



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Conspiracy Theories Amid COVID Crisis: A Causal-Comparative Analysis of Global Power Policies Employing and Highlighting Cultural Diplomacy**

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**ABSTRACT**

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COVID-19 pandemic outbreak carries many conspiracy theories along. Conspiracy theories like whether it is a lab-created virus; 5G network usage; or involvement of Bill Gates; a biological war tactic of the United States against China, or as a global hoax etc. Powerful states utilize the conspiracy theory as populist approach. They employ 'group polarization' and 'vicious cycle of suspicion' as two major tactics of populism in power politics. Its implications are observed on international politics by converging reliance of developing states on power elites. Developing cultural diplomacy progressively ensures collective interest and security through exchange of ideas. In larger context, its usage will transform cross-cultural ties in pandemic crisis, globally. Research employs qualitative-phenomenological method using causal-comparative analysis of cultural diplomacy factors, practiced through foreign policies of VETO powers. It finds how COVID crisis is responded by these countries and their impact on cross national ties by enhancing cultural diplomacy.

**Introduction**

Half-truth is being sold in written words of journalistic, academic and spiritual piece of writings. Conspiracy theory is more a psychological response rather than sentinel reflex. It cannot be stereotyped with the containment policy of pecuniary giants, interventionist approach of proselytizer and unidimensional social groups etc. It was once battery fed sentiment of hegemony-as history proves. It got nuclear propulsion after getting attached to the cocktail of politico-social uncertainty of general masses. Conspiracy theories instills new ideas to drive mass power for vested interests of governments/groups.

### **Conspiracy theories and believe tendency**

Factually, People are self-responsible for this wave of conspiracy driven ideas in favor or against peculiar class. For instance, bashing of China for initiation of COVID (Brewster 2020) from Wuhan ranging up to the involvement of Bill-gates for achieving capitalist-centric aims (AFP, 2020). The fear of intrigue and subversion doesn't exist only on the fringes of society but has always been part of our national identity. When such tales takes hold, Walker argues that they reflect the anxieties and experiences of the people. He states that people believe them even if they say nothing true about the objects of the theories themselves (Walker, J. 2013).

Conspiracy Theories are endeavors to clarify a definitive reason for huge social and political occasions and conditions. In the current scenario, reasons may be based on the covert war among the two powerful entities USA and China i.e. Allegation of lab-creation of Covid-19 virus (Brewster 2020). Looking into larger frequencies of governmental involvement in any rising clash or prevailing conflict, conspiracy theories accuse the involved groups being malevolent and paranoid. Conspiracy notions about the 9/11 dread assaults blame the Bush administration (van Prooijen & Douglas, 2017), the Saudi Government, and all other Taliban sponsoring agencies in Afghanistan during Russian invasion in 1979. A conspiracy itself alludes to a genuine causal chain of occasions, while conspiracy theory alludes to a claim of the deceptive plot that might possibly be valid.

### **Conspiracy theories and scholars' views**

McKenzie-McHarg is of the view that it would apparently go up against with two choices: either concede the recorded inconstancy of paranoid fear as a marvel. Secondly, characterize or demand its determinability and reject that the shows any changeability over the span of time (McKenzie-McHarg, 2020). Jack Z. Bratich, in his book *Conspiracy Panic*, along these lines embraces a meta-position rather than para-position like other conspiracy theory researchers. Bratich's line of contention, suggests that if conspiracy theory really exists then it may cover only the area of its existence or rely on the reasons which created it, for its survival (Bratich, 2008, p-34). This discussion extracts and argument that conspiracy theory is mostly short lived if strong causal chain is not found, which is one aspect of discussing conspiracy theories during pandemic crisis here.

Looking into COVID initiation and continuation, it is observed that increase and decline in intensity belief in crisis depends on cross governmental, cross cultural, cross psychological argumentation. When first wave of COVID ended in late July 2020, it was said that it's just a hoax, not a real time existence. While again initiation of second wave of pandemic at the same time in many countries around the globe suppresses the hoax notion (Brewster, 2020). Public mentality and ideology develop with socio-cultural growth and progression impact mass belief tendency (Bilewicz et al., 2013). If stress is identified in socio-cultural environment, then belief on these theories is observed to be fast and vice versa in calm conditions.

### **Conspiracy theories and public vulnerability**

Distrustful arguments seem to give wide, inside steady clarifications that permit individuals to safeguard convictions even with vulnerability and logical inconsistency. According to research faith in conspiracy theories gets flourished under state of vulnerability (Radosavljevic et al., 2009, p.71). False flag usage to simmer the target area, thoughts and people like a cauldron may become a nonsense act with serious consequences i.e., mostly winning. Conspiracy theorists are winning either in the war of politics, social behaviors, religious believes or economic trends by manipulating public belief tendency (Goldberg, 2020). From the assassination of President Kennedy to ongoing COVID crisis, shift from regional to global conspiracies have been observed involving cross cultures. Cross-cultural involvement considers cultural diplomacy as a source to steer global power politics' trends with positive impacts rather than discrepancies (Prokofieva, 2016). So according to my research, sharing ideas, development of behaviours, possible solutions to issues and joint efforts in one cultural trend would result positively.

### **Conspiracy Theories as populist approach of power politics**

Conspiricism and populism are based on the concept and exercise of mistrust. Subjective immorality in case of conspiracy theory or populist approach is not an issue to achieve vested interests. But the exercise of power to spread mistrust and getting it worsen by immorality tag is point of consideration. From the lens of power politics, conspiracy theory or propagandization is used as populist approach to accomplish their objectives (P.S. Swayer, 2020, p.15). According to research 'Group Polarization' and 'Vicious Cycle of Suspicion' are found two main themes while studying conspiracy theories in reference to populism. These aspects enable to justify that how conspiracy theories are utilized to reshape mass opinion by increasing believe tendency.

### **'Group Polarization' in contemporary times**

Group polarization is result of like-mindedness or group deliberations i.e. effect of government policies on public mind and their behavioral impact on government's policy making trend (Sunstein, 1999, p.91). In contemporary times of COVID crisis sharp group polarization is observed such as blame game started by the release of factsheet by US State Department and then Ex-President Trump stood against China for lab-created virus as a tool of biological warfare (G. Mohan, 2021). While Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying's responded it to be a trick to contain Chinese rising economy and influence in Indian ocean under 'Belt Road Initiative' (AFP, 2020, P-3). Subsequently, another wave of communist (controlled environment) and democratic (Majoritarian environment where conspiracies are more likely to spread) rift (cross-argumentation for violable power status) of conspiracy notion for the involvement of Bill Gates to control the world and gaining business goals via paralyzing economies was observed (AFP, 2020, P-3).

Bidimensional Principal mechanism of group polarization can be considered i.e., Social impacts and Stress restricted moves. While Populism is not always based on lies, mistrust but it may be manipulation of public believes and realities for reaching targets (Golder, 2016, P-67-71). Conspiracy theories are considered to be an important tool for power politics as unique psychological inclination drives sentiments rather than billion-dollar strategic maneuvering in territorial borders for wining wars i.e. hard or soft wars. Study of populism and conspiricism reveals the essential exercises of the group polarization have long range impacts as it cast new light on an old point i.e., social homogeneity may prove deteriorating for deliberative progression. Another side of the coin is Group polarization which cannot be tagged as negative or positive, but it is purpose driven approach. At the point when individuals are hearing echoes of their own voices in social practices and power politics it may results in reinforcement of initiated notion i.e. either conspiracy or constructive political trend (Iyengar et al., 2019). While sometimes specific types of social consistency and responding behavior can give rise to unjustified radicalism which needs perspectives to steer general masses affirmatively.

### **‘Vicious Cycle of Suspicion’ in contemporary times**

Wider lens of global emergency, populism and conspiricism highlights another power-politics tactic being followed in contemporary times. Politics of Doubts or “Vicious Cycle of Suspicion” (VCS) is core behind developing and re-fabrication of ideological and political narratives (K. Wain, 2004, p. 41-42). Two driving factors behind VCS i.e. fearsome weapon and antidote of ideologies helps to work in emergency situation in best possible manner. Populism, ethnic patriotism, emaciated racial character, governmental issues developing in states of extraordinary imbalance and hardship among the majority results in VCS in power politics (A.G., 2020). Denialism and fear can be used to gain political aims which gets reinforced by dysfunctional press who is not ready to deny, expose and discredit false information (Krasodonski-Jones, 2019).

During COVID crisis from polarization to VCS many trends were observed, and immediate crisis duration decision-making was questioned in USA and EU badly. Multi-lateral global governance under G7 and G8 states with dominancy of OECD with aims under WTO and WIPO seems more diplomatic rather than practical conjuration (BBC, 2020). WHO and UNHRC although trying to counter global health emergency but yet politico-economic tussle doubts their countering measures (BBC Future, 2020). Even WHO declared emergency situation i.e. COVID-19 may have second and third waves if not seriously countered, delay in vaccine preparation, monotony may create psychological problems among general masses etc were undermined by the state governments.

Doubts of 5G network and frequent usage of electronic devices is another conspiracy thought prevailed during different phases of COVID crisis and believed by the general masses. (Jolley et al., 2020, p. 134-145). Anyhow, vicious cycle of suspicion may get repeated over and over again due to politico-economic aims of the

global giants and political tycoons. Rendering respect criteria and effecting need basis creates doubts i.e. Trump's government response to counter health emergency and to serve public was attached to the upcoming election campaigns (Mansbridge & Macedo, 2019, p. 17). Similarly, COVID crisis management was allegedly exploited being an umbrella to cover governance in-capabilities in Pakistan in view of general masses. Political victimization and achieving one's vested interest against opposition not only with in state but in international economic markets is another sight of politics of suspicions observed around the globe. For instance, vaccine preparation was counted as a race among VETO powers, provision of health care equipment and facilities, sustained shift in defense policies and agreements prevailing since pre-COVID is considerable (Crisis Group, 2020).

### **Impact on Worldwide Political Trends**

Worldwide political trends received sharp shifts in different categories in wake of COVID crisis i.e. divide in commercial and cultural ideals, gender-based politics, regionalism, and strife for hegemony (*Diplomacy and Global Governance after Covid-19: Prepare for Change*, 2020). Wide ranging implications are particularly genuine for those trapped in already ongoing conflicts i.e. US-Iran rivalry, Sino-US confrontation, Saudi-Iran and Yemen crisis, Indo-china armed conflict in Ladakh, Syrian crisis and refugee rehabilitations, EU-Brexit case etc. The pandemic may further disturb peacekeeping tasks, humanitarian aids and defers diplomatic efforts for resolving preceding inter-state conflicts. Corrupt leaderships may misuse the pandemic to propel their goals in manners that fuel homegrown or worldwide emergencies – taking actions against rivals either with in state or out of the state. Corona virus has fueled multidimensional international irritation i.e. the US criticizing China for the COVID crisis and Beijing attempting to make acquaintances by offering help to victim nations which is resulting in intensification of existing incredible power pressures halting global counter-crisis measures (Crisis Group, 2020).

Despite already strangulated situations, important policy shifts (Ostrom, 1977, p. 226-235) were observed worldwide. Some important events listed are; QUAD (The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue-also acronym QSD) to QUAD 2.0, Increasing Indo-US alliance under LEMOA (The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) and COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) (J.W. Hornung & S.W. Harold, 2020), Indo-Australia's AIMSLSA (Australia and India Mutual Logistics Support Agreement) agreements, China's spreading BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) and CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) related ties with Pakistan in region, Indian ousting from Chahbahar in Iran after US-Iran increasing clashes. Recent anti-Iran block i.e. UAE, KSA, Israel and USA paves way for Pak-Iran-China (PIC) collaboration in various sectors (Al-Jazeera, 2020). While COVID crisis called lockdowns and in-person business halting put pressure on oil economies giving serious demand-supply shock resulting in political reorientation (A. Rabah & N. Ha, 2020).

### **Comparative Analysis of cultural diplomacy factors in foreign policies of Veto powers**

Conspiracy theories are sometimes area specific and occasionally spread over the globe contemporarily due to technological advancements. A qualitative method is employed to conduct the research on VETO powers-model of reference i.e. causal-comparative research design (Salkind. N.J., 2010). Here, interlinkage among the dependent variable-cultural diplomacy (how it is employed and how can be employed in future) has depending impact on independent variables- conspiracy theories during pan demic crisis and multidimensional responses of the VETO powers to these crises. The researcher's goal is to determine whether the independent variable affected the outcome, or dependent variable, by comparing two or more groups of individuals (Salkind. N.J., 2010).

Causal comparative analysis of VETO powers is conducted in four frames of references so that international, foreign and domestic policy trends could be understood as explained in Table no. 1.

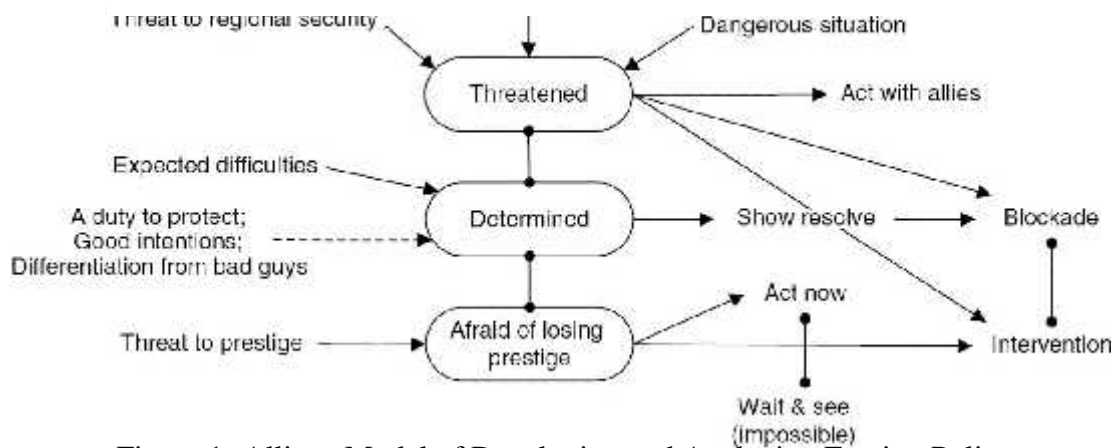


Figure 1- Allison Model of Developing and Analyzing Foreign Policy

**Source:** Cambridge University Press(Y. Ariffin, J. Coicaud, & V. Popovski, 2016, p.205-397)

Here the question rises that why foreign policy model of Allison is discussed here? Answer to the query is quite clear that cultural diplomacy needs to be injected in the system to work in host environment-world politics among great powers. So, Allison model give a core understanding that how and to what extent policies can be made flexible for incorporating cultural diplomacy aspects to be exercised among the great powers. It further expositis that how far positive results could be attained with

practice of such cultural diplomacy based foreign policies not only among great powers but with those developing countries which rely on these great powers.

The use of a neo-classical type 'Allison political process model' or 'Governmental Politics' of foreign policy (FP) investigation (G. T. Allison & P. Zelikow 1999), p. 143) to the selected situation of COVID crisis requires the correlation of the free factors, ideational settings, local mediating factors, and their effects on short-term international strategy conduct just as the long-term approach yields. This model has analyzed foreign policy by focusing on national interests and prestige, economy-based determination, international alliance and strategies planned and acted upon in different situations during COVID crisis (Ryniejska -Kiełdanowicz, 2020, p. 134). By focusing on these aspects, foreign policy analysis is summarized in the following table as it addresses how cultural diplomacy is practiced (Discussed in Table-1), which economic and political policies were preferred coherently in response to the social trends with in state and in international arena. These categories of policies practiced are selected on the basis of Allison's model of foreign policy discussion by Cornford, Horelick, Ball and Art in their joint research work (Cornford et. Al, 2018, p.1-3).

Notwithstanding, the real factors around us today ask the inquiries: does social strategy truly matter when countries are fighting a widely affecting health emergency? What better approaches for leading cultural diplomacy are arising in the wake of revived configuration "new normal"? (ASEF, 2020). Abrogation of public events have seriously confined vis-à-vis encounters, which is important for public engagement employing cultural diplomacy tactics (ASEF, 2020). With this evolution of social practices for bridging communication gap and building trust among masses countries around the world has employed cultural diplomacy ways as highlighted in the last part of Table-1. Cultural diplomacy tactics observed around the world and particularly among VETO powers are highlighted as causal consideration domains (Table-1). These strategies of cultural diplomacy somehow managed to keep the world connected rather than functional isolation in the times of COVID crisis and lockdowns when fear prevailed among masses compelling them towards social distancing. This data is collected through qualitative-Phenomenological method (Groenewald T. A, 2004) employing exploratory approach to find international practices of cultural diplomacy amid COVID crisis. Most important revelation of research was that foreign policy is host environment to let cultural diplomacy flourish and be practices smoothly. It highlights how each VETO state performed in the four categories so that aspects for developing resilience and retaliation could be extracted. In the later part of the table, cultural diplomacy as focus aspects is elaborated with mentioned practices of each VETO country. It exposit seriousness of the matter to keep the world positively integrated with affirmative outcomes of collective growth.

**Table 1- Causal and Comparative Analysis of Foreign Policies of VETO**

<b>Causal Consideration Domains</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>China</b>
<b>Economic Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Withdrawing aid to WHO</li> <li>• Aid to 120 countries including Africa under USAID program</li> <li>• Digital economic forum conferences and MoU's</li> <li>• Uncertain multilateral market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing aid to WHO</li> <li>• Digital economic talks to develop resilience to COVID-19</li> <li>• Post-Brexit Debt crisis</li> <li>• Developing multilateral market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing aid to WHO</li> <li>• Digital economic talks to develop resilience to COVID-19</li> <li>• Post-Brexit Debt crisis</li> <li>• Preserving single market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing WHO aid</li> <li>• Joining anti-US china's alliance</li> <li>• Coping health emergency with reserved assets</li> <li>• Developing multilateral market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing aid to WHO</li> <li>• Aid under ADB for coping global health emergency</li> <li>• Digital economic forums and agreements</li> <li>• Developing multilateral market</li> </ul>
<b>Political Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of leadership to lead the world</li> <li>• Mimicking covid-19 as Kung-flu</li> <li>• Withdrawing from Paris climate protocol</li> <li>• US-China Blame Game</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paris peace forum success</li> <li>• Disciplined leadership</li> <li>• Collective counter COVID strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aiming new transatlantic contract with new-US president</li> <li>• Aiming to manage US-China-EU cooperation triangle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Echo china's offensive attitude</li> <li>• Inclination towards china</li> <li>• Oil price depression</li> <li>• Cybernetic digital countering of US world order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the world from front beside allegations of spread of virus</li> <li>• Alleged Chinese espionage</li> <li>• Misinformation accusations</li> </ul>



<p><b>Social trends</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwillingness to share COVID-19 information</li> <li>• Trump's nationalistic behavior-Public monetary Support</li> <li>• Research investment for vaccine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive Research investment</li> <li>• Helping neighbouring states to overcome covid-19 spread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'New-normal' approach to acclimate with digital trends in COVID crisis</li> <li>• Research on COVID-Spread and countering strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive research in vaccine discovery policy</li> <li>• Hybrid war trends</li> <li>• Kremlin's pressure for increasing government reliance</li> <li>• Social welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplying masks, test-kits, ventilators and medical personnel to world</li> <li>• Sharing COVID information</li> <li>• Extensive research investment to develop vaccine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Security Trends</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing Indo-US alliance i.e., LEMOA + COMCASA</li> <li>• US-Iran Rivalry</li> <li>• Anti-Iran alliance i.e., US+UAE+KSA</li> <li>• Launching new aircraft carrier in Persian Gulf</li> <li>• QUAD to QUAD 2.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoiding US culture of coercion</li> <li>• Bilateral security ties with France</li> <li>• Power exercise through NATO participation</li> <li>• Media literacy campaign to counter conspiracy theories</li> <li>• SDRD Policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilateral security ties with UK</li> <li>• Media literacy campaign to counter conspiracy theories</li> <li>• Strategy driven-resource driven security policies (SD-RD)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military actions in Ukraine</li> <li>• Sending troops in Syria to prop up Assad's regime</li> <li>• Deploying SCC-8 Missile system-(Demise of Inter-range Nuclear Force Treaty)</li> <li>• Intelligence sharing with China</li> <li>• Intra-Afghan dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countering QUAD and QUAD 2.0 with increasing BRI Investments and work speed</li> <li>• Prospect Pak-Iran China collaboration after Indian oust from Chabahar-Iran</li> <li>• Increasing defense ties with Russia</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural diplomacy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tele-medicine initiation</li> <li>• Virtual cross-cultural dialogue under Florida university</li> <li>• Increased racial targeting cases in COVID crisis</li> <li>• State sponsored online arts exhibitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cancellation of London Book fair</li> <li>• Lockdown calling closure of public places</li> <li>• Tele-medicine initiation</li> <li>• Inter-state virtual dialogue on cinematography</li> <li>• Online sports coaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tele-medicine initiation</li> <li>• Online sports coaching</li> <li>• Intercultural dialogue</li> <li>• Anti-racist activism through social media</li> <li>• Online Civic exchange programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tele-medicine initiation</li> <li>• Online Arts and film festival</li> <li>• Cross-cultural dialogues for practitioners</li> <li>• Psychological counseling during COVID lockdown in societies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closure of libraries, cinemas, and theaters</li> <li>• Launched 3D virtual tours to museums</li> <li>• Live commerce exhibition</li> <li>• Tele-medicine initiation</li> <li>• Psychological integration via counseling in COVID crisis</li> </ul>

**Source:** Table is prepared by the author through causal analysis by comparing policies and strategies of VETO powers.

**Probability of collective retaliation: Response of VETO countries**

COVID crisis has changed many international business trends i.e., political, economic, security, and social. Collective issues and threats faced, by the general masses and states, converged to identification of collective interests and security gaps to develop collective retaliation mechanism. Following is the suggestive collective response mechanism in four categories as shown in Table no. 2, in the wake of cultural diplomacy to counter conspiricism in crisis times. This region-centric foreign policy development commensurate with international needs will help to manage worthy place by international stakeholders in global arena. Table no. 2 carries data based on causal comparative analysis through descriptive approach. It suggests collective retaliation mechanism in four categories i.e., political, economic, social and security. Why are these four categories selected to develop retaliation and resilience mechanism? Response to this query connects this part of research to the preceding causal comparison of VETO countries' foreign policies practices employing cultural diplomacy approaches. It addresses research question that how cultural diplomacy can be employed prospectively to counter conspiracy impacts during crisis period i.e., natural or man-created disasters. Table no. 2 suggests areas where cross cultural participation collaboration can be increased.

**Table 2** Collective Retaliation Mechanism in response to COVID-19 Crisis by VETO Powers

	Political	Economic	Social	Security
<b>Collective Retaliation Mechanism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplined and responsible leadership behavior</li> <li>• Collective response plan for COVID crisis depressions</li> <li>• Emergency international political dialogue</li> <li>• New-normal approach</li> <li>• Joint international research for vaccine development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments in infrastructural projects</li> <li>• Nuclear ban and disarmament agreements to save blind investments</li> <li>• Open and Multilateral market</li> <li>• Low tax and duty rates for international shipping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint cultural dialogues</li> <li>• Arts sharing either through online conferences or exhibitions</li> <li>• Low price business opportunities</li> <li>• Climate protection dialogues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint security exercises</li> <li>• Bridging gaps needs based revised security policy and strategies</li> <li>• No first use policy</li> <li>• No offense-Active defense approach</li> <li>• Military cum economic ventures</li> <li>• Information sharing agreements</li> </ul>

**Source:** Table is prepared by the author.

### Conclusion

Importance of diplomats and diplomacy is equally arising and considerate for developing cross-cultural ties (Sharp. P, 2009). By analyzing foreign polices of VETO

powers research extracted that there are three essential features of fast evolving diplomacy at the initial stage which are interpretation, dialogues, exchange of ideas and information. Strategies extracted includes “state-driven condition; predominant configurations of collective participation between nations; service of international concerns by the selected organization for unaccustomed strategy usage; restrictiveness of discretionary institutions/representative for discussing significant legislative issues; controlling of nearby worldwide occasions; correspondence by customary methods of data trade and presence of generalists during cross-cultural and international table talks” according to researchers of the field (Ang & Mar, 2015, P. 365-381). However, ongoing observation is that the accompanying changes: service of international concerns has assigned a few capacities to different stakeholders and the function of nongovernmental participants has been expanded. Furthermore, multilateral collaboration designs has become more significant while the structure and elements of conciliatory organizations are re-imagined and the impact of data on plans of international concerns is developing more. Considering the previously mentioned conversation, the cultural part of diplomacy will be significantly substantial in the post-COVID times than it has been during the most recent twenty years.

### **Results:**

Concluding my research, I found that powerful states have strong economy, coherent society and political strength. Due to strengthened status, in economic, political, social and security sector, developing countries look towards powerful states for finding solutions to their issues. So, firstly, disciplined leadership is base of initiating a change with collective response plan for any type of crisis i.e. COVID-19 crisis which is amalgamation of economic, social and political problems. Moreover, there is need of perpetual international dialogue to understand sharply changing international scenarios i.e. health, climate, societal responses and politico-economic trends. Secondly, economic aspects core to all issues. For the purpose, VETO powers should plan joint infrastructural programs for connecting the world rather than fighting for hegemonic influences and raising armaments race ending into conflicts. Current crisis situation shows strong urge for multilateral markets, demands low tax duties due to economic depressions faced around the world due to shutdown of industries and developmental projects. Thirdly, security matters are of great concern from last many decades right after WWII. Trust building is necessary to mend ways of security provision and to shift international focus from security rift to social and economic development. Joint military exercises and developing an agreed way of sharing information across countries, that might not be sensitive, can make possibilities of friendly and reliable interaction. Fourthly, Cultural diplomacy above all can work better for materializing all cooperation theories in times of crisis and vulnerability. Cultural diplomacy by sharing unique cultural features by art exhibitions, theaters, exporting cultural crafts and offering special tax-free trade of cultural commodities may help to cope with contemporary crisis. Lastly, It will possibly reduce trust deficit due to conspiracy theories increasing stress and anxiety in societies during pandemic crisis. As masses become prone to such fake theories and

have increase believe tendency due to low faith in their government and authorities. Not only cultural aspects but joint climatic issues effecting the whole world or other such aspects i.e. food insecurity, malnutrition, war destructions in certain areas etc can be considered. Cultural diplomacy is bright aspect of Track-Two-Diplomacy which may help to reduce conflicting aspects and may develop cross-cultural and cross-national cohesive interaction.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Comparative analysis of policies of five Veto states and understanding causal factors behind their formation gives comprehensive view of state's approach during global health emergency crisis. Here are few feasible recommendations to improve cultural diplomacy approach to bridge gaps among stakeholders of the international arena and counter conspiracies in pandemic crisis.

First, Online and in-person cross-cultural exchange programs should be launched for sharing arts and conducting exhibitions to increase social cohesion and to curb exacerbating grievances during lockdowns. Second, Cross-cultural work opportunities should be increased to stop general masses from joining terrorist's organization and acts of violent extremism. Third, Cross-cultural Education exchange programs and mentor-mentee projects for increase trust and reliance on mutual support is need of the time. Fourth, Opportunities for foreign audience and speakers in international conferences and online seminars-Webinars will pave way for exchange of ideas and problems for cooperative solutions. Fifth, Cross cultural music and drama sessions for exchange of artistic norms and values will increase cordial cooperation. Sixth, Free dialogue and impartial territory creation for conducting cross-cultural dialogues and area of trust i.e. can be used for mediation, good offices etc. Seventh, Mutual military exercises and cross-territorial visits to increase mutual reliance via security and defense pacts which may later on provide base for collective retaliation to collective threat. Eighth, Psychosocial assessment sessions are needed, with in state and cross-cultural assessments to record problems in different communities for uniform resilience development against conspiracy theories and community conflicts in emergencies. Lastly, Revised national foreign policies incorporating cultural diplomacy tools i.e. sports diplomacy, educational diplomacy and cross-cultural scholarships.

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