

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING SPORTS DIPLOMACY AS A FOREIGN POLICY TOOL IN QATAR

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Abstract

The research shows how sports diplomacy can effectively be implemented into foreign policy of a state.

Introduction

Today diplomacy is in continuous evolution, new theories, concepts, and methods are emerging. The concept of "soft power" and its various versions are actively developing. One of them is sports diplomacy. Sport is increasingly used as an instrument of political influence and has become an integral part of international relations. Nowadays, sports diplomacy is more relevant than ever for developing countries, as the world's giants (the United States, China) are increasingly dominating the world community, and there are fewer resources to resist this pressure.

Body Paragraph

Qatar uses sport as a means of developing the state and establishing relations with the world community. This strategy can be divided into four main parts: 1) direct investment in the sports industry; 2) organization of major sporting events; 3) development of elite sports; and 4) sports diplomacy.

The Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) was established to implement sports diplomacy as an instrument to create an official and full image of a "peacemaker state". All investments aim to promote the development of economic sectors such as retail, real estate, hospitality, and tourism, as part of a broader strategy to reduce dependence on oil and gas, and thus explore other safe businesses around the world.

Qatar is also strengthening its international image and "branding" the country. The official website of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs contains a section dedicated to Sports Diplomacy. "The State of Qatar is one of the sponsors of the UN resolution on sports for development and peace, highlighting the importance of Sports in enhancing development, peace, respect and tolerance, achieving an active and healthy community. Therefore, the State of Qatar gives greater importance to sports, through hosting numerous international sports events. The value of sports culture in the State of Qatar is reflected through launching of local and international initiatives including the National Sports Day and "Doha Goals" initiative.

The State of Qatar is preparing to host the World Cup in Doha in 2022. The World Cup will accelerate the pace of development on a national level in regard to the infrastructure, taking into consideration national laws which the state of Qatar works to amend and implement, in accordance with international laws and regulations.

Hosting the World Cup in Qatar is a regional accomplishment that will contribute to development in the Middle East. This event will change the image of the Middle East and create an atmosphere of positive interaction between the region and the World."

Sports diplomacy is especially relevant for developing countries, since their word is not powerful enough among the stronger actors in world politics, they do not have nuclear weapons, and they are not so actively involved in the activities of TNCs and global NGOs, which makes them even more eager to consolidate their positions in the international arena

Moreover, Qatar is promoting tourism through sport diplomacy. In 2011, Qatar Sports Investments bought the Paris Saint-Germain football club and invested in the purchase of world-class players known throughout the world. After that, the logo of the Qatar Ministry of tourism was placed on the

players' t-shirts. So, one of the leading European clubs, known for its victories, participates in the promotion of the Qatari brand. People started talking about the country not only as a primary resource power. Qatar's sports Minister Salah bin Ghanem al-Ali once noted publicly that when he was a student in America, he was asked: "Where is Qatar?". Now people are asking: "Do you want to invest in our sport, in our team?"

A young journalist from China, H. Yang, visited the AIPS (International Sports Press Association) congress in Doha in 2016 and tried to answer the question "Why is Qatar investing a large amount of money in sports?" And this is what she says: "Qatar is a country known for its hydrocarbon economy. However, this is no longer relevant. According to the Director General of the Qatar financial center authority (QFCA), the contribution of the non-oil sector to Qatar's GDP will constitute 70% by 2017. The country is moving from a hydrocarbon economy to a more diverse and sustainable one. Among all sectors, given that Qatar has become the host of the largest number of sporting events worldwide, sport is playing a fast-growing role in the Qatari economy. Sports diplomacy is a soft power tool of the state that has changed the whole face of Qatar over the past 10 years."

Conclusion

Thus, the reasons why Qatar actively uses international sports in its foreign and domestic policies are the following: insufficiency of military power, which is why Qatar is trying to create an image of a conflict-free "peacemaker state"; strengthening its position in the region; and developing economic sectors (through investment) other than the hydrocarbon sector. Also, in terms of purposes for which the State of Qatar uses international sport, we can highlight the following: attracting universal attention to the state, awareness, and strengthening the international image. For Qatar, this is important, since when relations with partners in the region break down, the state needs to seek support from other countries (the United States and Russia in the first place) and go beyond the region. Finally, we will highlight two more reasons: attracting tourists and "improving" the nation. In cases where the "primary" diplomatic tools, more familiar to us, do not produce results, sport can be used as a "secondary" diplomatic tool.

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