

Science Diplomacy in the Age of War

Eric Piaget

UNTRAD (Unit on Non-Traditional
Diplomacy)



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

UNU-CRIS

Institute on Comparative
Regional Integration Studies

The Power Dimensions of Science Diplomacy

- SD is predominantly conceptualised within the framework of soft power
- But as we are seeing now, science is increasingly finding itself in the hard power framework too (cf. scientific sanctions)
- The question is: to what extent should science fall within the arsenal of hard power tools?





Putin's War

- Scientific sanctions all-encompassing
 - Governments
 - RTOs
 - HEIs
 - Supra-national level (e.g. Horizon Europe)
- Justified in light of horrific war
- However, is the heat of the moment blinding us to the implications of cutting all scientific ties with Russia?



Selecting the Science

- Many collaborative scientific projects are aimed at issues that go far beyond the scope of politics and national borders
 - Arctic
 - Oceans
 - Climate
 - Public health
 - Space
 - Shared problems require shared solutions
 - SDG17 - partnerships for implementing the goals
-



Selecting the Science 2

- Of course, a selective, case-by-case approach is required
 - Difficult to justify continued collaboration with institutions that propagate the Kremlin's objectives
 - Roscomos – ExoMars Mission
-



Science for Peace

- Science has long been a channel for warming relations between hostile states
 - Cold War
 - US-Cuba relations
 - CERN
 - SESAME
- Cutting ties with the Russian science community overlooks this
- Especially important if traditional diplomatic channels continue to downsize and freeze



A black and white photograph of a large group of men, likely scientists, standing in several rows for a group portrait. They are all dressed in formal attire, including suits and ties. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text 'Individual Scientists' is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Individual Scientists

- The Russian scientific community has demonstrated a strong opposition to the war at great peril to themselves
- Cutting ties disregards the Enlightenment principals of progress and toleration upon which Western societies are based
- Of course, the reality of the situation makes collaboration very hard, and we must be careful that continued collaboration doesn't jeopardize the safety of Russian scientists
- Could the ERC's initiative to welcome Ukrainian researchers also be extended to Russian scientists?

Conclusions

- A true science diplomacy approach to the situation in Ukraine and Russia is well illustrated by the statement issued by the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS)
- Important to ask the following questions:
 - Does cutting scientific ties hamper the Kremlin's objectives?
 - Does it help Ukraine to defend itself from this brutal invasion?
 - What is the impact that cutting scientific ties has on humanity at large?





Thank you for your time!