

Научная статья

УДК 32.327

<https://doi.org/10.37493/2307-910X.2025.3.21>

## Культура в контексте национальной безопасности и международного позиционирования

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**Аннотация. Введение.** Статья посвящена роли культуры и культурной дипломатии как средства формирования международного имиджа государства. Данная роль связывается с обеспечением национальной безопасности страны. На основе анализа современных теорий «мягкой силы», культурной дипломатии и внешней политики Российской Федерации рассматриваются институциональные, социокультурные и стратегические аспекты культуры как фактора безопасности и международного позиционирования. Особое внимание уделено анализу деятельности институтов культурной дипломатии России, в числе которых МИД России, Россотрудничество, Фонд «Русский мир», Фонд Горчакова. Статья рассматривает вызовы и перспективы развития культурной политики в условиях современных международных трансформаций и санкционного давления.

**Ключевые слова:** внешняя политика, мягкая сила, культурная дипломатия, экспорт образовательных услуг.

**Для цитирования:** Никитаева Д. Г. Культура в контексте национальной безопасности и международного позиционирования // Современная наука и инновации. 2025. №3. С. 195-202. <https://doi.org/10.37493/2307-910X.2025.3.21>

Research article

## Culture in the Context of National Security and International Positioning

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**Abstract. Introduction.** The article explores the role of culture and cultural diplomacy as a means of shaping a state's international image. This role is linked to ensuring national security. Based on an analysis of contemporary theories of "soft power," cultural diplomacy, and the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, the institutional, sociocultural, and strategic aspects of culture as a factor of security and international positioning are examined. Special attention is given to the analysis of the activities of Russia's cultural diplomacy institutions, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Rossotrudnichestvo, the Russkiy Mir Foundation, and the Gorchakov Foundation. The article addresses the challenges and prospects for the development of cultural policy amid contemporary international transformations and sanctions pressure.

**Keywords:** foreign policy, soft power, cultural diplomacy, export of educational services.

**For citation:** Nikitaeva DG. *Culture in the Context of National Security and International Positioning*. Modern Science and Innovations. 2025;(3):195-202. (In Russ.). <https://doi.org/10.37493/2307-910X.2025.3.21>

**Introduction.** In the context of globalization, accompanied by a growing crisis in world politics, culture is becoming increasingly important as a tool for ensuring national security and a means of strategically positioning a state on the international stage. Modern approaches to foreign policy emphasize the importance of new methods and practices of diplomacy, emphasizing "soft power" and cultural diplomacy as crucial elements in achieving a country's competitiveness [2, p. 67; 6, p. 48].

In the Russian Federation, issues of cultural diplomacy and foreign cultural policy acquired particular relevance after 2000, when the term "soft power" was first recorded in strategic documents as an element of the national security strategy, and culture began to be viewed not only as a self-sufficient sphere, but also as a resource for foreign policy influence [8, p. 5].

The purpose of this article is to comprehensively analyze the functions and mechanisms of culture in ensuring national security and international positioning of the Russian Federation, to identify modern challenges and trends in the development of cultural policy, as well as institutional and strategic aspects of the activities of Russian cultural institutions abroad.

**1. Theoretical and regulatory framework.** Contemporary threats to national identity and cultural security are increasingly humanitarian rather than military in nature: information wars, attempts to rewrite history, discrimination against the Russian language and culture abroad, and sanctions against cultural and educational projects.

In the fundamental regulatory documents of domestic foreign policy, culture is considered as a factor of national security.

The national security strategy, in addition to military and economic components, also includes humanitarian, socio-cultural, and informational aspects: "The key factors determining the position and role of the Russian Federation in the world in the long term are the high quality of human potential, the ability to ensure technological leadership, the effectiveness of public administration, and the transition of the economy to a new technological foundation. The state of science, innovation, industry, the education system, healthcare, and culture is becoming a key indicator of Russia's competitiveness" [14, p. 22].

In this context, culture is not simply a collection of traditions and values, but a mechanism for shaping identity, consolidating society, overcoming internal conflicts, and countering external threats. According to the Fundamentals of State Cultural Policy of Russia, culture is viewed as a factor in national security: "State cultural policy is implemented to ensure the observance of citizens' constitutional rights in the sphere of culture, including the right to access cultural values, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage, and the achievement of goals and objectives in the area of national security and the socioeconomic development of the Russian Federation" [12].

The National Security Strategy of Russia also highlights the importance of preserving historical memory and cultural identity as an element of balance in international relations: "Against the backdrop of the crisis of the Western liberal model, a number of states are making attempts to deliberately erode traditional values, distort world history, revise views on the role and place of Russia in it, rehabilitate fascism, and incite interethnic and interfaith conflicts" [14, p. 19].

The term "soft power," coined by J. Nye, implies the ability to achieve foreign policy goals through attraction, persuasion, and cultural influence, rather than through military or economic pressure [1, pp. 67–68]. In modern diplomacy, culture is becoming a crucial component of "soft power," enabling the formation of a positive image of a country and the promotion of its values, language, and lifestyle.

In modern scientific literature examining the current crisis period in the state of international relations, culture and “soft power” are also considered as a strategic resource influencing the security of the state: “In the context of new – hybrid – forms of geopolitical confrontations and counteractions, the practical significance of “soft power” not only does not weaken, but, on the contrary, strengthens, acquiring modified features and characteristics” [11].

“In an era of conflict and international instability, the role of culture as an instrument of ‘soft power’ cannot be overestimated” [2, p. 67]. Cultural diplomacy today is “a battlefield for the minds, hearts, and wallets of people around the world” [2, p. 67].

In the context of a more detailed examination of the modern functionality of culture as a component of “soft power,” it seems important to emphasize that in international relations, culture performs four key functions: integration, communication, informational propaganda, and innovation.

Let's take a closer look at them.

The integration function implies strengthening identity both within the country and abroad – through support for compatriots abroad. Examples of the influence of consolidated diasporas on a political scale represent a window of opportunity for the “soft” redirection of state policies. A consolidated diaspora represents a completely legitimate political force. There is no doubt that “diaspora communities exert significant economic, political and cultural influence not only on the host countries, but also on the countries of the so-called “exodus”” [1]. Particularly successful examples of using the diaspora of compatriots abroad are the Armenian and Jewish diasporas. “Institutionally organized Armenian communities in various countries can act as pressure groups, lobbies, and actors in Armenian public diplomacy,” as noted in Armenian academic works [1, p. 125]. In practice, the diaspora not only can, but also acts as such a lobbyist, seeking, for example, the support of European authorities in political matters. Despite the observed “decline in Jewish identity among members of the diaspora” [17], the Jewish diaspora, which is part of the economic elite of the United States, consistently provides political and even military support to Israel. Economically, the Jewish diaspora even purchases securities issued by the Israeli state, perceiving this as a debt to their homeland [16]. Supporting compatriots abroad, preserving their linguistic and cultural identity, protecting them from discrimination, and supporting integration ties with Russia are relevant and important areas of foreign policy.

The communication function built through cultural diplomacy extends its reach even further. The reach of cultural influence extends beyond the diaspora, creating channels for dialogue between countries and peoples. An example of expanding humanitarian ties is the influence of American cinema on shaping lifestyles and perceptions of the United States abroad. In this context, great potential opens up for creating an attractive investment image of the economy [4]. Culturally constructed images of a partner country inevitably exert an indirect influence on thinking not only in economics but also in political decision-making.

The information and propaganda function is closely intertwined with the communication function, but it has a two-pronged structure: it focuses on creating a favorable image of the country abroad, on the one hand, and on the other, it counteracts negative narratives spread by ill-wishers.

Culture is also the foundation for innovative development. The desire for improvement and the promotion of new development models are consequences of certain directions in civilizational development. Thus, studying civilizations, A. Toynbee identified the reasons for the development of some and the “frozen” state of others. Frozen, for example, were the civilizations of nomads and Eskimos, who, faced with the challenges of a harsh environment, managed to develop a unique culture but stagnated in their development [15]. The key reasons for the stagnant development of such civilizations were technological minimalism and the lack of a developed written language. Isolation precluded cultural exchange: the inherently limited set of

tools and the impossibility of developing and transmitting thought led to perfect adaptation, blocking evolution.

Today, the further development of civilization is driven by the qualitative and quantitative growth of education and the digitalization of many production processes.

**2. Evolution of cultural policy and diplomacy of Russia: institutional and strategic aspects.** Historically, Russia has always sought to use culture as a means of foreign policy influence. Even in the 19th and 20th centuries, literature, ballet, fine arts, and scientific and educational achievements were powerful export products that shaped the country's attractive image [2, p. 77].

During the Soviet period, cultural diplomacy acquired institutional form—through a system of cultural centers, academic exchanges, tours, and Russian language support programs [10, p. 105]. Modern Russia has inherited this experience but faces new challenges—competition with the West, sanctions pressure, information wars, and the need to update cultural strategies.

The institutional infrastructure of Russian cultural diplomacy consists of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rossotrudnichestvo (the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation), the Russkiy Mir Foundation, and the A.M. Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund, a network of Russian science and cultural centers abroad, and cultural and educational projects.

This system, inheriting the Soviet model of cultural diplomacy and centralized regulation, currently has both advantages and disadvantages, which are closely intertwined. Among the disadvantages are overregulation and a centralized decision-making mechanism, which, in creative fields, is not always productive and hinders the achievement of quick results. However, quick results may not always be good; a centralized decision-making system serves as a safety net against hasty and ill-considered actions.

In order to compensate for the identified shortcomings, which are not new to this study but are well known, a toolkit of cultural diplomacy is being developed in domestic foreign policy.

**3. Cultural diplomacy as a means of international positioning.** Cultural diplomacy is "the use by the state of existing or specially established cultural, social, and scientific ties to achieve political, diplomatic, and propaganda goals" [5; 7]. It includes exchanges, educational and language programs, tours, exhibitions, support for Russian schools abroad, and the dissemination of information about Russian culture.

In modern Russian practice, three models for implementing cultural diplomacy can be distinguished.

The first is the institutional-state approach, where the primary focus is on the structures of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Rossotrudnichestvo, embassies, and cultural centers abroad. This institutionalization, as already emphasized, has Soviet roots and, due to its "sluggishness" and minimization of errors, represents a reliable foundation.

Rossotrudnichestvo is the leading state institute for cultural diplomacy, an organization that implements a significant portion of programs promoting the Russian language, supporting education, and organizing cultural events [8]. However, according to experts, "current programs for promoting the Russian language outside the country and strengthening its role in the global communication system currently do not allow for the achievement of all the conceptual goals of Russia's foreign cultural policy" [8, p. 23].

The second is a networked, public-public model. This model entails the creation of non-profit organizations that have the right to make independent and more dynamic decisions, but that nevertheless follow the general course of state cultural policy. Such organizations include the Russkiy Mir Foundation and the Gorchakov Fund.

These foundations support the Russian language and education, develop public diplomacy, and foster a positive image of the country. The Gorchakov Fund is viewed by Russian researchers as an intermediary structure that "enables cooperation between the state and non-profit organizations," while the Russkiy Mir Foundation focuses on promoting "the development of education in the Russian language" [8, p. 24].

Network diplomacy also encompasses work with compatriots abroad. Currently, our country's cultural diplomacy is largely limited by these boundaries, but the search for effective tools should help expand the network's scope.

The third – information and communications – covers the media, digital platforms, and work with bloggers and opinion leaders.

Russian media abroad are one of the most important tools for shaping the country's international image and information security. At the same time, as modern researchers note, "Russian media, represented in the global information space, have demonstrated their high effectiveness; however, they are concentrated in one traditional area—television—and are therefore extremely vulnerable to the loss of access to foreign audiences" [8, p. 17]. A current problem is limited access to Western audiences due to sanctions, blocking of television channels, and restrictions on the work of Russian journalists.

Working through digital platforms offers greater flexibility and involves channeling information through social media. The unit of influence in this case is dispersed bloggers (or opinion leaders) – a dispersed community closely resembling journalism, but lacking a single decision-making center – an editorial board.

Exporting educational services and supporting the Russian language are key areas of cultural diplomacy. "The Russian education system can be considered one of the most effective instruments for cultural policy" [8, p. 21]. However, "recently, there has been a 'brain drain' and a decline in personnel, a loss of demand for domestic educational services, and the collapse of knowledge-intensive educational centers" [8, p. 16].

**4. Culture and integration projects: the Eurasian dimension.** Culture is becoming an instrument of not only bilateral but also multilateral integration. The concept of the Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP), put forward by Russian President V.V. Putin in 2015 [13], envisages the formation of a single space for cooperation in the areas of "trade and investment, logistics, digitalization, finance", which requires "the development of a common vision for the organization of economic space and strategic planning for the development of the territories involved" [3, p. 16; 9]. Integration in the Eurasian space is impossible without a cultural component — a common historical memory, language and educational programs, and support for humanitarian exchanges. "The Russian language remains a popular language of interethnic communication... The Russian authorities are taking active steps to strengthen the position of the Russian language outside the country" [8, p. 16]. However, "in the neighboring countries, there is a tendency toward a decline in interest in the Russian language and Russian culture" [8, p. 16].

Supporting Russian schools, educational programs, and educational exchanges as the basis for humanitarian integration is becoming an important task.

The concept of the Greater Eurasian Partnership aims to create a unified space for cooperation in the economic, transport, and digital spheres. However, the success of this initiative depends not only on infrastructure and financial mechanisms but also on the humanitarian dimension of integration. Culture is a key element capable of uniting Eurasian countries through shared values, historical memory, and educational projects.

The Russian language has historically served as a facilitator of communication between people in the post-Soviet space and in several countries of Eastern Europe and Asia. Its preservation and popularization will contribute to strengthening communication ties. The language can become a tool for business, scientific, and cultural interaction across Eurasia.

The development of a common educational space is also an important component of the Greater Eurasian Partnership: Russian-language schools and university programs foster elites loyal to cooperation with Russia. This responsibility should fall to Rossotrudnichestvo. Branches of Russian universities already exist abroad, but the task of expanding the scope of educational programs requires state participation.

The preservation of historical and cultural commonality is achieved through literature, cinema, and the media, which convey shared meanings and identities. Understanding the

historical and cultural context without knowledge of the language is extremely difficult. In this regard, it is concerning that in recent decades, interest in the Russian language in neighboring countries has been declining due to the policies of national elites focused on European integration or the creation of monoethnic states. This requires systemic measures to support Russian-language secondary education, including funding for schools with instruction in Russian.

Beyond language, integration requires the development of a common cultural code. This is facilitated by international festivals, exhibitions, and theatrical performances—for example, ballet performances. Examples include the "We and Maya" exhibition held in April, dedicated to the memory of the world-renowned prima ballerina of the Bolshoi Theater, ballet master, and choreographer Maya Plisetskaya, and the performance of the ballet "Diaghilev" at the Art Moscow Fair of Classical, Contemporary, and Jewelry Art. The ballet's theme seems to hint at a return to the era of Russian ballet's dominance on the world stage. It seems important to revive the potential of Russian art across Eurasia.

A shared history, such as victory in World War II or Soviet infrastructure projects, can become a unifying narrative for many countries in both the post-Soviet space and Asia. However, it is important to avoid conflicting interpretations and emphasize the positive aspects of cooperation.

It could be said that cultural integration within the Greater Eurasian Partnership is not an addition to the economy, but its foundation. Without a common humanitarian space, trade and logistics projects will remain unsustainable.

**Conclusions** In the modern world, culture is not only an independent sphere but also a crucial tool for ensuring national security and shaping the state's international positioning. In the Russian Federation, culture is a strategic resource not only for domestic but also for foreign policy, a factor in soft power and the country's competitiveness, and a means of supporting national identity and integration processes.

The effectiveness of cultural policy and diplomacy is determined not only by institutional infrastructure, but also by the state's ability to adapt to modern challenges—digitalization, information warfare, and the crisis in international relations.

In the context of the crisis-driven transformation of international relations, Russia faces the need to update its cultural diplomacy strategies, develop flexible and innovative mechanisms for promoting culture, the Russian language, education, and information products, and expand cooperation with public, diaspora, educational, and expert organizations.

Cultural diplomacy is an integral part of national security and successful international positioning, requiring constant renewal, institutional and technological development, and dialogue with the global cultural space.

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**Вклад авторов:** все авторы внесли равный вклад в подготовку публикации.

**Конфликт интересов:** авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Статья поступила в редакцию 01.08.2025;  
одобрена после рецензирования 13.09.2025;  
принята к публикации 01.10.2025

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**Contribution of the authors:** the authors contributed equally to this article.

**Conflict of interest:** the authors declare no conflicts of interests.

The article was submitted: 01.08.2025;  
approved after reviewing: 13.09.2025;  
accepted for publication: 01.10.2025.