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Global health diplomacy, health and human security: The ascendancy of enlightened self-interest

Vijay Kumar Chattu, Andy W Knight¹, Sebastian Kevany², Annamarie Bindenagel Sehovic³

Department of Paraclinical Sciences and Institute of International Relations, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago AND Global Institute of Public Health, India,
¹*Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada,*
²*Department of HIV/AIDS, University of California, San Francisco, CA, USA,*
³*Department of Politics and International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, United Kingdom*

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Vijay Kumar Chattu,
Lecturer- Public Health and Researcher- Global Health Diplomacy at Institute of International Relations, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago and Honorary Research Professor in Public Health, Global Institute of Public Health, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 501, Kerala, India.
E-mail: drvkumar.ch@gmail.com

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Abstract:

The political, social, economic, and security implications of health-related issues such as emerging infectious diseases or the epidemic of Non Communicable Diseases offer a rare opportunity for professionals in foreign policy and international relations to engage with the health arena and at the same time for global health experts to enter into and intersect with the domain of diplomacy. The aim of this review is to understand and explore the concepts of global health diplomacy (GHD), health security, and human security. For this narrative review, a literature search was done in PubMed, Scopus, and EBSCO for the “global health diplomacy,” “health security,” and “human security,” and full-texts were reviewed. The recent outbreaks of Ebola in West Africa and Zika in South America are pertinent examples of the nature of the human security crisis and the imminent and severe threat posed to human life across the globe as a result of these epidemics. The Commission on Human Security defines human security as the protection of the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive threats. We highlight the ways in which health has now become an issue of national security/global concern and also how GHD can aid in the development of new bilateral or multilateral agreements to safeguard the health and security of people in our globalized world. The paper provides a prospective about, and overview of, health and human security that essentially emphasizes the growing interlinkages between global health, diplomacy, and foreign policy.

Keywords:

Emerging infectious diseases, foreign policy, global health diplomacy, health security, human security, pandemics

Introduction

Global health diplomacy (GHD) is relatively a very new field that has yet to be clearly defined, and in terms of International Relations, theory is still early in its coining. The Commission on Human Security (CHS) defines human security as the protection of the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive threats. Globalization combined with the acceleration and intersection of knowledge and technology has revamped the conventional ways of conceptualizing

the medical, economic, and political means of improving health. In the recent years, the rise of health as a foreign policy concern has indicated an increasing commitment and agreement by a wide array of diverse public and private actors at various levels of governance to the issue of global health. Thus, GHD is defined here as (1) a discipline with transformative potential for furthering human rights dialogue; (2) a platform for providing a framework that allows us a better understanding of global health issues and a better grasp of the negotiations around those issues taking place in many different global governance venues; (3) a paradigm that positions health in foreign

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