Wasatiya in international diplomacy: An analysis of the application of moderation in addressing global conflicts

Syeda Dur e Nayab[1], Mohammad Javad Zarei[2]
[1] Riphah Internasional University, Pakistan
[2] University of Religions and Denominations, Iran

Correspondence: dnayab027@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the application of the Wasatiya principle as a diplomatic strategy in resolving global conflicts, focusing on the implementation of moderation in international diplomacy. The method used is a descriptive literature review, with data sourced from international journals indexed in Scopus or DOAJ (2015-2024). The research findings indicate that the Wasatiya moderation principle is effective in reducing international tensions, creating an inclusive dialogue space, and achieving peaceful solutions. The application of this principle allows for the creation of an inclusive and constructive dialogue space, while avoiding confrontations that exacerbate conflicts. However, the main challenges faced include mistrust between countries and the imbalance of power in global diplomacy. These findings suggest that, despite these obstacles, the Wasatiya principle remains relevant and effective in creating sustainable peace in international diplomacy by promoting inclusivity and fair solutions for all parties involved.

INTRODUCTION

In the midst of growing global tensions, the world faces a major challenge in resolving various international conflicts involving conflicting political, economic, and ideological interests (Grassiani et al., 2015; Ide, 2018). The phenomenon of polarization in international relations, both between countries and between groups within countries, leads to the emergence of cycles of violence and confrontation that are detrimental to world peace (Hegre, 2018). As this phenomenon develops, there is an urgent need to seek a diplomatic approach that is not only effective in easing tensions but can also facilitate a sustainable peace. One approach that can offer a solution in this context is Wasatiya, a principle of moderation that is rooted in Islamic tradition but has relevance far beyond religious boundaries (Bakir & Othman, 2017; Wani, 2016).

Wasatiya, which means "moderation" or "balance", emphasizes the importance of avoiding two extremes in decision-making, both in personal life and in international diplomatic contexts (Ibrahim, 2018). This principle supports the application of justice, inclusivity, and self-control in dealing with situations full of tension and differences. In international diplomacy, the application of Wasatiya offers an alternative to avoiding confrontational and

polarizing strategies that often exacerbate conflicts. In this context, the principle of moderation can be key to fostering dialogue, compromise, and peaceful solutions, which in turn can build long-term stability.

Historically, the Wasatiya principle has shown its effectiveness in resolving conflicts, with several concrete examples reflecting the values of moderation in the practice of diplomacy (A'la et al., 2023; Bakir & Othman, 2017). One of the most famous examples is the Hudaybiyyah Treaty in the 7th century, where the Prophet Muhammad chose peace over continuing the war, even though at the time the treaty seemed unfavorable to Muslims. In addition, the diplomacy of the Ottoman Empire, which managed to manage a multiethnic and multireligious empire with the principles of balance and moderation, shows how diplomacy based on the Wasatiya principle can maintain peace in the long run, even in very complex and tense situations.

However, the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy is not without challenges. One of the biggest obstacles is the partisan agenda that often pushes countries to put their national interests ahead of global peace. In addition, distrust between countries accumulated due to a long history of conflict is also a challenge in building constructive dialogue (Rød et al., 2024; Scheidel et al., 2020). Imbalances of power in the international arena, with large countries often dominating the negotiations, also make it difficult to reach a balanced and fair agreement (Grassiani et al., 2015; Hegre, 2018). Therefore, the application of the Wasatiya principle requires a commitment to inclusivity, sustainable dialogue, and justice in every aspect of international diplomacy.

This article aims to analyze the application of Wasatiya as a diplomatic strategy in resolving global conflicts, by examining its implementation in relevant practical cases. Through a descriptive analysis approach, this article will illustrate how this principle of moderation has been applied in international diplomacy and how it can help defuse tensions and build a more sustainable peace. Examining real-life examples of diplomacy broadens the understanding of the relevance and effectiveness of Wasatiya in contemporary diplomacy as well as providing insight into how this principle can be applied more broadly in addressing global diplomatic challenges.

METHODS
Research Design

This study uses a descriptive design to describe the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy, especially in global conflict resolution. This approach was chosen because the focus of this study is to describe the phenomenon that exists in the practice of diplomacy inspired by the principle of moderation, without testing or comparing the relationships between variables. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of how the principle of moderation, embodied in the Wasatiya, is applied in international diplomacy by countries that have adopted the principle in their foreign policy.

The Wasatiya principle, which means moderation and balance, is particularly relevant in the context of international diplomacy, where countries are often caught up in sharp differences and political tensions. Therefore, this study aims to describe how this principle is applied in diplomacy to reduce tensions and achieve peaceful solutions in the resolution of global conflicts.

Data Source

The data source used in this study is secondary literature, which mainly consists of scientific articles relevant to the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy. Data will be obtained through a literature review of scientific articles published in leading international journals. Scientific Articles: The scientific articles used in this study will be taken from international journals indexed in Scopus or DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals). These articles should discuss the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy and global conflict resolution. The data criteria are 1) the article used must be relevant to the research topic, namely the application of the principle of moderation in international diplomacy and conflict resolution. 2) the selected scientific article must be published in a recognized international journal, such as those indexed by Scopus or the DOAJ, to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the data. 3) Relevance to the current state of global diplomacy, the articles used must be published within the last five years (2015-2024).

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was carried out through two main techniques, namely literature review. The main data collection is carried out by analyzing scientific articles that have been published in international journals. This process is carried out by utilizing academic databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar to search for relevant articles on the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the research topic, the credibility of the source, and the topicality of the publication. The number of data10 scientific articles published in the last ten years (2015-2024) on the Wasatiya principle, international diplomacy, and moderation in conflict resolution.

Data Analysis

Once the data is collected, a descriptive analysis will be used to illustrate the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy. The analysis of the selected articles will be analyzed in depth to explore emerging themes related to the application of the principles of moderation and justice in international diplomacy. This analysis process will include a description of how the Wasatiya principle is applied in the context of diplomacy to reduce tensions and achieve a just and balanced solution. The synthesis and interpretation of the analyzed articles will be synthesized to provide a broader understanding of the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy. The interpretation of the results will provide insight into how this principle of moderation can be applied more broadly in global conflict resolution.

RESULTS

This research aims to describe the application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy, especially in global conflict resolution. Based on a literature review of relevant leading scientific articles, it was found that the application of the principle of moderation in international diplomacy can be seen in a wide range of real cases, leading to conflict resolution and increased global stability (Al Aghbari et al., 2025; Anuar et al., 2025; Anwar et al., 2021; Kamali, 2015). The Wasatiya Principle, which emphasizes moderation and balance, has been

applied by several countries that act as mediators in various international conflicts. This success shows how the application of moderation can result in a fair and beneficial solution for all parties involved in the negotiations.

However, the application of the Wasatiya principle is not always easy, given the challenges that exist in international diplomacy. One of the main challenges found in this study is the distrust that has accumulated between countries due to the long conflicts that have occurred before (A'la et al., 2023; Grassiani et al., 2015; Hegre, 2018; Hinnebusch, 2016; Ide, 2018; Pramasto, 2024). For example, in mediation between large and small countries, there is often a power imbalance that hinders the achievement of a balanced agreement. In this case, major countries tend to dominate negotiations, so the Wasatiya principle of emphasis on balance and justice is often overlooked. In addition, a strong partisan agenda is also an obstacle to the application of the principle of moderation. Many countries prioritize their own national interests rather than creating broader peaceful solutions. For example, countries involved in conflicts in the Middle East often find it difficult to find common ground due to deep differences in political and ideological interests (Al-Abdin et al., 2018; Gopalan et al., 2017; Hinnebusch, 2016; Ide, 2018). This creates heightened tensions, and the Wasatiya principle must fight against the tendency to put forward extreme positions.

In an attempt to illustrate the application of the Wasatiya principle in more depth, the following table summarizes some of the relevant articles on the application of the principle of moderation in international diplomacy (Al Aghbari et al., 2025; Anuar et al., 2025; Burton, 2021; Hassan et al., 2022; Koch, 2016).

Table 1. Diplomacy Wasatiya

No	Country	Conflict/Negotiation	Role	Applied Wasatiya Principles
1	Qatar	Mediation between the United States and the Taliban	Mediator	Balance, inclusivity, fairness
2	Oman	Mediation between Iran and the Gulf states	Mediator netral	Moderation, balance, self-control
3	Malaysia	Mediation in ethnic and religious conflicts in Myanmar	Mediator	Extreme avoidance, inclusivity, fostering trust
4	Indonesia	Aceh conflict resolution	Mediator	Compromise, inclusivity, creation of solutions that benefit all parties

The table above shows some examples of the application of the Wasatiya principle in a variety of relevant international negotiations, with a focus on how the principle of moderation is used to create peaceful solutions that benefit all parties. Although the application of the principle of moderation in international diplomacy has significant challenges, the findings of this study suggest that countries that adopt the Wasatiya principle can act as effective mediators in defusing global tensions. In this case, the application of the principle of moderation not only provides a fair solution, but also builds a more stable and harmonious relationship between the parties involved in the conflict. Thus, the Wasatiya principle can be seen as an important tool in modern diplomacy that can accelerate the achievement of a more sustainable peace.

DISCUSSION

The application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy reveals that moderation and balance can play an important role in reducing increasingly complex global tensions (Muhammad & Rahim, 2017). In this increasingly polarized world, where ideological, political, and economic differences are often the main source of international tensions, the principle of moderation offers a middle ground that avoids extremism and confrontation (Kamali, 2015). The Wasatiya principle, which is rooted in the values of moderation in the Islamic tradition, has expanded beyond religious boundaries and has become relevant in the global diplomatic context, especially in conflict resolution involving countries with conflicting interests (Burton, 2021; Hassan et al., 2022).

The application of the Wasatiya principle is in multinational mediation involving various countries with different ideological and political backgrounds. In this context, countries that adopt the principle of moderation seek to maintain a balance between the interests of the various parties involved in the conflict (Al Aghbari et al., 2025; Anuar et al., 2025; Muchtar et al., 2020). Countries with a moderation-based foreign policy tend to avoid overly partisan strategies, preferring to be neutral mediators who create space for inclusive and constructive dialogue. This can be seen in the many mediation roles carried out by international organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union, as well as countries that act as mediators in regional and global conflicts (Altbach & De Wit, 2015; Djebbi, 2022). These peace processes involving moderation-based mediators are often able to bring together parties with sharp differences and lead to a solution that is acceptable to all parties (Djebbi, 2022). This process involves open dialogue, strengthening communication between countries, and a commitment to create more transparent relations. Large countries should also be more open to the interests of small countries, and encourage inclusivity in the negotiation process. This can reduce inequities in multilateral diplomacy and increase the likelihood of reaching a fairer and more balanced agreement. In addition, moderation-based diplomacy also needs to pay attention to social and humanitarian aspects, such as increasing attention to humanitarian and human rights issues, which are often part of global conflict resolution (Al-Abdin et al., 2018; Gopalan et al., 2017; Johnson, 2023; Smith, 2023).

The implications of applying the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy are significant. The application of the principle of moderation can help reduce tensions between countries with deep ideological and political differences, as well as increase the effectiveness of international mediation processes. This principle allows for a more sustainable peace, by prioritizing solutions that are fair and beneficial to all parties. Therefore, wasatiya as a diplomatic approach is not only important in a regional context, but also in global conflicts. Countries that adopt the principle of moderation in their diplomacy can play an important role in creating a more peaceful, stable, and inclusive world. The Wasatiya Principle offers a middle ground that can reduce extremism in international diplomacy and help create a more balanced solution, which in turn will make a major contribution to world peace.

CONCLUSION

The application of the Wasatiya principle in international diplomacy shows the effectiveness of moderation in resolving global conflicts by prioritizing balance and justice. Countries such as Qatar and Oman as well as international organizations that have adopted this principle have succeeded in creating inclusive and constructive dialogue spaces, avoiding

extremism in conflict resolution involving a variety of conflicting interests. Despite major challenges such as mistrust between countries and power imbalances, the Wasatiya principle remains relevant as an approach to reducing global tensions and achieving peaceful solutions. By building trust, increasing inclusivity, and maintaining balance in negotiations, Wasatiya offers sustainable solutions and can play a role in creating a more stable and harmonious global peace. Therefore, the application of this principle of moderation needs to be promoted in international diplomacy to reduce polarization and create a more peaceful world.

REFERENCES

A'la, B. A., Ikhwandi, R., & Muzaqi, S. (2023). Religious moderation concept in Israel, United Kingdom, and Indonesia: a systematic literature review. Proceeding International Conference on Islam, Law, and Society, 2(1).

Al-Abdin, A., Roy, T., & Nicholson, J. D. (2018). Researching corporate social responsibility in the Middle East: The current state and future directions. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 25(1), 47–65. https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1439

Al Aghbari, F., Hassan, M. S., & Musa, N. (2025). Assessment of Political Principles in the Constitution of Oman from International Law Perspectives. Law Reform, 21(1), 39–57. https://doi.org/10.14710/lr.v21i1.61436

Altbach, P. G., & De Wit, H. (2015). Internationalization and global tension: Lessons from history. Journal of Studies in International Education, 19(1), 4–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315314564734

Anuar, H., Anas, N., Aziz, S. A., Abd Karim, R., & Ismail, M. M. (2025). The Value of Patriotism based on the Principles of the Rukun Negara in Islam: The Reality of a Plural Society in Malaysia 2018-2024. Intellectual Discourse, 33(1).

Anwar, H. S., Al Baqi, S., & Yusron, M. A. (2021). Understanding of Islamic Worldview as Basis for Islamization of Science. 1st International Conference of Education, Social and Humanities (INCESH 2021), 178–182.

Bakir, M., & Othman, K. (2017). Wasatiyyah (Islamic Moderation). Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 7(1), 13–30.

Burton, G. (2021). Middle power behavior under multipolarity: Indonesia and Malaysia in the Middle East since the Arab uprisings. Asian Politics & Policy, 13(2), 228–247. https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12577

Djebbi, E. S. (2022). Religion, peace, and security: challenges and prospects in the MENA region. Proceedings of the Study Seminar Held in Rome On, 5, 6.

Gopalan, S. S., Das, A., & Howard, N. (2017). Maternal and neonatal service usage and determinants in fragile and conflict-affected situations: a systematic review of Asia and the Middle-East. BMC Women's Health, 17(1), 20. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-017-0379-x

Grassiani, E., Abdali, D., Diphoorn, T., Ivasiuc, A., Musariri, L., Saraf, A., & Sen, A. (2015). Conflict and Society Advances in Research. Conflict & Society, 1(1).

Hassan, G. S., Al Rabaani, A. H., & Nejjari, M. (2022). The tale of the two Sultanates, Oman and Brunei: Foreign policy and bilateral relations. Asian Affairs: An American Review, 49(3), 116–139.

Hegre, H. (2018). Civil conflict and development. The Oxford Handbook of the Politics of Development, 177.

Hinnebusch, R. (2016). Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique. Twenty Years of Studying Democratization, 76–98.

Ibrahim, H. (2018). The principle of Wasaṭiyyah (moderation) and the social concept of Islam: Countering extremism in religion. Al-Itqan: Journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies, 2(1), 39–48.

Ide, T. (2018). Climate war in the Middle East? Drought, the Syrian civil war and the state of climate-conflict research. Current Climate Change Reports, 4(4), 347–354. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40641-018-0115-0

Johnson, R. M. (2023). New opportunities ahead amidst rising global tension and concern. In International Journal of Circumpolar Health (Vol. 82, Issue 1, p. 2292460). Taylor & Francis.

Kamali, M. H. (2015). The middle path of moderation in Islam: The Qur'anic principle of wasatiyyah. Oxford University Press.

Koch, N. (2016). Is nationalism just for nationals? Civic nationalism for noncitizens and celebrating National Day in Qatar and the UAE. Political Geography, 54, 43–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2015.09.006

Muchtar, N., Hamada, B. I., Hanitzsch, T., Galal, A., & Ullah, M. S. (2020). Journalism and the Islamic worldview: Journalistic roles in Muslim-majority countries. In Comparing Journalistic Cultures (pp. 31–50). Routledge.

Muhammad, M. K., & Rahim, A. A. (2017). The Principle of Wasaṭiyyah as a Higher Objective of the Sharī 'ah: A Historical Survey. Intellectual Discourse, 25(2), 341–355.

Pramasto, A. (2024). Reconciling Islam and Human Rights: A Narrative Review of Reform, Resistance, and Realignment. Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies, 2(3), 149–161. https://doi.org/10.61194/ijis.v2i3.606

Rød, E. G., Gåsste, T., & Hegre, H. (2024). A review and comparison of conflict early warning systems. International Journal of Forecasting, 40(1), 96–112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijforecast.2023.01.001

Scheidel, A., Del Bene, D., Liu, J., Navas, G., Mingorría, S., Demaria, F., Avila, S., Roy, B., Ertör, I., & Temper, L. (2020). Environmental conflicts and defenders: A global overview. Global Environmental Change, 63, 102104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2020.102104

Smith, R. (2023). Economic Consequences of Global Tensions. In Fault Lines After COVID-19: Global Economic Challenges and Opportunities (pp. 135–147). Springer.

Wani, Z. A. (2016). al-Wasatiyyah: A Distinctive Feature of Islam. Excellence International Journal of Islamic Studies and Theological Research, 1, 3.