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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN THE CHANGING WORLD

Ph.D. Elena Tilovska-Kechedji⁷³

Ph.D. Darian Rakitovan⁷⁴

Ph. D. Milica Kolaković Bojović⁷⁵

ABSTRACT

The world is changing. Communicating with the world and learning information is done with the speed of light and this is all due to the fast rise of technology in all the parts of the world. These changes influence all of us privately and publicly. It influences states and the way they conduct foreign policy. Diplomacy changed into digital diplomacy. Diplomats, states, NGO's are online and are open to the community which was unthinkable in the past. As much as there are positive connotations to all of this new technologies and the internet there are also negative ones that are linked to terrorism, war, uprisings, hackers and so on. Important information can be hacked by terrorists and used to harm a state, a nation or the world. Therefore, digital diplomacy should be conducted in a very specific way and the diplomats should be trained to conduct diplomacy to be open but safe.

Key words: *digital diplomacy, internet, foreign policy*

INTRODUCTION INTO THE DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

In today's changing world Governments are developing new kind of diplomacy in order to conduct international affairs. Diplomacy needs to keep up with the changes in the world, and to meet up the new challenges.⁷⁶ Scholars and diplomats have adopted the term “digital diplomacy” but the definition is still not concise. Definitions help visualize how diplomacy should be practiced, changed and which skills must be acquired.⁷⁷

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⁷⁶ Pahlavi C. Pierre. “Cyber - Diplomacy: A New Strategy of Influence”. 2003 Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228739617_Cyber-Diplomacy_A_New_Strategy_of_Influence

⁷⁷ Manor Ilan. “The Digitization of Diplomacy: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Terminology”. Working Paper 1. Department of International Development, The University of Oxford. 2017

The term digital diplomacy has been defined as the use of social media by a state to achieve its foreign policy goals and image. C. Bjola and Marcus Holmes defined digital diplomacy as a tool for management, while Potter formulated the term as the conduct of diplomacy with the use of technologies.⁷⁸ The lack of precise definition has enforced scholars to research different kinds of diplomacy in the networking environment. Scholars use the terms “cyber-diplomacy,” “net-diplomacy,” “e-diplomacy,” and “Twiplomacy”, but all of these terms point out the same thing, each prefix points to a specific field, for example “cyber” is used to discuss security issues, “e” for business, and “twi” for Twitter. Today, in the digitalized world, diplomats and political policy makers need to recognize the use of technology because they need to improve the development of international relations.⁷⁹

Furthermore, the MFA’s (Ministries of Foreign Affairs) begun to use digital tools due to certain events and actions, one was the Arab Spring of 2010. MFA’s were surprised by the event because they were not monitoring the networks, like Facebook. Although, Facebook did not cause this event, it did serve as a tool. Another action is the use of internet by terrorist groups to recruit young people. In order to fight and prevent such groups from gaining online support the MFA should also follow and monitor the networks.⁸⁰ Other examples of the use of “digital diplomacy” and acceptance of the digitalizations is Sweden’s virtual embassy created in 2007. Norwegian Ambassadors use Skype to converse with students. The Indian ministry of foreign affairs is developing computer games for children. UN Ambassadors use Whats App to coordinate their votes on resolutions, while the Kenyan foreign ministry is using Twitter to deliver emergency consular aid.⁸¹ Digital diplomacy, is the use of information and communication technology for attaining foreign policy goals. Many experts defined it as an electronic component of public diplomacy.⁸² E-Diplomacy or digital diplomacy is a developing internet resource that helps advance diplomatic goals of countries. Currently the digital diplomacy is limited because it

Retrieved from: <https://digdipblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/the-digitalization-of-diplomacy-working-paper-number-1.pdf>

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Verrekia Bridget. “Digital Diplomacy and its effects on International relations”. 2017 SIT Graduate Institute. Retrieved from:

https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=3619&context=isp_collection pg. 14-15

⁸⁰ Manor Ilan. “What is Digital Diplomacy, and how is it Practiced around the World? A brief introduction”. 2016 Annual Review of the Diplomatist Magazine. Retrieved from:

<https://digdipblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/dig-dip-intro-diplomatist.pdf>

⁸¹ Manor Ilan. “The Digitization of Diplomacy: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Terminology”.

Working Paper 1. Department of International Development, The University of Oxford. 2017

Retrieved from: <https://digdipblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/the-digitalization-of-diplomacy-working-paper-number-1.pdf>

⁸² Almuftah Hamad, Weerakkochy Vishanth, Sivarajah Uthayasankar. “E-Diplomacy: a systematic Literature Review”. Retrieved from: <https://bura.brunel.ac.uk/bitstream/2438/12827/3/FullText.pdf>

does not cover electronic internal collaboration, mobile or other technologies.⁸³ Only the Americans have the leading role in the digital diplomacy. The State Department operates 600 external and internal media platforms to reach more than eight million people. They consider it to be a central foreign policy strategy. Parallel to public diplomacy, they use technology in foreign policy areas like information and knowledge management, catastrophe management, the promotion of Internet freedom, and policy planning.⁸⁴

THE INTERNET AND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD AND ON DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

Today the most isolated parts in the world can interact with other civilizations due to the internet. The Internet is less expansive in transmitting information, and as a result, nongovernmental organizations, academics, and individuals are using the Internet to create their own platforms and influence. Due to the speed of information and its diversity, the international relations are changing to adopt to the surrounding of networking.⁸⁵

The Internet has shortened the diplomatic decision making process, news from distant countries can become public in an instant, and all the information spread, creates a burden on diplomacy.⁸⁶ But the change that the internet poses is normal, it was present in the 16th century when ships enabled the expansion of Europe, the 19th century was changed with creation of the telegraph, and the airplane, radio and TV have changed the 20th century.⁸⁷ The internet created a enormous advancements. In the beginning of digitalization, the internet was used only by governments, and it was controlled by the state. Then, as the internet became public, it became wide spread.⁸⁸

The Internet is a means of communication that authorizes the publication, exchange and storage of information. Global communications and information are brought together by the Internet. The Internet should not be confused with the content

⁸³ Ibid

⁸⁴ Turkan Anja. "In the Digital Training Camp Taking traditional diplomacy into the Digital Age". ifa-Edition Culture and Foreign Policy 2012 Retrieved from: https://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/pdf/edition/digital_diplomacy_en.pdf pg. 11

⁸⁵ Bollier David. "The Rise of Netpolitik How the Internet is changing International Politics and Diplomacy". The Aspen Institute, 2003. Retrieved from: http://www.bollier.org/sites/default/files/aspen_reports/NETPOLITIK.PDF pg. 2

⁸⁶ Ibid pg. 5

⁸⁷ Westcott Nicholas. "Digital Diplomacy: The impact of the internet on International Relations". Oxford Internet Institute Research Report 16 July, 2008 Retrieved from: <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/archive/downloads/publications/RR16.pdf> pg. 2

⁸⁸ Verrekia Bridget. "Digital Diplomacy and its effects on International relations". 2017 SIT Graduate Institute. Retrieved from: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=3619&context=isp_collection

that is exchanged or accessed on it. The technology is the means and the people are the ends.⁸⁹ What is done with the information that is received is up to the people, it can be used for good or for bad.

Global movements like solving poverty, global warming, human rights abuses or conflicts are evolving and the Internet helps them to be effective, and their voices heard. The technology allows more actors to interact, increases the field of action, and the rules of play.⁹⁰

The data collected and shared impacts the diplomacy in several ways. First, data impacts the environment in which diplomats operate. The data is influenced by geopolitics and economics. Second, data brings new topics to the negotiation or policy-making tables. Third, it provides diplomats with new tools.⁹¹

Digital diplomacy presents new methods of conducting diplomacy. The Internet changes diplomacy in the way it is conducted in geo-politics, economics, sovereignty, interdependence, Internet governance, cybersecurity, privacy, and more.⁹² The diplomatic change needs to be analyzed through the diplomatic processes and diplomatic structures and institutions. In the diplomatic arena all things ‘online’ blend with the ‘offline’. Digital diplomacy is trending. The consular diplomacy is a challenge, citizens demand fast delivery of services. Social networks created new dynamics and platforms of opportunities, in the negotiation processes.⁹³ But all these is very new and hard to adjust and learn. Diplomacy and diplomats need time, and knowledge to learn how to use all of this tools to create a greater good.

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN THE CHANGING WORLD

There is a big difference between traditional diplomacy and digital diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy was based on representation, and the Ambassador served as a representative. The ambassador was extraordinary because he had the power to negotiate and sign treaties on behalf of the state or the monarchy. Yet in the age of information and communication technologies the diplomatic summitry (such as G20 meetings), leaders come together to directly negotiate. The social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram enable diplomats and embassies to cooperate and communicate online. Therefore digital diplomacy overcomes the

⁸⁹ Ibid pg. 3

⁹⁰ Ibid pg. 8

⁹¹ “In focus. Digital Diplomacy/E-diplomacy/Ciber diplomacy”. Retrieved from:

<https://www.diplomacy.edu/e-diplomacy>

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Hocking Brian, Melissen Jan. “Diplomacy in the Digital Age”. Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations. July 2015. Retrieved from:

[https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Digital Diplomacy in the Digital%20Age Clingendael July2015.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Digital%20Diplomacy%20in%20the%20Digital%20Age%20Clingendael%20July2015.pdf) pg. 6

limitations of traditional diplomacy.⁹⁴ The media is everywhere and it access culture, politics and economic activities with an ability to mediate. Online infrastructures redesign international relations, politics, cultural exchange and new ideas in ways which are very relevant for diplomacy.⁹⁵ The digital technologies should be a source of creativity for diplomats. They can use the email, Twitter or Facebook in order to manage, collect and reuse data.⁹⁶

A lot has changed in this century, and many aspects of diplomacy have been challenged and continue to be challenging. Digital tools, have added an important dimension to diplomacy, making communication fast but also not very precise. This has forced MFA's to allow diplomats to make mistakes publicly and to correct them, a tactic never seen before. It has changed the diplomatic language, the formality and secrecy, diplomats are engaged in the public sphere, speak publicly with messages informal and short. These transformations have turned social media into necessary tool for diplomatic interactions, some diplomatic organizations have embraced the changes but others view it as a challenge and danger. Therefore, the Internet and social media, led the debate within MFA on adaption of digital technologies in order to achieve effective and efficient results in the conduct of foreign policy.⁹⁷

Public diplomacy used a linear and asymmetrical broadcast. It responded to the development of the network and the social media through different approaches like dialogue and symmetry in order to build mutual relationships.⁹⁸ For German foreign policy, the use of social media it is a way of thinking. There should be developed new forms and strategies for foreign policy because nowhere else the use of social media should be addressed with more caution and sensitivity.⁹⁹ Although many times the social media can act positively in vulnerable situations and give in advance notice of national conflicts.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Manor Ilan. "What is Digital Diplomacy, and how is it Practiced around the World? A brief introduction". 2016 Annual Review of the Diplomatist Magazine. Retrieved from: <https://digdipblog.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/dig-dip-intro-diplomatist.pdf>

⁹⁵ Melissen Jan and de Keulenaar V. Emillie. "The Case for Critical Digital Diplomacy.". Working Paper. German institute for International and Security Affairs. 2017 Retrieved from: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/WP_Diplomacy21_No7_Jan_Melissen.pdf pg. 3

⁹⁶ Ibid pg. 3

⁹⁷ Bjola Corneliu. "Adapting Diplomacy to the Digital Age: Managing the Organisational Culture of Ministries of Foreign Affairs". Working Paper. German Institute for International and Security Affairs 2017. Retrieved from: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/WP_Diplomacy21_No9_Corneliu_Bjola_01.pdf pg. 3-4

⁹⁸ Deos S. Anthony. "Digital Diplomacy & Social Capital: Analysing Relational Components of Trust in US & Israeli Online Social Networks". University of Otago. Retrieved from: <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/5800/DeosAnthonyS2015PhD.pdf?sequence=1> pg. 3

⁹⁹ Turkan Anja. "In the Digital Training Camp Taking traditional diplomacy into the Digital Age". ifa-Edition Culture and Foreign Policy 2012 Retrieved from: https://www.ifa.de/fileadmin/pdf/edition/digital_diplomacy_en.pdf pg. 6

¹⁰⁰ Ibid pg. 7

Furthermore, digital diplomacy can help in the strained relations between states due to security, for example between the United States and Syria. Since the relations were brittle, the Department of State wanted to connect with the Syrian people. The ambassador, Robert Ford, wanted to maintain a dialogue with Syrians and used social media to bring the violence and repression to the attention of the world. To continue with, Facebook and Twitter are used by authorities or diplomats to publish personal reports, stir up debates, answer questions. Also the technology allows civilians to participate in the processes of conducting foreign policies. Digital diplomacy helps to link governmental representatives with the people and supports governments to reach foreign policy goals.¹⁰¹

The tools of the digital age create new issues and routines, and remodel the old ones. The US Embassy in Jakarta has over 600,000 likes on its Facebook account. China encourages its embassies to use Twitter. In diplomacy, the balance between old and new forms of communication is different. In 2015 Pope Francis mentioned the genocide in Armenia, Turkish foreign minister Cavusoglu voiced his protest through Twitter. But this was only the beginning, and followed by traditional diplomatic initiatives through private channels. In future diplomacy will be a mix of 'old' and 'new' models of communication. Therefore, diplomacy is characterized by combination of the two. That is why traditional diplomacy is interacting to produce more diverse and complex scenarios. Eric Schmidt, Chairman of Google, and J. Cohen, argue that the adaption of technologies will mean that governments will have to develop two kinds of signs of communication and two foreign policies, the online and the offline. There are significant changes in the 'offline' world of diplomacy that intersect with the online world. Rather than separating two foreign policies, the two should be integrated, this will require a redefinition of roles and new diplomatic skills.¹⁰²

The 'one size fits all' digital strategies should not and can not be used. There should be a difference between negotiations (diplomatic domains) and the character of diplomatic communication. Different models of diplomacy blend with different policies. This can be illustrated by comparing the use of social media in human rights campaigns with its use on security issues. But it should be clear about what diplomacy is used for.¹⁰³ Diplomacy is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between groups or states. According to Senator Hagel, "Diplomacy is not a weakness ... but rather an essential tool in world affairs using it where possible to ratchet down the

¹⁰¹ Ibid pg. 8

¹⁰² Hocking Brian, Melissen Jan. "Diplomacy in the Digital Age". Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations. July 2015. Retrieved from: [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Digital%20Diplomacy in the Digital%20Age Clingendael July2015.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Digital%20Diplomacy%20in%20the%20Digital%20Age%20Clingendael%20July2015.pdf) pg. 11-12

¹⁰³ Ibid pg. 30

pressure of conflict and increase the leverage of strength.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, diplomacy should be digitalized and use all the digital tools to be fast, informed and knowledgeable but be protected and safe at the same time.

Foreign policy decisions used to be conducted by secret negotiations, but the Internet and social media allowed new players to enter the diplomatic stage and present a new age of transparency not only for governments, corporations but also for the media industry. This shift poses challenges to governments and states because they have a different role in society. They are designed to provide social goods, and the risk is that if they don't transition, they will become less efficient and less effective. Second, states fear that the things that they perceive as negative, retailers can perceive it as positive, online. The problem for governments is that the things that stop the negative

actors will also stop the positive actors and break the Internet. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, believes that the methods of conducting foreign policy may seem old-fashioned, but Diplomacy takes time and involves tough negotiations in order to conclude compromises. Compared to the dramatic pictures in the Internet and on the news, it appears that the international community is incapable of reacting quickly. But foreign policy must not respond with

quick and simple solutions, they must seek diplomatic initiatives patiently and resolutely, Dunja Mijatovic, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, says that “Virtual diplomacy is a huge challenge for diplomats. We are all more exposed to the outside world. We are becoming more transparent, more reachable, but also more accountable. ... But this cannot in any way replace traditional diplomacy.”¹⁰⁵

The government’s strategic objective should be to create an institution that will take advantage of the media.¹⁰⁶ Technology-driven public diplomacy suffers from the lack of imagination about what technology can do, and so far, technology has been used only as a tool, but it could be used as an idea.¹⁰⁷

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF DIGITALIZATION AND THE CYBER SECURITY

In a globalized international environment, ideas have become weapons and the Internet the mean for delivery. As the West struggles to defeat the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, the soft power tools of public diplomacy and the information strategy can be

¹⁰⁴ Nakamura H. Kennon and Epstein B. Susan. “Diplomacy for the 21st Century: Transformational Diplomacy”. 2007 CRS Report for Congress. Retrieved from: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34141.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ “E- Diplomacy: How technology is increasing accountability in foreign policy”. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/e-diplomacy-how-technology-is-increasing-accountability-in-foreign-policy/a-18536742>

¹⁰⁶ Morozov Evgeny. “The future of “Public Diplomacy 2.0””. Foreign Policy 2009. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/06/09/the-future-of-public-diplomacy-2-0/>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

used as crucial tools for fighting radicalism.¹⁰⁸ In other words, it is a general knowledge that the terrorist organizations and groups use the internet to influence and spread fear, but the governments and diplomats can use the same means in order to defeat them.

Since 9/11 Al-Qaeda has waged “information war,” developed a lot of websites and blogs with radical ideas, and unleashed online pictures, videos, all designed to preserve Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is a globalized phenomenon, it is two in one, a reaction to globalization, and its product. The websites devoted to jihadism increased from 12 in 1998 to more than 4,700 by 2005. It is estimated that the Internet is responsible for around 80% of jihad youth recruitment. Terrorists accepted the digitalization more easily and they are more sophisticated, previously they would communicate via email, but now they encrypt messages. The Internet has become a powerful propaganda tool. The terrorists have become technologically cunning. They use new weapons like the minicam and videotapes, the laptop and desktop computers, email, Internet and WWW access. While the main character of terrorism might remain the same, there is much that it is new and distinct about the terrorist groups such as Al- Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah. In the ‘70s and ‘80s terrorist groups and organizations such as the IRA, ETA, and so on relied on traditional mass media to communicate, but today the Internet provided these groups with the ability to spread a message globally at little or no cost, and at the speed of light. The Internet has allowed social activist and democratic protest movements to flourish, but it also gave a chance to terrorists, hackers and criminals.¹⁰⁹

There are no secrets on the Internet. All the information transferred from one place to another can be caught for example messengers can be captured, telephones tapped, goods hijacked, and spies or whistle blowers will always find ways to leap information. With the internet all of these is much easier. The Internet brings a new dimension to the security of information. Firstly, private information, when made public, may have a serious re precautions for the world affairs. For example, the exposure of the British Government’s policy and legal opinion on the war in Iraq, damaged the reputation of the Prime Minister. Secondly, diplomatic rivals, state and non-state actors (such as terrorist organizations), may try to hack into government systems and take information. To break inside a secure system requires a lot of professional resources. Third, the Internet is becoming vulnerable. Virus or worm attacks can be easily generated. For example, in January 2003, the “Slammer” worm brought down the Internet in Korea and several other Asian countries. Furthermore, the targeted attack in Estonia in 2007, severely damaged the business in the country

¹⁰⁸ Hallams Ellen. “Digital Diplomacy: The Internet, the battle for ideas & US foreign policy”. CEU Political Science Journal Vol. 5 No.4 Retrieved from: http://epa.niif.hu/02300/02341/00021/pdf/EPA02341_ceu_2010_04_538-574.pdf pg. 540

¹⁰⁹ Ibid pg. 544-546

and cut off all communication. Assuming the attack was from another state this means that a virtual act of aggression was conducted, and this is only a taste of the risks of the Internet. Terrorist organizations and governments are aware of this weakness. In 2007, Scotland Yard reported, that Al Qaeda had been planning a cyber attack in Britain. That is why since 2001, the Pentagon has been developing a Cyberspace Command to manage the risks of such attacks. Both the US and UK devote a lot of time and money to monitor the Internet and spot threats. Governments can respond to these threats by building secure systems and protected.¹¹⁰

International relations are not strangers in this reality. The DNA of diplomacy needs to adapt to the digitalizing world because the world is embracing the internet freedom, cyber security and good governance of the social media. Digital diplomacy opposite of traditional diplomacy represents decentralization and horizontality. Diplomacy will become more public and more dispersed. Controlling and centralizing foreign action will be impossible due to the number of players and the generalized and instant access to information.¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

Digitalization and the Internet have changed the world. Diplomacy is not anymore what it used to be its successor is digital diplomacy. Foreign policy and diplomacy used to be conducted secretly with acquired special tools and techniques but today everything is public, the people are also taking part in conducting the foreign policy and everything is transparent. Technology so far has been used as a tool for conducting good and bad. The negative outcomes from the use of technology and internet is that it is used by terrorists, hackers, radical movements to generate wars, radical movements and terrorism. Therefore governments and diplomats should use the technology and internet as a means to safeguard and protect humanity by fighting back with the same means to archive the end in itself.

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