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THE INTERACTION OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND US PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

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Abstract

Despite the lack of a precise definition of "digital diplomacy," all global actors are currently attempting to establish e-diplomacy within their government structures, and each foreign policy agency and diplomatic mission is defining and experimenting with it individually. Internet diplomacy refers to the use of ICT and online platforms by international actors to define and clarify foreign policy intentions and priorities, as well as the productive implementation of missions by individuals representing the national interests of international actors. E-diplomacy is a fruitful method of foreign policy activity, as it interacts with public diplomacy, which utilizes ICT. Public diplomacy offers the opportunity to utilize online platforms, and thanks to users of online platforms, the chances of engaging people are increased, and their views are also prominent both within the state and internationally [1].

As is already known, internet diplomacy originated in the United States, and Washington viewed it as a form or tool of public diplomacy. The latter is direct, informal communication between governments, directly or through their diplomats, and the publics of other countries, with the aim of informing and influencing them, sometimes in ways that may not please the governments of those other countries. It should be noted that, unlike public diplomacy, internet diplomacy is a dialogue, not a monologue.



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The emergence of public diplomacy was facilitated by three factors that occurred in the 20th century. The first was the widespread use and application of radio in foreign policy. The second is two events: the October Revolution of 1917 and the Nazi rise to power in 1933. The third event is "the use of radio by both the Nazis and the Bolsheviks to promote revolutions in neighboring countries" [2]. Thus, the use of radio by the German Reich and the RSFSR led to the formation of public diplomacy. Some researchers, when discussing e-diplomacy, often refer to the use of online platforms or other ICTs by foreign policy agencies, considering it a new form of public diplomacy. However, in a broader sense, it refers to the digitalization of diplomacy, as well as other areas of everyday life. This approach encompasses a variety of points, from modern criteria to well-known powers and essential individuals representing a state's national interests, to the use of ICTs in conducting dialogues with states on how to cooperate in the digital world and in international decision-making.

With the advent of ICTs in 2004, Web 2.0 technologies emerged, making it possible to express personal opinions on information posted on the World Wide Web using expressions such as "like," "recommend," and commenting. Following this, technologies began to be increasingly applied in US public diplomacy. The use of Web 2.0 technology, in turn, led to the merging of the concepts of digital diplomacy and public diplomacy into a single concept, despite the fact that these concepts differed in their goals, functions, and essence. To expand the tools of public diplomacy and distinguish it from e-diplomacy, the United States introduced a new term: "Web 2.0 public diplomacy." This term was first used in 2008 by US Deputy Secretary of State James Glassman, who defined the new diplomacy as the use of online platforms, information and communication technologies, "personal diaries," and entertainment programs designed for mobile devices to achieve US foreign policy goals [3].



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It can be seen that US new public diplomacy has come to incorporate some of the tools and functions of digital diplomacy. It is worth recalling that digital diplomacy emerged before Web 2.0 public diplomacy [4]. However, in 2001, when the United States announced the emergence of "network diplomacy," the government did not provide a precise definition of "digital diplomacy." It was only in the context of the "Information Technology Strategic Plan 2011-2013: Digital Diplomacy" [5] that the State Department defined internet diplomacy as follows: the application of modern information and communications technologies, approaches, systems, and information products in fulfilling the mission and objectives of U.S. diplomacy.

There are many concepts that denote "digital diplomacy," and these concepts are used in a broader sense than new public diplomacy. The latter refers to the conduct of foreign policy by countries using Web 2.0 technology. It also includes the use of the full potential of the World Wide Web and ICTs.

For diplomatic purposes. Thus, every action by states pursuing foreign policy goals on the World Wide Web will be considered "e-diplomacy," but not every action constitutes the new public diplomacy, only those actions that utilize Web 2.0 technologies.

Consequently, current public diplomacy and digital diplomacy in the United States are closely intertwined, and they have evolved together, beginning with the first journal mergers. The development of e-diplomacy tools in the United States has also contributed to the digitalization of public diplomacy. Everything created within the framework of digital diplomacy has also affected public diplomacy. For example, the creation of the "Digital Outreach Team" is one of the most important events in the history of e-diplomacy. The team focused on public diplomacy issues within the State Department. It also began its work as an attempt to directly engage with users on online platforms in languages such as Persian,



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Urdu, and Arabic, discussing American foreign policy in the Middle East. The team's goal was to prevent fake news and disinformation spread by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban online and to explain and accurately present Washington's actions to online users. This event demonstrates that the United States, on the one hand, is pursuing digital diplomacy, protecting its national interests, analyzing and collecting information, and preventing the spread of terrorism. On the other hand, it is pursuing public diplomacy, demonstrating to the world that it is creating a team of agents to save people in danger and, at the same time, trying to portray America in a positive light [6].

For example, how humanity interacts with the world is a function of public diplomacy, which involves developing state needs through efforts to provide information, engage, and influence foreign audiences, and it is becoming increasingly important. The world is evolving in a way that increases the usefulness of public diplomacy as a tool of statecraft and limits the effectiveness of other tools. However, it is undervalued, underutilized, and poorly understood. The United States' use of public diplomacy underscores its usefulness. Leveraging this potential should be a core US foreign policy objective.

Current US public diplomacy should be used to achieve five strategic goals:

- 1) informing, engaging, and persuading foreign publics to support a particular regime;
- 2) accurately communicating American culture, traditions, and civilization so that the public places information about the United States in its proper context and enhances America's appeal;
- 3) creating a climate of mutual understanding, respect, and trust in which cooperation is more feasible;



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4) encouraging support for shared values—whether environmental protection, the rule of law, support for free markets, or the illegality of suicide bombings—that support American interests;

5) strengthening close ties between today's and tomorrow's leaders, opening communication networks that minimize the possibility of disputes, and developing methods that will facilitate partnership and the realization of shared aspirations.

From a public diplomacy perspective. ICTs can be used to facilitate or hinder the two-tiered game of diplomacy. Foreign policy institutions can now use digital platforms to communicate with citizens to build public support for diplomatic agreements, which can lead to political support[7]. An example is Obama's use of his Twitter account to engage with the American public and rally support for the Iran Nuclear Deal, which ultimately led to Congressional approval of the deal [8].

As digitalization has dramatically increased the ability of online users to challenge governments, the challenge of domestic digital diplomacy is now expected to emerge and become more prominent in the coming years. Foreign ministries will likely face increasing demands to monitor foreign opponents' activities in the domestic public sphere, collate their arguments, and rebut them in near real time. Sometimes the opposite can also occur, as domestic public diplomacy leads to external ripple effects. One good example is the "selfie" posted by former First Lady Michelle Obama in 2014. The selfie depicted the First Lady holding a poster with the hashtag "Bring Back Our Girls," a reference to the abduction of more than 270 Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram. This tweet may have been an attempt to draw public attention in the US to the plight of the abducted girls. However, within hours of the tweet, a counter-campaign was launched, with people posting selfies with the hashtag "Bring Back Your



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Drones" and referencing the Obama administration's closeness to drone strikes. This example demonstrates how online users can accept or reject diplomatic messages, leading to ripple effects both domestically and internationally. Overcoming this limitation requires diplomats to continue using digital tools to engage the public and foster online conversations. Indeed, the power of digital tools lies not in their ability to disseminate messages, but in building relationships through meaningful dialogue.

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