CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

This chapter discusses the ontology of digital diplomacy. The first section of this chapter discusses the evolution of diplomacy, from conventional into digital diplomacy, and how the innovations of ICT have transcended the nature, characteristics, and the performance of current diplomacy. The second section discusses the pros and cons of digital diplomacy, particularly regarding the terminology of digital diplomacy, and how it impacts international relations. The third section describes the performance of five leading countries in digital diplomacy; United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and the Vatican.

A. The Transformation of Diplomacy: from Conventional into Digital

Diplomacy is a very old term used in inter-state affairs. Diplomacy has been long practised by both Western and Eastern civilization before the study of diplomacy and international relations existed. The term diplomacy is etymologically derived from the Greek word *Diploun*, meaning "to fold", and *Diploma* was used to denote official documents which were folded and grants privileges or specific rights for its holder. The word diplomacy first emerged during the French Revolution between 1789 and 1799. In this era, the term "diplomacy" used to be perceived as having negative connotations; as it was always involving duplicity, hypocrisy, and secrecy (Leira, 2016).

In the nineteenth century, Woodrow Wilson's idea of open-diplomacy diminished the previous stigma of diplomacy, which had previously been perceived as full of secrecy and deception. Many people seem to be convinced that the idea of open-diplomacy has influenced the practice of current diplomacy. Nicholson criticized that Wilson's idea on open-diplomacy is not completely "open". Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, in fact, involved secret negotiations between Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau. Many scholars argue that the results of negotiations must indeed be submitted to the public, but to publicly inform the process of negotiations is carried out will only aggravate the conflict.

Diplomacy which was previously always associated with negotiations during war and ceasefire has turned into activities involving various channels and scopes in the post-World War era. At the bilateral level, diplomacy can be performed through the establishment of the diplomatic mission and consular. As it is stipulated in The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, a diplomatic mission carries out the task to; a) represent the sending state in the receiving state; b) protect in the receiving state the interest of the sending state; c) negotiate with the government of the receiving state; d) ensure in the legal manner, the conditions and developments in the receiving state and report them to sending state; e) boost friendly relations between sending state and receiving state (Denza, 2016). While a consular mission, as it is stated in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963, a consular mission is responsible to; a) improve the

cooperation between two countries in distinctive issues; economy, trade, culture, education; b) ensure the protection of sending state citizens abroad.

Despite the failure League of Nations to prevent World War II, Wilson's idea to establish an organization involving several member countries has inspired the emergence of multilateral diplomacy. Multilateral diplomacy involving three or more countries can be carried out at the level of international organizations. United Nations which was founded in 1945 has now become a global organization which has 193 member countries, is one example of diplomacy performed on a global scale. The United Nations General Assembly or UNGA holds an annual summit meeting in which the member states send their representatives to discuss and vote on certain issues. Besides UN, myriad international organizations; European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), World Trade Organization, international regimes; Montreal Protocol, Kyoto Protocol, and other multilateral conferences and forums have become the medium which multilateral diplomacy is executed.

Although the formalization of diplomacy in the post-World War has the practice and the perception towards diplomacy. However, diplomacy at this stage is still often associated with high-level and exclusive meetings. A diplomat is required to have the expertise to negotiate, manage information, and engage in ceremonial activities, and knowledge regarding tools, procedures, methods, norms, and laws in

diplomacy. However, globalization has changed the way in which diplomacy should be carried out. Globalization has created the complexity and the new players in international relations; sub-state; local and regional, NGOs, TNC / MNC, media, academics, political parties. Such a condition has caused diplomacy to require more comprehensive expertise in performing diplomacy.

The concept of diplomacy has grown vastly. Its practice requires diverse instruments and expertise which then result in the new terms in diplomacy; such as "public diplomacy", "track-two diplomacy", "cultural diplomacy", "disaster diplomacy", "gastro diplomacy", and of course "digital diplomacy". According to Bolewski, the evolution of diplomacy is the effect of globalization. Globalization is the convergence of economic, political and cultural barriers to create the integrated and incorporated world society. Globalization has four features; First, the emergence of global challenges that require new solutions from the government and private. Second, the intensification of political and economic integration. Third, increasing the number of issues and transnational actors. Fourth, the technological leap that facilitates new approaches in international relations (Bolewski, 2007).

Learning from the history of how the telegraph which was invented in the early age of industrial revolution used for delivering the message, later followed with the invention of the telephone in 1876 and the radio in 1895. Those three communication devices witnessed how communication technology has influenced inter-state relations. The military has depended much on the use of telegraph and radio to deliver

secret messages during the World War, while the telephone has been used to help cross-border communication become more efficient. Development of the internet apparently cannot be separated from one of the prominent histories in international relations. Competition in military build-up between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War has induced the technology that later known as "internet". In response to Soviet Union's Sputnik satellite which was launched in 1957, The United States Defense Ministry in 1958 formed Advanced Research Project Agency or ARPA, a special team with the to collect research from a number of universities (Castells, 2002).

As a continuation of ARPA, Information Processing Techniques Office or IPTO launched a network called ARPANET in 1969. (Castells, 2002). ARPANET was later replaced by Internet Protocol or IP in 1983, which has become the beginning of the modern internet. The discovery of the World Wide Web or www in the 1990s caused significant changes to global communication in the early twenty-first century (Aronson, 2015). It seemed like what Marks, the Director of the United States Information Agency envisioned in 1968 has become true. The discovery of the internet and the "World Wide Web" or "www" was a winder that has driven number aspects of the life of the global community. The first official email exchange between the states' leaders; Bill Clinton and Carl Bildt, took place in 1994 (Btzsercas, 2016). The emergence of the internet has caused the use of diplomatic cable; diplomatic telegram used to exchange the message between diplomatic mission became outdated.

Many scholars believe the Cable News Network or CNN, an international television news channel, gave major impact on states' foreign policy in the late period of Cold War. Heart-breaking images used by CNN could perfectly depict the humanitarian crises around the world, and created a phenomenon what we called later as the "CNN effect". Realizing the importance of information management to support the conduct of foreign policy, in 2001, Dizard introduced the term "digital diplomacy" in his book "Digital Diplomacy: U.S Foreign Policy in the Information Age". In his book, Dizard argues that electronic communication and information resources have not merely raised the new strategic issues in foreign affairs, but also changed the way in which we deal with them (Dizard, 2001).

At the same period, the emergence of new website framework, Web 2.0, which was invented by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 and later developed by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty in late 2004 has influenced the way cyberspace operates. The previous generation of the websites used to allow people to passively access the website content. After Web 2.0 was introduced, worldwide users can interact with each other, share the information, ideas, and interests through virtual communities. Web 2.0 has inspired the creation of several platforms, such as social media; Friendster (2002), LinkedIn (2003), MySpace (2003), Facebook (2004), and Twitter (2006), Flickr (2003), Youtube (2005), blogs, etc.

Digital diplomacy is a new term in international relations studies. There is so far no firm consensus among scholars in defining what digital diplomacy actually is (debates related to the concept of digital

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diplomacy is explained in other section in this chapter). Preceding research on digital diplomacy has been conducted mostly based on the United States' experience in digital diplomacy (Gilboa, 2016). The United States, in fact, chose to adopt the term "e-Diplomacy" to name the strategy to achieve diplomatic goals through the use of websites, social media, and communications technology in general. In response to recommendations from the 1999 Overseas Presence Advisory Panel that suggested the United States Department of State improve its ability in communication and knowledge sharing, e-Diplomacy Task Force was established in 2002.

The task force was later organized into the Office of e-Diplomacy in the following year. The office is part of the Bureau of Information Resource Management, and has three divisions; the Diplomatic Innovation Division, the Knowledge Leadership Division, and the Customer Liaison Division (U.S. Department of State, n.d.). In 2006, the United States Secretary of State introduced "Transformational Diplomacy", which sought to restore the performance of US diplomacy which has so far focused too much on war and counter-terrorism.

Two major phenomena occurred in 2010 and 2011 have shown that digital technology has a strong influence in the political realm. WikiLeaks, an international non-profit organization founded in 2006 in Iceland, released confidential information, particularly government classified information provided by anonymous sources. WikiLeaks purpose is to reveal important information to the public, so readers worldwide can see the truth. WikiLeaks has successfully become

whistleblower that induced several social movements, particularly from media and journalist groups. Leaked documents of the Afghanistan War in July 2010, followed with Iraq War in October 2010, diplomatic wire leaks from the United States in November 2010, and secret files related to prisoners in Guantanamo Bay in April 2011 (Brevini, Hintz, & McCurdy, 2013), have caused the global society to doubt the United States' foreign policy which was always declared as the act of democratization. such actions also affected other countries, such as Peru, Iran, China, Iraq, Australia, Kenya, Syria, and German. But those transparency promoted by WikiLeaks still could not affect governments to raise its transparency and accountability.

The website, social media, and technological devices have made access to the information become easier. Even in authoritarian countries and countries that have restricted policy on the internet people are still able to discover new information through the internet. The website, social media, and technological devices have made access to the information, even in authoritarian countries and countries that have restricted policy on the internet, people are still able to discover new facts through the internet. Despite the debates among scholars whether social media has caused the Arab Spring or not, social media has played the role in amplifying the messages during the civil movement 2010-2011. However, it is not the debate that we should highlight, but the need for the government to engage in the cyberspace.

It is estimated that the number of Twitter users in the Arab region in April 2011 reached 6,567,280, and the number of Facebook users

reached 27,711,503 users. According to Dubai School of Government's report, there was an increase of Facebook users in the Middle East in the first quarter of 2011, mainly in the countries where revolutions have occurred, except Libya, which has shown a sharp decrease in the number of Facebook users (Mourtada & Salem, 2011).

Social networks have led to the civil movement in Tunisia and Algeria in 2010. To respond to the outbreak, Algeria blocked access to Facebook and Twitter for a day. The Tunisian Government blocked certain websites and routes that were related to the protests. Tunisian Revolution later inspired Egyptians, particularly the youth movement to spread the anti-government campaign via Facebook in 2011, causing the government to block the access to Facebook and Twitter before the entire access to the internet was completely shut down for five days, starting from January 28th 2011. Although social networks did not play a huge role in countries with low penetration of social media, such as Syria and Yemen (Mourtada & Salem, 2011). Still, the Syrian Government had to control the information spread on the internet in certain ways, whether through blocking the access to the certain websites, or even the entire access to the internet, and engaging in the debates to counter the anti-government campaign.

Under United States President Barack Obama, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's introduced the "21st Century Statecraft" as the approach of American foreign policy. 21st Century Statecraft was the government response to the digital disruption, which was characterized by the resurgence of developing countries in

economy and technology, and the emergence of transnational political activism on the internet. It is stated in the United States Department of State official website, that political movements in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya during the Arab Spring have proved the need for the United States Government to adapt with disruptive political realm rather than to foresee what will happen in international politics. The United States has carried out 21st Century Statecraft by maximizing new instruments for diplomacy, applying the new approach to development programs, improving the focus on the current issues, and improving the capacity of the related institutions and bodies; such as embassies, consulates, offices, and bureaus (U.S. Department of State, n.d.-a). 21st Century Statecraft has soon made digital diplomacy become the buzzword among many countries in the world.

Graphic 2.1 Digital Diplomacy Buzz 2013-2016
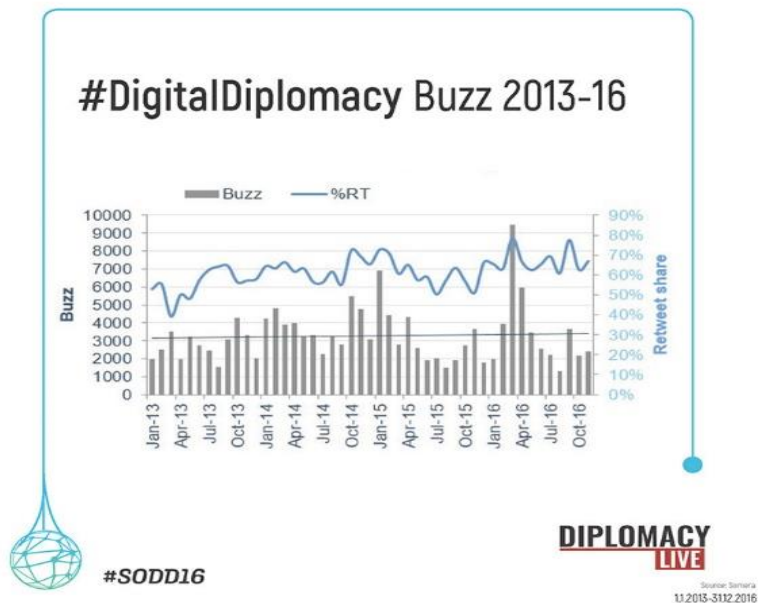
Obama administration was known to be very enthusiastic in implementing digital diplomacy (Holmes, 2015). One of the United States's innovations in diplomacy is the launch of the e-Libya initiative since Libya under Qaddafi administration blocked the internet access for the people in Libya. The program aims to; improve internet penetration in Libya; maximize the use of the internet network for the economy, government services, education (U.S. Department of State, n.d.-a). The government also launched The Virtual Embassy Tehran in 2011 to improve the US-Iran relations which have deteriorated since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

A similar strategy was also adopted by Israel. The Israeli Government has opened a virtual embassy on Twitter to bridge the relations between Israel and the Gulf States; Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (Gilboa, 2016). However, the United States is not the first country to open a virtual embassy. In 2007, even before digital diplomacy became a trend, Maldives and Sweden have launched virtual embassy on the "Second Life" (Btzsercas, 2016) (Government of Maldives, 2007), an online virtual game launched in 2003 (Linden Lab, n.d.). A virtual embassy can be beneficial to promote dialogue for the countries that have unfriendly or even conflictual relations, and the countries that have constrained diplomatic outreach.

Such growth has transcended the pattern of diplomacy performed by countries around the world, which previously implied "state-to-

state" relations. Current digital diplomacy enables both "state-to-people" communication or vice versa, and "people-to-people" communication. The project "Curators of Sweden" is perhaps one of the examples of how citizens can promote their country through the internet. Among 197 countries, Sweden was the first country to give access to its Twitter account to the citizens. The curators can share their activities, works, opinions, or any information supporting the government interests and values (Swedish Institute, n.d.).

Digital diplomacy that has become the trend prompted many countries to include digital media as the instrument of their foreign policies. According to Diplomacy.Live, more than 209 countries have used social media to connect with the world (Digital Diplomacy Live, 2017). Although only a few countries have explicitly recognized the concept "digital diplomacy" as the strategy of their foreign policy, their presence on various social media platforms has shown that many countries have been accustomed the use of websites and social media to the current diplomatic practice.

B. Debates on Conceptualizing Digital Diplomacy

Innovation in science undeniably will always lead to certain pros and cons. In the context of diplomatic and international relations studies, debates between three mainstream; liberalists, realists, and constructivists in describing the nature of inter-state affairs, have enriched international relations studies with a number of derivative ideas theories. Debates between hyper-globalists and sceptics on

"globalization"; whether the globalization is an inevitable phenomenon caused by advances in technology or merely a myth; is caused by different paradigm used in explaining the term "globalization".

Debates on digital diplomacy are often related to the conceptualization of digital diplomacy, and how digital technology impacts on international relations. As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, digital diplomacy still has no precise definition. Scholars might prefer different terms to conceptualize the use of digital technologies on current diplomacy. The United States proposed "21st Century Statecraft" in 2010 after "e-Diplomacy" was introduced in 2002. Two Clingendael experts, Hocking and Melissen introduced "Diplomacy in the Digital Age" in 2015, and its report was commissioned by Finnish and Belgian MOFAs (Hocking & Melissen, 2015).

The massive use of social media has created the derivative terms of digital diplomacy. Data shows that 97% of the United Nations member countries have official presence on Twitter to connect with worldwide people, except Laos Mauritania, Nicaragua, North Korea, Swaziland, and Turkmenistan. There are about 951 Twitter accounts; consisting of 372 personal accounts, and 579 institutional accounts used by the governments and ministries of foreign affairs in 187 countries, causing Twitter to become most popular social media platform among the governments worldwide. Ninety-three percent of the United Nations member countries have been using official Facebook over the last few years, and 81% of them have actively engaged in Instagram. Even the government that has restricted policy on the internet, such as Chinese

Government, still maintains its presence on the platform ("Twiplomacy Study 2018," 2018). Such growths have contributed to the emergence of other terms similar to digital diplomacy; such as "Twiplomacy" or "Twitter Diplomacy", "Hashtag Diplomacy", "Facebook Diplomacy", and "Instagram Diplomacy".

The term digital diplomacy can sometimes intersect with "public diplomacy". According to Paul Sharp, public diplomacy aims to gain national interest and spread the values through direct relations with the worldwide public (Sharp, 2005). Digital diplomacy is often equated with "Soft Power" which was introduced by Joseph Nye in 2005. Although website and social media are essential tools for the state to communicate with public worldwide and spread state's positive image, however, both public diplomacy and soft power are not always related to digital disruption, rapid flows of information, and novelty in ICT. Public diplomacy can be performed through non-digital channels, and soft power does not merely encompass the advances in technology. Thus, equating digital diplomacy with public diplomacy soft power is clearly a fallacy.

Hillary Clinton and her advisor Alec Ross have an optimistic idea, or somewhat utopian, in contemplating the impacts of digital technologies on today's diplomacy (Sotiriu, 2015). Present diplomatic practices have to deal with digital disruption and all uncertainties that require velocity in the decision-making process. WikiLeaks and the Arab Spring are often used to justify the need for the government to alter its diplomatic approach and governance. Digital diplomacy

defenders see that digital technologies have altered the foreign policy environment. They suggest the government must lessen its control over what is happening in cyberspace. The government must be able to adapt with such transformation and provide opportunities for non-state actors; privates, interest groups, think tanks, and communities on the policymaking. The government also needs to involve in the international agendas; international forum, and cooperation that specifically advocate internet freedom and cybersecurity.

Unlike its predecessor, John Kerry, the United States Secretary of State (2013-2017) argues that technology does not cause fundamental changes to the nature of foreign policy and diplomacy. John Kerry even stated that the discourse about digital diplomacy was a waste. People use the social media mostly for things that are not related to politics, and using the reaction of people on social media on state's foreign policy is not an effective way to measure the impact of foreign policy (Sandre, 2015). Digital diplomacy was also criticized as the result of Clinton's favouritism towards interest group, such as Silicon Valley.

Besides, diplomacy undoubtedly requires excellent skills or expertise in communication, including communication through the internet and social media. John Kerry added, the term digital diplomacy is redundant, it is simply "diplomacy" (Gilboa, 2016). Morozov from Georgetown University underlined sceptics do not totally deny the role of technology in supporting the practices diplomacy. They rather criticize the myth that digital technology has shifted the traditional diplomacy that has been practised for centuries (Sotiriu, 2015). In fact,

the sceptics' perspective on digital diplomacy is more acceptable than the utopian by most governments and academics around the world.

C. Leading Countries in Digital Diplomacy

This section provides a brief overview of the implementation of digital diplomacy by five leading countries in digital diplomacy, namely the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and the Vatican. Sweden might also be considered as leading countries in digital diplomacy since it has invented some novelties in digital diplomacy. Besides, the United States policy on digital diplomacy has been widely discussed in the first and second sections of this chapter. However, it is not without reason that the five countries were chosen as the leading countries in digital diplomacy. Based on the latest "Diplomacy Live" review in 2017, those five countries are ranked as having the best performance among other countries in the world (See Table 1.1).

1. United States: The Pioneer of Digital Diplomacy

After 21st Century Statecraft was introduced, a number of domestic and foreign policies that support the ideas of 21st Century Statecraft have been carried out. At the institutional level, the government of the United States has employed 150 full-time staff working for e-diplomacy in the country, as well as 900 overseas staff, and increased the budget for projects related to digital diplomacy. The government has launched Virtual Student Federal Service (U.S. Department of State, n.d.-c) to encourage civil society, particularly college students to contribute to projects in various issues, such as

human rights, economics, environmental sustainability, and any other strategic issues (Gilboa, 2016).

Several projects and international cooperation have been promoted by the government to echo the internet freedom and digital literacy. The United States has collaborated with the Libyan Government to establish e-Libya, an initiative which seeks to restore the access to the internet in Libya which has been banned during the Arab Spring and enable Libyan people to connect with the world. The United States has also launched Civil Society 2.0, an initiative that envisions civil society organizations capacity in harnessing digital technologies to accomplish their goals. Seventeen Tech-Camps were hosted, 1,130 organizations from 81 countries around the world were involved in the mission (U.S. Department of State, n.d.-a).

The government also uses digital diplomacy as a means to restore its diplomatic relations with Cuba and Iran. Social media enabled the information related to Obama-Castro relation to spread, which in turn has led to the restoration of diplomatic ties between the United States and Cuba (Rahardja, 2015). The Department of State also launched "U.S Virtual Embassy Iran" to reduce the tension with Iran. The virtual embassy provides information related to the travel, education, and the United States policies towards Iran. The website also can be accessed in Persian ("Why Virtual Embassy?," n.d.). On March 2015, President Obama released a YouTube video to congratulate public and Iranian

Government at the commemoration of *Nowruz*; Iranian New Year. Obama also mentioned on the video the history of US-Iran hostility and proposed to restore US-Iran diplomatic relations (Office of the Press Secretary, 2015).

2. **United Kingdom: Innovator in Digital Diplomacy**

The United Kingdom is one of the leading countries in digital diplomacy, and was ranked as the first in 2016. Foreign and Commonwealth Office or FCO is the body carries out responsibility to execute digital diplomacy. The state's capacity and the existence of commonwealth countries enabled the office to broaden its diplomatic network.

The FCO has performed digital diplomacy through four mechanisms; listening, publishing, engaging and evaluating (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2012c). The FCO has set £2.1 billion budget to improve its digital diplomacy (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013a). The FCO has currently 270 offices spread over 160 countries (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013b). The FCO has employed over 14,087 staffs Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2013b) and encouraged them to listen and monitor conversation on the social media, track the latest news and events, and build broader networks (Clarke, 2015).

In 2012, the FCO has issued "The FCO Digital Strategy". It covers the FCO achievements, its diplomatic performance and public services. In the term of FCO digital presence, FCO has run

over 250 official websites. Ninety-three websites can be accessed in foreign languages. In 2012-2013, the website has reached over ten million views. The FCO has also used over 120 Twitter accounts. Six Foreign Office Ministers have actively used Twitter. Over 120 Facebook pages; and various local and regional social media platforms have been run by the FCO (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2012a).

The office has also FCO harnessed digital technologies to connect with Somalian diaspora during the Somalia Conference, and engaged in the international cyber agenda; such as London Conference on Cyberspace, and Internet Governance Forum (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2012a). FCO has also collaborated with Libya and the United States to establish e-Libya (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 2012b).

In 2017, FCO's network has become broader. FCO has currently 268 Embassies, High Commissions, and Consulates in 168 countries which actively engage in digital diplomacy. Over 7 million people around the world have followed 700 FCO's official Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. FCO's most popular posts have reached many people across the world. According to Hugh Elliott; The United Kingdom Ambassador to Spain and Director of Communication and Stakeholders at Department for Exiting the European Union, there are three keys for the government success in digital diplomacy.

First, a diplomat should be able to create interesting arguments, or even provocative. Boring posts are less likely to be noticed by people and do not cause many engagements (feedbacks). The second clue is innovation. FCO has made several innovations; the first foreign ministry on Snapchat and Facebook Live, using Twitter for travel advice, British Embassy in Washington or UKinUSA was the first embassy on Buzzfeed, British Embassy in New Zealand was also the first to use Periscope. Third, having multimedia mindset. The ministry; including diplomats and its staffs ought to improve their skills and produce attractive and authoritative contents that attract more engagements from the audiences (Elliott, 2017).

3. France: Enhancing Soft Power through Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy has become a concern of French foreign policy, especially related to the issues of economy, national stability, security, and contribution of the government to the global agenda. Since 2008-2009, The French government, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and other related agencies, have been actively using social media networks to connect with the world. The French Ministry was the first to create a Twitter account @francediplo in 2009.

French President, Emmanuel Macron currently has over 3,7 million followers on Twitter and 1,3 million followers on Instagram. In 2012, a French news agency, *Agence France Presse* or AFP made an

innovation by launching "E-Diplomacy Hub", a tool that enables the people worldwide to see the diplomatic interactions that occur in the social in real time. The hub provides, visualizes the data, and measures relations between political figures or diplomatic actors on social media (Agence France Presse, 2012). The website "France Diplomatie" has currently reached more than 1,5 million viewers each month, and most of them ask questions related to travel advice (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2018). More than 43 million users have also visited 267 sites of French embassies and consulates in 2017.

The *Institut Français* (French Institute), an institution established by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs has developed several websites to promote French cultures and language, such as *Culturethèque, IFcinéma*, IFmapp, and WebTV. Since 2013, The IF has also launched IFprofs, a social network for French teachers around the world, and supported training for teachers in French-speaking Africa (Francophonie). Thus, French soft power; language, culture, tourism, relies much on the use of digital technologies.

To improve its strategy in digital diplomacy, France's Digital International Strategy was set up in 2016 by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The strategy states that the French Government focuses on three issues; governance, economy, and security (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2017). French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs does not merely

consider digital technology as merely the new instrument for communication, it has also altered the present diplomatic network.

4. Russia: Competing Western Domination in Digital Diplomacy

Digital diplomacy is considered as influential tools for the Russian Government to support Russian foreign policy activities. In 2012, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin has stressed the need for the Russian Government to use new digital platforms and technologies. Although the Russian Government has revised its foreign policy strategy in 2016, the "digital diplomacy" was not explicitly inserted in the strategy. "Digital diplomacy" is only mentioned in the annual review of the Russian Foreign Minister in 2016 and 2017 (Shakirov, 2016).

Russian Government policy on embracing digital diplomacy was a reactive policy rather than proactive. As it was stated by President Putin in 2016, information technology is necessary to counter attacks on the Russian Government, as well as to offset Western domination in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It seemed that the government has learnt from the previous experience of Twitter-war between the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the United States' regarding the hashtag #UnitedforUkraine which became viral in 2014 (Tharoor, 2015).

Although Russia is new-comer in digital diplomacy, Russia is still able to achieve the fourth position in the digital diplomacy

index in 2016 and 2017. Global Cybersecurity Index in 2017 shows that the Russian Federation was ranked as one of the top ten countries in the world. A number of websites, software, and apps that can compete for US dominance in ICT have been developed by Russian, and one of them is Telegram, an instant messaging app that has been used widely by people all over the world.

5. Vatican: Learning from the Pope

The Catholic Church has contributed to the development of diplomacy in Europe during the Medieval Age. It is not surprising that the Vatican has now become one of the leading countries in digital diplomacy. Compared to previous four states, Vatican digital diplomacy is rather unique. Since Pope is a figure admired by most chatolics around the world, Pope Francis's attitude in using social media has made Pope Francis become likeable and got much attention from worldwide public (Amiri, 2015). Pope's persona has somehow become a "soft-power" for Vatican's diplomacy.

Pope Francis has succeeded in bringing Vatican to be one of the top ten countries in digital diplomacy in 2013 and 2014 (Amiri, 2015), before being ranked as fifth country in digital diplomacy in 2017. To improve its diplomatic outreach, Vatican now has nine Pope's Twitter accounts with nine different languages; Arabic, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Latin (Lüfkens, 2018). Pope Francis accounts have often voiced issues related to the peace and humanitarian, suchas economic inequality,

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the environment. The number of Pope Francis's Twitter followers has now reached 47 million followers, while Instagram account reached 5.7 followers (Lüfkens, 2018).

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