

TWIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF TWITTER IN A DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

Bakibayeva Damelya Ardakovna
damelya.bakibayeva@gmail.com

The student of the II course of the Faculty of International Relations
 L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
 Scientific supervisor – K. Velichkov

Our world is very peculiar to change and develop. Therefore, it is extremely important to keep pace with the times.

Obviously, the Internet and social networks have flooded almost all areas of our life. The world is digitalizing. And the digitalization becomes an integral part of our lifestyle.

According to the statistics of Global Digital Report 2020, more than 4.5 billion people across the globe now use the Internet, while social media users have passed the 3.8 billion mark. This data shows us that today about 60% of the world is online [1].

Nowadays, social networks have almost become a key platform for disseminating information. Nevertheless, social networks are more than just news portals. They significantly changed the form of communication, invaded politics as a new battlefield for political parties as well as to discuss ideas. They attracted the special attention of leaders and governments around the world, who began to use them for their own benefit or in the interests of the represented country.

States take places in social networks and even use them to establish connections with other states. This is what we call as «digital diplomacy».

Unlike television, radio or newspapers, social networks immediately organize a dialogue between users on national and international issues, regardless of location, and this gives an important political attractiveness.



Picture 1 – Twitter accounts of the Leaders of states

Therefore, political leaders, government agencies, public organizations and private companies gradually began to create accounts in various social networks in order to maintain direct contact with other users at the moment when it is necessary to convey a message to them.

Social networks are a new public forum and a new political tool in the hands of citizens to improve democracy and many people are able to express their opinions in a real time. As diplomacy is being restructured to better respond to new challenges, social networks are widely used among

diplomats, cabinet ministers and their propagandists as a way to interact with the audience and to popularize their international political commitments.

Among the foreign policy trends of information technologies on the political arena, one can not see such phenomena as digital diplomacy and tweet-making, creating image-building attractiveness of the state using media tools as elements of soft power, and an information press that holds «underpressure» the heads of state [2].

This type of diplomatic impact on social networks was studied in 2012 following a conference organized in Turin, Italy by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Events showed that Twitter has become an innovative tool for public diplomacy and has changed the way diplomatic processes are perceived. Citizens and politicians of many countries have the opportunity to instantly learn about international political acts and communicate with other citizens by commenting on these events. Twitter also allows you to quantify the opinions of users, as well as the degree of popular support for world leaders (picture 1).

Obviously, the relationship between social networks and diplomacy has become a rapidly evolving modern phenomenon because of Twitter by demonstrating that social networks can play a significant role in ensuring peace between people and are an integral part of maintaining the connection of actors in international relations.

Before revealing the role of Twitter in digital diplomacy, it is worth disassembling the platform itself.

Twitter, Inc. is a micro-blogging service that was created by Jack Dorsey in 2006. The peculiarity of this service is that it allows you to publish short text messages, that is, «tweets» that are displayed on the user's main page. This is the optimal tool used to comment on events that occur in live or repost (re-tweets) conversations. It also serves as an exchange of views, an interview (for example, an interview with John McCain, a former US presidential candidate in 2008), or even an interview with political leaders using «twitcam» - a live-stream mode [3].

For the first time, the term «Twiplomacy» (Twitter + diplomacy) was proposed by Matthias Lufkens, a social media specialist at the world's leading PR communications company, when Latin American leaders began to actively interact with each other via Twitter since 2011.

It should be noted that Twitter is an important system of diplomatic interaction, along with its similar services (for example, Facebook, Instagram etc.)

In addition, the explanation for the phenomenon of Twiplomacy is associated with the increasing need for politicians to have more contact with people.

The possibility of creating a connection between users Twitter has demonstrated that this is a system convenient for mobilizing social groups for numerous tasks, such as organizing protests. Vivid examples are Twitter Revolutions: protests in the elections in Iran and Moldova in 2009, the Egyptian revolution in 2011-2013, actions against corruption in Turkey in 2014 and actions due to the coup in Ukraine in 2013-2014. However, I believe that this is not the main function of the Twitter service [4].

It should also be noted that the governments of China, North Korea, Iran and Egypt blocked the operation of the Twitter service in these countries in order to maintain public control in their territories.

According to Michael Oren, former Israeli ambassador to the United States, Twitter is another tool that helps in communication with other diplomats and journalists, and also allows add an individual touch to the political views. This is an opportunity for diplomats to speak out on topics without the usual control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is a valuable advantage in communication.

Many world leaders use this platform for expressing their thoughts. Some of them are distinguished by their own «handwriting» and styles. This is what distinguishes the current president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, who managed to reverse the idea of how a politician should use this tool. On Twitter, he is widely known for the fact that you can find many of his statements about opponents - Democrats, representatives of other branches of government (mainly the judiciary), and especially - the «lying media». Trump writes about them too often,

occasionally diluting complaints with a ritual exclamation: «Make America Great again!» - certainly in capital letters.

Most likely, Twiplomacy is working together with diplomacy and expanding its field of activity, which means an overcoming the phase of «Facebook Diplomacy», which caused many expectations in diplomatic circles from 2008 to 2011, when it began to be used by the US government as a means of publishing diplomatic messages. However, fortunately or unfortunately, it began to lose popularity due to the loss of interest on the Facebook page for the audience as a result of an increase in its complexity [5].

In the long run, Twiplomacy will help reduce barriers between politicians. And also it can be used to «establish dialogue with the public abroad». This is useful, but slightly changes the essence of diplomatic theory, since Twitter together with other social networks changed the traditional and official forms of diplomatic interaction. Citing the most elementary example, e-mail and communication over the Internet are undeniably very convenient to use, but they reworked diplomatic scenarios: «reducing distances between countries», «undermining the idea of a protocol» and «weakening the role of embassies». The «face» of diplomacy is changing significantly. Twiplomacy, along with other important and popular social networks, is changing the form in which governments are informed.

However, Twitter cannot in any way replace traditional diplomacy. Each coin has a flip side, and therefore, Twitter can be counterproductive to the goals of diplomacy, as it can have negative consequences too. Since information on social networks is like a nuclear weapon: «it can destroy cities». One example is the event that occurred in 2012. Argentina, Chile and the United Kingdom were nearly on the point of breaking off after British Ambassador to Chile John Benjamin posted a tweet that made fun of all of Argentina, citing her attempts to recapture the Falkland Islands [6-7].

There is a website called «ediplomacy.afp.com», in which it offers the user real-time and global access to tweets of the most influential personalities in the field of international politics.

There is also another website called «twiplomacy.com», which numerically calculates what happens on Twitter every day.

This system also has important concepts such as «Follow» and «Unfollow». For example, in 2011, Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard (@JuliaGillard) did not reciprocate («Follow») with his colleague from New Zealand John Phillip Kay (@JohnKeyPM) to tracking her Twitter account; and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not respond with a pledge to Palestine (@PMFayyad), which was regarded by the world community as unfriendly diplomatic positions. In this context, the functions «follow» and «unfollow» of Twitter are interpreted by the world community as an axis of diplomatic tension between governments. Thus, the diplomatic position of a country or its leader can be determined on the basis of whether he/she follows a particular account [8].

Whether or not to follow a global leader is an important topic, but it is also important when a leader or government stops following another government or person. This can be seen as serious disagreement and hostility.

In conclusion, the fact that Twitter has assumed various roles in diplomatic relations and relations between countries is another indication that social networks are expanding their field of influence day by day. The direct impact between users and world leaders on social networks is a new way of interacting for joint policy-making, changing traditional diplomatic relations, and they are moving to cybernetic territories. Politicians around the world are becoming more attentive to social networks, which have turned into political fields of ideological battles, and this trend seems to indicate that this phenomenon will stop for a very long time. So the development of social networks will dictate new standards of interaction that may open the door to other more efficient and more powerful services/platforms than Twitter, which is currently leading diplomatic initiatives in the virtual arena.

References

1. Digital 2020: Global Digital Overview

2. Zuckerman E. The first twitter revolution // 12-08-2014
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/01/14/the_first_twitter_revolution.
3. Landler M. In the Scripted World of Diplomacy, a Burst of Tweets // 12-08-2014
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/05/world/middleeast/in-the-scripted-world-of-diplomacy-a-burst-of-tweets.html?_r=0
4. Zonova T. Public diplomacy and its actors // 01-11-2014
http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=718#top
5. Wasserman S., Faust K. Social Network Analysis in the Social and Behavioral Sciences. Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications // Cambridge University Press. USA, 1994
6. Burson-MastellersTWi-Diplomacy // 01.1.2013
<http://twiplomacy.com>
7. Morozov E. Diplomacy in stile // 12.08.2014
<http://www.inosmi.ru/world/20090226/247656.html>
8. Zittrian J. In: Cohen N. 2009 Twitter on the Barricades: Six Lessons Learned // The New York Times 01.09.2014
http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/21/weekinreview/21cohenweb.html?_r=2&hp&

UDC 327.8

COUNTRY IMAGE AS AN ELEMENT OF SOFT POWER

Bodenova Alsina

alsina-birmanova@mail.ru

Master's student of the Faculty of International Relations

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University

Supervisor – D.K Akhmedyanova

Nowadays the role of the image of country is becoming increasingly important in international relations. Along with traditional factors that influence the formation of interstate relations, the country's image has become an integral variable that determines the development of international contacts. The implementation of a long-term image strategy allows states not only to attract investment and tourists, but also adds weight on the world stage, increasing the "soft power" of the state. The concept that most fully reveals the possibilities of the state's image as an instrument of increasing its influence is the concept of "soft power". It was developed by many foreign and domestic scientists. It should be noted that the concept of "Soft power" gained popularity quite quickly: if in the 1990s it was known only in a narrow circle of specialists, then in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the term "soft power" was widely used not only in scientific but also in journalistic literature, as well as in the headlines of articles in the media aimed at a wide audience. It should be emphasized that today, when the term "soft power" is mentioned in the public information space, it is simplified and practically reduced to issues of promoting the image of the state. At the same time, other tools of "soft power" are omitted, so we can say that the country's image is a key element of "soft power". "The strategy of "soft power" can be effectively used when the state aspires to global dominance or to global primacy [1]".

It is also very important that the tools of "soft power" of the state can not be used in isolation from the situation that has developed in the country and in the world, since this type of force is an essential direction of foreign policy and it "must be considered in the focus of global socio-political, economic and cultural processes that form a new, radically different from the previous, system of world politics, where the classic hierarchical models of relations between political actors begin to give way to network structures [2]".

The main aspects of implementing the "soft power" policy include:

- Public diplomacy;
- foreign cultural policy;