Opportunities and Challenges of Digital Diplomacy in the Public Diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Abstract : The ever-increasing growth of the Internet and the development of information and communication technology have prompted the politicians of different countries to use virtual networks as an efficient tool for their foreign policy. The communication of governments and countries, even in the farthest places from each other, through electronic networks, has caused vast changes in the way of statecraft and governance. Importantly, in the meantime, diplomacy, which is always based on information and communication, has been affected by the new prevailing conditions and new technologies more than other areas and has faced greater changes. The emergence of virtual space and the formation of new communication tools in the field of public diplomacy has led to the redefinition of the framework of diplomacy and politics in the international arena and the appearance of a new aspect of diplomacy called digital diplomacy. Digital diplomacy is in the concept of changing relations from a face-to-face and traditional way to a non-face-to-face and new way, and its purpose is to solve foreign policy issues using virtual space. Digital diplomacy, by affecting diplomatic procedures and its change, explains the role of technology in the visualization and implementation of diplomacy in different ways. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the position of digital diplomacy in the public diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The paper tries to answer these two questions in a descriptive-analytical way, considering the progress of communication and the role of virtual space in the service of diplomacy, what is the approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards digital diplomacy and the use of a new way of establishing foreign relations in public diplomacy? What capacities and damages are facing the country after the use of this type of new diplomacy? In this paper, various theoretical concepts in the field of public diplomacy and modern diplomacy, including Geoff Berridge, Charles Kegley, Hans Tuch and Ronald Peter Barston, as well as the theoretical framework of Marcus Holmes on digital diplomacy, will be used as a conceptual basis to support the analysis. As a result, in order to better achieve the political goals of the country, especially in foreign policy, the approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran to public diplomacy with a focus on digital diplomacy should be strengthened and revised. Today, only emphasizing on advancing diplomacy through traditional methods may weaken Iran's position in the public opinion level from other countries.

Keywords : digital diplomacy, public diplomacy, islamic republic of Iran, foreign policy, opportunities and challenges

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