

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Anne-Marie Slaughter
Sent: Saturday, August 4, 2012 11:52 AM
To: H
Cc: Abedin, Huma; Jacob J Sullivan (SullivanJJ@state.gov); Cheryl Mills
Subject: "Twiplomacy" -- you'll like this (and it's short)

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I hate the term "twiplomacy," but overall this is a v impt part of your legacy, particularly for the younger generation. A paper that one of my students wrote this past spring showed that David Huebner has more followers of his blog and twitter account than the readers of New Zealand's largest daily paper. I like the point below re a "genetic adaptation to new technologies" – you have put that in motion.

Best,

AM

Guest blog by Andrea Sandre, Press and Public Affairs Officer, Embassy of Italy in the United States

Since the lanuch of AFP's eDiplomacy Hub in June and the recent release of Burson-Marsteller research study on the so-called 'Twiplomacy', the debate surrounding the use of social media tools in diplomacy and foreign affairs has thickened to new heights. Some are now asking: is twiplomacy replacing traditional diplomacy?

"If somebody thinks that 140 characters is the diplomatic solution to solving the world's problems, then we've got a big problem," said James Carafano of the Heritage Foundation in an interview with Voice of America. "Twitter really wasn't created for diplomacy. Twitter's not even created to have a conversation," he said.

Indeed, while Twitter and Facebook's origins are far from being linked to diplomacy, it's safe to say they have certainly contributed to an increase of diplomacy's relevancy in the media and beyond, and have certainly furnished it with better outreach capabilities. Of course, they are not a substitute to traditional channels used in government-to-government relations. They are however a new way to look at our diplomatic agendas and engage with less traditional players.

"Speaking directly to citizens – seeing a country's people, as well as its government – is not just a rhetorical device," explained Anne Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department (2009-2011) and a former dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. In a March 2012 article on Project Syndicate, Slaughter clearly explained how US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has executed a sort of pivot to the people. "She has introduced policies, programs, and institutional reforms designed to support government-to-society and society-to-society diplomacy, alongside traditional government-to-government relations," Slaughter said summarizing Clinton's ediplomacy goals.

Twiplomacy represents one of the many tools available to ediplomacy – defined as the use of the web and new information communication technologies (ICTs) to help achieve diplomatic objectives. While there is a tendency to identify ediplomacy with terms like Twiplomacy and Digital Diplomacy, the latters are only tools used to actuate some ediplomacy programs through social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook

When you look at Twiplomacy this way, then it can hardly be seen as a replacement for traditional diplomacy. It's never going to. Rather, it is a way to help make diplomacy more efficient, more inclusive, more engaging. It has certainly shaken the diplomatic elite and forced all traditional players to a more open approach in which listening becomes as important as acting.

Some argue twiplomacy's popularity is linked to the hype around social media. Indeed key players like Foreign Ministers William Hague and Carl Bildt are cashing on it while exploiting tools like Twitter and Facebook to the fullest. Bildt, for example, helped creating quite a buzz around the social media tool when in May 2012, as he was unable to reach his counterpart in Bahrain by traditional means of communication, he decided to tweet him: @khalidalkhalif Trying to get in touch with you on an issue. Quite a strong statement if you put it in a context of a piece of communication from Foreign Minister to Foreign Minister.

In a way, it is as if twiplomacy is altering the DNA of diplomacy: a sort of genetic adaptation to new technologies. Adapting takes time and for diplomacy it might take even longer, as demonstrated by how slow foreign ministries around the world are dipping their feet in to social media tools. However slow, twiplomacy is forcing its way in to the foreign policy agenda as a consolidated ediplomacy tool to rethink objectives and better respond to new challenges. As such, ediplomacy can be easily seen as an important complement to the diplomatic craft, often time taking center stage.

"In some areas ediplomacy is changing the way State does business," wrote Fergus Hanson, Director of Polling and Research Fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy in his March 2012 "Revolution @State: The Spread of Ediplomacy" report. "In Public Diplomacy, State now operates what is effectively a global media empire, reaching a larger direct audience than the paid circulation of the ten largest US dailies and employing an army of diplomat-journalists to feed its 600-plus platforms. In other areas, like Knowledge Management, ediplomacy is finding solutions to problems that have plagued foreign ministries for centuries."

As twiplomacy is consolidating within the ediplomacy spectrum at the US State Department as well around the world, it has been both criticized and embraced. Foreign ministers however seem to all invest in social media for diplomacy and are taking the exploration of etools even further – Twitter is a very hand-on experience for beginners – including it in the training of their diplomats. The goal is to keep communications channels open at all times and bridge the gap between diplomacy and citizens.

Anne-Marie Slaughter
Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor of Politics and International Affairs
Princeton University
440 Robertson Hall
Princeton, NJ 08544

Assistant: Terry Murphy
Website: www.princeton.edu/~slaughttr

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