Chapter 15
Making Foreign Policy Through Twitter:
An Analysis of Trump's Tweets on Iran

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ABSTRACT

Through the development of technology, the understanding of traditional foreign policy has changed. Foreign policy making, which was shaped by diplomatic correspondence, visits, agreements, and notes between countries, is carried out today via messages sent over the Internet. Twitter is the most frequently used internet tool in the hands of institutions, decision makers, and leaders in foreign policy making. US President Donald J. Trump is one of the leaders who use Twitter most effectively. Twitter was the center of Trump's messages, both during the presidential campaign and after his election. Trump is not just using Twitter as a platform for meeting his supporters and announcing the country's official policies. Twitter has also been an important way for Trump to challenge and send harsh messages to certain countries, companies, and individuals. Iran is one of the countries that Trump targets through Twitter. This study aims to examine the use of Twitter as a platform in foreign policy making by using content analysis method through Trump's tweets about Iran.

INTRODUCTION

The new media stemmed from the developments in information technologies, namely Internet revolution have led to changes in many fields including International Relations. Diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy, has also been transformed with this revolution. Diplomacy has long been understood as the interaction between different sovereign countries through official representatives. Today, both the actors and instruments of diplomacy have changed. In today's interconnected world, individuals and organizations are also playing a larger role in international affairs. One major factor that have increased the importance of individuals and organizations in foreign policy making is the revolution in information technologies,

mainly social media. Social media is also used by state leaders and institutions very effectively in their connections with their own countries and the outside world. Different names are given to that phenomenon like "digital diplomacy", "twiplomacy", "cyber diplomacy", "ediplomacy" and "twitter diplomacy". Twitter is the key channel of digital diplomacy. U.S. President Donald Trump is the most popular leader in Twitter with 44,5 billion tweets and 64,7 million followers as of September 23, 2019. Donald Trump used Twitter very effectively both during the election campaign and after being president. While most of the world's leaders share corporate tweets from their official accounts, Donald Trump uses a personal and undiplomatic language, which for some presents a challenge to traditional diplomacy (Twiplomacy Report, 2018). Twitter is an important platform in which Trump expresses his foreign policy towards Iran. Trump targets the Iranian government and makes accusations through Twitter.

This study aims to examine the use of twitter as a platform in foreign policy making by using content analysis method through Trump's tweets about Iran. The language that is adapted by Trump in his tweets concerning Iran, messages sent to the Iranian administration, issues that are covered in the tweets and the indirect messages sent to the other individuals and institutions are analyzed in the study. In the light of the data of the study, it is revealed that the vast majority of the messages sent by Trump about Iran via twitter are negative, and that the content of the messages is more about threatening, accusing and refuting rather than informing. Trump's tweets on Iran mainly focus on the nuclear problem, negation of the Iranian regime, America's superiority and the sanctions on Iran. Trump has also targeted various institutions and individuals such as Obama administration, media, US intelligence and democrats through his tweets on Iran.

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AS A TOOL OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Social media has penetrated the world culture far more than we possibly thought.The scope and breadth of new forms of communication, especially social media, has created vital changes in the way individuals, groups, governments, businesses and nations communicate, which greatly affects their thinking and behavior. Foreign policy making and diplomacy as the main tool of conducting foreign policy of a nation have also been affected with the changes in the communication technology. Foreign policy refers to the general objectives that guide the interactions of a state with other states. Diplomacy is the main instrument of foreign policy, which consists of wider goals and strategies that direct a state's interactions with the rest of the world. Today, most of the state institutions and the leaders have a presence on digital media platforms.

The use of digital technologies and social media platforms by the states in their interactions with the other states is called as "digital diplomacy. Digital diplomacy did not replace traditional diplomacy rather it complements and coexists with each other . (Adesina, 2017: 1). According to Manor (2015), digital diplomacy is the process by which a country uses social media more widely to achieve its foreign policy goals and proactively manages its own image and reputation. Hanson (2012) states that digital diplomacy has eight political goals which are knowledge management, public diplomacy, information management, consular communications and response, disaster response, Internet freedom, external sources and policy planning.

Digital diplomacy is generally seen as part of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is the international public relations activities that are carried out by the states in order to create public opinion among foreign states. The concept was first used in 1965 by Edmund Gullion in a disciplinary framework. According

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