

Roman Melikyan
PhD in Political Sciences, Associate Professor
European University of Armenia
melikyan.roman2911@gmail.com

RA CIVIL SOCIETY AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL DIPLOMACY

In the modern world order, together with the processes of democracy and globalization, the institutional development of a new type of diplomacy plays a key role, that is, digital diplomacy. It is especially important in the context of observing existing problems in civil society, their appropriate solution and overcoming possible risks and threats. In that sense, the topic of the presented work is more than current, because the approaches and technologies of digital diplomacy are not only in great demand and involvement in the Republic of Armenia, but also as the best way to overcome existing problems and challenges, there is a certain tendency to increase the possibilities of their development and applicability in the Armenian civil society.

The concept, methodology, key importance, goals, approaches, problems and technologies of digital diplomacy are considered in the presented work. Their experience and development opportunities in the outside world are analyzed. The work emphasizes and justifies the place of digital diplomacy in the system of modern diplomacy, emphasizing the study of development issues in the context of civil society. The problems of digital diplomacy in the development and strengthening of the civil society of the Republic of Armenia are analyzed, as well as the benefits and necessity of digital diplomacy in the context of its institutional security and security are presented and justified.

In today's transforming world order, where various manifestations, challenges and threats greatly affect sustainable

development and international security systems, the policy of implementation, development and modernization of digital diplomacy¹ capabilities, technologies and tools are increasingly required from modern diplomacy institutes. The applicability of the latter today has a great impact on the decision-making of local, glocal and global actors, on which many human destinies and the future of states depend. Suffice it to mention how a single post on the Internet can cause many problems due to the emotional impulses of the masses, bringing forward the need for the convergence of information flows and channeling it into the right flow, and the critical imperative of justifying and rethinking the problems and dangers caused by them.

The concept of "digital diplomacy" continues to gain greater interest in various scientific and educational centers. Being a modern public and diplomatic direction, it presents itself as a set of information and communication technologies, social networks, blogs and other media platforms, using diplomatic and foreign policy functions. The terms "internet-diplomacy", "social media diplomacy" and "web 2.0. diplomacy" are also often used as synonyms. Digital diplomacy was first used in the United States, among other forms of public diplomacy, such as outreach programs, educational exchanges, cultural and sports projects. Attention to digital diplomacy grew especially after waves of mass protests in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, which received the name "twitter-revolution" in the media².

In the Republic of Armenia, declared as a democratic state in the modern era, the representatives of the civil society should have their unique role in the formation of public opinion, both in domestic and international political relations. It is believed that sometimes due to some reasons, largely under global impulses and challenges, the establishment of democratic institutions can be disrupted, which is

¹ **Digital Diplomacy.** Theory and practice Edited by **Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes.** First published by Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2015, p. 15.

² **Mkrtchyan H.,** Digital Diplomacy: opportunities and prospects. "Articles of Yerevan University. International Relations, Political Science", 2016 No. 2 (20), pp. 78-79.

largely due to pressures on civil society and irregular controls, in the context of overcoming which digital diplomacy is of paramount importance. At the same time, it should also be stated that the representative parties and active circles of the Armenian civil society still do not use the opportunities and technologies offered by the digital world at a sufficient level according to the existing challenges.

Although Armenia has several leading records in a number of leading international rating systems, in particular, in "Digital Diplomacy Rating - 2016", Armenia was recognized as a leader in the region and ranked 52nd. Moreover, Georgia took the 65th place, Azerbaijan - the 73rd place, and Iran - the 112th place. In the Post-Soviet space, except for the Baltic states, Armenia lost only to Russia (4th place) and Ukraine (11th place). The leader of the ranking was Great Britain, the last, in 210th place, Papua New Guinea³. When compiling the ranking of digital diplomacy(e-diplomacy), the use of the latest technologies and the Internet to achieve diplomatic goals is evaluated. In that context, it is no coincidence that the annual report on global freedom published by the international human rights organization "Freedom House" already in 2022, according to which the Republic of Armenia has recorded unprecedented progress, occupying the 55th position (2021: 71st, 2020: 75th, 76th in 2019, 73rd in 2018, 68th in 2017)⁴ And this is in the event that a number of laws on restricting the independent press and critical speech were recently adopted in the Republic of Armenia through legislative changes, which directly affects the primary values of civil society⁵.

³ «Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2016». "Digital Diplomacy. The FCO's digital work" <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/digitaldiplomacy> (10.01.2023).

⁴ «Freedom House» International human rights organization website (*«Freedom House»* միջազգային իրավապաշտպան կազմակերպության. <https://freedomhouse.org/-country/armenia/freedom-world/2022> (02.10.2022).

⁵ Freedom of speech continues to be limited in Armenia. Amnesty International: - *"Azatutyun" R/C official website* (Հայաստանում խոսքի ազատությունը շարունակում է սահմանափակված մնալ. Amnesty International. - «Ազատություն»-ն/կ պաշտոնական վեբ-կայք) - <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31775802.html> (02.01.2023):

The aim of the work is to identify the digital aspects of the institutionalization and consistent development of digital diplomacy in RA in this context and the impact of Armenian civil society on them based on the results of a comparative analysis of the civil society activities operating in the modern world of digital diplomacy. Problems arise from the logic of the formulated goal.

Assess the possibilities of implementation and promotion of digital diplomacy tools in RA.

Identify the conditions and ways of the democratization development of public administration among the civil society.

To justify the aspects and approaches of the activities of mass communication media in the domains of social networks in RA.

To analyze the opportunities for the development of RA's digital diplomacy and the degree of its role in the region in the coming years.

To form relevant ideas and present necessary recommendations in the general process of establishment and development of RA civil society.

The study and research was carried out based on the standards, rules and methods that allow making the work unique, while applying comparative systemic structural-functional approaches, as well as practical and informational models.

The subject of the research is the discovery of the influence of digital diplomacy, the raising of problems and the synchronization of relations with the Armenian civil society.

The object of research is non-governmental organizations, foundations, initiatives, mass media, movements, unions, individual groups.

The scientific novelty of the work includes the following provisions:

- Digital diplomacy had a great impact on the establishment and development of RA civil society. In the course of the study, deficiencies were also revealed, and addressing them in turn will

contribute to more competent campaigns of organizations engaged in civic activities in the territory of the Republic of Armenia.

- Non-governmental organizations, foundations, movements and initiatives fill the sometimes vital gap in government activity. Therefore, civil society-state complementarity or cooperation in the conditions of the use of digital technologies can contribute to the formation of such a platform that will allow transparency to be included in various spheres of the authorities' activities.

Principal Part.

Highlighting the role and influence of digital diplomacy on the development and development of different countries, many states are also widely using its opportunities, setting to overcome the challenges in information and virtual domains.

The Digital Diplomacy Department has been set up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the United Kingdom, which is one of the goals of the British Civil Society.

The high priority of Russia's national interests in digital diplomacy is established by continuous increase in the Internet, with its economic importance, as well as the process of e-government. According to the "Electronic Russia" Federal Target Program (2002-2010), the development of ICT is considered to be an instrument to increase the competitiveness of the economy, to expand the opportunities for its integration opportunities to its integration. Russian state structures also increase their presence on the Internet, including encouraging civil society to be actively involved in that domain. In 2002, the first Russian presidential website appeared, in 2008 the presidential video open, and from 2010, Twitter Microblog account. Today, all the federal ministries, departments and other state bodies have their own websites. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation gives everyone the opportunity to follow the

current events of foreign policy on social networks, in particular, using Facebook and Twitter platforms⁶.

The Digital Diplomacy Institute is actively introduced in many Asian countries. In particular, astroturfing technologies are currently being used in China, which aims to form false public opinion on the Internet. Accordingly, special leased people in many forums, media sites and blogs write ordered letters, politicians, political groups or parties to make the impression of national support in various matters.

The US government, defining digital diplomacy in the US government's diplomatic practice, has given American diplomats an opportunity to communicate with Internet users, including a wide range of civil masses. The implementation of US Digital Diplomacy Programs is based on large companies in the Internet industry, including Google Corporation. The starting point of activating the digital policy of the State Department is the recognition of the possible Internet impact on the significant number of users and mobile phones in the world. Indeed, today more than 30% of the world's population are active users, and this figure is constantly growing. The key to understanding the essence of digital diplomacy is to be a technological tool. The US foreign policy and digital diplomacy are based on ideological bases, which effectively embody Google's business model and information policy, Facebook, other American-industry companies, and first of all, democracy, rights and the cost of freedoms, where civil society plays a central role⁷.

⁶ **Zinovieva E.**, Digital diplomacy, international security for Russia. Security Index, No. 1 (104), Volume 19 213, p. 213. Federal Target Program "Electronic Russia (2002-2010) (**Зиновьева Е.**, Цифровая дипломатия, международная безопасность для России. Индекс безопасности, № 1 (104), Том 19 213, с. 213. Федеральная целевая программа «Электронная Россия (2002-2010 годы)»).

⁷ **Zinovieva E.**, Digital diplomacy, international security for Russia. Security Index, No. 1 (104), Volume 19 213, p. 213. Federal Target Program "Electronic Russia (2002-2010) (**Зиновьева Е.**, Цифровая дипломатия, международная безопасность для России. Индекс безопасности, № 1 (104), Том 19 213, стр. 213. Федеральная целевая программа «Электронная Россия (2002-2010 годы)»).

As a rule, Internet Public Diplomacy in the United States is coordinated by the Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy to promote American television and radio channels, as well as to promote social networks, widely used and coordinating the potential of civil society.

Conclusion.

Summing up the above and comparing its own opportunities to the experience of the developed country, it is very purposeful so that the RA Diplomacy Programs are actively and regulated by the RA State Power Bodies, which must generate the potential of civil society in overcoming external challenges. Prior to that, the development of key importance issues on the institutionalization of digital diplomacy, development of the normative legal base, adopting and operation of relevant laws based on the formation of the following basic principles:

- Discrediting the ideological opponents of Armenia.
- Respect the information activities of hostile countries on the Internet.
 - The presence restriction of the media of hostile countries.
 - Contrary to the foreign cultural policy of Turkey and Azerbaijan through social networks.
 - Ensuring the rights and freedoms of the citizens of the Republic of Armenia based on the priorities and priorities of national security and state interests.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani four-day war of 2016, the change of power in 2018, the 44-day Artsakh war of 2020 and the ongoing information wars have clearly proven and continue to prove that the capabilities and technologies of digital diplomacy are very important in the current information age. Especially during the wars, many fake user accounts of social networks opened by the adversary, various tricks and technologies of information warfare were and are aimed at obtaining information about the Armenian side and spreading disinformation. It was during those days that the importance of mastering digital diplomacy methods and working with them correctly, as well as developing and implementing the right policies to

properly operate, manage, regulate civil society activities in the Internet domain, and ensure national security and state interests, became more apparent. Very often, the situation can change due to the fact that different states consider the digital diplomacy programs of the leading state in the field as an attempt to interfere in internal affairs, a case that threatens to violate their state sovereignty. The existence of such fears is confirmed, for example, by regular attempts to block access to Facebook, YouTube, BlogSpot services and restrictions on the rights and freedoms of civil societies or their complete termination, in particular, they were blocked at different times in Vietnam, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, Myanmar, in North Korea and a number of other countries, and currently also in Russia. In this context, it is not important what poses a great threat to international security. US policy aimed at strengthening information superiority, or the response of authoritarian states such as China or Pakistan, which poses a threat in the form of fragmentation of the global information space? It is important that both phenomena are generated in information spheres with the logic of international politics, the inevitable component of which is the struggle for leadership. In that sense, the component according to which the Azerbaijani side, using its rich resources, managed to make name changes, based on pro-Azerbaijani positions, as well as to make territorial changes of a locational nature in the range of Google Maps electronic maps, related to Artsakh and surrounding areas, is also very characteristic⁸.

Thus, digital diplomacy, including the development of social networks, creates new technologies for the realization of foreign policy goals, strengthening the soft and hard power of the Republic of Armenia and modernizing the institutional aspects and approaches of its civil society. At the same time, it is very difficult in the conditions of the development of democracy to clearly separate soft and hard government and governable and ungovernable civil society. In the

⁸ «Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2016». "Digital Diplomacy. The FCO's digital work" <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/digitaldiplomacy> (10.01.2023):

contemporary world order, the Republic of Armenia should strive to strengthen its leadership in the global information space. But it is also necessary to realize that even in the case of occupying leading positions, new risks and challenges can arise, which can increase the vulnerability of management. But it should also be recognized that it can deeply justify the priority goals and aspirations of the modernization of digital diplomacy as the best opportunity to overcome global challenges.

Ռոման Մելիքյան
Քաղաքական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ
Հայաստանի եվրոպական համալսարան
melikyan.roman2911@gmail.com

ՀՀ ՔԱՂԱՔԱՑԻԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱՐԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ ՈՒ ԹՎԱՅԻՆ ԴԻՎԱՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԳԼՈՒԽԸ ՄԱՐՏԱՀՐԱՎԵՐՆԵՐԸ

Ժամանակակից աշխարհակարգում ժողովրդավարության և գլոբալացման գործընթացների հետ համատեղ՝ առանցքային դերակատարում ունի նաև նոր տեսակի դիվանագիտության ինստիտուցիոնալ զարգացումը, այն է՝ թվային դիվանագիտությունը: Այն հատկապես կարևորվում է քաղաքացիական հասարակությունում առկա խնդիրների դիտարկման, դրանց համապատասխան լուծման և հնարավոր ռիսկերի և սպառնալիքների հաղթահարման համատեքստում: Այդ առումով, ներկայացված աշխատանքի թեման առավել քան արդիական է, քանի որ թվային դիվանագիտության մոտեցումները ու տեխնոլոգիաները ոչ միայն ունեն մեծ պահանջ և ներգրավվածություն Հայաստանի Հանրապետությունում, այլ նաև առկա է որոշակի միտում մեծացնելու դրանց զարգացման և կիրառելիության հնարավորությունները հայաստանյան քաղաքացիական հասարակության շրջանում՝ իբրև առկա խնդիրների և մարտահրավերների հաղթահարման լավագույն միջոց:

Ներկայացված աշխատանքում դիտարկվում են թվային դիվանագիտության հասկացությունը, մեթոդաբանությունը, առանցքային նշանակությունը, նպատակները, մոտեցումները, խնդիրներն ու տեխնոլոգիաները: Վերլուծվում են դրանց փորձն ու զարգացման

հնարավորություններն արտաքին աշխարհում: Աշխատանքում առանձնապես կարևորվում և հիմնավորվում է թվային դիվանագիտության տեղն արդի դիվանագիտության համակարգում՝ շեշտը դնելով քաղաքացիական հասարակության խորապատկերում զարգացման խնդիրների ուսումնասիրության վրա: Վերլուծվում են թվային դիվանագիտության հիմնախնդիրները Հայաստանի Հանրապետության քաղաքացիական հասարակության զարգացման և կայացվածության ամրապնդման գործում, ինչպես նաև ներկայացվում և հիմնավորվում են թվային դիվանագիտության արժեշահային կողմերն ու անհրաժեշտությունը վերջինիս ինստիտուցիոնալ անվտանգության և ապահովման համատեքստում:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. **Mkrtchyan H.** Digital Diplomacy: opportunities and prospects. "Articles of Yerevan University. International Relations, Political Science", 2016 No. 2 (20), pp. 78-79 (**Մկրտչյան Հ.,** Թվային դիվանագիտություն. հնարավորություններ և հեռանկարներ: «Բանբեր Երևանի համալսարանի. Միջազգային հարաբերություններ, Քաղաքագիտություն», 2016 № 2 (20), էջ 78-79).

2. We strongly condemn the Azerbaijani name change and distribution of the territories of Artsakh by the Google company. "Aravot.am" information website (Խստորեն դատապարտում ենք Google ընկերության կողմից Արցախի տարածքների ադրբեջանական անվանափոխությունն ու տարածումը. «Aravot.am» տեղեկատվական վեբ-կայք) - [https://www.aravot.am/2022/06/05/1272401/\(08.01.2023\):](https://www.aravot.am/2022/06/05/1272401/(08.01.2023):)

3. Freedom of speech continues to be limited in Armenia. Amnesty International: - **"Azatutyun" R/C official website** (Հայաստանում խոսքի ազատությունը շարունակում է սահմանափակված մնալ. Amnesty International. - «Ազատություն» ռ/կ պաշտոնական վեբ-կայք) - <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31775802.html> (02.01.2023):

4. Google Maps company should immediately remove Azerbaijani place names from digital maps of Artsakh, restore all Armenian place names. "Iravaban.net" Information website (Google Maps ընկերությունը պետք է Արցախի թվային քարտեզներից անհապաղ հեռացնի ադրբեջաներեն տեղանունները, վերականգնի բոլոր հայկական տեղա-

նունեքը. «Iravaban.net» տեղեկատվական վեբ-կայք) - <https://iravaban.net/398552.html> (08.01.2023):

5. **Digital Diplomacy.** Theory and practice Edited by **Corneliu Bjola and Marcus Holmes**. First published by Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2015.

6. «**Freedom House**» International human rights organization website («**Freedom House**» միջազգային իրավապաշտպան կազմակերպության. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/armenia/freedom-world/2022> (02.10.2022):

7. «Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2016». “Digital Diplomacy. The FCO's digital work” <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/digitaldiplomacy> (10.01.2023):

8. **Zinovieva E.**, Digital diplomacy, international security for Russia. Security Index, No. 1 (104), Volume 19 213, p. 213. Federal Target Program "Electronic Russia (2002-2010) (Зиновьева Е. Цифровая дипломатия, международная безопасность для России. Индекс безопасности, № 1 (104), Том 19 213, стр. 213. Федеральная целевая программа «Электронная Россия (2002-2010 годы)»).

9. **Monbio J.**, The need to protect the Internet from "astroturfing" is becoming increasingly important (**Монбио Дж.** Необходимость защитить интернет от «астротурфинга» приобретает все большую актуальность)<http://www.inosmi.ru/world/20110318/167458693.html> (14.02.2022).

10. Approved on 28.01.2002. Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 65. (Утверждена 28.01.2002. Постановление Правительства РФ № 65) - <http://www.internet-law.ru/intlaw/laws/e-rus.htm> (28.01.2023 г.).