

SECTION 5. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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ACCELERATION OF ICTS PENETRATION IN DIPLOMACY AS COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT

The Covid-19 pandemic besides the economic variable has affected the normal processes around the world, and has shifted traditional means of business operations and diplomatic relations.

Diplomacy can be defined as the conduct of international relations by negotiation and dialog or by any other means to promote peaceful relations among states [1, c. 574]. Hence, the pandemic has minimized the frequency of personal contacts, it has certainly had a solid impact on it relations, diplomatic and business etiquette.

Muzaffar S. Abduazimov considers six major trends in the diplomatic practice caused by the pandemic, namely: acceleration of ICTs (information and communication technologies) penetration; reappraisal of information security; ensuring the reliability of public diplomacy; further diversification of responsible duties; the growing role of psychology; the emergence of the hybrid diplomatic etiquette and protocol [2, c. 52-62].

In this paper we consider the first trend – acceleration of ICTs penetration.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the speed of ICTs penetration into different fields, and diplomacy is not an exception.

Certainly, ICTs have already been actively integrated into the world of diplomacy in the pre-pandemic period, in the form of digital diplomacy. Nevertheless, in the pre-pandemic period, ICTs used to be one of the means of conducting diplomatic work, while during the pandemic, it has almost become the leading tool of communication [2, c. 52].

Hence, during pandemic to conduct diplomatic events through video conferences has become normal. For instance, international organizations, states high-level representatives began to held negotiations, consultation, summits and conferences had been conducted in a different manner, online.

Corneliu Bjola and Ilan Manor have conducted a survey of diplomats about diplomacy in the age of the pandemic. It was found that most of the diplomats relatively well prepared to handle the shift from face-to-face to virtual meetings. Moreover, participants felt that the transition to the virtual medium did not affect their ability to engage with their peers. On a scale from 1 (not useful) to 5 (very useful), they rated virtual meetings as high as 3.80 for their role in assisting them to fulfil their functions and activities [3, c. 480].

There are advantages and disadvantages of online diplomacy. Certainly, an online diplomatic event requires less financing, allows avoiding time-consuming programs, and deploys less human resources. However, besides its benefits, the acceleration of ICTs penetration into diplomacy poses significant information security risks [2, c. 53].

Currently, the usual diplomacy is becoming a reality again. Hence the diplomats have

questioned whether online diplomacy will become permanent with virtual meetings, negotiations, consultations. The answer is that henceforth, the “online” and “offline diplomacy” has gotten the mixture of the two formats, called “hybrid diplomacy” (Figure 1).

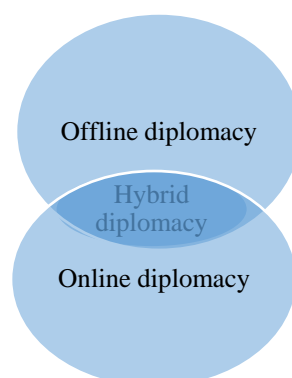


Fig. 1. Hybrid Diplomacy
Джерело: [2, с. 53-54].

Hybrid diplomacy combines face-to-face, physical diplomacy with virtual engagement via video conference platforms such as Zoom, Teams or Webex [3, с. 478].

Covid-19 has promoted the acceleration of ICTs penetration in diplomacy. Despite its shortcomings, online diplomacy has proven its worth in times of crisis and fulfilled its tasks. Thus, Covid-19 has become not only a booster in the digitization of state, including diplomatic functions, but also was a powerful factor in transforming the essence of world politics. Mankind will never return to a pre-pandemic state, as changes in the international relations system have become new standards of communication and launched a “new normality”.

References:

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