

Media Consultants and Attachés And their role in the international media

By

Dr. Ashraf Mohamad Gharibeh¹

¹Assistant professor in Law, Faculty of Law, Al Falah University

Dr Shereen Abu Ghazaleh²

²Dr. Mahmoud Khalaf, Diplomatic Theory and Practice, Zahran Publishing House, Amman, second edition, 1997, p. 194

Dr. Muhammad Najim¹

³Aisha Ratib, Diplomatic and Consular Organization - Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, Cairo, first edition 1963, p. 65

Abstract

This paper aims to explain the new functions of the media diplomat in light of scientific, technical and diplomatic development revealed in the 21st century. It clarifies the media function of the media diplomat in light of recent developments that have occurred among the traditional diplomatic work in the twenty-first century and the consequent emergence of new patterns in the diplomatic media. This is through introducing the Media Diplomat, demonstrate the tasks of the Media Diplomat and discuss the Information technology and means of communication, their impact on the work of the media diplomat and its sources of information.

Key Words: Media, Attachés, Diplomat, Information technology.

1. Introduction

Since the last century, the international community has witnessed a tremendous development in the field of diplomatic work and its practice, although its traditional patterns have remained in place so that its scope has expanded greatly. This development imposed on the diplomatic envoy an awareness not only of the political aspect of international relations, but also of a conscious awareness of the media aspects as well. This development is attributed to a number of factors and developments, most notably the complexity of international relations, an increase in the number of independent countries that are members of the international community, and the development of international organization, not to mention the tremendous technical development in the means of communication.

After the great development that occurred in the work of diplomatic missions and after providing them with advisors as well as cultural, commercial, military and other attachés in line with the weight of the country they represent. Besides, the urgent need to supply diplomatic missions abroad with technical cadres in various disciplines, to take care of its interests in the host country have resorted to appointing media attachés within their diplomatic missions abroad to be the right arm of the foreign media policy of the sending state, as the media diplomat performs an important duty in clarifying information and conveying the image to the public.

¹ Assistant professor in Law, Faculty of Law, Al Falah University

Diplomacy and media are two sides of the same coin, despite the tendency of traditional diplomacy to be kept secret in the face of public media. However, it has become clear that both aim to convey messages and modify trends. Moreover, both of them belong to the field of public communication, which targets all communication methods to reach people's views and win friendliness, sympathy and cooperation.

From this point of view, the media went hand in hand with political and diplomatic work, especially following the technological development in the field of individual and mass communication. The media has become one of the components of the general policy of countries with different doctrines and objectives. Where countries have striven to establish specialized agencies that carry out media functions abroad, where the media diplomat is devoted to justifying the foreign policies of the adopted country and explaining its political positions, even if they are contradictory.

It is noticeable that there is an overlap between the media and diplomacy, as the media diplomat works on explaining and clarifying facts and information to the masses abroad in order to make an impact on the way of thinking of those masses to serve the issues and interests of the state. While, the media diplomat has the responsibility to convince peoples and societies to accept the values and principles pursued by his country and the policies followed to increase mutual understanding and respect at the popular level between his people and other peoples, whether this is through the release of statements and speeches or through contacts and relations with political decision-makers.

Therefore, the work performed by the media diplomat, with its comprehensiveness and accuracy, is not just an ordinary media practice; it is indeed a special and dedicated media. The time when this media was limited to delegates who stand in the corridors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or diplomatic missions to make various statements is over. As the development that occurred in diplomacy itself has resulted in a new diplomatic media in terms of its dimensions as well as in its specialization, as the media has opened up to new horizons of knowledge, culture and thought, where media diplomacy must be aware of it if it wants to be a successful media diplomat.

It worth mentioning that media and diplomacy are inseparable twins and it is impossible to separate them. This is evident in our present age, where the media is the tongue of policy makers, men of thought, literature and the public.

1.1 The problem:

To explain the new functions of the media diplomat in light of scientific, technical and diplomatic development revealed in the 21st century.

1.2 Importance:

The importance of this topic is reflected in shedding light on the media function of the media diplomat in light of recent developments that have occurred among the traditional diplomatic work in the twenty-first century and the consequent emergence of new patterns in the diplomatic media.

1.3 Methodology:

The descriptive and analytical method was adopted in this research.

1.4 Research divisions:

This research is divided into the following the following:

One: Introducing the Media Diplomat.

Two: The tasks of the Media Diplomat.

Three: Information technology and means of communication and their impact on the work of the media diplomat and its sources of information.

2. Introducing the Media Diplomat

In this chapter, we will address the definition of the diplomat in general, the media diplomat in particular. Besides the importance of the work of media diplomats in the twenty-first century in light of the contemporary developments including the changes that have affected the foreign diplomatic career, and the characteristics and tasks that must be possessed by everyone who occupies a diplomat job, especially anyone who is involved in media affairs and skills.

2.1 Definition of a Diplomatic Envoy

Article 1/4 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 states that: "Diplomatic staff are the staff of a mission with diplomatic status". It states also that the term "Diplomatic envoy" means the head of the mission or one of its diplomatic staff.

Some argue² that it is not easy to define or describe the diplomatic status of the members of the mission, as it differs from one country to another, and there is no unified standard agreed upon and applied among all countries when selecting their diplomatic staff. Nor is it a requirement that the diplomatic envoy be a graduate of one of the higher diplomatic institutes, or that he be affiliated with the central administrative apparatus of the Foreign Service in his country. A diplomatic envoy is also defined as a person who represents his country abroad on a permanent basis, in everything that affects its foreign relations with the host country. However, the delegation capacity is what gives him the diplomatic description.³

Some defined⁴ the diplomat as the individual who has the competence to represent his country in international forums, speak on its behalf and defend its rights. Others⁵ defined a diplomatic envoy as a person delegated by a country to represent it abroad according to the authorities given to him to carry out this task. His representative capacity may be for a relatively long period; this is called the Permanent Diplomatic Representative (Resident). Alternatively, his delegation capacity may be for a relatively short period, this is called a temporary or itinerant diplomatic representative. Another defined it as the person delegated to other countries and entrusted with managing the country's foreign policy, according to the directives of policy makers in his country⁶.

Therefore, a diplomatic envoy is someone who occupies a diplomatic position and exercises his duties in the diplomatic capacity granted to him by his country in order to

² Dr. Mahmoud Khalaf, *Diplomatic Theory and Practice*, Zahran Publishing House, Amman, second edition, 1997, p. 194

³ Aisha Ratib, *Diplomatic and Consular Organization - Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya*, Cairo, first edition 1963, p. 65

⁴ Salah Abdel-Badi' Shalabi, *Al-Wajeez in International Law*, Publishing House not mentioned, second edition, 1999, p. 109.

⁵ Zayed Obaidullah Misbah, *Diplomacy*, Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, first edition 1999, p. 92.

⁶ Al-Shafi'i Muhammad Bashir, *Public International Law in Peace and War*, Al-Jalaa' New Library, Mansoura, sixth edition, p. 579.

represent it abroad. In order to exercise his diplomatic duties, he enjoys a set of diplomatic immunities and privileges guaranteed to him by public international law in order to perform his duties freely and reassuringly away from the interference of local authorities in approved country. As for the media diplomat, he is the media front of his country, who works to employ his media skill in diplomatic work in a clearly defined manner, with a specific goal, with a specific effect, in a specific place, and through known tools planned by his country, without interfering in the internal affairs of the approved country.

On the other hand, the media diplomat, whether an employee of one of the bodies or institutions concerned with media work, or within the diplomatic cadre of one of the diplomatic missions, is subject to all rules and provisions stipulated in civil service legislation or any other legislation related to foreign service such as the Diplomatic and Consular Corps Law.

2.2 Definition of Diplomatic Media

After the end of World War II and the emergence of the communist and capitalist poles, facts emerged, including the need to base the foreign policy of countries on three main axes: preparing foreign policy based on the two main poles, political decision-making based on mutual interests, and finally the process of implementing political decision⁷. Hence, the diplomatic media is one of the tools for implementing foreign policy because of its direct impact on internal and external public opinion.

There are many definitions of “Diplomatic Media”, where some see that diplomatic media is nothing but the use of the goals of the authority with one tool in order to achieve a specific and timed goal, in a timely & a clearly defined manner, through negotiations, information gathering and analysis, and through official representation.⁸

However, the diplomatic media does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, as it mostly depends on collecting accurate information. Moreover, it is affected by changes, whether international, regional or local, whether economic or political.⁹ The diplomatic media is the official spokesperson for the state through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which reflects the field of foreign and international policy between two parties and the influence it represents through communication skills, as it represents the authorized official body with the necessities of preserving national privacy and expressing its goals and interests.¹⁰

Further, diplomatic media, through social media, has the responsibility to create bridges of communication between everyone based on firm and honest facts away from falsification and evasion, and to deliver information as quickly as possible, which indicates professional professionalism and media diplomatic acumen.¹¹

Diplomatic media is one of the most important components for the success of the state, regardless of its name. As it is a strategic goal through which the state and through its higher authorities work to support its strategic credibility¹², and to emphasize its weight and

⁷ Saadoun bin Hussein al-Hamdani, Diplomatic media and social media pros, Alwatan, August 4, 2022 - 6 Muharram 1444 Ah available at < <https://alwatan.com/details/446496>>

⁸ *Ibid*

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid*

importance in political, developmental, economic, tourism, health issues ... etc., to deliver information as soon as possible¹³.

2.3 The importance of the work of the Media Diplomat

The period following the emergence of the United Nations witnessed the appearance of the media intensively and actively, and it played a distinguished role in influencing the course of international relations, as the media became keeping pace with the smallest details of diplomatic work. From this point of view, a kind of harmony and cooperation occurred between diplomacy and the media, and one of them became indispensable to the other in the midst of international political, ideological, economic and cultural conflicts¹⁴.

Diplomacy and the media are linked to close, multiple and complex relations, as both perform communicative functions with external spaces and both form the interest in public opinion, the centerpiece and circle of their activity. Add to the above that diplomacy and the media share an integrative role in performing their civilized communicative function in the life of societies and nations¹⁵.

Accordingly, diplomacy and media can establish a mutually complementary relationship between them. Where they constitute the power of a civilized role especially if the relationship is based on methodological, scientific and psychological foundations and knowledge of the material and environmental conditions of any society whatsoever, and to involve scholars of history, economics, politics and sociology both in the scope of his work and its jurisdiction¹⁶.

Hence, the authors recommend the necessity to work on the establishment of special committees concerned with media affairs, so that their establishment would be through joint cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information to select an elite of media diplomats, provided that the committee includes a group of former and current diplomats and media attachés. Also, it is necessary to work on refining the media diplomat with the necessary diplomatic skills to carry out his duties abroad. As it is known that the media diplomat is not among the diplomatic cadres working in the diplomatic corps since the beginning of their career, but is chosen from among the workers in the journalistic and media field. This requires the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its affiliated institutions, such as diplomatic institutes, to work on providing such cadres with the necessary skills to educate them diplomatically and to clarify the aspects of enjoying diplomatic immunities and privileges and not to exploit them in a way that contradicts the rules and principles of diplomatic work.

The technical development in the means of communication and transportation has emphasized the enrichment of diplomatic work. Thus, opening up prospects for the media diplomat in order to put before his country a comprehensive coverage of the events the moment they occur after he has balanced all the goals in a keen and deliberate manner, enlightened in

¹³ The Omani Ministry of Health has published on its official account on Twitter, specific information regarding the booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. The news spread quickly before it was published on the radio, radio or newspapers.

¹⁴ Jamal Barakat, *The Media Aspect of Diplomatic Work*, Journal of Diplomatic Studies, Institute of Diplomatic Studies, Riyadh, Issue 4, 1987, p. 65.

¹⁵ Ali Abdel Fattah, *Diplomatic and Political Media*, available at < <https://www.noor-book.com/%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A8%D9%84%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A-pdf> >.P. 33.

¹⁶ Ali Abdel Fattah, *ibid.*, p. 43

that from his country's point of view and the objectives of its foreign policy and the protection of its interests.

The media diplomat is the one who sends his reports and information in an objective, balanced manner, superior to other media outlets in view of his effective role in serving the supreme interests of his country away from unconscious media and hollow misleading propaganda.

Hence, the qualified and trained media diplomat is a maker and producer of the media event to accomplish his mission in a correct and positive manner.¹⁷ Moreover, the media diplomat has to focus on the media in all its forms in order to take advantage of them in order to achieve and implement his national agenda, and that would be by choosing the distinguished channels and radio stations in the approved country to appear through them.

Such media outlets are a double-edged sword in times of war and peace because of their ability to shed light on certain topics, attract the attention of the masses, form a store of knowledge for these masses, and form a mental image of certain issues¹⁸.

Countries have realized the importance of the dangerous role played by the media in preparing and influencing public opinion, justifying positions and winning conflicts. From this standpoint, countries mobilized their efforts and competed in owning various means of radio, press, satellite channels and social media on the Internet, which had an effective impact in refining the diplomatic and media work in the service of the higher interests of the state.

In addition, the media diplomat, in addressing the authorities in the state to which he is accredited, as the link between him and his state, should not neglect addressing the peoples of those governments to see the extent of the influence of the media on them and when the effect of transferring the image and its clarity to them.

In conclusion, we can only say that the media diplomat is one of the important means for implementing the foreign policies of countries through his media function, whether directly or indirectly, which indicates the depth of relations between the media and the foreign policy of countries. This integration between the media and foreign policy has become a model that is difficult to separate between them, not to mention that both form the dimensions of the other's work.

2.4 Characteristics of a Media Diplomat and its advantages

The media diplomat represents a media and social attraction, which distinguishes him from other diplomatic envoys, which requires that he dedicate a special space for him.

The media diplomat must be educated with a wide political culture, especially the foreign ones, which enables him to keep pace with the diplomatic work in its peculiarities, complexities and causal link to politics.¹⁹ In addition to the above, there must be a social culture, because the social and cultural environment from which the diplomat emanates is the same environment that runs in the diplomatic media stream. The media diplomat is the owner of a calm and balanced speech, as he always keeps pace with the diplomatic work and is

¹⁷ Ali Abdel Fattah, *ibid.* p. 60.

¹⁸ Mohamed Baboush, Alwajdeyah, Global diplomacy today is media diplomacy, Published in Al-Waqdwa on 08 - 12 - 201, available at < www.maghress.com/oujdia/7265 >

¹⁹ Joseph Assaf "Diplomatic Media (Exceptional Characteristics and Role), available at <<http://www.arabparliamentaryinstitute.org/upload/article/2784664924.pdf>>.

synonymous with it. His success or failure depends on the ability to communicate diplomatic work in its various forms and dimensions, especially political work, which enables him to reflect it in the media to serve political visions and goals in its optimal form.²⁰

Some argue that the media diplomat should be described as something that some may consider strange and abnormal for those who work in diplomacy, which is “aggression.” However, this aggression is not aggressive going in the wrong direction, but rather it is a positive and fruitful aggression. In which the media diplomat, employ it in persuading others regarding the policies of his country, be proud of his country's ideal life approach, its lively language, its wide culture, and the relations based on friendship and neighborliness that bind it with other countries.

However, this positive and fruitful aggressiveness from the hands of the media diplomat must be of the highest degree of decency and sophistication, so that it indicates the extent of his skill in understanding the message he is undertaking. Thus, the extent of his ability to deliver it successfully.

In conclusion, it worth mentioning that the diplomatic work in a large part is a sacramental work. Thus, the media diplomat had to be characterized by honesty and confidentiality in cases that require such confidentiality. In which if revealed and found their way to the media, a disaster for the security of the host state and hosted state may occur. This is because the nature of media work is based on publicity, disclosure and media precedence, not to mention the lies and intimidation resorted to by various media in some cases in order to achieve national goals in order to influence the course of international relations in a manner that serves the self-interests of the concerned state²¹.

The diplomatic envoy that carries out the media function abroad is originally an employee of the Ministry of Information and is delegated according to a decision issued by the Minister of Information, after consulting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A media diplomat who is assigned to work abroad with a diplomatic mission must have a degree in media or one of its branches, international relations, political science, or any branch that qualifies him to practice media tasks abroad.

Some countries require those who join such a position to have the experience and flexibility necessary to exercise the media mission for a period of no less than ten years in the Ministry of Information or any other ministry, institution or body concerned with media work.

The purpose of the foregoing is to select the best qualified elements and to leave a positive impression on those who occupy the media job abroad, as the competence of the media diplomat is of great importance in judging the media outlet.

The media diplomat is not necessarily affiliated to the Ministry of Information or any of the bodies or institutions concerned with media work. In cases of necessity and for

²⁰ Joseph Assaf, *ibid.*

²¹ Jamal Barakat, *ibid.*, p65

considerations of public interest, any of the members of the diplomatic mission may be delegated to carry out the work of media functions, even temporarily.

A media diplomat must have the ability to deal quickly with the media, while being firm with diplomatic acumen, broad knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of his country's policies.

It's also worth to mention that the media diplomat is the one who has the ability to adapt no matter how circumstances change so that he can build relationships and alliances with different spectrums in order to achieve the desired goals²².

3. The Tasks of the Media Diplomat

Undoubtedly, there are many important tasks entrusted to those who work in diplomatic media. These tasks vary between what is stipulated in international agreements and what is imposed by virtue of practice.

Based on the foregoing, this chapter will be divided into two sections, so that we will address in the first section the tasks of the media diplomat in the light of international conventions; whereas in the second section, we will discuss his duties in the light of practical reality.

3.1 the tasks of the media diplomat in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

Referring to Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963, it is the responsibility of the diplomatic envoy, in general, and the media diplomat in particular, to explore the conditions and collect information about the host country and send it to the hosted country.

The media diplomat works to send information and data, especially data related to issues and events that pertain to his country and affect its interests directly or indirectly. In addition to political and economic news, social mobility and everything related to the issues that are the focus of internal public opinion in the host country. The mission of the media diplomat shall not stop at the limits of collecting information and data only, but also goes beyond them to include analysis, statement of opinion, reading between the lines and a statement of different points of view of many specialists in all political, economic, cultural, social and religious affairs...etc.

It is noted that the wording of the articles within the Vienna Convention of 1961 included the use of terms such as observation, watching, exploration, inquiry and other meanings indicating the necessity of collecting information and ensuring permanent communication between both the host and hosted countries, provided that obtaining any information was done through the legitimate methods and means.

With regard to the information and data collection and analysis task assigned to the the media diplomat and then sending it to his country, it must be of great importance, enabling his country to achieve the greatest amount of benefit from it at the present and future. In addition to that such information and data must be carried in Its folds are serious and deep, which is

²²Abdul Salam ben Abdullah Alanzi, Media and influence diplomacy, Al-jazirah, Thursday, May 30, 2019 available at, < www.al-jazirah.com/2019/20190530/ar1.htm >.

consistent in particular with the ruling regime in his country, its trends, the constants it walks on, and the role that its countries play in the context of international and regional relations.

It is the responsibility of the media diplomat to send his information periodically and within a specified time under absolute confidentiality, so that the information does not lose its value and importance and with the need to distinguish between the important and the most important²³.

The information should be clear, concise and comprehensive so that decision makers in the hosted country can understand it in a deep, accurate and objective manner. Therefore, this requires the media diplomat to list the facts and events without adding or missing; as the decision-makers in the hosted country rely on this information when making a decision that can either lead to a brilliant success in the context of international relations, making the hosted country the focus of attention of many countries, or to a catastrophic failure that causes it to lose its status and importance at the international level for a period of time that may not be short.

Hence, the authors recommend to work on adopting the decisions and recommendations issued by the media attachés as they are issued by the specialists so that they have a wide margin of acceptance, study and attention when setting media policies. In addition to giving them the necessary authorization to sign agreements and protocols related to media cooperation between the approved country and the approved country because of its experience and knowledge that makes them more qualified than others.

Based on the foregoing, the authors find that the media diplomat in the host state performs an accurate and balanced media work in terms of collecting information and data, making statements and making contacts, and therefore he explores, concludes and suggests.

Whereas, the media diplomat is collecting information and data from newspapers and magazines in the hosted country - paper or electronic - and then analyzing them and submitting reports on their analyzes to the local press in the host country regarding the current conditions in his country, especially in terms of foreign policy at a time of political, economic and social crises, he is representing the tongue of his state²⁴.

It is the responsibility of the media diplomat to represent his country with everything in it, as the field of his work is the foreign countries with everything in it. He should have an ideological content through his knowledge of the books of history, heritage, religions and nationalities. Moreover, that he has a scientific and economic formation by informing him of the sources of natural resources, methods of manufacturing and trade, technology and financial markets. This is so that he has a prior opinion of the events before they occur. Consequently, the media diplomat had to follow up on the statements of officials and decision-makers in the hosted country for the best solutions and proposals thereof²⁵.

In addition to the above, the media diplomat must predict the event before it occurs, especially with regard to the programs of the political parties involved in the electoral process,

²³ Khalil Jabbar, The Information Building of Diplomatic Decisions and Determinants of National Security, Journal of the Kufa Studies Center, 40, 2016, p. 78

²⁴ Ali Hussein Al-Shami, Diplomacy, House of Culture, Amman, Fifth Edition, 2011, p. 253

²⁵ Khudair Al-Aqidi, Diplomatic Media, University Book House, Al-Ain, first edition, 2017, p. 165

or through their decisions through which they review the policies of the governments they lead²⁶.

In addition to the mission of the media diplomat with regard to political parties, he also has the responsibility to communicate with influential groups in the host country, whether these groups are members of Parliament, parties, senior officials and others who have a clear and positive influence in the political decision-making process²⁷.

Also, we should not lose sight of the important and sensitive role related to mass communication, as the media diplomat, through the means of communication and media in the accredited country, must write contracts, respond to what is published by the media, give lectures, hold press conferences, participate in audio and visual media, and hold media exhibitions and cultural and artistic weeks as well as encouraging tourism, in addition to holding folkloric parties and distributing purposeful publications and books.

3.2 Realistic Tasks of a Media Diplomat

There are many duties assigned to the media diplomat, which are imposed on him de facto, specifically in the field of work. The nature of work may impose duties and tasks that may differ significantly from the tasks stipulated in any international agreement, and this is what we will address in this section.

Since the media diplomat is the eye of his country abroad and the trustee of everything that affects its reputation and dignity, it was necessary for him to follow up everything published about his country in all media, especially what was offensive to its citizens, its faith and its president, so that he works on refuting the fabricated and malicious news according to the direct and indirect smart method, and publishing facts and information related to the truth.

His mission does not stop at this point, but goes beyond it to purify the atmosphere and crisis containment - real or fake - with the necessity of avoiding emotions and uncalculated reactions and anticipating any direction. Here, he must confront the clashing media by all means and methods, provided that this does not lead to disturbing the relations between the two countries.

Further, the media diplomat in his battlefield of defending his country, he must inform his country first-hand of the aspects of his media activity and the methods of counter-media, and explain the best methods and methods in order to confront it, and what does not require a response to it.

The media diplomat is not the one who stands ready to respond to every offense with a statement, speech or denial...etc. Rather, he has to separate the wheat from the chaff, between what deserves a response, and what does not deserve a response, seeking the assistance of decision-makers in his country when necessary.

²⁶ Khudair Al-Aqidi, *ibid.*, p.65

²⁷ Islamic University of Gaza, 'Media advisors and attachés and their role in the international media, available at <<http://site.iugaza.edu.ps/awafi/files/2011/09/002.docx>>, p. (1)

Based on the foregoing, coordination between the media diplomat and the media in his country or in the host countries has become a fundamental and necessary matter, considering that they are two sides of the same coin.

The international relations undertaken by the diplomatic institutions should be accompanied by a conscious media, so that the media diplomat gives an honest image of his country and its citizens abroad, radiates its values, principles and culture to defend them, and works to win international public opinion for his country's stances and just issues, and harmonizes the supreme interests of his country and the international concerns²⁸.

It worth mentioning that the media diplomat must change the mental image of all sectors of the state that is deliberate about his state, and work to form a positive, sympathetic or at least neutral public opinion. Thus, Strengthening the media presence and strengthening the links with the media and press institutions between the approved country and the approved country is one of the most present and important tasks.

This requires the media diplomat to work on communicating with journalists and establishing close relations with them in order to identify all the news and rumors that affect his state and to strive to refute those rumors and spread his state's point of view.

The media diplomat, when practicing all of the above, should also have set limits and controls that shall not be crossed, in a way that might harm his country's relations with other countries. The media diplomat, while performing his duties, is not acceptable to enjoy wide margins in his reading of the determinants of his country's foreign policy or even the relevant countries. As this would open the door to *ijtihad* and convey a different, image or contradict the national interests of his country, as the media diplomat is only a transmitter of political reality not a maker of it²⁹.

Thus, the media diplomat has become prepared to deal with the changes of the new era, the tremendous technical progress in the means of communication, the speed of obtaining information, the international media exchange, and the interest in global public opinion, which made media and diplomatic work a suitable environment for advancing the world politically, economically, intellectually and culturally.

The media diplomat works to present facts and sound information on the thorny issues and topics, which leads to the creation of the largest possible degree of knowledge and awareness among everyone who receives the media material, which contributes to enlightening public opinion and positively affecting the mentality of the masses.

The media diplomat, when dealing with information, he may deal with a huge amount of information and data, which requires him to be able to control this amount of information. In the event that there are five different reports, dealing with the analysis and reading for a specific urge. Here he will not be able to read the entire five novels. Hence, he had to identify

²⁸ Jamal Barakat, *ibid.*, p. 69

²⁹ Joseph Assaf, *ibid.*, p. 4

the most important novel and find homogeneity between the novels that include convergent analyzes³⁰.

The media diplomat can play a pivotal role when performing his work. When he performs a work of absolute importance, he must take the initiative to present it to the media as soon as possible before it is lost and loses its importance. As for the works that do not constitute any importance, it is possible to draw attention to them if they are presented in an elaborate and distinctive manner, with what is known for their mastery of effective strategies, determination and perseverance³¹

4. Information technology and means of communication and their impact on the work of the media diplomat and its sources of information

There is no doubt that information technology and modern communication means have an effective and pivotal role in raising the level of diplomatic media because of the speed of obtaining information and the speed of verifying it, and then delivering it to decision-makers in his country. Information technology and modern means of communication are not the only source in the work of a media diplomat, as there are traditional sources that still constitute an indispensable importance in the ABCs of the media diplomat's work in the present as in the past.

Accordingly, this chapter will be divided into two sections:

1. The impact of information technology and means of communication on the work of a media diplomat.
2. Sources of information for the media diplomat

4.1 The impact of information technology and means of communication on the work of a media diplomat

There are many obstacles that face the media diplomat while exercising his duties, these obstacles include the limited equipment and devices necessary to perform his duties. In addition to the weak financial capabilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as this has become an obstacle to any development required in the information age.

This dilemma is exacerbated by the fact that the diplomatic apparatus of any country exercises its work within a permanent headquarters abroad, which is reflected in the costs and expenses resulting from the introduction of modern technology through geographically distant locations³².

In addition to the above, we find that the technical obstacle may require electronic processing of the flowing information stream, which may constitute a problem that is not easy to address effectively because the information received is characterized by its flexibility and lack of structure.

³⁰ Archetti, Cristina 2010, Media impact on diplomatic practice: An evolutionary model of change , in: American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Convention, 2-5 September, Washington, DC. Available at <<http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/12444>>

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Ali Abdel Fattah, *ibid.*, p.50

In addition to the above, the possibility of accessing the information exchanged between the media diplomat and the competent authorities to receive it in the hosted country, whatever its name, has become a security concern for countries.

Where it is possible to break into such information and data electronically, and thus accessing it, it may constitute a security threat to the security of the hosted country or any related country and the occurrence of what does not carry consequences.

In addition to the technical obstacles and the security they pose to the task undertaken by the media diplomat, the authors find that there are another obstacles such as the low level of awareness, culture and knowledge of the tasks required of the media diplomat. This is due either to a lack of personal competencies or to a failure to keep pace with the pace of media development, especially media technology. There are also, the surroundings' obstacles that should not be underestimated, represented in the medium or the environment. In which the media diplomat exercises his duties, as he exercises his duties in a foreign and unclear environment, in a way that enables the local authorities in the host country to impose restrictions and control over his tasks, not to mention providing him with technical aid if requested³³.

Given that diplomacy in the 21st century is no longer limited to dealing with the government or official authorities as it was in the past. The media diplomat has become, and in light of the spread of means of communication, in a direct relationship with members of the people, which is called (popular diplomacy). Although this method has become popular in many countries, it may be considered a blatant interference in the internal affairs of the state it has adopted.

The media diplomat must bear in mind that he is working in the midst of a storm of technological developments and successive modern media techniques, and the accompanying emergence of non-traditional forms of social media such as electronic newspapers, the Internet, and Nano science to obtain information.

Hence, the media diplomat had to work on exploiting the positive aspects of the means of communication, such as the speed of delivering the news based on tangible facts such as the drop in stock prices or any misleading economic data and other events that provoke people's feelings³⁴.

The link between media diplomacy and technological development in the field of information technology and means of communication has become of great importance in the twenty-first century, both of which have become an important and inevitable matter in the literature of media work in general and diplomatic work in particular.

The technological development that the world is witnessing now, especially in the means of communication, has enabled the media diplomat to take advantage of social media and digital platforms in achieving political, economic, social, health, tourism and other goals.

The means of communication and technological communication have significantly affected all aspects of the media activity of the media diplomat, by making him more interactive and responsive to the events surrounding him. Where such media made the diplomatic media

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Saadoun bin Hussein Al-Hamdani, Diplomatic media and the positives of social media, July 2022, available at < <https://alwatan.com/details/446496> >

flow more easily and flexibly than before between his country and the host country, in receiving instructions and directions and communicating the required information through the mobile, the Internet or short messages more quickly and faster response. Instead of ordinary and encrypted telegrams, secret channels and other traditional means accompanied with different obstacles that are no more hidden from everyone.

Such technological development has helped the media diplomat to be quickly acquainted with the course of things and events, and the consequent rapid response in conveying the news and providing the required answer to any question directed to him by the decision-makers in his country³⁵.

Without having an excuse for any delay, in light of the available technology and the positives associated with its use that embodied in saving time, effort and money.

Despite some opinions that deny the importance of the media diplomat's work in light of the information technology revolution that the world is witnessing at the present time, the tangible reality goes to the contrary. The media diplomat works to create an important addition in the media work, which is the search for the truth and its meanings, and the ambiguity associated with some outstanding issues through the search for evidence, in addition to the analysis and interpretation of information. As the vast amount of past and present information cannot be analyzed or interpreted on its own.

4.2 Sources of Information for the Media Diplomat

The media diplomat derives his information from several sources, where these sources must be accurate and precise so that they are true and objective that the decision-makers in the approved country can rely on.

These sources vary in front of the media diplomat, but this diversity should be credible and professional, so that the media diplomat has to restructure such information and examine it to separate the wheat from the chaff. Among the most important of these sources:

4.2.1 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the host country

For the media diplomat, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the host country is one of the most important bodies and sources of information and data. At the same time, it is considered one of the sensitive and complex bodies due to the secrecy and ambiguity surrounding diplomatic work, especially with regard to correspondence, letters and reports issued by its diplomatic missions abroad³⁶.

In addition to the above, the restrictions imposed on the employees, which are the prohibition of communication with the public in general and the media in particular.³⁷

³⁵ One of the media diplomats working in the United Kingdom says that at the same time you are reading about a news item in the British press and the resulting controversy or discussions, you can refer to the Washington Post or the New York Times in the United States of America to know what they comment on this news, thanks to technology the information. Archetti, Cristina, *ibide*.

³⁶ The Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a circular prohibiting all diplomatic and consular missions abroad from conducting any press interviews, writing in newspapers, or conducting interviews with visual, audio and print media without prior permission from the ministry's leadership in Sana'a. Yemen Press - Sana'a , The Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs prevents diplomats from declaring or writing in the media a "document" Saturday, February 22, 2014 at 10:30 am available at <www.yemen-press.com/news27675.html>

³⁷ Khudair Al-Aqidi, Diplomatic Media, University Book House, Al-Ain, first edition, 2017, p. 81.

As all the concerned parties and their employees of all levels are not required to delve into the secrets of their work or reveal any information, no matter how insignificant in their eyes it may seem.

Despite the veil of secrecy imposed in this regard, the media diplomat can, through friendly parties, be able to obtain the required information without raising any sensitivities or troubles that could cast a shadow on the relations between the two countries. This is due to the resourcefulness and shrewdness of the media diplomat and the extent of his skill in accessing the data information he wants.

4.2.2 Radios and news agencies

It is agreed that international radio stations and news agencies have become an indispensable source for obtaining the required information. However, total reliance on it is considered unacceptable, given the specific trends and opinions represented by these agencies and radio stations that express certain programs and regimes, which makes total or partial reliance on them a convincing misleading that is about to plunge the media diplomat into a maze that is difficult for him to get out of, not to mention serious damage to his country, if he does not deal with it properly and objectively.

However, the proper analysis of the information obtained from this source can form the basis for reaching the desired truth, because it represents a bank of information related to news, world events, comments and analyzes that can be accessed with the required speed.

From this point of view, the authors find that the knowledge of the media diplomat and his skill in reading between the lines, may allow him to deal with decision-makers with high professionalism and unrivaled efficiency, whether in his country or in other countries, otherwise this is reflected in his performance and was a reason for his failure.

4.2.3 Relations and contacts with members of the diplomatic corps

The strong ties and relations of the media diplomat with his diplomatic counterparts are the most important sources of information, especially what was outside the scope of official work, such as diplomatic parties, clubs, social events and all modern social media. A media diplomat derives from his colleagues in the diplomatic corps may sometimes be more abundant than what he can obtain from his sending country.³⁸

Here, the media diplomat has an obligation to familiarize himself with the basics of knowledge that he can obtain from his colleagues in the diplomatic corps, without going into any information about his country. This requires a foresight from the media diplomat and a deep knowledge of the methods of communication with the other people, so that he can take more than he gives, without raising doubts about him in this regard.

4.2.4 The Press and Journalists

Foreign newspapers, magazines, and every piece of paper that carries new information, is of considerable importance for the media diplomat, as the press is the main source of information, regardless of its type and importance.

This, therefore, requires from the media diplomat distinguished linguistic and mental abilities. An unlimited passion for reading and a deep knowledge of the direction that each newspaper takes in its writings comments and analyzes, and whether it is in the orbit of a

³⁸ Amin Shalaby, In Contemporary Diplomacy, World of Books, Cairo, second class, p. 195

particular political party or one of the influential pressure groups, and this requires a fertile vigilant mindset in media diplomat.

In this regard, some believe that the diplomat's daily contact with foreign correspondents and journalists would make him more knowledgeable and insightful than his contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the host country³⁹.

Thus, the media diplomat, during his continuous contact with the press and its cadres of journalists, correspondents and others, would spare him the means of misinformation and deception that some media might deduce, such as distorting the event or news or giving it less importance than its real importance or vice versa, or presenting facts by twisted means.

In addition, the media diplomat, when dealing with the event in the press or any other media, should be honest and trustworthy when conveying information, avoiding intimidation, and placing matters within their true size.

The media diplomat is not a journalist translator, he should not be satisfied with just a premature and superficial reading of the political events, and just conveying the information contained in the press as they are⁴⁰. Rather, his work goes beyond that to explore what is written, analyze, filter, and evaluate between lines and what is reliable or not, news sources and their attitudes.

Finally, we cannot fail to mention that the media diplomat has a duty to influence journalists and reporters when such influence is required in order to correct information on a specific issue or area that falls within his field of interest⁴¹.

It is worth noting, in this regard, that the best use of the press and journalists is not through the availability and flow of information. The media diplomat should not use any available information randomly, as he needs a reliable and accurate source of information⁴².

5. Conclusion

Diplomacy, in its quest to strengthen the bonds of love and friendly relations between countries, has become certain that the media is one of its main and effective tools in effectively influencing the course of international relations.

The development of traditional diplomacy and its tools has called for the need to establish media offices in diplomatic missions. As carrying out media tasks has become a major and important part that diplomatic missions cannot dispense with even if this work is undertaken by a diplomatic employee, since media work has become an effective and influential part of modern diplomacy tools.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Tayseer Masharqa, Contemporary Diplomat and Media. Available at <www.balagh.com/pages/tex.php?tid=48894>.

⁴¹ Tayseer Masharqa. *Ibid.*

⁴² One of the diplomats working in his country's embassy in Ethiopia described the information available in the press and the media as scanty and insufficient, and this is due to weak government propaganda and the lack of a balanced analysis or evaluation of any event. Archetti, cristina , *ibide*.

Countries have realized the importance of the role played by the external media, so they are in a race against time to work hard to develop their own capabilities in this field, through training, planning and access to the experiences of developed countries in this regard and keeping pace with technical progress in the field of media.

Based on the foregoing, the researcher concludes a number of recommendations in this regard, the most important of which are:

1- Linking media missions abroad with the Ministry of Information and Culture in the hosted country so that it is easy to provide them with media material from their internal source, taking advantage of the tremendous technical progress, whereby it is possible to ensure that the media message is delivered in an accurate and transparent manner.

2- Working on coordination between all the authorities responsible for media tasks in the hosted country in order to obtain a unified media discourse abroad.

3- Working on appointing qualified and specialized media attachés so that they can link the print, audio and visual media with diplomatic work, in a manner that will reflect positively on the national constants that the sending state seeks to achieve and consolidate in order to deliver its message to the international community. So that the external media is formulated in a way that achieves consistency between national constants and international relations.

4- The conditions of job qualification in the diplomatic corps must be reconsidered so as to attract qualified competencies to undertake media jobs, with the need to adopt tests and interviews that contribute to the selection of these elements in the best manner, provided that this is applied in countries that cannot use two media attachés from the competent authorities for certain considerations.

5- The necessity of establishing an international diplomatic institute affiliated with the United Nations (with branches in all countries) to work on rehabilitating diplomatic cadres from all corners of the earth, and in particular with regard to undertaking media functions in diplomatic work. Especially in developing and poor countries whose resources and budgets do not enable them to catch up with the leading countries in this regard.

6- The context of Vienna Conventions 1961 and 1963 become incompatible with the developments that have taken place in diplomatic work, in particular (media work), and as more than half a century has passed since the conclusion of both conventions. Hence, it has become necessary and necessary to work to amend the texts contained in both conventions so that they are compatible with the diplomacy of the 21st century.

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