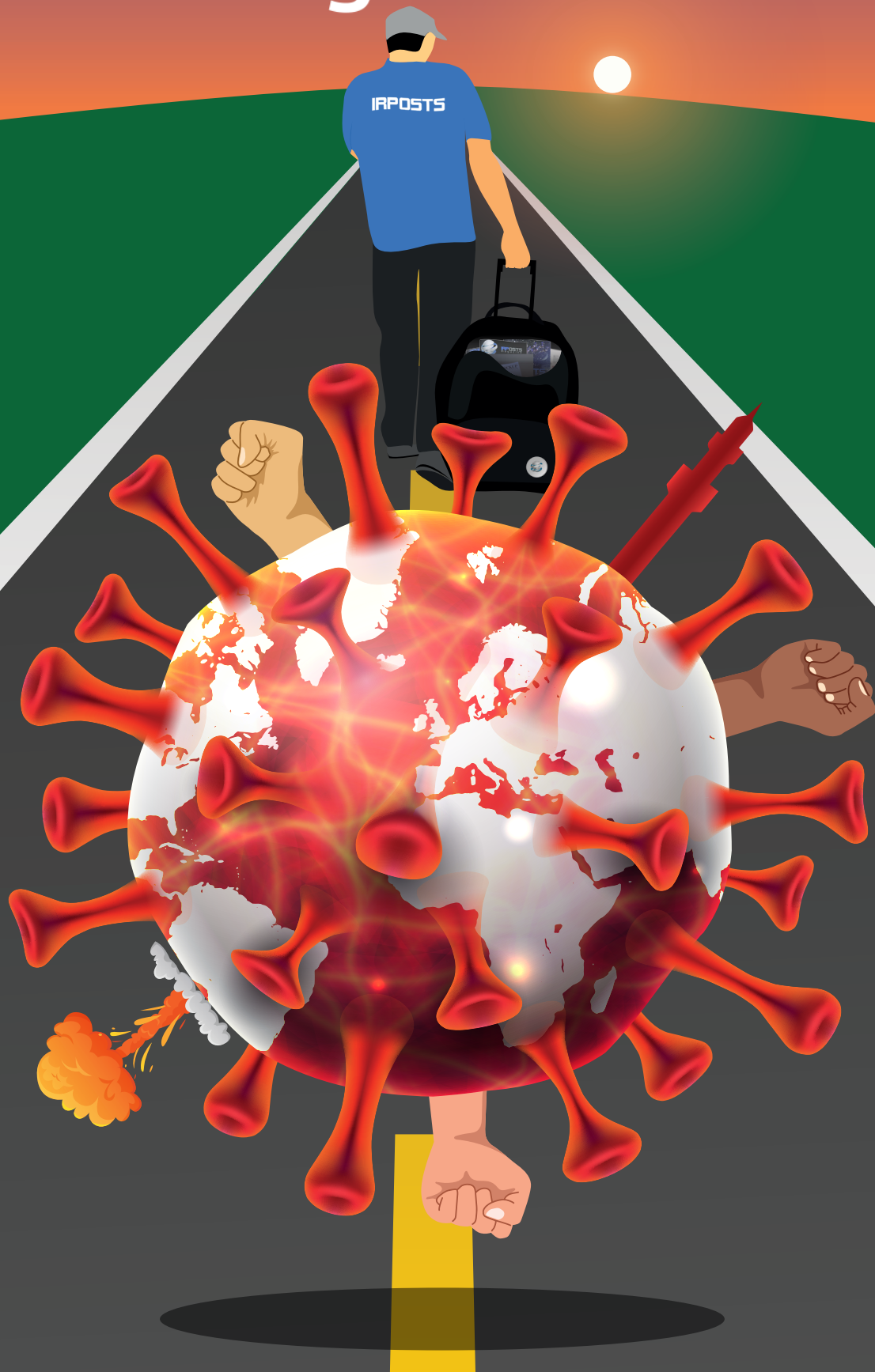


IRPOSTS

magazine



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After this volume, IRPosts Magazine will take a long break from the publishing life. You can continue to follow us in the Typelish platform. We are grateful to you accompany us in our 4-years adventure.

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Editor in Chief

Berkay Bulut

Editor

Yağmur Taşdemir

Social Media Coordinator

Selen Ceylan

Design

RGBear

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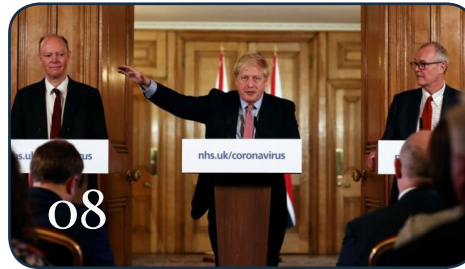
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PRIVACY RIGHTS AND THE NEW CORONAVIRUS

by Ahsen Sevnur Yıldırım



We are struggling with a new crisis which is affecting the whole world. The Coronavirus, which has already caused more than 4 million cases, brings new problems with itself. One of the most important problems is the violation of privacy rights. In the case of tackling the Coronavirus, digital tools, for example, health applications have been introduced to track the spread of the Coronavirus and they already caused to concerns on the privacy issue. TraceTogether, Pan-European Privacy-Preserving Proximity Tracing, C-19 COVID Symptom Tracker, WeChat, Apple and Google... They all have a common mis-

sion during this worldwide crisis; tracking the spread of Coronavirus. These applications generate heat maps by using the location of Coronavirus patients and their contacts via their personal telecoms data. For example, China is using a color-coded health rating system that identifies the patients according to their risks, and the patients are either allowed or denied to enter malls, subways so on according to their colour-codes. Another contact-tracing example is the announcement of a joint initiative by Apple and Google. In this joint effort, the Bluetooth technology will be used for tracking the spread of Coronavirus by using the users' location data. The important reasons for privacy concerns in these implemented policies are anonymity of the personal information that used in the apps, the risks of selling the personal data to the third parties, the possibility of the usage of information in the future for any other purposes etc. The world has already witnessed some examples cases of privacy breaches. For example, 2018 revelation of Facebook sold the user's information to the third parties or the cases of the four largest industry players (AT&T, Verizon, Sprint and T-Mobile) of the USA sold the location data to the third parties without the explicit consent of its users. Although digital tools are being used for national security in the case of fighting with the deadly epidemic, old experiences show that the concerns over privacy issues are on point. It must be taking into consideration that there is a fine line in this issue and none of us does want a wake up in a morning and sees that our personal data are at risk because of these applications.

Identity Politics as a Threat to the EU Disintegration Process

by Yağmur Taşdemir

Europe, which has been living a long period of peace after the Second World War and gradually institutionalizing the EU since the 1950s, has strengthened its political unity and increased its welfare. As a natural result, it has been one of the target regions of immigrants for a long time. As refugees who migrate to neighbouring countries lose their hope of returning to their homeland, they move towards “rich and welfare Europe” to establish a new life in a completely new country. This can be understood from the fact that approximately 3.9 per-cents of the EU population consists of foreign nationals or stateless people.¹ In addition to those living in the EU countries in the context of regular migration, there is a large influx of irregular migrants towards the EU. Considering that the main countries experiencing war, civil war, social and political instability are located in the Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan regions; it is inevitable for Europe to become a destination for irregular immigration and asylum seeking. Such migration movements pose some special challenges for the European states, such as management of crossings process at the borders, heavy cost of hosting a large population, as well as security and integration concerns.



Irregular immigration to the EU has caused more concern in recent years and also started to take place frequently in the public policy discussions. Under increasing public pressure to prevent irregular immigration, European policy makers define it differently at the national level and produce various policies regarding the problem. For example, after removal of the internal borders in the Schengen region, the European states have cooperated to ensure security of the external borders trying to combat irregular immigration to the EU through Frontex which is the European

Border and Coast Guard Agency. From a historical point of view, it is possible to say that despite the recent increase in immigration movements to Europe, immigration problem has lasted ages for the continent rather than being a new phenomenon. One of its main reasons is that coordination in the asylum policies of the European states has not been achieved and these policies have been generally developed only at the national level despite the regulations regarding establishment of the European common market and removal of borders within the EU. Refugees who took refuge in the European states in 1950s and 1960s came from some former Soviet territories and European states that adopted communist ideology. In the Cold War era, until the end of the 1970s, Europe had applied generous admission policies to them in line with ideological and strategic goals, since arrivals were mostly European, preventing anxiety about integration problems and responding to need in the labour market in the first thirty years after the war. In the 1980s, these political and economic conditions changed, and the European countries receiving immigration started to give refugee status to these immigrants that they could not control by quota applications claiming that they came with only economic motivations. By 1990s, European states had given more reasons to prevent refugee movements such as the rising xenophobia in the Europe, envisaged pressure that mass migration influx to Europe after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and economic crisis as well as high unemployment rates in Western Europe. On the other hand, because of understanding that growing irregular immigration flow in 2015 would lead to a crisis, public discussions on solution of the problem started in beginning of the year. In fact, similar debates were brought to agenda in 2011, the first year of the Arab Spring, and Italy issued a Schengen visa to refugees, since burden of irregular immigration from Libya was not shared by other countries of the EU equally.² Therefore, France controlled trains coming from Italy by stopping at the borders to prevent entry of immigrants and announced that the Schengen Agreement would be suspended if necessary. After France, Denmark announced that it would start border controls without waiting for decision of the EU.³ Additionally, when refugee crisis started in 2011, it did not reach its current level. Therefore, no detailed study has been carried out on structural problems of the EU regarding refugee crisis. By 2015, the fact that the majority of irregular immigrants were refugees, not migrants was ignored; and first proposal was measures to protect the borders of the EU more closely. As a matter of fact, Frontex has continued its efforts to protect

1- Yücel, S. Y. (2017, November). Avrupa'nın Mültecilerle İmtihani.

2- Paoletti, E. (n.d.). The Arab Spring and the Italian Response to Migration in 2011.

3- Yücel, S. Y. (2017, November). Avrupa'nın Mültecilerle İmtihani.

EU territorial waters within this framework. However, a million of people who managed to cross EU territorial waters in 2015 made it clear that this was a futile effort performed by the Europe.



Suspension of the Schengen as a solution against influx of refugees has revealed extent of the crisis. This means that influx of refugees has reached a level that restricts the EU's greatest values such as free movement of goods, services, capital and people. Another method was adapting to re-adjustment of the borders, increase border controls reinforcing police and even soldiers, and to use push back method to send refugees to their countries of origin. In the face of immigration crisis in European public, trend towards rebuilding the walls has been increasingly expressed and found support. As a matter of fact, a public survey conducted in July 2015 revealed that European citizens no longer want the Schengen Agreement, which ended identity checks of EU citizens.⁴ According to the survey, percentage of those who want to cancel Schengen is 67 per-cent in France, 53 per-cents in Germany, 59 per-cents in the Netherlands and 56 per-cents in Italy.⁵ In this regard, some question marks have emerged: "Do those who want to cancel the Schengen Agreement want it for only economic reasons?", "What is the effects of illegal immigration on the questioning of the internal issues of the Union?" or "Within the context of the immigration crisis, what is the role of identity politics related to increasing number of immigrants in the EU disintegration process?" Excessive increase in immigration may be a problem for European countries not only in the short but also long term. Economically, especially the problems experienced by the countries which receive refugee substantially or countries with budget problems cannot be denied. The basis of opposing stance of the countries receiving mass immigration and citizens of these countries is also generally related to the economy. Unfortunately, today many countries in Europe have unemployment and low-paid job problems, especially among young people. In January 2016, average European unemployment has reached 8.9 per-cents, leading to an increase in question marks on immigration.⁶ However, rather

er than examining economic effects of flux of illegal immigrations on disintegration process, this article will seek to analyse effects of identity politics looking at social and cultural impacts of immigration on the continent. Besides financial and social costs of immigrants, immigration can also cause problems in integration process, which is the most important step towards the EU. This poses the risk of undermining the core beliefs of the Union, which fuels solidarity and cooperation between the Member States.



Aniol argues that "States are required not only to defend their territorial integrity and political independence, but that they have a responsibility to protect inter alia their cultural identity and social stability."⁷ Some argues that immigration possess a threat since traditional way of thinking adopts identity clash as one of the main elements related to security of society. According to traditional thinking, immigrants are perceived as a threat to public order and associated with crimes such as drugs, human trafficking and terrorism. From this perspective, only exception can be complementary identities. For example, since both identities do not conflict with each other, it is possible to be both Italian and European, while it is not possible to be both Muslim and Christian. In my opinion, the best instance to be observed is the discussions about long story of the Turkish membership to the Union on the grounds that "Turkey is not Christian and hence is not European and cannot actually become European."⁸ Therefore, in the case of the immigration, lack of cultural affinities of immigrants with the countries they migrated on social and cultural issues such as language, religion and race may create a bias towards them. Many of the concerns and disputes regarding to refugees arise from the in-group and out-group distinction. As a result, all the side effects that come with radicalized migration movements also increase. We/they distinction and visions of Europe have raised concerns not only for the Eurosceptic parties and its supporters but for many European citizens. This affects the European states' commit-

4- BBC. (2016, April 24). Schengen: Controversial EU free movement deal explained.

5- Vollaard, H. (2019). European Disintegration: A Search for Explanations. pp.148-219

6- Eurostat. (2019, January). Euro area unemployment at 7.8%

7- Raf, O. (2006, December 11). The European Union and Migration: Security versus Identity?

8- Minkenberg, M., Freire, A., Boomgaarden, H. G., & Claes, H. M. (2012, April). Turkish membership in the European Union – The role of religion.

9- Caporaso, J. A. (2018, June 13). Europe's Triple Crisis and the Uneven Role of Institutions: The Euro, Refugees and Brexit

6 EUROPE

ment to the Union and European citizens' perception as a threat because European integration theories mainly relate with "Europeanization of the identities". So, it is inevitable that Eurosceptic movements and parties frequently raise issue of immigration and continue their populist discourses in this regard since immigrants are seen as a threat to the European identity. According to Boerzel and Risse, "The EU has shown itself to be limited in the face of a crisis that revolves around identity concerns more than economic issues."⁹ So, problems emerging from identity politics lie at the heart of current crisis of the EU despite of the existence of several other crises. The immigration crisis has also led to the questioning of the internal issues that have a very important place in the EU agenda, such as the 1985 Schengen Agreement and Dublin Regulation. The Schengen Agreement has an important meaning for the EU and forms one of the symbols of the Union. "The Schengen area represents a territory where the free movement of persons is guaranteed. The signatory states to the Agreement have abolished all internal borders in lieu of a single external border."¹⁰ The Schengen Agreement is one of the most important steps taken in deepening the EU integration period. However, according to some, the easier the free movement of people within the Union, the harder it will be to deal with crimes on the continent. This poses a threat to the Member States, in particular in fight against terrorism and cross-border crimes. Therefore, immigration crisis may have undesirable consequences in the Member States due to the right to free movement at the borders. Countries such as Bulgaria and Hungary have built precautionary border fences to protect their borders and limit illegal immigration.¹¹



On the other hand, during the migration from Syria, refugees were trying to migrate from the borders of Greece to relatively more developed European countries, especially to Germany and France. As a precaution, Germany has regulated its borders with Austria.¹² This has attracted interest in the other European countries and they have made regulations in their internal borders as Germany did. For example, France initiated to carry out the internal border controls, Norway imposed to checks in the points of ferry connections and Austria strengthened its land borders shared with Slovenia and Hungary.¹³ Therefore, the immigration crisis has become an important risk factor against the Schengen Agreement limiting the borders among the European states which supposed to be

free as one of the core principles of the Union. In addition, due to the increased immigration, Dublin Regulation has also started to become a regulation that the Member States are in dilemma. This Regulation is the law that determines how the Member States will apply in their asylum applications. According to this Regulation, the first country where refugees enter the Union is responsible for obtaining their fingerprints and asylum requests. Therefore, the first EU country is responsible for welcoming and processing refugees. However, most refugees want to go to relatively developed countries such as Germany rather than fingerprinting in destination countries such as Greece and Italy. Along with the immigration movements, Germany processed the asylum requests of Syrian immigrants who entered the country by suspending the Dublin Regulations. Also, Hungary considered itself overburdened because of welcoming around 60.000 illegal immigrants and declared that it would not accept another flux of migration simply referring to the withdrawal from the Dublin Regulation.¹⁴



These are only some examples of the Dublin Regulation being restricted and revised by the Member States. In June 2015, the European Commission offered a scheme in which refugees were redistributed in the European states. Thus, the distribution of immigrants to the Member States would have been more equal through new regulations, but was rejected by some Eastern European countries. Also, some West European countries like the UK, Austria and Spain were reluctant to take a step related to reshape the asylum seeker policies.¹⁵ However, strong opposition was still from the Central and Eastern European Members. Therefore, although they gave a relatively mild result later, meetings were in deadlock for a long time. Related to these talks, *Le Monde*, which is a French daily newspaper, stated that "The mountain EU had moved, but given birth to a mouse."¹⁶ As a result, the Schengen Agreement and Dublin Regulation are in shock, especially on the recent developments in Syria, which is an obstacle to further integration of the Union. In brief, the European states have begun to disagree about the Union because this crisis has caused some conflicts on the continent. In my estimation, the most crucial point of this disagreement is the different views between the Member States about the atti-

10- EUR-Lex. (2009, August 03). The Schengen area and cooperation.

11- Goździak, E. M. (2019, October 10). Using Fear of the "Other," Orbán Reshapes Migration Policy in a Hungary Built on Cultural Diversity.

12- Schengenvisa.info. (2018, April 17). Germany requests border control extension for Austrian frontier.

13- Ibid.

14- Than, K., & Nasralla, S. (2013, June 23). Defying EU, Hungary suspends rules on asylum seekers.

15- Vollaard, H. (2019). European Disintegration: A Search for Explanations.

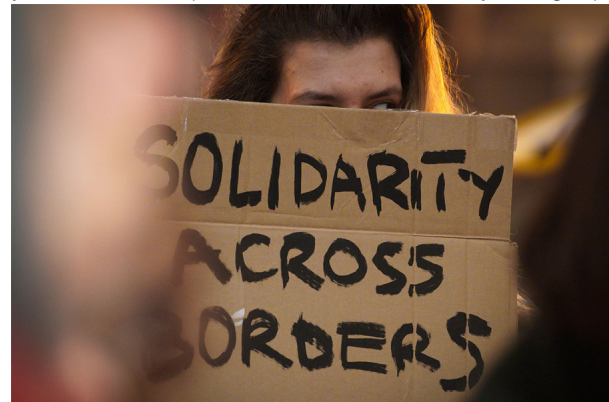
16- Ibid.

tudes towards immigrants. For example, Germany has been more welcoming in this regard, while France has been more cautious. On the other hand, Eastern and Central European countries do not hesitate to express their opposing views regarding to this issue frequently. For example, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán criticized Germany because of its attitude towards the refugees under the title of “moral imperialism” and rejected Germany’s proposal to redistribute the refugees within the Union.¹⁷ Another example can be shown as the discourses of President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker in September 2015. Juncker, whose attitude is very accusatory, expressed his criticism on this issue by saying “Our European Union is not in a good state.”¹⁸ He briefly expressed their needs for a new common plan. The basis of his speech was based on the common past and traditions of the European states. According to him, the priority was to protect the past that Europe had as a whole. So, his main concern was to lose the common past and identity shared by the Europeans. He highlighted that “Numbers of asylum seekers simply represents 0.11% of the overall EU population of 500 million, when they are representing 25% of the Lebanese population.”¹⁹ He also added “I do not want to create any illusions that the refugee crisis will be over any time soon. It will not. But pushing back boats from piers, setting fire to refugee camps, or turning a blind eye to poor and helpless people: that is not Europe. Europe is the baker in Kos who gives away his bread to hungry and weary souls. Europe is the students in Munich and in Passau who bring clothes for the new arrivals at the train station. Europe is the policeman in Austria who welcomes exhausted refugees upon crossing the border. This is the Europe I want to live in. The crisis is stark and the journey is still long. I am counting on you, in this House, and on all Member States to show European courage going forward, in line with our common values and our history.”²⁰ According to some, the Union could not fulfil its purpose and refugees have played an important role in this regard.



In my opinion, it is possible to think the effects of migration on the continent as a circle because having a better future, better living standards, fleeing from war or conflict; regardless of the reason, mass immigration to the EU has led the Union to have failure, as well as increased nationalism and xenophobia on the continent. This has strengthened citizens and Member States’ concerns

about the Union. However, from a historical point of view, the EU has somehow coped with all the internal troubles experienced so far, such as Iraq crisis, Empty Chair Crisis, Arab Spring and several economic crises. On the other hand, some public opinion figures still show that immigration crisis does not have a huge effect on the public opinion. Between 2005 and 2015, there was not a clear decline in support of the EU although various conflicts on the continent. About 50 per-cents of the EU citizens continued to support the Union. In a more detailed way, there was more than 70 per-cents support in Germany, more than 80 per-cents in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Ireland. On the contrary, there were less than 40 per-cents in the Czech Republic and Austria. So, contrary to common belief, there was not nationalist backlash in public opinion. Many European citizens still believed that being European was better than being nationalist to survive the crisis they faced. After the immigration crisis in question and the intense identity crisis it brings with it, the question is whether the EU will continue with harmonization and strengthening just like it did with previous crises or whether it will go on disintegration path. However, one thing is certain that, in current situation, this issue will continue to maintain its place in both domestic and foreign policies of the Member States and agenda of Eurosceptic parties. How about the effects of the Covid-19 together with the on-going immigration problems? We need to wait to see the policies followed by the Member States in the upcoming days.



17- Larivé, M. H. A. (2015, October). A Crisis for the Ages The European Union and the Migration Crisis.

18- Ibid.

19- Larivé, M. H. A. (2015, October). A Crisis for the Ages The European Union and the Migration Crisis.

20- Newvision. (2015, September 10). State of the Union 2015: Time for honesty, unity and solidarity.

Has Britain Been Successful in Its Strategy for Covid-19? The Answer is NO!

by Selen Ceylan

Britain announced that it will follow a different strategy from China, South Korea, the United States and many European countries in the fight against the new type of coronavirus Covid-19. At first, the measures that limit daily life in the country were very few and they were left to personal will. Except for severe cases, the policy of not performing virus testing was also implemented. Personal responsibility and sensitive citizenship were at the forefront.

The strategy implemented by the British government consists of three stages: Take control, delay, and reduce its impact. At the press conference held on 12 March, the strategy emphasized compliance with hand washing and hygiene rules, and those with cough and high fever were voluntarily asked to quarantine themselves at home for seven days. In addition, it was pointed out that more care should be taken in elderly and patient visits. It was reported that people other than those who had difficulty coping with their symptoms did not need to be contacted by health services and tested. Apart from these measures, which would be implemented entirely within the framework of personal responsibility, volunteering and sensitive citizenship; any restrictions were not imposed on education, social and working life.

What is herd immunity?

"When a large percentage of the population becomes immune to a disease, the spread of that disease slows down or stops. Many viral and bacterial infections spread from person to person. This chain is broken when most people don't get or transmit the infection. This helps protect people who aren't vaccinated or who have low functioning immune systems and may develop an infection more easily, such as older adults, babies, young children, pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems, people with certain health conditions."¹ With the Coronavirus outbreak, the pressure on the British National Health system was feared to become worse and collapse. The government's delay strategy was also considered to be a solution to this concern. In an open letter, published by 229 scientists from various universities in England, the herd immunity method in the Coronavirus epidemic would increase the life-threatening situation and contrary to the intended purpose was criticized. The World Health Organization's (WHO) former Unit Director Anthony Costello, pointed out that the Coronavirus could easily mutate like the virus that caused the flu, and the herd immunity would lose its effect. WHO's top official also warned of Britain's ap-

proach to testing saying "You cannot fight something you do not know where it is". WHO Secretary-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus underlined that every case must be found, isolated, tested and treated in order to prevent the outbreak. Leading newspapers criticized the strategy of the government. Europe is the region where the most lives were lost in the epidemic. The number of cases, mostly in European Union countries, has approached one million. In other countries, the pandemic rate and the rate of increase in death have started to slow down, while there is no decline in the UK. Coronavirus outbreak is slowly losing its impact on the European continent. The data in Britain, which has the highest death rate on the continent, indicates the opposite. The British newspaper Daily Mail made the headline "sick man of Europe" for the country where the number of dead is increasing day by day (NTV).



The policy of the Coronavirus and the government on the epidemic, which continues to spread in Britain, was included in the editorials of British newspapers. According to The Financial Times "The British strategy against the virus is a gamble" (BBC).

Reminding that Ireland has closed its schools, Denmark's border and France has banned collective activities, FT pointed out that Britain has not taken any such measures. In the UK, the Coronavirus is planned to infect a large proportion of the population over time, thereby improving the population's "herd immunity". The focus of the government in the UK is that the virus is transmitted slowly, not to the general public, so there is no burden on health-care. But FT wrote that it is not certain that the measures taken will slow the rate of transmission, and that the Coronavirus policy of Britain will lead to more deaths than strict quarantine measures. In addition to FT, The Guardian wrote in its editorial that social life in England is slowing down to a halt. Stressing that the Premier League has cancelled the matches despite the British government's decision not to cancel the collective events, the Guardian wrote that the government's hitherto measures were minimalist, as their measures were ahead of the government in taking action. According to the latest breaking news; Britain became the country with the highest number of deaths in Europe, with the number of casualties rising to 29 thousand 427 due to the Coronavirus.

¹- healthline.com, (2020, April). What Is Herd Immunity and Could It Help Prevent COVID-19?

While the total number of tests in the UK reached 1 million 383 thousand 842 with 84 thousand 806 new tests, the total number of cases reached 194 thousand 990 with an increase of 4 thousand 406. Following the strategy of “controlled spread of the virus for the purpose of gaining herd immunity” in the first place, the British government stepped back after reports and criticism that the number of dead could be about 300 thousand. With the decisions taken on the 23rd of March, the restriction of the people leaving the house was restricted, while all commercial businesses were closed except for the markets and pharmacies. The application, which expired on April 16, was extended for another 3 weeks. On March 25, the test of the Prince of Wales Charles; on March 27, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Health Minister Matt Hancock tests were positive. We will see the Coronavirus future of Britain together.

Victor Orban's Rise to Power

by Dilara Soy

The rise of far-right is not a new thing anymore. Since 2015, especially with the immigration crisis, we see that many European countries witness a rise in far-right parties' popularity. One of these countries is Hungary. Hungary has several far-right parties and it is crucial to mention that far-right organizations and the mind-set of extreme nationalism are widespread in Hungary. Today, the ruling Fidesz Party is actually using this nationalistic side with underlining the historical background.

The Party was founded in 1988 by Victor Orban who is currently a Prime Minister. However Orban was not always anti-EU. Initially, the Party, defined itself as anti-Communist, was fighting for a free market economy and the EU integration. The elections in 1990 and 1994 were not very promising. That is why a change was needed and Orban decided to create alliances with the centre-right groups. This led to winning the most seats in Parliament and forming a coalition government with him becoming the Prime Minister. Later on, Fidesz lost in 2002 and 2006 elections to the Hungarian Socialist Party. However, with the lies that have been uncovered about the economy, the Hungarian Socialist Party lost the trust of the people. Orban saw this as an opportunity and used it to get stronger support by backing the protests. Not only did he had more support but he also had the opportunity to show

himself as a man within the society as most populist leaders do.

With the lack of an opposition in 2010, he got back in power. This time he won with a clear majority of the two thirds, which meant that he was unstoppable in the parliament. He used this power and pushed through a new constitution in 2012. This new constitution underlined Christian values but more importantly included judicial reforms. This was criticized by Hungary and by the European Council. According to the Commission, the Hungarian legislation conflicts with EU law by putting into question of the independence of the country's central bank and data protection authorities and by the measures affecting its judiciary.¹ After that, the EU launched infringement proceedings. Nevertheless, Orban was not very willing to cooperate and insisted on the new constitution. The response was that the EU and the IMF cut the talks for aid. I believe during this time Hungary was trying to test its limits because it was not receiving any strict response.

First, it put up restrictions on the political advertisements but reversed it under EU pressure. However, it controversially approved some constitutional changes even though there was a threat from the EU. Then, it even approved a deal with Russia over nuclear power station although after the annexation of Crimea, the EU member

states agreed not to have bilateral agreements with Putin (2015). Despite the growing economic problems and corruption claims in 2014, Orban was again in power. He openly criticized the attitude of the EU towards the sanctions on Russia and didn't change the deal with Russia. So, a clear shift towards Russia initiated.



Now if we come to the year 2015, with huge populations migrating towards the Europe, the perfect situation was build up for Orban. He turned this situation as if the EU was using Hungary and started his anti-migration campaign and underlined his ethnic nationalist and xenophobic side. He rejected the EU quota for migrants and said that the EU is trying to change Hungary with the help of Soros, implying Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker as a puppet of Soros.

1- European Commission, European Commission launches accelerated infringement proceedings against Hungary.

2- <https://www.cartoonmovement.com/cartoon/48311>

Now if we come to the year 2015, with huge populations migrating towards the Europe, the perfect situation was build up for Orban. He turned this situation as if the EU was using Hungary and started his anti-migration campaign and underlined his ethnic nationalist and xenophobic side. He rejected the EU quota for migrants and said that the EU is trying to change Hungary with the help of Soros, implying Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker as a puppet of Soros.

If we come to the EU side, the first sign of serious action could be considered the suspension of Fidesz from the European Peoples Party (2019). Nevertheless, this was not effective and strict enough. Other than that we only see verbal criticisms and due to the current pandemic the focus of the EU is shifted knowing that Orban took advantage of it and pushed a new bill. Now he is entitled to rule by decree. Meaning his power grown again and al-

though the EU underlined that his actions have to be in line with democracy and the European values, we do not see that Orban is anyhow willing to listen or change his policies. Additionally, nearly a month ago, the Commission has approved a 5.6 billion Euro aid to support the Hungarian economy damaged by the Coronavirus. So, actually everything is going well for him.

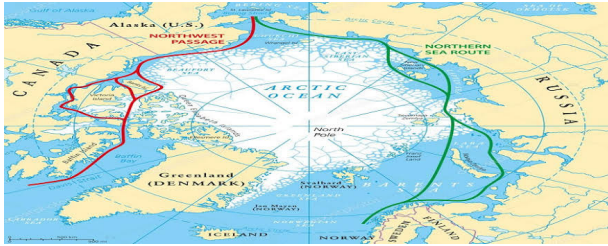
I understand that the EU has always tried to fight it battles with soft power due to its democratic and rule of law values, to settle things very diplomatically but it will clearly not work this time. So, I believe that the EU must urgently oppose economic sanctions because this is the only side that will get Orban to listen. Otherwise democracy in Hungary cannot be sustained. Orban has used these emergency situations always for himself and he will do it again if the EU does not interfere.

Russia's Arctic Policy

By Kemal Kısa

Translated by: Yağmur Taşdemir

Due to its strategic location and its underground resources, the Arctic region is now increasing the appetite of many countries in both neighboring and non-neighboring regions and constantly generating border discussions, though not on the political agenda. The fact that states such as the USA and Russia mention the Arctic region in the security strategy documents also shows the significance of the region. Although the terms such as "Middle East of the Future" seem exaggerated for the region, it is possible that there will be a "conflict area" in the future due to the energy resources it has.



In the Arctic region, while many states called 'Arctic Five' or 'Arctic Eight' are in conflict of interest, there is no authority above the states because of the anarchic structure of the international system. This causes states to reshape their policies from a realistic point of view rather than complying with texts such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in the region. In other words, the factor that will be the ultimate determinant in the environment of conflict or tension in the region will be the "power" of the states.

"When we examine the relations of the states in the Arctic region or those who are interested in the region, it is observed that the relations of the states in the region are carried out in an anarchic system since there are no superior authorities to decide on the issues in the region. In addition to legal contracts such as UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as well as Arctic Five formed by Russia, USA, Canada, Norway and Denmark and the organizations such as EU; there is no sanction power in the Arctic region that can provide order or at least affect. Also, the US is not part to UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Besides, while Sweden, Finland and Iceland are not members of the Arctic Five; Russia, the USA, Canada and Norway are also not the EU members. This can lead to the absence of a supreme authority to create an order and stability in the Arctic region, thereby creating an "anarchic system structure."²

"On the other hand, China wants to strengthen its role in the region due to the economic and geopolitical benefits by defining itself as "the relative state to the Arctic" although it is not geographically located in the Arctic."³

Russia is also one of the main actors in the region. While Russia was a state that was introverted and struggled with economic problems in the first years of the end of the Cold War period; by today, it has become a state trying to be effective in the Middle East, Ukraine, the Balkans and the Caucasus. Of course, the impact of Vladimir Putin here is an undeniable fact. It is necessary to evaluate Russia's interest in the Arctic region in this context, namely within the framework of Russia's projection of becoming a great power again. However, as it is known, many processes such

1- Sohtaoglu, M. (2019, July). Geleceğin Ortadoğu'su: ARKTİK

2- Dağıstan, F. (2020 January). Rusya Federasyonu'nun Vladimir Putin Dönemi Arktik Politikası

3- Ibid.

as searching energy resources in the region are very costly and require high technology in terms of economy. As it is known, Russia is a state that does not have a crucial economic power although it has an important military and territorial power. Finally, the Russian economy was injured by the fall of oil prices in the Covid-19 process. In addition, Russia's annexation of Crimea was protested by many countries, including Turkey. For this reason, the application of economic and technological sanctions to Russia by the USA and the EU is increasingly causing the country to suffer. As a result, the weak economic and technological structure of Russia negatively affects Russia's Arctic policy.

In the post-corona period, it can be said that the Arctic region will turn into a conflict environment, given that the states will gradually approach the issues in line with their national interests. Whether Russia will be an effective actor in the region will be determined by the USA. Because, as long as the USA activates the elements of military power in the region and increases the political interest in the region in line with the "Trump Doctrine", Russia's influence will shrink. At this point, the fact that Trump bought the island of Greenland,⁴ which has strategic importance for the control of the Arctic Ocean, also gives us clues for the US Arctic strategy.

4- Euronews (2019, October), Trump Grönland Adası'nı Neden Satın Almak İstiyor?

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Digital Diplomacy in the Time of the COVID-19

Erkay Bulut

For centuries, diplomacy has been used between different states and communities, even though it had no definitive definition yet. While for many, diplomacy is an art, according to "A Dictionary of Diplomacy" by G. R. Berridge and A. James, diplomacy is "The conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad, the latter being either members of their state's diplomatic service or temporary

peace within international arena, to protect mutual interests and to maintain various factors such as economy and trade. So, for diplomacy, national interest is the priority. There is no place for emotions in foreign policy for decision makers. Along with the globalizing world, the increasing use of the internet has included masses more in diplomacy and has taken traditional diplomacy to a whole new level making digital diplomacy much more important.



As radio and newspapers were replaced by the internet and social media, information spread more rapidly, and this has become effective in diplomacy as well as being effective in every field. All the new technological advances such as television, internet, satellite

communication has become one of the most important tools of international communication. With digital diplomacy, it has become easier for leaders to reach the masses and the use of soft power, which is a very important issue in the international arena, has increased. For example, today, some foreign ministries show their national foreign policies on their websites and also show that the claims and actions made by other countries are also unfounded.³ In addition, lobbying has also gained another dimension with digital diplomacy. Lobbyists, in particular the United Kingdom, United States and European Union, benefit from digital diplomacy in the implementation and discovery of policies.⁴ Therefore, digital diplomacy makes all these abilities more possible and visible with its unique features. Yet, what is digital diplomacy? Briefly, digital diplomacy is a form of public diplomacy. It is a tool that facilitates reaching the masses and strengthens diplomatic relations with the use of internet and social media.⁵ The replacement of traditional diplomacy to digital diplomacy dates back to the 19th and 20th centuries with the development of technology. Transportation was facilitated by the invention of railways and

diplomats.¹ For realistic international relations theory, states are in search of security and power within the international system.³ States have cooperated and allied with different states in their own interests to provide power and security. Foreign policy has been used to ensure

people everywhere to gather information in a short period while it was taking for days, even weeks before. As a result, technological devices, especially social media, have become crucial tools of diplomacy. Today, it is obvious that this uncondition-

1- Berridge, G. R., & James, A. (2003). A Dictionary of Diplomacy.

2- Verreika, B. (2017). Digital Diplomacy and Its Effect on International Relations.

3- Rashica, V. (2018, December). The Benefits and Risks of Digital Diplomacy.

4- Reshetnikova, L. (2018). e-Diplomacy as Instrument for Establishment of Interethnic Relations.

5- Rashica, V. (2018, December). The Benefits and Risks of Digital Diplomacy.

steamships in the 19th century, and diplomats took advantages of this progress. Besides, with the invention of the telegraph, a big step has been taken in the field of communication and intergovernmental communication has gained momentum. Later, with the development of air transportation and information technology in the 20th century, transportation and communication have also experienced important developments. However, inevitably, this convenience has brought along some advantages and a number of risks. In this paper, it will be analysed the advantages and disadvantages of the digital diplomacy in the time of the new coronavirus trying to figure out and mitigate the risks asking "What are the pros and the cons of digital diplomacy in the case of COVID-19?"

Advantages of the Digital Diplomacy Communication is the essence of politics and diplomacy. One of the most attractive features of digital diplomacy is encouraging two-way communication. The Netherlands Ambassador to the United States, Rudolf Bekink, states that "The digital arena opens new possibilities from one-on-one conversations to dialogues with communities".⁶ With the development of technology and the increasing use of social

media, government officials have made it easier to communicate with the masses and with officials from

other countries. Since it became easier to learn and shape the public's thoughts, governments have entered into a race to turn it into an advantage. In this way, individuals started to be more involved in the decision-making process. One of the best examples can be the UK Foreign Secretary William Hague starting an initiative called "Meet the Foreign Secretary" on his Twitter account. He asked his followers to tweet about what their expectations are from the Foreign Office in the next years,

and in return promised to meet several of his followers.⁷ Examples of the importance that countries place on digital diplomacy can be increased. For example, while the Dutch government shares the answers to the questions asked by its followers every week⁸, the President of the USA, Donald Trump, tweets daily and informs his followers about the people he will meet and the agenda items he will talk to. As a result, digital diplomacy allows diplomats and leaders to maintain diplomatic relations with both the public and with each other and to establish strategic partnerships. Other than active communication, digital diplomacy has also brought one of the most debated issues in diplomacy which is transparency. It has increased transparency and openness, which have an important place in today's world. Yet, the balance needs to be established in terms of transparency. As an example, when Trump tweeted about the cancellation of his so called "secret meeting", with Taliban leaders and Afghan President, it caused suspicion on Twitter since he ignored the national security for his famous Saturday night tweets.⁹ In addition, today governments have understood the importance of soft power

more and have started to take bigger steps in this regard. All states have entered the race to create a more positive image in the eyes of others

internationally. In this context, digital diplomacy is an essential tool. State leaders and governments have had the opportunity to explain themselves more by using social media tools, thereby making their policies more reasonable for their own citizens and other states. In short, digital diplomacy has brought the concept of "nation branding" together with it. Additionally, it is important that governments and leaders need to make quick decisions at the time of the crisis and survive the crises

with minimal damage without involving turmoil. Especially when we consider terrorist attacks, pandemic, or natural disasters; it can be said that the distribution of information is prone to error causing chaos during such events. In the slightest wrong move, the crisis can grow, and larger events may erupt. Therefore, the authorities should share information with the public regularly and up to date. At such times, maintaining transparency can be difficult as too much transparency can lead to panic and conspiracy theories. Nevertheless, the use of digital diplomacy is essential in crisis management as it facilitates the distribution of information. In addition, thanks to digital diplomacy, governments have the opportunity to cooperate not only with their people, but also with other governments which often results in the effective and fast crisis management. Digitalisation in diplomacy also has some cost-effective features. Before digital diplomacy emerged, diplomats and representatives had to go to other countries to hold meetings. However, today with the help of digital diplomacy, they can save their time and continue their speech using various tools as if they were in the same room. In this way, governments can also make savings by making profit from transportation. This means that digital diplomacy contributes to both the environment and the economy. It would not be wrong to say that CO2 absorption decreases as virtual travel replaces physical travel.¹⁰

Disadvantages of Digital Diplomacy

In addition to the advantages of digital diplomacy, there are some risks that some leaders and heads of states are afraid of using this new diplomatic tool. First of all, using digital diplomacy can cause a number of security problems. Since digital platforms contain personal information such as phone numbers, various documents, contact addresses, government secrets, identity cards, financial information; in some cases, they may pose a risk of leaking information. Worse still, leaders and governments may face great problems as a result of this information being captured by terrorist

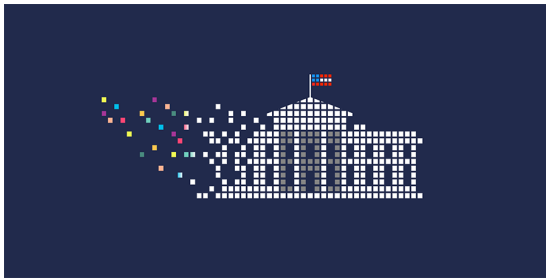
6- Verreika, B. (2017). Digital Diplomacy and Its Effect on International Relations.

7- Ibid.

8- Manor, I. (2020, April 17). Social Media Mobility: Leveraging Twitter Networks in Online Diplomacy.

9- Chhabra, R. (2020, January). Twitter Diplomacy: A Brief Analysis.

10- Loerincik, Y. (2006, January). Environmental impacts and benefits of information and communication technology infrastructure and services, using process and input-output life cycle assessment.



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organizations, opposing groups or hostile countries. Digital platforms also keep people's photos, videos, and many other shares in its memory even years later. If the leaders' speeches made years ago are in contradiction with their current ideas, this can be challenging for their campaigns. At the same time, today it is possible to play and change these photos or videos which can result in national or international crisis. As a result, this problem causes for many to avoid using the new ways of diplomacy.



On the other side, the fact that people can access information easily and that they can add new information to the internet creates a big question mark about the reliability of the information on the internet. So, it has become more difficult to reach the right information today as an inevitable result of information pollution. In this way, new concepts such as post-truth and populist discourses increased. With the digital diplomacy, it has become much easier for leaders to spread their populist discourses to the masses thus; it has become an effective way of creating post-truth information. Besides, it has been possible to see the leaders having discussions on Twitter over the past years. In general, although they appear to be harmless, small-scale discussions, there are also examples of where interstate tension is at the top. One of the best examples is the discussion which the world was in the verge of nuclear crisis between Donald Trump, who uses Twitter very actively, and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un because of the heavy words of Trump about him in 2017. Moreover, when citizens read the tweets written by the authorities, they may think that they understand the country's official policy. However, this may be a contradiction. Although the informal environment and attitude used on Twitter or other social media platforms can facilitate communication between citizens and officials, it can also reduce the impact of traditional diplomacy.

Using Digital Diplomacy during COVID-19: Analysing Case Countries

Due to the new coronavirus, countries have closed their borders and imposed restrictions such as limiting trade and freedom of movement. So, in another word, with the COVID-19 globalised world is being tested. It is possible to see the effects of pandemic in communication channels and diplomacy which is strictly related to communication. The use of digital diplomacy has increased

because international cooperation and spreading information are vital especially in time of crisis. With the rising use of digital diplomacy, it is also more visible the pros and cons of it. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and many other organizations organised online meetings. However, since "protocol" is an important term for diplomacy, online meetings can be a threat for the roots of traditional diplomacy which has its own characteristics. Embassies and consulates tried to guide their citizens who live abroad. They tried to explain their citizens what actions they need to take through digital channels and announced the flights arranged for their return in order to decrease their concerns. The use of artificial intelligence is also increased and developed because they can be used in many different areas. For example, embassies and consulates have used them as Chat-bots to release updates and information.¹¹ In this way, they aimed to prevent panic among their nationals. During the pandemic, countries have also used digital diplomacy to improve their national image. In my opinion, China and Turkey can be the best examples. In the case of Turkey, while no one has expected such a performance, Turkey has helped more than 60 countries and tried to reshape its international image. On the other hand, China has sent a lot of medical kit and doctors mostly to the EU countries. Also, because China is the first contender, world copied its methods to handle the virus and these steps are a path for China to increase its international image.¹² The COVID-19 has a peculiar characteristic since it is the first global pan-



demic for more than a century. It is also comprehensive because nearly all the countries using the same methods to handle it. This attitude also brings some disadvantages as well as its advantage. First of all, the situation is suitable for post-truth, lies and conspiracy theories and this caused another crisis besides corona crisis which is digital disinformation. According to the several researches, conspiracy theories have increased during the time of crises because of lack of information or unreliable local media. This causes public panic and makes more difficult to manage the crisis. False news and conspiracy theories among individuals may not only cause panic. Even worse, false information and conspiracy theories through governments can have disastrous consequences for states and international policies.

¹¹- Bjola, C., & Manor, I. (2020, March 31). Digital Diplomacy in the Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic.
¹²- Bjola, C. (2019, January 22). The "Dark Side" of Digital Diplomacy.



In recent days, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Zhao Lijian said "It might be US Army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!" through digital diplomacy channel.¹³ On the other side, the US president Donald Trump blamed China for the virus and pursue to saying "Chinese virus" instead of Coronavirus.¹⁴ These attitudes can increase the tension time to time, and we need to avoid it especially during the crisis. Some have already started to criticise European Union because of its attitudes against the pandemic. At the end of this process, this criticism can increase Eurosceptic attitudes. Last but not least, even in the middle of 2020, accessing the internet can be difficult for some states, particularly African countries. In this respect, failure to transition to digital diplomacy would make crisis management more difficult for such countries.¹⁵ As a result, digital diplomacy has its own pros and cons. Cultural changes generally proceed slowly. However, digital diplomacy has very critical effects on diplomatic relations and it is crucial for governments. In diplomacy, the remedies are inexhaustible. So, in my opinion, with the ever-growing technology, digital diplomacy will renew itself and overcome the disadvantages. For example, in the USA, many institutions and associations such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have social media guidelines. These directives should be widespread in all countries and institutions as well as should be constantly updated.¹⁶ Also, in my estimation, to reduce the risks in digital diplomacy, authorities should get various train-

ings. In this way, they can use the media more effectively, prevent false news and leaders to be overwhelmed by their emotions and flared up suddenly. So, leaders can increase their popularity instead of criticizing them for their inappropriate tweets. Likewise, these trainings should ensure that leaders are aware of the relevant risks and consequences. In the past years due to weak digital diplomacy, the risks were not so obvious. However, if the risks of digital diplomacy are not properly managed, one day a digital war (mostly in Twitter) can trigger a real war. Besides, in this case, we saw the world is not ready for a pandemic or worldwide disaster. For this reason, protocol rules are needed to update. Online platforms should be developed to ensure the stability and security which are fundamental in digital diplomacy.

Artificial intelligence data are vital for predicting, monitoring, and preventing the adverse effects of the pandemic. As a result, it is always crucial to keep in step with the new developments in the diplomatic arena as in all the other areas. In this way, leaders can have wider supports and explain themselves in a more detailed way. However, while doing this, it is essential to make provision against possible threats and dangers. Governments should speed up cyber security and artificial intelligence technologies. To sum, besides all the negative sides, digital diplomacy proved its effectiveness during the current pandemic and it is possible to overcome the challenges with cooperation among states and leaders.

13- Pickrell, R. (2020, March 14). Chinese foreign ministry spokesman pushes coronavirus conspiracy theory that the US Army 'brought the epidemic to Wuhan'.

14- Aljazeera. (2020, March 23). Trump defends calling coronavirus the "Chinese Virus".

15- Kurbalija, J. (2020, March 06). Diplomacy goes virtual as the coronavirus goes viral.

16- Wang, C. (2019, May 20). Twitter Diplomacy: Preventing Twitter Wars from Escalating into Real Wars.



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