Bangladesh Needs "Tech Ambassador"

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Digital Bangladesh and Rise of Youth:

In 12thDecember 2008, Bangladesh has declared "Digital Bangladesh" with its"vision2021" and in 12th December 2020, Bangladesh celebrated 4thDigital Bangladesh day. Meanwhile, Bangladesh already hadadvancedin emerging digital country with grater footprint on digital innovationwith nursing, patronizing technology. This visionary initiative ultimately comes up with newer challenges and threats in cybersecurity for its sustainable existence of digital era. Along with that, according to a recent published report of UNFPA in 2014, some 47.6 million or about 30 percent of total 158.5 million people in Bangladesh are young (10-24 years)[1].But the report again said that, the young population will be between 10 to 19 percent by 2050."If they are equipped with necessary skills, good health and effective choices, they present an enormous opportunity to transform the future," said UNFPA Bangladesh Representative Argentina Matavel. So to educate, equip and facilitate this enormous opportunity with digital endeavor, we should build a sustainable digital ecosystem.

To uphold this digital dignity, we should go hand in hand with global tech giants, leverage in house technology towards global footprint and expedite its digital environment, Bangladesh should take steps to focus global digital arena diplomatically. This new era is called the "TechPlomacy" and is conducted by a states "Tech Ambassador".

The Traditional Diplomacy:

"Diplomacy" is the bilateral relations between two sovereign states. It is the art of influencing the foreign government and people's decision through negotiation, dialogue and other possible means.It is a systematic process between actors (usually diplomats between two states), who pursue public and private dialogue in a peaceful manner.Diplomacy has started from the very beginning of civilization.Benefits of diplomacy can promote exchanges of information that enhance trade, culture, wealth and knowledge.Although, some leaders in history defined it in a different way "Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that, they ask for direction" (Winston Churchill).

Diplomacy is not foreign policy, but a part of foreign policy[2]. In fact, diplomacy is guided by foreign policy. Diplomacy is very essential tool and the state's interaction without diplomacy will results in conflicts like war, economic sanction or sometime espionage. In fact, the international law that dominates diplomacy principle – is the **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)**.

DanishUnique "TechPlomacy" Initiative:

"Techplomacy"—the term first coined by Danish Tech ambassador "Caspar Klynge" refers to the combination of technology and diplomacy or technological diplomacy. As state's foreign and security policies embraced in digital age, the technological diplomacy becomes increasingly important. In 2017, Denmark first appointed first ambassador in high technology sector commonly known as "Denmark's Tech Ambassador". Although, Danish Tech Ambassador not the first country that taken initiative and has opened the diplomatic mission related to digital world. Formerly, Swedes opened "Second life" an embassy in the digital world, but"Second Life"was short in life.More countries have opened virtual embassies, where they offer online information and services for foreign countries. But they are just taking advantages of digital tools and technology; we can say this "Digital Diplomacy", whereDanish "Tech Ambassador" engaged with big and new technologygiants in diplomatic actors[3].In this case, Denmark's approached quite a different way.

Photo Credit: DiPLO

Role of "Tech Ambassador":

Bangladesh is emerging an ICT focused country, to uphold Bangladesh's digital vision globally, Bangladesh needs tech ambassador to perform key role of "TechPlomacy"that Bangladesh needs below but not limited to:

- Bangladesh needs amassing information and analyzingon new and upcomingrevolutionary and disruptive technology and their impact on politics, diplomacy and current society;
- Acquiring information on developments itself within the technological sector,the interactionsamong tech giants and their futureoperation strategy and investments plans;
- Consultingregulatory and ethical concerns with tech giants, with emphasize on undesirable, vulgar contents and specially data andprivacy protection;
- Managingand convincing techgiants to base operations, facilities on research orregional subsidiaries in specified country;

- Promoting Bangladesh as a focusedon digitalized country at the cutting edge of newtechnologies and thinking.

Some other crucial area that reshaped the way we think and should be leveraged into "TechPlomacy" for sustainable ecosystem of digital Bangladesh and in cyberspace.
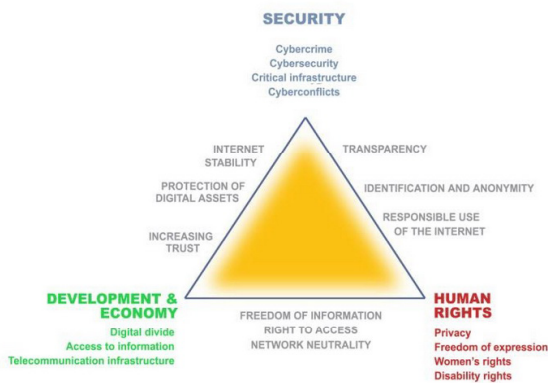
Internet Governance:

This is the most debated and concerned issue in cyber space. This is the sovereignty over internet in the national segment. That means, framework for cyberspace control aligning national border, while preserving the benefit of using global network, first introduced by Mueller (2017)[4]. According to Mueller, there are three basic methods to establish such an alignment: National Securitization, Controlling Territorialization of information flows, and Structured Control for critical Internet resources along national lines. Recently, Russia imposed "Internet Governance" (Runet) results in Russian much protest. This consist ofboth the technical part of how to manage the internet, (such as the role and initiatives of ICANN), data protection, net neutrality, protect vulgar contents and developing baseline norms in the cyber space that will mitigate the cyber conflict.

Organized Crime:

Mass deployment of internet broke out and facilitate mass crime specially child abuse, money laundering, state sponsored cybercrime, hacktivism, false propaganda, vulgar contents, human trafficking are much discussed than others. Engaging internet and technology companies on such organized crime by implementing both internet governance and data protection, persuading them to be aligned with established international protocol (such as **Budapest convention**), norms and combating cybercrime altogether is a key priority. It's also to be addressedby tech ambassadordiplomatically.

Technology Companies as Geopolitical Actors:

Figure: UN Digital Cooperation Roadmap built on three pillars. #Development & Economy #Human Rights & #Security

To compel internet and technology companies, tech giants,especially social media platforms, search engines responsible for what netizens upload, share and comments, searches there, tech ambassador should and engage them in geopolitical actors. Facebook has a public perception that, it is a platform for monetizing data, rather than promoting social networking. Allegedly, Russiautilizing facebook and Youtubein its Cyberwarfare to destabilize western societies. Facebook as a social media, also contributed for several anarchy in Bangladesh. In 2012, instigated by a Facebook post of burning Quran, local agitated people in Ramu (Coxsbazar) torched the Buddhist Temple and vandalized a villagewhich was one of the worst religious attacks in Bangladesh. The underlying algorithm of Youtube and Facebookpaved the way of information warfare and allow public diplomacy message reach to those who only agree with it rather than engage with who do not agree it.

Cryptocurrencies:

Cryptocurrency is one of the disruptive technologiesthat have got no central authority and regulation. Thus by its feature, cryptocurrency has great geopolitical implications. US reserve currency of Dollars grant him significant geopolitical impacts, but Facebook back in June 2019, tried to bring its own cryptocurrency #Libra backed by prominent corporate giants, the Swiss based #Libra association, like Uber, Spotify, Lyft etc. That could pose threaten to US geopolitical impacts. So, several financial corporates withdrawn backup from libraafter being pressured from US congressmen. Thus Facebook's crypto ambition falls into trouble. China tookinitiative to issue its owndigital currencyin October 2019, begun to launch in two Chinese social media; Alibaba and Tencent.In fact, most internet and technical giants are in process to issue their own digital currency that would impact globally.

Human Rights Dimension of Artificial Intelligence (AI):

New technology Artificial Intelligence (AI) heavily impacted human rights. "*Machines function on the basis of what humans tell them. If a system is fed with human biases (conscious or unconscious), the result will inevitably be biased*"[6]. States are the sole guarantor of human rights protection. So, state's diplomacy needs to address this issue and bring this key topic to discussion table while being aware of concerns arising due to impact of AI. In 2012, UNHRC affirmed that, the human rightsprevail in offline, must also applicable for online. Data and its protection is the prime targetfor human rights protection with regards to AI.Thus encouraging the AI development company to developdesign and deploy AI respecting human rights by multi-stakeholder dialogue and inclusion. Therelated framework development is also need to cover.

Digital Cooperation Roadmap:

In June 2020, United Nation (UN) system and UNSG has declared Roadmap for Digital Cooperation[7]. Aligning with UN's three UN pillars #Development #humanrights& #security. The roadmap emphasized on 'multistakeholder' engagement and multiparty 'inclusion'.New laws are introduced and new policies are initiated on a weekly basisalmost, new and disrupting technology emerging with new challenges and threats. Thus growing needs for public and private inclusion, UN roadmap further boost the digital cooperation while securing it to the social, legal,political, and realities of the digital world.Every UN member state has its own responsibility to focus, engage and implementfor consistency with UN digital cooperation roadmap.

TechPlomacy Challenges:

"Techplomacy"is a global mandate. It requires dealing with multicultural and multilingual people with race, ethnic diversity, and religion.Thus challenges here arise like below:[8]

▪ "TechPlomacy" cannot be done by a state alone, leverage like-minded people, organizations, tech giants have to come under same umbrella.

▪ To bridging the gap of different professional race, cultures needs strong individual interpersonal skills, open-mindedness and flexibility.

▪ Tech ambassador of state have to deal with culture of internet companies. So here less formal communication, attire and environment to a certain extent is required.

▪ The circle of network should be broadeningwhich is influenced by breadth of subject being negotiated rather than typical among diplomatic communities, i.ethe internal government set structure and external protocols are less effective here.

▪ Besides, tech-ambassador requires knowledge of foreign affairs perspective, some combined stuff with specialized knowledge in tech-sides work well.

▪ While in tradition diplomacy, diplomat's works in rotational basis, if the tech-ambassador position is vacant, there is limited opportunity to handover established network to successor.So, building continuous presence in internet industries is necessary.

▪ Legal challenges in the country of origin, which hinders to invest in internet industry. Other like setting up a branch, securing finance, meeting legal environment in other country.

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