

Book Reviews

***Digital Diplomacy in Indonesia's Foreign Policy.* By Albert Triwibowo. London: Routledge, 2025. ISBN: 9781003505884**

The practice of diplomacy in the contemporary era has evolved significantly thanks to the massive digital transformation. Advances in information and communication technology have increasingly facilitated diplomatic practices, enabling them to reach audiences across the globe without the constraints of time and space. Thanks to this development, contemporary diplomacy has further expanded the spaces for diplomacy and interactions among actors, both state and non-state. This shift in diplomatic dynamics has given rise to the concept of digital diplomacy, which is now receiving considerable attention in the study of international relations. The rapid expansion of the digital world and the emergence of increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence make understanding digital diplomacy increasingly crucial for adapting to current situations and conditions.

This book is systematically structured and contains six chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction, laying the foundation for understanding Indonesian foreign policy, diplomacy, and technology. Albert demonstrates that the development of the digital world has transformed the way the Indonesian government applies digital diplomacy and Indonesia's position within the development of digital diplomacy. Chapter two provides an analytical framework for understanding digital diplomacy, utilizing various literature reviews compiled by the author. Some of the literature reviewed includes digital diplomacy, public diplomacy,

strategic communication, and the use of information and communication technology in international relations. According to Albert, digital diplomacy cannot be understood solely as the use of social media by state actors, but rather as part of a broader transformation of the diplomatic communication process (Albert, 2025).

In the chapter third, Albert explains the research methods he used to analyze Indonesia's digital diplomacy. The combination of document analysis, observation, and interviews helps the book present a comprehensive overview of the policy formulation and implementation process. This coherent, systematic presentation of the methodology lends credibility to the discussion in subsequent chapters. Furthermore, the chapter fourth discusses Indonesia's journey in implementing digital diplomacy. According to Albert, the use of information and communication technology in Indonesia's digital diplomacy was not carried out through a grand, centrally designed strategy. Rather, it was carried out gradually, adapting to changes in the international environment and the increasing use of technology as a medium for public communication (Albert, 2025). This is evidenced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various Indonesian representatives abroad using social media and other digital platforms. This effort is an effort to expand the reach of their public communication. Furthermore, Albert views Indonesia's digital diplomacy as more adaptive than transformational (Albert, 2025). In the fifth chapter, this book provides an analysis of Indonesia's digital diplomacy practices across three main issues: Indonesian palm oil diplomacy, Indonesia's response to the Rohingya crisis, and digital diplomacy



during the COVID-19 pandemic. These three issues demonstrate how information and communication technology is used in digital diplomacy across different issue contexts. In the palm oil diplomacy issue, Indonesia seeks to build a counter-narrative to the growing negative image that has developed internationally. In contrast, in the Rohingya crisis, the Indonesian government utilized digital diplomacy to demonstrate Indonesia's humanitarian position to the global community. Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government used digital diplomacy to maintain diplomatic communication amid significant restrictions on physical mobility. Chapter six presents the author's conclusions based on the research.

Overall, Albert argues that Indonesia's digital diplomacy has increased its international visibility and expanded the reach of its public diplomacy. Furthermore, the use of various digital platforms has been found to be highly effective in helping Indonesia convey its foreign policy messages to international audiences. Indonesia's digital diplomacy is considered to have significant potential to become a key instrument in Indonesia's future foreign policy. While this book makes an important contribution to the study of international relations, several key aspects warrant critical reflection. The book tends to view Indonesia's digital diplomacy as capable of enhancing its bargaining power on the international stage. However, the discussion of its concrete impacts is limited, leaving insufficient evidence to support this capability. Furthermore, Albert points out that digital diplomacy can increase Indonesia's visibility, but, as previously mentioned, this increased visibility has not yet fully translated into

changes in the policies and preferences of other parties. Furthermore, this book does not explicitly link Indonesia's digital diplomacy to its identity as a middle power. This book would be more interesting if it included a discussion of how Indonesia's digital diplomacy can contribute to its middle-power diplomacy strategy. Furthermore, discussion of non-state actors is still relatively limited. The book still predominantly discusses state actors as actors in Indonesia's digital diplomacy. In reality, digital diplomacy, as part of contemporary diplomacy, cannot be separated from the role of non-state actors such as digital corporations, organizations, academics, media, and individuals. The effectiveness of digital diplomacy is also determined by the role of non-state actors. Collaboration between state and non-state actors is one of the main keys to success in implementing digital diplomacy. The various limitations in this book do not diminish its academic content, but rather provide opportunities for further research.

This book demonstrates that digital diplomacy has become an integral part of Indonesia's foreign policy practices. It is powerful in highlighting how Indonesia employs digital diplomacy to achieve its national interests. This book could still be further developed, particularly regarding the measurement of digital diplomacy effectiveness, the relationship between technology and power, the role of non-state actors, and the strategies of middle powers in their diplomatic practices.

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