

## Technology's Impact on Global Journalism and Communication

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Our awareness and understanding of what happens in locales outside our communities or beyond national borders often rely on communication technologies. Imagine people who have never traveled to a given nation, they would have to depend on the media – including broadcast news, tourism advertisements, travelers' comments and reviews, Instagram photos and even bots-generated posts – to obtain any information about that nation and to form impression in their heads (Lippmann, 1997). Our perception of the world is, to a great extent, dependent on the type and amount of media we consume – because we cannot be everywhere at all times (Wu, 2019). What is more, our directly observed, literal reality under certain circumstances can be less important than the counterpart presented and discussed in the media. Given the fast development of new technologies (such as artificial intelligence) and of different types of media platforms, a wide variety of global communication issues have come to the fore and warrant serious discussion. This chapter offers a brief introduction of key technologies and developments that have taken place in the past few decades and addresses several new, pressing issues related to their influence on journalism and communication around the globe.

As communication across national borders hinges profoundly on the media, it is vital to examine the role technology plays not only at the personal, but also at the aggregate level. The war in Ukraine has engaged multitude of social media participants not only from Russia and Ukraine but also from all over the world, resulting in dramatically varied opinions and perceptions due to the dissemination of a high volume of disinformation and misinformation about the war. This case merely shows the tip of the iceberg about the impact of technologies over how we learn about a critical event. The 2019 Mueller Report unveiled Russian interference in the U.S. election campaign through targeting social media users and brought transnational distribution of disinformation, misinformation, and alternative facts to the fore. With the rising penetration of social media networks in almost every corner of the world and the increasing influence of global technology juggernauts such as Alphabet, ByteDance, Meta, and Tencent, communication scholars have raised questions about the credibility of myriads of online information sources, their sophisticated operation, and nefarious manipulation of public opinion at the global level (Pavlik, 2023). While technology companies have largely avoided public scrutiny or dodged their social responsibility, how journalism entities cope with ongoing technological advancement, eroding trust from the public, and cut-throat competition for users' attention cannot be over-emphasized. Furthermore, how does the AI-generated, Internet-based, algorithm-directed operation affect communication across national borders? This chapter addresses the role of technology in content creation, dissemination, and automation and its impact on how we understand the world. The following also explores the implications of technologies and cyberspace for media professionals and policymakers to improve the flow of accurate, credible information between countries.

### The Evolution of Communication Technology

Before we address current developments in emerging technologies, it is beneficial to look back, briefly, at the past century to inspect the impact of a few technologies on global journalism

and communication. The impressive list of major media technologies invented in the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries includes radio, television, cable, computer, digitization, satellite, smartphone, and the Internet, each of which has affected what, when, where, and how people from different parts of the world communicate and how journalists work. One of the most researched media technologies is television, primarily due to its omnipresence and capacity to instantly transmit not only audio but video content. The term “global village” was first coined (McLuhan & Powers, 1989) to reflect the interconnected lives and shared experiences of the world’s different locations, thanks to television. In a way, television contributes to the abatement of geographical distance and the extension and homogeneity of human consciousness, profoundly affecting people’s sense of place (Meyrowitz, 1986). Most apparent examples would include large global sports events like the Olympics or the World Cup that are immediately shared by viewers all over the world. Undoubtedly, television as a medium has propelled the speed of globalization.

Yet, on the other hand, the dispersion of information, cultures, and national images shown on the very medium can be considerably uneven and inaccurate. For one thing, the cost of television content production, transmission, and needed infrastructure may prevent poor countries from competing with those with more financial, technological and human resources. This imbalance between the haves and have-nots (or the Global North vs. the Global South) among the world’s nations has resulted in uneven flow of information and cultural products across national borders (Mowlana & Roach, 1992); in other words, certain parts of the world are less likely to be covered by the news media (Stevenson & Shaw, 1984) and their entertainment output is more difficult to circulate globally. Additionally, a disadvantaged nation’s reliance on media content from elite nations might yield negative influence, including undermining its indigenous culture, collective confidence, and self-identity (Aslama & Pantti, 2007) rather than being economically beneficial, as development communication scholars originally envisioned (Lerner, 1958; Schramm, 1964). The effects from the global export of television content can range from inundation with national stereotypes and clichéd images of foreign destinations to formulaic reality and game shows adopted worldwide (e.g., “America’s Got Talent”).

The palpable influence of television, a global medium (Lule, 2015), can also be examined together with other connected technologies, such as cable, satellite, audio/video streaming, and so forth. Each of the aforementioned technologies may have accentuated different aspects of impact on global communication. For example, thanks to the advent of cable news and its insatiable need for news content, more comments and opinions have been included in news programming than hard facts. The constant and instantaneous live coverage of disruptive events outside national borders has forced national leaders to accept interview invitations and make prompt responses – or even take immediate action that would otherwise have needed far more diplomatic deliberation and consultation. Without the hasty policy announcement, they run the risk of looking weak and indecisive to their domestic supporters and worldwide stakeholders. This phenomenon was termed “CNN effect” to epitomize the impact that instant television coverage of international events such as civil wars or humanitarian crises has on foreign policymaking deliberation, forcing national leaders to intervene due to public pressure (Gilboa, 2005). Similarly, digitally transmitted, online-based media have also exponentially increased, allowing for more personal, partisan, or extreme perspectives about individual nations to percolate into the global discourse. With more access and capacity, media technologies have paved the way for more heterogeneous, voluminous, and valenced (even polarized) discourse about world affairs and global issues. For example, the dramatically different angles adopted by MSNBC and Fox News when covering global warming and climate change illustrate the point,

so do other globally distributed channels such as Al Jazeera, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), and CCTV (China Central TV). Their impact on the nature and characteristics of global communication will be discussed later in the cyberspace section.

Communication infrastructure such as satellites, fiber optic cables, and cellular towers should be considered key technologies because they also have transformed how journalism is practiced and how its content is accessed and consumed worldwide. Most people probably are unaware of their critical, extensive contribution but many existing communication and media services that the entire world enjoys rely on them. Pelton (2010) pointed out the crucial role satellites have been playing in facilitating globalization, making nations intricately interconnected and interdependent. Satellites beam down to almost every corner of the world at all times to transmit information, stream entertainment content, facilitate business transactions, and much more. Another significant unintended consequence of satellites is allowing global access to instantaneous information around the clock, which has many ramifications for global commerce, public sentiment, international relations and policy-making. All of these aforementioned aspects of changes undoubtedly bolster globalization.

Aside from infrastructural technologies, personalized mobile devices and their direct and collateral benefits and impacts at the global level cannot be overstated. Mobile phones (a broad category that may include smartphones and tablet computers connected via a cellular system) have provided critical communication services for countries with scarce resources in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and were found to have elevated quality of life and counter-balanced uneven information flow patterns in the Global South (Ling & Horst, 2011). With its potential leapfrogging impact on economic performance, education, health, and culture in the Global South (Hyde-Clarke & Van Tonder, 2011), there was much hope that mobile phone technology would provide a level playing field. However, it remains to be seen whether the potential for increasing access, participation, and contra-flow of information and entertainment originating from the Global South will be fulfilled in the future.

Other technologies also have generated a profound impact on how individual nations and the world at large communicate. New technologies that are based on artificial intelligence have only shown the beginning of the major global transformation that lies ahead (Brandtzaeg, Skjuve, & Følstad, 2022). While it is challenging for us to foresee future trends, technologies have already made the world, on the one hand, more connected and integrated, on the other, more susceptible to technologies' harms on a larger scale. As we have witnessed, each of the media platforms has brought various – and distinct – type of influence. For example, blogs were found to give rise to the demands of the “voiceless” for more freedom, self-identity, and power (Russell & Echchaibi, 2009); transnational, strategic use of social media was attributed to the Arab Spring (2010), the Occupy (2011) protests, and the #MeToo (2019) movement. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) will revolutionize the production of content and prompt restructuring and/or deconstructing of the media work force – particularly in the cross-border context (Pavlik, 2023). Many legal, ethical, financial, and trust-related issues regarding AI-generated content and its consumption will definitely ensue in the years to come. The implications and ramifications of AI's role in the media ecosystem and global communication will be vast and vexing, which will unfold in the near future.

#### The Challenges for Global Communication

Before the advent of the Internet and Web 2.0, international news carried by mass media had been the primary source upon which communication between nations was based. News produced at a locale or region, primarily controlled by international news agencies (e.g., AFP,

AP, Bloomberg, and Reuters) and transmitted through national borders to various parts of the world, mattered tremendously, especially in the last century. The volume, valence, characteristics, and dissemination of the news about a given nation, culture, people, or region can introduce vital issues, which have been vigorously debated by scholars and are discussed in other parts of the book. The following section introduces three interconnected issues that pertain particularly to communication technologies that pose serious challenges for global communication.

One critical component of global communication nowadays stems from governmental, corporate, and non-governmental organizations' efforts to enhance their influence and gain the support of the international publics. The channel of influence is beyond traditional journalism practice and orchestrated by industry-backed, professional execution. The execution of reaching out to international publics can be technologically sophisticated, financially compelling, and psychologically savvy. Public diplomacy is often used to describe such operations (Manheim, 1994) and has become more important than traditional diplomatic activity that has been firmly grounded in official communication, interpersonal relationship, and diplomatic protocol. Because of the abated editorial interests in covering foreign countries and greater business pressure to reduce cost, fewer foreign news has been produced and broadcast in most press systems (Altmeppen, 2010), resulting in audiences' greater dependence on social media-based and public diplomacy-sponsored content to keep abreast of the world. One facet of public diplomacy is placed on mediated persuasion that targets directly at foreign publics (Entman, 2008) and is intended to win "the hearts and minds" of key constituencies in other countries (Nye, 2004). Given the critical role of public diplomacy in global communication and journalism, it deserves further discussion along with related topics of cyberspace and post-truth.

#### Public Diplomacy

This subfield of international communication tends to be more practitioner-oriented and overlaps significantly with public relations and international relations. It has been used by governments, NGOs, and the private sector (Manheim, 1994) to inform and influence foreign publics in order to gain support for the sponsoring entity's goals, policies, and interests (Tuch, 1990). Public diplomacy deserves a rekindled attention in the context of technological change for several reasons. For one thing, public diplomacy is no longer a mere supplement to conventional diplomacy. It goes beyond making splashy advertisements for foreign audiences or maintaining international broadcasting operations, which are still keenly practiced by global powers such as China and Russia (Massoglia & West, 2018). Now, technologies like AI-supported algorithms and geosocial targeting can generate unprecedented, superbly tailored messaging for influential individuals, who can be critical news gatekeepers, law makers, or voters of certain districts. For example, given U.S. journalists' reliance on X (formerly Twitter), an agenda-building program executed by a given entity on X could result in more U.S. media's editorial attention to that particular agenda.

How nations communicate today with international publics is deeply affected by media technologies. Throughout history, one can see the distinct influence from different mediums during different points in time. Radio, for example, was strategically utilized during WWII by both the Allies and Axis nations that transmitted their propaganda messages. Currently, the frequent use of social media by prominent political leaders has resulted in unfathomable impact on cross-national relations and foreign policy, and has facilitated direct communication with global audiences (Duncombe, 2017). This practice of "Twitter diplomacy" and its impacts on public opinion around the world needs to be thoroughly ascertained.

Traditionally, promotional information and images of individual nations have been clearly labeled as promotional content and/or placed in a distinct section of news media. However, the distinction between editorial and sponsored content, due to heightened business pressure and relaxed ethics standard, has blurred. That is to say, audiences would have tremendous difficulty in distinguishing editorial content or entertainment from promotion, because ads can be equated with news (native advertising) and movies and games can use long-format or interactive ads that feature a specific location on earth (product placement). Tiffany's, a jewelry store, centered in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* or Dubrovnik, Croatia featured prominently in *Games of the Thrones* are just two examples. The combination of public diplomacy and unscrupulous, profit-driven media practices should lead us to question how people's opinion and evaluation of foreign nations really come about.

While public diplomacy efforts to create content appropriate for foreign nations are usually accepted, their interference with creative and journalistic works can be frowned upon and encroach on freedom of expression. Hollywood's financial clout in the gigantic Chinese market, for example, has been reported to directly intervene in the production process, including rewriting scripts for movies or changing the villains' nationality (Qin & Carlsen, 2018). Given this, one needs to examine not only text-based information, but also images, visuals, and affective memes associated with nations from comprehensive sources, including movies and social media (Elasmar & Groshek, 2017).

#### Post-Truth Flows across Borders

Traditionally, the volume of information and direction of news flows from one part of the world to another has been a critical issue in international communication. As discussed in Chapter 2, the long-term concern about the imbalance of information flow between the North and the South sparked debates about a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) and raised questions about the potential of communication technologies to empower and strengthen smaller media organizations in the developing world. There has been a great body of empirical works devoted to investigating the pattern and genres of international news coverage (Golan, Johnson, & Wanta, 2010; Hester, 1973) and many editorial and contextual determinants have been identified (Segev, 2016; Wu, 1998). However, the news is merely one facet of content that flows across borders; other types of content of interest include infotainment (Thussu, 2007), entertainment content (Walter, Sheaffer, Nir, & Shenhav, 2016), film (Fu & Sim, 2010), and recently, post-truth (Wu, 2023).

The concept of post-truth is epistemologically broad (Beckett, 2017; McIntyre, 2018) and may encompass other terms such as misinformation, disinformation, alternative facts, fake news and "junk news" (Howard, 2020). These terms generally refer to false content either deliberately or unintentionally created to sway public opinion towards an issue, organization, or country. Such content quickly spreads across national borders via multitude means of strategic sharing and delivery, often relying on social media channels. Russia's targeted use of social media in an effort to influence U.S. voters' perceptions and possibly voting outcomes during the 2016 presidential election provides a vivid example as does the war in Ukraine (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Grinberg, Joseph, Friedland, Swire-Thompson, & Lazer, 2019). Recently, many other nations, including Iran and Saudi Arabia (Stubbs, 2019), have also resorted to social media to troll and fabricate tactically tailored content in order to achieve specific sociopolitical outcomes in various nations.

The wide spread of false information, especially online, has been a challenge for journalists who are expected to solve the thorny problem for the public (Mitchell, Gottfried,

Stocking, Walker, & Fedeli, 2019). The task of fact-checking content on the myriads of media platforms is critical to democracy and public health, but average users do not have the required expertise or most up-to-date knowledge to do this regularly – thus, media literacy training would not suffice and industry regulation or intervention may be needed. However, social media platforms where most disinformation originates have faced complex and evolving laws and regulations and have taken different stances when it comes to flagging false and potentially harmful information on their platforms. As a case in point, Facebook and Twitter took opposite actions regarding Donald Trump’s social media posts (Isaac & Kang, 2020). Facing mounting concern about AI’s negative impact on democracy, major tech companies announced a joint commitment to combat disinformation and misinformation ahead of the 2024 elections (Field, 2024). Whether this well-intended but toothless announcement might result in any effective actions remains to be seen.

The Chinese control of and intervention on the Internet and ingenious ways of disseminating self-benefiting messages to other countries are also worth discussing (Cook, 2019). Because of China’s highly controlled communication system, Mokry (2017) reports that the most frequently quoted sources in Western mainstream media come from the Chinese central government. The Freedom House’s Annual Report states that the Chinese endeavor may “undermine key features of democratic governance and best practices for media freedom” (Cook, 2019, p. 10). The most significant human resource invested in monitoring online content and steering social media discourse is the so-called “50 cent army,” composed of governmental employees whose task is to screen all online information (King, Pan, & Roberts, 2017). The well-orchestrated cyber program has utilized multiple methods to shape foreign publics’ perception of China. For example, China-backed efforts to reach soybean farmers via mainstream media were made in order to influence 2018 midterm election (Cook, 2019). Similarly, 23 Web sites registered in Taiwan were found to disseminate fake news directly from China’s government to influence Taiwan’s presidential election in 2020 (Chung-shan, Hsin-fang, & Hetherington, 2019). These examples unveil that technologically advanced communication apparatus has been implemented by nation states or their proxies in order to affect political outcomes in other nations.

Social media automation through the use of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and bots can have a marked impact on another nation. The Russian Internet Research Agency (IRA), according to the Mueller Report (Mueller, 2019), strategically intervened through social media and produced 80,000 Facebook posts and reached 126 million people by 2016. Similarly, Twitter reported 3,814 accounts were controlled by the IRA and 1.4 million may have been in contact with an IRA-controlled account. The above cases center on U.S. elections but vaccine-related misinformation (Yan, Barbati, Duncan, Warner, & Rains, 2023) was also found to be used as a tool by the IRA to sow discord. This trend of reaching out to foreign nationals with disinformation in the hope of stirring up anxiety and animosity with societies is likely to worsen (Davis & Mazzetti, 2019). Stanford University’s Internet Observatory reported in 2020 that Twitter took down 23,750 accounts linked to China that tweeted 348,608 times, 1,152 Russian accounts that tweeted 3,434,792 times, and 7,340 Turkish accounts that tweeted 36,948,524 times (Observatory, 2020), indicating a regular practice for some countries.

The above cases shed light on what lies ahead. The era of post-truth has facilitated the practice of spreading emotion-stimulated disinformation and complete falsehood to advance sponsoring nations’ interests in open societies. Capitalizing on the openness of cyberspace and unfettered connections on social media, countries can and have bypassed traditional news

gatekeepers and communicated directly with foreign publics and stakeholders around the world. Moreover, the transmitted content can be automatically tailored and amplified by voluntary (often innocent) participants who embrace and share, creating the intended effects the sponsor envisions. News reported that Russian's online operation unit based in St. Petersburg (MacFarquhar, 2018) served exactly this purpose. The old-fashioned culture events used during peace times or blatant propaganda operations during war times have been transformed into a far more high-tech, large-scale, and covert manipulation in cyberspace.

### Cyberspace

Although the majority of international communication scholarship focuses on traditional mass media, a significant volume of global communication takes place in cyberspace. This artificial space arguably has exerted more influence than other types of media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – it enables multitude of communication activities and transforms how people access, process, and act on information originating from other countries. It is notable that under certain circumstances the cyber version of the world can overwhelm and overpower the counterparts covered by legacy media (Rainie & Wellman, 2014; Turkle, 2011) or even the real world. The combined impact of platform functionality, content creation and sharing, and wide participation in cyberspace can cut through all the research topics addressed above and has resulted in tremendous changes – both welcoming as well as challenging. It is therefore no surprise that many countries were found to have resorted to cyberspace to skew reality outside their borders (Alba & Satariano, 2019). As Choucri and Clark (2018) indicate, the ease of access to online information has been a great equalizer, enabling weaker actors to influence or even threaten stronger actors in the world. Cyberspace also provides a level playing field for all levels of participants – not only nation states, but also individuals, private sector companies, and other communities – to voice, collaborate, network and advocate for their interests, representation, and possible actions. Given these positive indications, does cyberspace really make global communication more transparent, diversified, and horizontal?

Because of various levels of participants (content providers, commenters, influencers, and so forth) involved in cyberspace, the degree of complexity increases exponentially. The term “lateral pressure” was coined to explain cyber entities’ behavior and influence beyond established boundaries (Choucri & Clark, 2018). The #MeToo movement that started in the U.S. has spread to many other countries and exerted influence in various domains is one case in point. Alt-right and extremist messages, initiated and propagandized on the Internet, also know no national borders and have been blamed to wreak havoc on traditional democracies (Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018). The point here is that nation states traditionally are the unit of analysis in the communication domain. Yet participants in the cyberspace have been exponentially empowered. Thus, how can individuals be part of and analyzed in inter-national communication? Do/should individuals represent the nation in which they are recognized/ come from? These questions can be extended to include alternative participants, such as issue-based online groups or even bots (Veale & Cook, 2018). The issue of participants in cyberspace and their impact on global communication awaits further exploration and clarification.

Zeroing in on participants of cyberspace, one can anticipate that certain actors with superior technological know-how and better networks can exert a much greater influence than others. For example, WikiLeaks enjoys unparalleled access to critical information on key leaders and global security; its operation – completely circumventing mainstream media’s mechanism – has been able to create political bombshells worldwide. Tencent’s WeChat that reaches an estimated 500 million users outside China as of 2024 can offer a multifunctional platform

(Review, 2024), but is closely monitored and censored by the Chinese government (Cook, 2019; Xiao, 2020). The cyberspace ecosystem along with other issues such as sovereignty, legality, technical management, and online censorship affect global communication greatly. Furthermore, while journalism and mass communication scholars may not be keen on the issues of cyber security or warfare – which mostly fall into the realms of data science and international relations (Flournoy & Sulmeyer, 2018) – monitoring of and interfering in communication content and process by foreign nations via cyberspace should be an area of concern. Policy experts and law makers therefore should take proactive, sweeping actions.

#### Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to examine the recent interplay between technology and global communication. Cyberspace presents a huge challenge as well as a potential opportunity to transform how the entire world communicates. It could potentially be a great enabler and equalizer for the world's communication participants and enhance the efficiency and magnitude of global communication, despite the unrelenting issues of unequal resources and access. It is also a nexus for two critical topics: post-truth and public diplomacy. As explained above, misinformation and the spread of deceptive content online shows some alarming trends, which have been observed in both domestic and international settings. Public diplomacy, against the backdrop of declined global journalism, aims at communicating directly to foreign publics via all types of media in the hope of benefitting sponsoring agents. Merged together, post-truth public diplomacy (PTPD) strategically disseminates fabricated content across national borders to sway public opinion and bolster the sponsor's interests (Wu, 2023). PTPD is more than a propaganda apparatus witnessed during World Wars and Cold War; it is far more sophisticated, technically advanced, and harder to detect by target participants—and one that is getting harder to detect through the use of AI technologies. It has been embraced and implemented by nations of all regions for quite some time and can engender a gargantuan impact on how the world is communicated, understood, and perceived.

One of the trends in global communication in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was Anglo-American influence – in language, pop culture, and media ownership (Stevenson, 1992). The influence in these three areas remains noticeable even today, although it seems to have shifted toward the technology side. Current technology juggernauts such as AI hardware design (Nvidia and AMD), cloud-based computing (Amazon and Microsoft), smart phone producer (Apple), Internet search engine (Google), content streaming services (Apple+, Disney+, and Netflix), and social networking sites (Meta) are all based in the U.S. The questions then are whether the prevailing communication system worldwide remains fundamentally uneven and whether these companies can establish effective mechanisms to curb PTPD, offer guardrail for AI's contribution, and safeguard universal values such as democracy, equal access, and individuals' privacy and well-being.

The underlying issues from a few media conglomerates that control key technologies are multifaceted, complex, and definitely deserve more attention. For one thing, representativeness, accuracy, and diversity and plurality (of the world's nations, identities, and cultures) in produced and distributed content are always a concern when ownership and management are increasingly centralized. Moreover, the practice of post-truth public diplomacy via the platforms controlled by the conglomerates is one urgent issue as companies wrestle to find solutions to handle highly deceitful content such as deep fake within civil, open societies (Dowdeswell & Goltz, 2020). Systematic, constant fact-checking and detection of harmful online content by independent, credible entities should operate at global level with seamless coordination from all countries in

order to protect the general public from being misled or deceived. Making sound, effective laws and policies regarding these complex issues should be another feasible pathway for solutions. Lastly, the trends identified here have implications for journalism practice. At the basic level, news professionals working in highly competitive markets need to always resist the temptation to simply relay or repackage stories expediently gathered via the Internet or other convenient sources (Lambert & Wu, 2018). In addition, journalists need to be more prepared and better understand the pros and cons of new technologies such as AI algorithms to better serve the world's information needs. This can be the best time for them to win back their audiences' trust and attention.

Princess of Wales's "adjusted" photo, new technologies, and many ramifications

Catherine, the Princess of Wales, issued a much-anticipated photo of her and her three children to the press to celebrate Mother's Day in the U.K. However, the Associated Press withdrew the release of the photo within hours, claiming the photo was digitally manipulated and violated their policy; many other news organizations followed suite (Putterman, 2024). Within days she had to apologize for making adjustments on it (Landler & Leatherby, 2024). There are many unprecedented practices in this case, which vividly show the complexity and confluence of AI and digital technologies, content sources and their credibility, press policy, and above all, potential impact on the audience. Start with sources of content. They can be authorized and unauthorized – both kinds can employ technologies to create, manipulate, or edit visuals to meet their goals. In this case, the public relations damage on the authorized source, the English royal family, is huge, resulting in doubt in its past releases and perhaps future ones. The press has many reasons to be highly vigilant on the visuals they carry – with forensic image expertise and technologies – for their credibility and trustworthiness are at stake. They are also responsible for their social and political responsibility. This particular photo they processed was intended to generate more positive effect. On the other hand, if the intended consequences – by unknown, unverifiable sources – are not flattering or flat-out scandalous, whether the press is capable of detecting any alteration or fabrication can be critical. Among the involved parties, the public can be the least prepared and resourceful to discern or process artificially created or produced content. Their impression of the featured personalities in the visuals can be inaccurate or entirely wrong, subsequently leading to their misinformed judgements or bad decisions. This scenario can be particularly detrimental under electoral circumstances.

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Discussion Questions

1. What can average users do to prevent disinformation and misinformation about another nation from impacting their social networks?
2. Should governments and/or social media firms systematically sift, label, or purge falsehood from media platforms? Why and why not? How do fact-check organizations play a role in this information verification process?
3. Can you identify any content or message on social media that can be categorized as "post-truth public diplomacy"? Can you tell which country it comes from (or which country sponsors it) and which entity (or nations) may benefit from it?
4. What type of technology do you think is most critical to enhancing global communication and improving the representation of the Global South, in particular?

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