
Editorial: diplomacy at the crossroads – power, people, and digital paradigms in a fractured world

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1 Introduction

We are living through an era in which diplomacy is both desperately needed and increasingly challenged. The landscape of international relations has become markedly more fragmented, volatile, and interdependent. From the persistent echoes of Cold War rivalries to the unforeseen disruptions caused by pandemics and regional conflicts, the classical instruments of diplomacy – summits, treaties, bilateral exchanges – are being reshaped by newer pressures: digital acceleration, public opinion via social media, shifting power centres, and the re-emergence of colonial legacies. These overlapping crises have not only tested the capacity of states to negotiate and cooperate, but have also placed immense pressure on multilateralism, global markets, and institutional legitimacy (Justinek, 2021; Justinek, 2021a; Justinek, 2022; Justinek, 2023; Justinek, 2024).

As we step into 2025, the world contends with a host of interrelated global challenges. Among them:

- The **Russia–Ukraine war** continues to reverberate beyond Eastern Europe, disrupting global supply chains, energy flows, and financial stability.
- In **South Asia**, long-standing hostilities between India and Pakistan remain a persistent threat to regional peace, particularly given their nuclear status.
- In **Southern Africa**, migration diplomacy and post-colonial reconciliation are hampered by an entrenched lack of political will, exacerbating xenophobia and regional fragmentation.
- The **digital transformation of industries**, especially tourism, is accelerating across continents, exposing regulatory gaps, data governance dilemmas, and asymmetries in technological adoption.

- Meanwhile, **financial markets** are no longer merely economic indicators – they have become responsive barometers of geopolitical tension and diplomatic signalling.

Amidst this complex backdrop, diplomacy has had to evolve – not just in form, but in purpose. The diplomat of today must navigate algorithmic bias, climate diplomacy, digital sovereignty, economic sanctions, cultural representation, and transnational activism, all at once. Diplomacy is no longer simply about statecraft; it is about managing flows – of goods, people, data, and narratives (Justinek, 2023a).

This issue of the *IJDipE* brings together five timely and geographically diverse papers that grapple with these transformations from distinct yet interconnected angles. The scholarship herein does not seek easy answers. Rather, it reflects the messy, multidimensional reality of contemporary diplomacy: one where global tensions shape domestic politics, where historical wounds bleed into policy failures, and where the digital and the diplomatic intertwine in unexpected ways.

Together, the articles selected explore:

- The prospects and persistent barriers in **India–Pakistan diplomacy**, exposing the fragile state of peace in a nuclear region.
- The **market responses to geopolitical crises**, revealing how diplomacy, war, and investor confidence are intimately linked.
- The pivotal role of **political will in decolonial and migration diplomacy** in South Africa, with implications for continental integration and justice.
- The **disruption of global supply chains** triggered by warfare, and the diplomatic recalibrations needed to address economic vulnerability.
- And the **digital transformation of tourism**, offering a window into how cultural diplomacy and innovation collide in the post-pandemic world.

These works reveal that diplomacy is no longer limited to ministries and ambassadors. It now includes platform developers, stock market analysts, migration researchers, and digital infrastructure designers. Diplomacy is everywhere – because crisis is everywhere.

In curating this issue, we offer not just a collection of articles, but a conversation across disciplines and regions. It is a conversation grounded in urgency, sharpened by historical memory, and oriented toward a more resilient and inclusive diplomatic future.

2 Diplomacy and the endurance of geopolitical rivalries

In the opening article, *Indo–Pak diplomacy: prospects and barriers*, Rehman (Pakistan) confronts one of the most persistent rivalries in modern history. Despite decades of dialogue and conflict, the India–Pakistan relationship remains mired in mistrust, with diplomacy often subordinated to nationalist rhetoric and militaristic posturing. Rehman’s analysis is more than a chronicle of historic failures – it is a sobering reflection on how regional disputes can inhibit socioeconomic development, destabilise nuclear order, and perpetuate mutual suspicion even in an era of global interdependence. In a time when regional diplomacy is increasingly shaped by public opinion and digital media, this study

underscores the urgent need for renewed third-party facilitation, trust-building initiatives, and economic interlinkages as tools for peace.

3 Markets, war, and the logic of financial diplomacy

Seth and Vengababu (India), in their paper *Does diplomacy influence stock market trends? Analysing the impact of the Russia–Ukraine conflict on India and the USA during and after war*, investigate the Russia–Ukraine conflict’s ripple effects on the financial markets of two large economies: India and the United States. Through sophisticated econometric tools, they reveal how global diplomacy – or its breakdown – manifests materially in Brent crude prices and equity indices such as the Nifty 50 and S&P 500. The key insight is not only that war disrupts supply chains and raises inflation, but also that investor behaviour is shaped by diplomatic cues, geopolitical alignments, and perceived economic resilience. This work effectively blurs the lines between economic forecasting and diplomatic analysis, urging scholars and policymakers alike to treat capital flows and market sentiment as embedded in the diplomatic environment.

4 Decoloniality and migration diplomacy in Africa

Toendepi, Niyitunga, and Asani (South Africa) contribute a conceptually rich and politically urgent paper titled *Solidifying the concept of political will to promote decoloniality and migration diplomacy in South Africa*. Their central thesis is that migration diplomacy in the region has been hampered not by a lack of legal instruments or institutional frameworks, but by an absence of genuine political will. This absence has allowed coloniality to persist in the form of xenophobia, exclusionary nationalism, and weak regional cooperation. The authors compellingly call for a paradigm shift – from reactionary border politics to African-centred solidarity informed by indigenous knowledge, inclusive governance, and historical redress. The paper is a clarion call to reimagine diplomacy not only as an instrument of the state but as a mechanism for healing post-colonial fractures.

5 The war in Europe and the global supply chain shock

Hussain et al. (India) turn our attention to the material consequences of conflict in their article *Russia–Ukraine conflict: disturbance of global supply chain*. The authors dissect the effects of economic policy uncertainty on manufacturing sectors in major economies – China, the USA, and the EU. Using a time-varying parameter vector autoregressive model (TVP-VAR), they demonstrate how supply shocks, trade rerouting, and geopolitical realignments have fundamentally altered production flows and corporate strategies. Their findings confirm that diplomacy today must operate not only in ministries and summits but also in ports, factories, and boardrooms. Globalisation’s infrastructure – once considered neutral – is now deeply politicised, revealing the fragility of the systems that power everyday life.

6 Tourism, technology, and diplomacy in the digital age

Concluding this issue is a comprehensive literature review by Zhang et al. (Hungary), titled *Comparative insights into the digital transformation of the tourism industry: a literature review*. Though focused on tourism, the article reveals how digital technologies are rewriting the rules of diplomacy itself. Platforms like Airbnb, blockchain-powered travel services, and AI-driven personalisation are not only reshaping consumer behaviour – they are redefining the cultural and political engagement between people and places. The paper contrasts China's rapid adoption of smart tourism technologies with more fragmented approaches in other regions, highlighting a growing divergence in digital governance and innovation. It positions tourism as a subtle but strategic arena for digital diplomacy, national branding, and post-pandemic recovery.

7 Final reflections: from diplomacy to 'Diplogility'

A theme cutting across all five contributions is that diplomacy can no longer be confined to embassies and high-level talks. It is increasingly entangled with *economic volatility*, *technological velocity*, and *post-colonial complexity*. Whether managing oil prices or memory politics, migration flows or meta-platforms, diplomacy must evolve – or risk irrelevance.

In this light, we propose a new conceptual framing: **Diplogility** – a portmanteau of diplomacy and agility. In an era where crises are systemic, and solutions are interdisciplinary, diplomacy must become more responsive, inclusive, and anticipatory. It must listen to the rhythms of financial markets, the voices of displaced populations, and the innovations of digital entrepreneurs. As the articles in this issue show, the world does not wait for diplomacy to catch up. It is time for diplomacy to lead.

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