



Perhaps one of the lessons the government can take away from the ruling is the unlikelihood of the state controlling the market through price regulations. The market has its own mechanism that follows supply and demand, rather than the government's will.

What the government can do is to provide a level playing field for all. Free competition will lead to a zero-sum game if the state fails to uphold fair play. The government also needs to educate consumers, so they are aware of all consequences in choosing between conventional and online taxis.

HER OPINION

Barcelona attack a warning to all

The Barcelona terror attack reveals the increasing desperation of radicals as the Islamic State (IS) movement's empire crumbles. Using vehicles to mow down civilians is terror on the cheap. Yet, that IS is under mortal pressure offers no consolation to victims and their families.

Western societies are called upon to re-examine whether security laws are stringent enough. It simply will not do to hold on to civil libertarian safeguards, which become part of the political arsenal of terror in abnormal times. It attests to the moral and social mores of Europe that most of its people are willing to accept religious minorities in spite of the deadly wedge that terrorists wish to drive between the peace-loving. Europe owes it to itself to leave no stone unturned in stopping terror rather than handling its aftermath.

Elsewhere, countries must prepare safeguarding as much of civilian space as they reasonably can. Singapore continues to move in that direction with the increasing emphasis on concrete bollards at public events. Barriers that reinforce security against hostile vehicle attacks send a clear message to terrorist

Digital diplomacy: Learn from neighbors

Albert Triwibowo
and Jessica Martha

BANDUNG

For us, Indonesians are our brothers and sisters. Very noble people."

The above statement from King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud was made during a lunch time conversation with President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, during the King's first visit to Indonesia, which appeared in the President's vlog (video blog).

Through digital instruments and social media, presidents, governments and diplomats simply bypass the old hierarchy of diplomacy. Audiences can be closer to their leaders, while vlogs change the paradigm of old diplomacy regarding discretion and secrecy. But have we really considered digital instruments as part of our diplomacy?

For Indonesia, awareness of digital diplomacy seems to be positive. Apart from Jokowi's vlog, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has also underlined the impor-

tance of digital instruments in today's diplomacy. In August 2016, international research organization Diplomacy Live recognized Retno's speech as the Best Foreign Minister Speech of The Year.

Digital diplomacy is the use of information and communication technologies to fulfill the state's foreign policy goals. However, according to Digital Diplomacy Review 2016, Indonesia ranks 37th in digital assets used by the countries' foreign affairs ministries for digital diplomacy. Indonesia still lags far behind other countries, including India, which ranked seventh out of 210 countries.

Traditionally, diplomacy limits the possibility of information sharing. Nowadays, states use as many digital platforms as possible to spread information.

Indonesia uses at least 10 digital platforms, including Twitter, Android app, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and government websites. India has at least 17 digital platforms including Twitter, Android app and App store, its government websites, Soundcloud,

Flickr, Periscope, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook in supporting its diplomacy.

The observation shows that Twitter is the most preferred digital platform used by foreign affairs ministries, including that of Indonesia.

Twitter creates more engagement between the government and its citizens. Our Foreign Affairs Ministry has three Twitter accounts (MoFA of Indonesia, Deplu and KEMLU RI), while India has two (Indian Diplomacy and Raveesh Kumar @MEAIndia). India is more active in updating its social media continuously. India's digital platforms also have various services, from visa applications, consular information and even emergency relief services for Indian citizens abroad. These make India the best Asian country to utilize digital diplomacy.

Indonesia should learn to optimize its digital platforms from India, especially to achieve its foreign policy goals. Moreover, Indonesia must improve its infrastruc-

ture, particularly information and communication technology.

More importantly, the government should encourage the use of digital platforms among its diplomats through training. Indonesia also needs to update content continuously on its digital platforms. From its three Foreign Affairs Ministry Twitter accounts, only KEMLU RI is updated continuously. Indonesia should, therefore, consider appointing a special division to manage its digital activities. Having a specific spokesperson dealing with digital activities, as done by the Indian government, is one example.

Jokowi's vlog might be a pioneer in Indonesian digital diplomacy, but there is wide room for progress and creativity for our diplomats to engage with the global community.

*The writers are lecturers of
Diplomacy in Practice at the
International Relations
Department of Parahyangan
Catholic University in Bandung.*