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Systematic Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Global Diplomacy and Sustainable Global Governance: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI), as a key component of contemporary digital technologies, has emerged as a transformative technology across various sectors, including international relations and diplomacy. As AI technologies continue to evolve within the broader digital transformation of international affairs, they are increasingly influencing diplomatic activities and shaping how governments and international organizations respond to global challenges. This study addresses the following research question: "How does AI shape global diplomacy, and what are its implications for global governance and sustainable development?" To answer this question, the study employs a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review of peer-reviewed studies. The findings suggest that AI enhances diplomatic processes by supporting data-driven decision-making, improving negotiation strategies through predictive analytics, and strengthening crisis response capabilities. However, significant challenges remain, including algorithmic bias, cybersecurity threats, ethical concerns, and the limitations of AI in replicating the human judgment and cultural sensitivity that are essential to effective diplomacy. The review further indicates that responsible AI integration requires appropriate governance frameworks, international cooperation, and continued human oversight. By synthesizing the existing literature, this study contributes to a broader understanding of AI's evolving role within the digital transformation of global diplomacy and its implications for global governance and sustainable international cooperation.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI); global diplomacy; global governance; sustainable development; AI governance

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1. Introduction

Diplomacy is a central instrument of international relations, relying on negotiation to manage relations among states and other actors, pursue national interests, resolve conflicts, and promote international cooperation [1–4]. Although traditionally centered on interactions among sovereign states, diplomacy has expanded to include a wider range of actors and communication channels, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media organizations, and influential individuals [5]. This broader structure reflects the increasingly complex and multidimensional nature of contemporary international affairs.

Diplomatic practice can take both bilateral and multilateral forms. Bilateral diplomacy involves interactions between two parties, whereas multilateral diplomacy brings

together multiple actors to address shared international concerns [1,6]. Despite major technological and geopolitical changes, diplomacy remains important for maintaining international peace, facilitating cooperation, protecting human rights, and addressing common global challenges [1,7]. However, the technologies through which diplomatic actors collect information, communicate, and support policy decisions have changed substantially over time.

Recent technological developments have accelerated this transformation, with artificial intelligence (AI) emerging as an increasingly important technology in international relations and diplomatic practice. This transformation is part of a broader shift in diplomacy, as emerging forms of international relations have been influenced by the unprecedented impact of large technology companies [8]. AI applications, including machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), and predictive analytics, can support the processing of large volumes of information, identify patterns, assist strategic analysis, and provide decision-support capabilities in complex environments [9–11]. As Barsekh-Onji, Torres Hernandez, and Cardoso Espinosa [12] observe more broadly, AI technologies encompassing machine learning, natural language processing, and advanced automation offer prospects for optimizing bureaucratic procedures, enhancing evidence-based decision-making, improving service delivery, and fostering more interactive government–citizen relationships—capabilities that are also relevant to diplomatic practice. These capabilities may strengthen diplomatic decision-making and crisis response, particularly where governments and international organizations must process rapidly changing and information-intensive environments. AI is no longer viewed merely as an innovation-driven technology but increasingly as a determinant of national power, with the potential to reshape global governance, international cooperation, and strategic competition [13]. At the same time, the use of AI raises important concerns related to algorithmic bias, misinformation, cybersecurity, accountability, and state sovereignty [14–16]. Beyond technical and ethical risks, significant institutional challenges also emerge. As Hassan [17] observes in the context of digital diplomacy, a key constraint is the shortage of human resources specialized in digital diplomatic work and equipped to address contemporary patterns of international relations in an era of cybernetics, digital transformation, and technological development. This challenge is equally relevant to AI integration into diplomatic practice.

The development of AI in diplomacy builds upon the broader transformation associated with digital diplomacy. Digital technologies have expanded governments' ability to communicate with international audiences, disseminate policy information, and engage with foreign publics through online platforms, thereby transforming the broader practice of digital diplomacy [10,18]. However, regulatory approaches to AI vary significantly across jurisdictions. While the European Union demonstrates an explicit territorial extension with multiple trigger factors, China adopts a more vertically oriented regulatory approach with a narrower territorial scope [19]. AI extends this transformation by moving beyond communication and information exchange toward more advanced forms of data analysis, prediction, and decision support. Integrating the technology agenda into the foreign policy track may create opportunities for small states, strengthen their role in the emerging global technological order, and contribute to greater polycentrism in international relations [20]. Consequently, the growing integration of AI into diplomacy represents not simply another technological development but a broader change in how diplomatic institutions process information, assess risks, and support international engagement. Although existing literature has examined AI in diplomacy from specific technological, diplomatic, or governance perspectives, a more integrated understanding of these dimensions and their interrelationships remains needed.

The implications of AI, however, extend beyond individual diplomatic activities. The growing use of AI has generated wider discussions concerning global governance because its applications can influence institutional decision-making, international cooperation, regulatory capacity, and the management of transnational challenges [12,21]. At the same time, the relationship between technological transformation, international governance, and sustainable development has become increasingly important as governments and international institutions seek to address complex global challenges through coordinated action [22,23]. From this perspective, examining AI in diplomacy provides an opportunity to understand not only how technology may alter diplomatic practice but also how its opportunities and risks may affect broader processes of international cooperation and global governance. Accordingly, this review contributes by bringing together the technological, diplomatic, institutional, and governance dimensions of AI within a single analytical framework to examine how their interactions shape the implications of AI-enabled diplomacy. Specifically, the review examines how AI-related benefits and risks are linked to diplomatic decision-making, negotiation, crisis response, communication, and institutional capacity, and how these relationships translate into broader governance implications.

Against this background, this study addresses the following research question: "How does AI shape global diplomacy, and what are its implications for global governance and sustainable development?" To address this overarching question, the review considers three specific sub-questions: (1) "How is AI being applied in diplomatic practice, particularly in decision-making, negotiation, crisis response, communication, and institutional capacity?" (2) "What opportunities and risks are associated with the adoption of AI in diplomacy?" and (3) "What are the implications of AI-enabled diplomacy for global governance and sustainable international cooperation, including its relevance to sustainable development?" To address these questions, the study employs a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review to synthesize the existing literature on AI in diplomatic practice, its opportunities and risks, and its broader implications for global governance and sustainable international cooperation [24]. The review focuses on how AI is discussed in relation to diplomatic decision-making, negotiation, crisis response, communication, and institutional capacity, while also considering the broader governance challenges associated with its adoption.

Analytically, the review is structured around a benefit–risks–governance framework, examining how the potential benefits of AI-enabled diplomacy are shaped and constrained by technological, institutional, ethical, and geopolitical risks, and how appropriate governance mechanisms may mediate this relationship. Importantly, this review does not treat the identified benefits and risks of AI as separate or inherently predetermined outcomes. Rather, it conceptualizes them as interconnected dimensions whose implications depend on the institutional, ethical, and governance conditions under which AI is developed and deployed. This analytical perspective enables the review to move beyond a descriptive synthesis of the literature and to examine how AI may reshape diplomatic practice while simultaneously generating new forms of institutional vulnerability and governance challenges. The findings are subsequently interpreted in relation to global governance and sustainable international cooperation, without assuming that AI itself directly produces sustainable development outcomes.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents the research methodology and explains the systematic literature review process. Section 3 presents the findings, covering the evolution from conventional to AI-enabled digital diplomacy, the benefits and risks associated with AI adoption, China's strategic use of AI as an illustrative case, and the implications for global governance and sustainable development. Section 4 discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature and considers their theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research. Finally, Section 5

concludes the study by summarizing the main findings and their implications for the future of AI-enabled diplomacy and sustainable global governance.

2. Materials and Methods

The review was conducted and reported in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 statement [24]. The completed PRISMA 2020 checklist is provided as Supplementary File S1. PRISMA framework provides a structured approach to identifying, screening, assessing the eligibility of, and selecting relevant studies [24]. The review process was structured around study identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. A qualitative research design was adopted to synthesize and critically examine the existing literature on the application of AI in diplomatic practice.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR. The review focused on scholarly publications published in English between 1997 and 2026, with particular emphasis on peer-reviewed journal articles addressing the relationship between AI or digital technologies and diplomacy, digital diplomacy, international relations, international cooperation, or global governance. The search strategy used combinations of the following terms: ("Artificial Intelligence" OR "AI") AND ("Diplomacy" OR "Digital Diplomacy") AND ("International Relations" OR "Global Governance"). The search strategy used combinations of these terms related to artificial intelligence, digital technologies, diplomacy, digital diplomacy, technology diplomacy, international relations, international cooperation, and global governance. The searches of Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR were conducted in June 2026. Studies were eligible for inclusion if they (1) were scholarly publications, with priority given to peer-reviewed journal articles; (2) were published in English between 1997 and 2026; (3) examined AI or digital technologies in relation to diplomacy, digital diplomacy, technology diplomacy, international relations, international cooperation, or global governance; and (4) provided substantive discussion of how such technologies influence diplomatic processes, international engagement, foreign policy, international cooperation, or technology governance. The 1997–2026 publication window was selected to capture the broader technological transformation of diplomacy, including the emergence of digital and ICT-mediated diplomatic practices that preceded the more recent expansion of AI applications. Although AI-focused diplomatic research has increased substantially in recent years, retaining the longer period allowed the review to examine the conceptual and technological transition from conventional diplomacy to digital and subsequently AI-enabled diplomatic practice.

Studies were excluded if they did not address the research questions, did not provide substantive discussion of AI or digital technologies in relation to diplomacy, international relations, international cooperation, or global governance, were outside the specified publication period or language criteria, or were purely theoretical, methodological, or contextual sources without substantive relevance to the review focus. The same conceptual search structure was adapted to the search interfaces of each database, while the stated publication period, language, and peer-review restrictions were applied as eligibility limits. The searches were conducted using the title, abstract, and keyword fields where available, with database-specific interface settings applied as appropriate. The search was conducted in June 2026, and the number of records retrieved from each database was documented and combined to determine the initial search yield. The final evidence base was established by applying the predefined eligibility criteria to the identified literature. Sources that provided substantive evidence concerning AI or digital technologies and their relationship to diplomacy, international relations, international cooperation, or global governance

were retained within the systematic-review corpus. Other sources used to define broader concepts, methodological frameworks, or contextual issues were retained as background references and were not counted among the included publications. References used to define or explain broader concepts, methodological frameworks, technological techniques, or contextual issues were therefore treated as background references rather than as part of the systematic review corpus. Accordingly, the 51 publications reported as included in the PRISMA screening process represent the final evidence base that met the predefined eligibility criteria and contributed substantively to the systematic synthesis. This number is distinct from the 69 references cited throughout the manuscript, as the latter also includes background, conceptual, methodological, and contextual sources.

The initial search identified 9485 records across the four databases. Following the removal of duplicate records, 8312 records remained for title and abstract screening. Titles and abstracts were screened against the predefined eligibility criteria before potentially relevant records were assessed in full text. A total of 8124 records were excluded during title and abstract screening because they did not meet the predefined eligibility criteria, leaving 188 records for full-text assessment. A total of 188 records were assessed in full text, of which 51 met the predefined eligibility criteria and were included in the final synthesis. The 51 publications included in the systematic synthesis should be distinguished from the total reference list of 69 sources cited throughout the manuscript. The remaining references were retained to provide theoretical, conceptual, methodological, or contextual support for the manuscript but were not counted as part of the systematic-review evidence base. Accordingly, the manuscript contains 69 references in total, whereas the final systematic-review corpus comprises 51 publications. At the full-text assessment stage, studies were excluded primarily because they did not directly address AI and diplomacy, did not sufficiently address the research question, or did not meet the predefined publication, language, or eligibility criteria. This selection process was designed to maintain a clear focus on the relationship between AI and diplomatic practice while allowing the review to capture relevant discussions concerning broader governance implications.

For each included study, relevant information concerning the study focus, application or role of AI in diplomacy, diplomatic functions or contexts examined, reported opportunities and challenges, and implications for global governance and sustainable development was extracted and organized for qualitative synthesis. For each included study, relevant information concerning the study focus, diplomatic context, AI application, reported opportunities and challenges, and implications for global governance and sustainable development was extracted and organized for qualitative synthesis. Table 1 summarizes the general characteristics and thematic scope of the 51 publications included in the final systematic synthesis.

Data were extracted by the authors through a structured review of the included studies. The methodological quality, potential risk of bias, reporting limitations, and overall confidence in the evidence were considered based on the clarity of the research objectives, study design, data sources, methodological procedures, analytical approaches, and consistency of the reported findings. These criteria were applied consistently across the included studies to assess the methodological robustness and potential limitations of the evidence. Particular attention was given to whether the study objectives were clearly defined, the methods and data sources were adequately described, the analytical approach was appropriate to the research objective, and the reported conclusions were supported by the presented evidence. These considerations were taken into account when interpreting and synthesizing the findings. Given the qualitative and heterogeneous nature of the evidence, no formal statistical assessment or quantitative certainty rating was applied. The methodological quality, potential risk of bias, and reporting limitations varied across the

included studies. These considerations were taken into account when interpreting the consistency and strength of the synthesized findings.

Table 1. General Characteristics of the Included Studies.

Characteristic	Description
Review period	1997–2026
Databases searched	Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and JSTOR
Records identified	9485
Records after duplicate removal	8312
Full-text records assessed	188
Systematic synthesis	51
Total references in manuscript	69
Publication language	English
Publication type	Scholarly publications, primarily peer-reviewed journal articles
Main research focus	AI and diplomacy, digital diplomacy, international relations, and global governance
Main diplomatic contexts	Decision-making, negotiation, crisis management, public diplomacy, communication, and administrative functions
Main AI applications	Decision support, information processing, predictive analysis, natural language processing, automation, and monitoring
Main challenges examined	Algorithmic bias, cybersecurity, misinformation, transparency, accountability, human judgment, and institutional capacity
Broader implications examined	Global governance, international cooperation, technology diplomacy, and sustainable development
Synthesis approach	Qualitative thematic synthesis

The review process is presented in Figure 1.

Following the PRISMA framework, the selection process proceeded through four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. Title and abstract screening, full-text assessment, and data extraction were conducted jointly by the two authors using the predefined eligibility criteria and a structured extraction approach. Any differences in assessment were discussed between the authors and resolved through consensus. The final set of studies was then examined using thematic analysis. The extracted information was compared across the included studies and grouped according to recurring concepts and patterns. The thematic synthesis followed a structured multi-step process. First, the extracted information from each included study was reviewed and coded according to its main topic, diplomatic context, AI application, reported benefits, risks, and governance implications. Second, conceptually related codes were compared and grouped into broader analytical categories. Third, recurring patterns across these categories were used to establish the principal themes presented in Section 3, including AI-enabled diplomatic practice, benefits, risks and challenges, China's strategic use of AI, and implications for global governance and sustainable development. China was not selected through a separate case-study sampling procedure. Rather, it emerged from the included literature as a prominent and sufficiently documented national context in which AI, technology diplomacy, international standards, and geopolitical engagement

are examined together. It was therefore retained as an illustrative synthesis within the broader thematic analysis rather than treated as an independent or comprehensive country case study. Where studies reported differing or contradictory findings, these differences were retained during the synthesis and interpreted in relation to differences in study focus, institutional context, and the specific application of AI rather than being treated as evidence of a single uniform effect. The synthesis focused on AI applications in diplomatic decision-making, negotiation, information processing, communication, crisis management, and administrative activities, as well as associated ethical, technical, political, and governance challenges. Particular attention was also given to how the reviewed literature connects AI-enabled diplomacy with broader issues of global governance, international cooperation, and sustainable development.

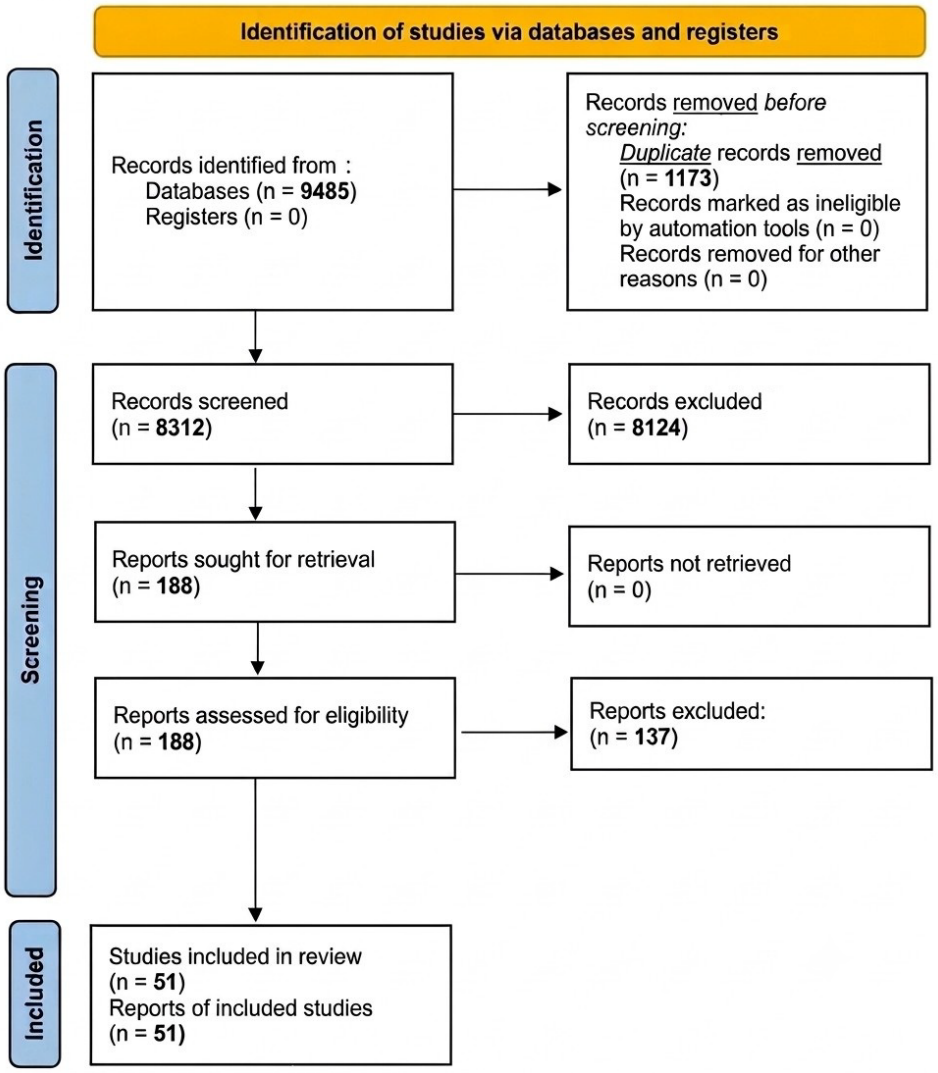


Figure 1. PRISMA-based literature review process.

The review process also has methodological limitations. The synthesis is dependent on the scope and quality of the literature identified through the selected databases, search terms, language restriction, and eligibility criteria. The use of a qualitative thematic synthesis also limits the possibility of making quantitative comparisons across studies. The review process also has methodological limitations. The findings are dependent on the databases searched, the search terms used, the language and publication-period restrictions, and the eligibility criteria applied during study selection. In addition, the qualitative thematic synthesis does not permit quantitative estimation of effect sizes or

causal relationships across the reviewed studies. A formal risk-of-bias assessment tool was not applied because the review used a qualitative thematic synthesis of heterogeneous literature rather than a quantitative assessment of intervention effects. This methodological limitation is acknowledged in the Discussion.

The thematic synthesis provided the basis for organizing the findings into the main analytical areas presented in Section 3. The synthesis was explicitly structured to correspond to the three sub-questions of the review, with the findings organized around AI applications in diplomatic practice, the associated opportunities and risks, and the broader implications for global governance and sustainable international cooperation. These include the evolution from conventional to AI-enabled digital diplomacy, the benefits of AI in diplomatic practice, the associated risks and challenges, China's strategic use of AI as an illustrative case, and the broader implications of AI for global governance and sustainable development. This approach allows the study to systematically synthesize the existing literature while avoiding claims about causal effects or outcomes that cannot be established from the reviewed evidence. This systematic review was not prospectively registered in a systematic review registry, and no review protocol was publicly registered. No amendments to a preregistered protocol were applicable because no protocol was prospectively registered.

3. Findings

3.1. From Conventional Diplomacy to AI-Enabled Digital Diplomacy

This section examines how technological developments have progressively transformed diplomatic practice, from conventional forms of communication to digital diplomacy and, more recently, AI-enabled diplomatic processes. The purpose is to establish the technological and institutional context for understanding how AI is reshaping contemporary diplomacy and to identify the main changes in diplomatic practice reported in the reviewed literature.

Diplomacy has long served as one of the principal instruments of foreign policy, enabling states to pursue national interests, resolve conflicts, and promote international cooperation through negotiation and peaceful engagement [3,4]. Successive advances in communication technologies have fundamentally transformed diplomatic practice by expanding both the range of actors involved and the mechanisms through which international engagement is conducted [25].

The evolution of diplomacy has closely followed technological progress. Earlier communication technologies, including the telegraph, telephone, radio, television, and fax, significantly improved the speed and efficiency of diplomatic communication without replacing diplomacy itself [1,26,27]. The emergence of the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) represented a more substantial transformation, enabling governments to exchange information rapidly, engage with international audiences, and communicate beyond traditional diplomatic channels [27–29]. These technological developments facilitated the emergence of digital diplomacy, which integrates digital platforms into foreign policy and public diplomacy. Often referred to as e-diplomacy or cyber diplomacy, digital diplomacy employs websites, social media, and other online communication technologies to disseminate diplomatic messages, strengthen public engagement, and support international cooperation [10,26,30]. Compared with conventional diplomatic communication, digital diplomacy enables governments to interact more directly with foreign publics, disseminate policy information rapidly, and respond to international developments through digital channels [31,32].

The reviewed literature supports a distinction between conventional diplomacy, digital diplomacy, AI-enabled diplomacy, and technology diplomacy, although these forms of

diplomacy are closely interconnected. Conventional diplomacy refers primarily to negotiation, representation, and interstate engagement conducted through established diplomatic practices and institutions [1–4]. Digital diplomacy extends these practices through digital communication technologies, including websites, social media, and other online platforms, particularly for information exchange, public engagement, and diplomatic communication [10,25–32]. AI-enabled diplomacy represents a further technological development in which artificial intelligence is applied to functions such as information processing, decision support, predictive analysis, negotiation support, and crisis management [12]. Technology diplomacy is broader in scope and concerns the integration of technological capabilities, standards, infrastructure, and technology-related interests into international relations and diplomatic strategies [8,11,12,20]. Thus, while digital diplomacy primarily concerns the use of digital technologies to support diplomatic communication and engagement, AI-enabled diplomacy emphasizes the use of AI-based analytical and decision-support capabilities within diplomatic processes. Technology diplomacy, in turn, encompasses the broader diplomatic management of technological issues and strategic technological interests. These distinctions provide a consistent conceptual basis for the thematic synthesis presented in the following sections.

Social media has become one of the defining components of digital diplomacy by providing governments with immediate and relatively cost-effective communication channels. During events such as the Arab Spring, digital platforms played an important role in facilitating information exchange, mobilizing public opinion, and influencing international diplomatic responses [33–35]. Recognizing these opportunities, many countries have established dedicated digital diplomacy units and increasingly incorporated digital communication into their foreign policy strategies [36,37]. The widespread adoption of social media has also contributed to the development of concepts such as Twiplomacy, reflecting the growing strategic importance of digital platforms in diplomatic communication [38].

Across the included studies, digital diplomacy was associated with faster information exchange, broader international outreach, and more interactive engagement with foreign publics [36,39]. However, these developments have also generated new vulnerabilities, particularly in relation to misinformation, cybersecurity risks, and the growing complexity of managing diplomatic communication across digitally mediated environments [18,40,41]. More broadly, digital technologies extend beyond communication functions by facilitating institutional connectivity, supporting cross-border coordination, and enabling more efficient forms of international cooperation. In this respect, digitalization can contribute to more responsive and interconnected governance processes while simultaneously creating new demands for institutional capacity, coordination, and risk management [22,23]. Across the included studies, AI was examined in relation to several areas of diplomatic practice, including decision-making, crisis management, public diplomacy, and international cooperation [42]. At the same time, the implications of AI extend beyond individual diplomatic applications to broader questions concerning international relations and the changing interaction between technology and global affairs [43]. This finding indicates that the implications of AI in diplomacy extend beyond specific diplomatic applications to broader issues in international relations and global affairs. The emerging role of AI also raises questions about how technological capabilities can be connected with international cooperation and new forms of technology diplomacy [12]. This finding indicates that AI creates new opportunities and challenges for linking technological capabilities with international cooperation and emerging forms of technology diplomacy.

Building upon this digital transformation, AI represents a further stage in the evolution of diplomatic practice. Rather than replacing diplomats, AI is increasingly viewed as a decision-support technology that can strengthen evidence-based policy formulation,

information processing, and international cooperation when implemented within appropriate governance and ethical frameworks [12,21]. Table 2 summarizes the evolution from conventional diplomacy to digital diplomacy and, more recently, to AI-enabled diplomatic practice, highlighting the key technological developments and their corresponding impacts on diplomatic processes.

Table 2. The Evolution from Conventional Diplomacy to AI-Enabled Digital Diplomacy.

Period	Technological Developments	Impact on Diplomatic Practice
Conventional Diplomacy	Telegraph, telephone, radio, television, fax	Improved speed and efficiency of diplomatic communication [1,26,27]
Digital Diplomacy	Internet, ICTs, social media, websites	Direct public engagement, rapid information dissemination, interactive communication with foreign publics [10,26,30–32]
AI-Enabled Diplomacy	Machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), predictive analytics, automation	Data-driven decision-making, negotiation support, crisis response, public diplomacy, administrative efficiency [9–12,21,42]

Taken together, these developments indicate that the transformation of diplomatic practice has been a gradual process of technological expansion rather than a sudden replacement of established methods. In relation to the research question, this evolution suggests that AI shapes global diplomacy primarily by extending diplomats' capacity to process information, communicate with international audiences, and support policy and decision-making processes. The following sections examine more specifically the benefits, risks, and governance implications associated with the growing use of AI in diplomacy. This section therefore addresses the first sub-question by examining the principal ways in which AI is being applied across diplomatic practice.

Across the included studies, a recurring pattern is that AI is primarily presented as an augmentation of diplomatic capabilities rather than a replacement for human diplomatic judgment. Studies focusing on decision-making, information processing, and strategic analysis generally converge on the potential of AI to improve the speed, scale, and analytical capacity of diplomatic work [12,21,42,43]. However, this convergence is conditional, as other studies emphasize that the realization of these benefits depends on institutional capacity, responsible implementation, and human oversight [14,15,17,18].

Taken together, the findings indicate that the transformation of diplomacy extends beyond the specific impact of AI and reflects a broader transformation driven by digital technologies. Within this broader transformation, AI represents a further development of digital diplomacy, extending digital technologies from communication and information exchange toward analytical, predictive, and decision-support functions.

3.2. Benefits of AI in Diplomacy

This section examines the main benefits of AI in diplomatic practice identified in the reviewed literature, with particular attention to how AI supports decision-making, negotiation, crisis management, communication, and administrative processes. Rather than replacing traditional diplomacy, AI is primarily viewed as a complementary technology that can strengthen diplomatic capacity through data-driven analysis, predictive capabilities, and operational efficiency [12,21,42]. These benefits should not, however, be interpreted as inherent or automatic outcomes of AI adoption. The same capabilities that increase analytical speed, predictive capacity, and operational efficiency may also introduce new

forms of dependency, bias, opacity, and vulnerability when AI systems are implemented without adequate institutional safeguards. Accordingly, the reviewed literature suggests that the benefits and risks of AI-enabled diplomacy are interdependent rather than separate dimensions, with the realization of potential benefits depending substantially on the institutional, ethical, and governance conditions under which AI is deployed.

The literature also highlights AI's contribution to diplomatic negotiations through predictive analytics and scenario modeling. Machine learning algorithms can evaluate historical diplomatic interactions, identify negotiation patterns, and estimate potential outcomes under different scenarios. These capabilities can assist diplomats in preparing negotiation strategies, assessing policy alternatives, and improving strategic planning while maintaining human oversight over final decisions [21,43,44]. By analyzing large datasets, simulating scenarios, and learning from past experiences, AI systems can provide policymakers with deeper insights into global trends and more sophisticated tools for decision-making in international diplomacy [42].

Another important contribution concerns crisis management and early-warning capabilities. AI applications can facilitate the continuous monitoring of political, economic, and social developments by integrating information from multiple sources. Such systems can support the early identification of potential conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, cybersecurity incidents, and other international risks, enabling governments to respond more rapidly and coordinate diplomatic actions more effectively [45–47].

The reviewed studies further emphasize AI's growing role in diplomatic communication and public diplomacy. Natural language processing (NLP), automated translation technologies, and sentiment analysis can enable diplomatic institutions to communicate more efficiently across linguistic and cultural boundaries while monitoring public opinion on global issues. AI can also support personalized communication strategies by analyzing audience preferences and digital engagement patterns, thereby strengthening interaction between governments and international stakeholders [48].

Consular and administrative services constitute another area in which AI can improve diplomatic efficiency. AI-powered chatbots, virtual assistants, and automated document-processing systems can accelerate routine administrative procedures, reduce operational workloads, and improve service accessibility for citizens abroad. These technologies can enable diplomatic personnel to devote greater attention to strategic diplomatic activities rather than repetitive administrative tasks [42].

Table 3 provides a structured overview of the key benefits of AI in diplomatic practice, categorized by functional area. Collectively, these capabilities have the potential to strengthen international cooperation and institutional resilience in addressing increasingly complex global challenges. However, as the reviewed studies emphasize, these potential benefits depend on responsible implementation, appropriate governance frameworks, and continued human oversight in diplomatic decision-making.

Beyond its direct operational benefits, the reviewed literature suggests that AI can also strengthen international cooperation by supporting evidence-based policymaking, improving cross-border information exchange, and facilitating coordinated responses to complex transnational challenges. These capabilities are particularly relevant to global issues such as climate change, humanitarian crises, public health emergencies, and international security, where effective diplomatic coordination can contribute to broader sustainable development efforts. Accordingly, AI should be viewed not only as a technological tool for improving diplomatic performance but also as an enabling technology that may support more effective and sustainable global governance when implemented within appropriate ethical and institutional frameworks [21,49,50].

Table 3. Key Benefits of Artificial Intelligence in Diplomatic Practice.

Benefit Area	Description
Data Analysis and Decision Support	Processing large volumes of information, identifying patterns, assisting strategic analysis [9–11]
Negotiation Support	Evaluating historical interactions, scenario modeling, predicting potential outcomes [21,43,44]
Crisis Management and Early Warning	Continuous monitoring of political, economic, and social developments; early identification of conflicts and emergencies [45–47]
Diplomatic Communication and Public Diplomacy	NLP, automated translation, sentiment analysis, personalized communication strategies [48]
Consular and Administrative Services	Chatbots, virtual assistants, automated document processing [42]
International Cooperation	Evidence-based policymaking, cross-border information exchange, coordinated crisis responses [21,49,50]

The literature also reveals differences in the emphasis placed on AI-related risks. While some studies primarily highlight technological and operational benefits, others give greater attention to cybersecurity, algorithmic bias, accountability, privacy, and the preservation of human judgment [14–18,40]. These differences do not necessarily constitute contradictory findings; rather, they reflect the different institutional and technological contexts examined across the studies. Overall, the evidence suggests that the opportunities associated with AI-enabled diplomacy are closely linked to the governance conditions under which AI is deployed.

3.3. Risks and Challenges of AI in Diplomacy

While AI offers significant opportunities for diplomatic practice, the reviewed literature also identifies a range of risks and challenges associated with its growing integration into diplomatic processes. These concerns include algorithmic bias, misinformation and disinformation, cybersecurity threats, accountability and transparency problems, ethical concerns, and limitations in human judgment and cultural sensitivity. The challenges are not purely technological; they also involve institutional, political, and governance-related dimensions that may affect the responsible use of AI in diplomacy.

One of the most frequently discussed concerns is algorithmic bias. AI systems learn from existing data, which may contain historical biases, incomplete information, or culturally specific assumptions. When such systems are applied to diplomatic decision-making, biased outputs may influence the assessment of political developments, actors, or potential policy responses. This creates concerns about fairness, reliability, and the potential reproduction of existing inequalities within diplomatic and international decision-making processes [14,15]. Consequently, the use of AI in diplomacy requires mechanisms for evaluating the quality of training data, monitoring system performance, and maintaining meaningful human oversight.

Cybersecurity represents another major challenge. The increasing integration of AI into diplomatic systems expands the number of digital infrastructures and information flows that may be exposed to cyber threats. Diplomatic institutions routinely handle sensitive political, strategic, and personal information, making them potential targets for cyberattacks, data manipulation, and unauthorized access. AI systems themselves may also be vulnerable to adversarial manipulation or the exploitation of weaknesses in data and algorithms. These risks create additional requirements for secure system design, data protection, and institutional cybersecurity capabilities [18,40].

The reviewed literature also highlights concerns related to misinformation and disinformation. AI-enabled technologies can facilitate the rapid generation, personalization, and dissemination of misleading or manipulated content, potentially complicating diplomatic communication and public diplomacy. In digitally mediated international environments, the ability to distinguish reliable information from manipulated content becomes increasingly important. Such challenges may undermine public trust, distort perceptions of international events, and complicate the communication strategies of governments and diplomatic institutions.

Another important issue concerns transparency, accountability, and explainability. Diplomatic decisions may have significant political and international consequences, yet some AI systems operate through complex models whose outputs may be difficult for users to interpret or explain. This creates challenges when AI-supported recommendations influence diplomatic decisions or policy assessments. Maintaining clear lines of institutional responsibility is therefore essential, particularly when AI-generated outputs are incorporated into decision-making processes [12,21]. AI should consequently function as a decision-support mechanism rather than as an autonomous substitute for diplomatic judgment.

The limitations of AI in reproducing human judgment and cultural sensitivity constitute an additional challenge. Diplomacy frequently depends on contextual interpretation, interpersonal trust, tacit knowledge, empathy, and an understanding of cultural and political nuances. Although AI can process large volumes of information and identify patterns, these capabilities do not necessarily translate into an equivalent capacity for understanding the social and cultural context of diplomatic interactions. Overreliance on automated systems may therefore create risks when complex diplomatic situations require contextual judgment and adaptation.

Institutional capacity is also a significant challenge. The effective integration of AI requires personnel with appropriate technical, analytical, and diplomatic competencies. As Hassan [17] observes in the context of digital diplomacy, the shortage of human resources specialized in digital diplomatic work represents an important constraint in an increasingly technology-driven international environment. This challenge is particularly relevant to AI adoption because diplomatic institutions need not only technical expertise but also the organizational capacity to evaluate AI outputs, manage associated risks, and integrate these systems into established decision-making processes.

At the broader geopolitical level, the integration of AI into diplomacy may also contribute to intensified technological competition. The reviewed literature points to the risks associated with tech-nationalism, protectionism, and fragmentation in the global technological environment [12]. Differences in national AI capabilities, regulatory approaches, and access to advanced technologies may create asymmetries among states and complicate international cooperation. These dynamics may also increase the potential for AI to be used in ways that conflict with broader principles of responsible technological governance.

Table 4 provides an overview of the principal risks and challenges associated with the integration of AI into diplomatic practice, categorized by thematic area. These challenges suggest that the benefits of AI cannot be separated from the governance conditions under which the technology is implemented. Effective safeguards, institutional capacity, international cooperation, and continued human oversight are therefore essential for mitigating potential risks while preserving the benefits of AI-enabled diplomacy.

Table 4. Risks and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence in Diplomacy.

Risk/Challenge	Description
Algorithmic Bias	Historical biases in training data may lead to unfair or unreliable diplomatic assessments [14,15]
Cybersecurity Threats	Increased vulnerability to cyberattacks, data manipulation, and unauthorized access to sensitive diplomatic information [18,40]
Misinformation and Disinformation	AI-enabled generation and dissemination of misleading or manipulated content, complicating diplomatic communication and public trust
Transparency and Accountability	Difficulty in interpreting complex AI outputs; lack of clear institutional responsibility for AI-assisted decisions [12,21]
Limitations in Human Judgment and Cultural Sensitivity	Inability to replicate contextual interpretation, empathy, interpersonal trust, and cultural nuance essential to effective diplomacy
Institutional Capacity Constraints	Shortage of specialized human resources for digital and AI-enabled diplomatic work [17]
Geopolitical Competition	Tech-nationalism, protectionism, fragmentation in the global technological environment; asymmetries in AI capabilities among states [12]

In relation to the research question, these findings indicate that AI shapes global diplomacy not only by expanding diplomatic capabilities but also by introducing new forms of technological, institutional, and geopolitical risk. These findings address the second subquestion by demonstrating that the opportunities associated with AI-enabled diplomacy are closely interconnected with technological, institutional, ethical, and geopolitical risks. The broader implications for global governance therefore depend on whether governments and international institutions can develop governance arrangements capable of addressing these risks while enabling responsible technological cooperation. The following section examines China's strategic use of AI as an illustrative case of how AI is being incorporated into the broader transformation of diplomatic and international practices.

3.4. China's Strategic Use of AI in Diplomacy: An Illustrative Case

This section addresses the third subquestion by examining how AI-enabled diplomacy may affect global governance, international cooperation, and sustainable development. This section uses China as an illustrative example to contextualize the broader findings of the systematic literature review and to examine how AI-related developments may influence contemporary diplomatic practice, international governance, and sustainable international cooperation. The purpose is not to present China as a comprehensive case study, but rather to illustrate how the opportunities and governance challenges identified in the reviewed literature may be reflected in a specific national context. The China case is therefore integrated into the broader benefits–risks–governance framework used in this review. It illustrates how the potential benefits of AI for diplomatic capacity and international engagement can be linked to national technological strategies, while also revealing risks related to geopolitical competition, technological asymmetries, and the diffusion of competing governance models. In this sense, the case adds an institutional and geopolitical dimension to the broader review findings by showing how the opportunities and risks of AI-enabled diplomacy are shaped by national strategic choices and governance arrangements.

The reviewed literature identifies China as a prominent example of the integration of AI into diplomatic strategy and international engagement [51]. Its inclusion reflects the prominence and breadth of China-related evidence within the reviewed literature, particularly concerning technology diplomacy, AI governance, international standardization, and strategic competition [51–56]. The China case is therefore used to contextualize the broader themes identified in the systematic synthesis rather than as a separately sampled country case. In the Chinese context, this integration is operationalized through what scholars describe as "new technology diplomacy," whose primary objective is to leverage integrated infrastructure deployment, participation in standard-setting processes, and capacity-building programs to promote digital connectivity and ecosystem integration in partner countries while reinforcing domestic technological self-reliance and expanding global influence [52]. China's experience illustrates how AI is increasingly connected with foreign policy, international economic engagement, public diplomacy, and broader strategic competition. Rather than treating these developments as evidence of a single or uniform model of AI-enabled diplomacy, the literature provides an example of how national technological strategies can influence the ways in which states pursue diplomatic and international objectives. Recent research on public discourse surrounding China's DeepSeek model further illustrates this dynamic. Within this framing, AI becomes more than a technical object; it acquires symbolic value associated with national achievement and strategic advancement, allowing public discussions to connect domestic AI developments with broader narratives of national revival and collective progress [53].

Beyond its implications for China's foreign policy, the reviewed literature suggests that the country's AI strategy also provides broader insights into the relationship between technological innovation, international governance, and sustainable development. States may seek to develop strategic narratives with positive or aspirational messages to persuade publics of the relevance and potential mutual benefits of AI-related plans and investments [54]. As a major actor in the global AI landscape, China increasingly participates in international discussions on digital governance, technology standards, and institutional frameworks shaping the responsible use of AI across borders [55]. Consequently, China's experience illustrates how national AI strategies can influence not only bilateral diplomatic relations but also the development of governance mechanisms intended to support international cooperation on complex transnational challenges.

At the same time, the literature indicates that the strategic use of AI raises important governance questions. The diplomatic value of AI cannot be assessed solely in terms of technological capability, as issues of transparency, responsible innovation, accountability, and international coordination also shape its broader implications [49,55]. China's experience therefore provides a useful context for understanding the dual character of AI-enabled diplomacy: AI may strengthen analytical and strategic capabilities while simultaneously creating governance challenges that extend beyond national borders.

Table 5 summarizes the key components of China's strategic use of AI in diplomacy, based on the reviewed literature. China's experience does not establish a universally applicable model; rather, it demonstrates how national approaches to AI can have broader implications for international cooperation and the governance of emerging technologies. In this respect, the case supports the broader conclusion of the review that the contribution of AI to global diplomacy depends on the extent to which technological innovation is accompanied by responsible governance, transparency, and international collaboration.

Table 5. Key Components of China's Strategic Use of AI in Diplomacy.

Strategic Component	Description
"New Technology Diplomacy"	Leveraging integrated infrastructure deployment, participation in standard-setting processes, and capacity-building programs to promote digital connectivity and ecosystem integration in partner countries while reinforcing domestic technological self-reliance and expanding global influence [52]
Triple Helix Synergy Model (THSM)	A distinctive mode of coordination among the state, industry, and academia aimed at integrating technological advancement with diplomatic objectives [52]
Global Standardization Efforts	Promoting Chinese AI standards internationally as a key channel for strategic technology competition; essential for major powers to diffuse their technological solutions globally [56]
Strategic Narratives	Framing AI as a symbol of national achievement and strategic advancement; connecting domestic AI developments with broader narratives of national revival and collective progress [53,54]
International Engagement	Participation in global discussions on digital governance, technology standards, and institutional frameworks shaping the responsible use of AI across borders [55]

From the perspective of the research question, this illustrative case reinforces the broader finding that AI is influencing global diplomacy not simply by introducing new technological tools but also by changing the relationship between technological capability, diplomatic strategy, and international governance. This transformation is particularly evident in China's approach, where the Triple Helix Synergy Model (THSM) represents a distinctive mode of coordination among the state, industry, and academia aimed at integrating technological advancement with diplomatic objectives [52]. As Zhu, Sinkkonen, and Mattlin [56] argue, in strategic technology competition, it is essential for major powers to diffuse their technological solutions internationally, with standardization serving as a key channel—a dynamic reflected in China's efforts to promote its AI standards globally. China's experience does not establish a universally applicable model; rather, it demonstrates how national approaches to AI can have broader implications for international cooperation and the governance of emerging technologies. In this respect, the case supports the broader conclusion of the review that the contribution of AI to global diplomacy depends on the extent to which technological innovation is accompanied by responsible governance, transparency, and international collaboration, including considerations relevant to sustainable global governance. Thus, in relation to the third sub-question, the reviewed evidence suggests that AI-enabled diplomacy may contribute to international cooperation and sustainable development indirectly by strengthening institutional and technological capacities, while its broader contribution remains dependent on inclusive governance, international coordination, and responsible technological development.

3.5. Implications of AI-Enabled Diplomacy for Global Governance and Sustainable Development: China as an Illustrative Case

This section addresses the third sub-question by synthesizing the broader implications of the reviewed evidence for global governance, international cooperation, and sustainable development. The findings of this review indicate that AI is becoming an increasingly important enabler of contemporary diplomacy by strengthening information processing, strategic analysis, negotiation support, crisis response, and international communication.

As AI is a global phenomenon, it requires coordinated international responses [57]. These developments have also increased the importance of examining AI from a global governance perspective, particularly with regard to international coordination and institutional responses to AI-related challenges [57]. This finding indicates that AI should be examined from a global governance perspective, particularly in relation to international coordination and institutional responses to AI-related challenges. Collectively, these capabilities extend beyond operational improvements and have broader implications for global governance, as governments and international organizations increasingly rely on AI-supported technologies to enhance policy coordination, institutional decision-making, and international cooperation [12,21]. However, the effectiveness of these efforts may be constrained by the fragmentation of existing governance approaches, with principles-based, rights-based, risk-based, and ethics-based frameworks often operating in separate policy domains [58]. This fragmentation of the digital order may contribute to the emergence of parallel digital spheres, with implications not only for major powers but also for the broader international community [59].

At the same time, the reviewed literature consistently emphasizes that the benefits of AI in diplomacy cannot be fully realized without effective governance frameworks capable of addressing ethical concerns, algorithmic bias, transparency, accountability, cybersecurity, and unequal technological capacities among countries [60–62]. These challenges demonstrate that technological innovation alone is insufficient; responsible implementation, appropriate regulation, and continued human oversight remain essential prerequisites for trustworthy AI-enabled diplomacy. The need for international coordination is further reinforced by the recognition that effective AI governance requires cooperation across countries and institutions rather than isolated national approaches [62]. This finding indicates that effective AI governance requires international cooperation and coordination among countries and institutions rather than isolated national approaches.

The broader literature further suggests that AI has the potential to support sustainable development by strengthening evidence-based policymaking, improving international coordination, and facilitating collective responses to complex transnational challenges, including climate change, humanitarian crises, public health emergencies, cybersecurity, and international security [22,23,49]. However, the literature does not suggest that AI alone can achieve these outcomes. Rather, its contribution depends on governance arrangements that promote ethical AI deployment, institutional capacity building, and inclusive international collaboration. In this regard, AI is best understood as a complementary technology that can enhance diplomatic effectiveness while preserving the central role of human judgment and diplomatic expertise.

Table 6 synthesizes the broader implications of AI for global governance and sustainable development, highlighting both opportunities and challenges identified in the reviewed literature.

Recent governance-oriented research has likewise emphasized the need to consider AI within broader frameworks of responsible, inclusive, and internationally coordinated governance [58]. This finding indicates that AI should be addressed within broader governance frameworks that emphasize responsibility, inclusiveness, and international coordination. More broadly, the findings indicate that AI governance is becoming an integral component of contemporary global governance. As AI technologies continue to evolve, international institutions will increasingly need to adapt regulatory frameworks, establish shared principles, and strengthen multilateral cooperation to ensure that the benefits of AI are distributed fairly and responsibly across countries and regions [55,63,64]. Consequently, the responsible governance of AI should be viewed not only as a technical or regulatory issue but also as an important element of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable international governance.

Table 6. Implications of AI for Global Governance and Sustainable Development.

Implication Area	Opportunities/Positive Contributions	Risks/Challenges
Global Governance	Enhanced policy coordination, institutional decision-making, international cooperation [12,21]	Fragmentation of governance approaches (principles-based, rights-based, risk-based, ethics-based frameworks operating separately); emergence of parallel digital spheres [58,59]
Sustainable Development	Evidence-based policymaking, improved international coordination, collective responses to transnational challenges (climate change, humanitarian crises, public health emergencies, cybersecurity, international security) [22,23,49]	AI alone is insufficient; requires ethical frameworks, institutional capacity, human oversight, and inclusive participation; unequal technological capacities among countries [60–62]
International Cooperation	Cross-border information sharing, coordinated crisis response, responsible AI governance [57]	Intensified geopolitical competition; tech-nationalism; protectionism; asymmetries in AI capabilities among states [12]

Recent research further supports this governance-centered perspective. Zhou [65] demonstrates that AI adoption in environmental governance is shaped by interacting institutional, technological, and social conditions, suggesting that context-sensitive implementation and governance safeguards are essential for aligning AI use with sustainable development. Similarly, Waqas and Naseem [66] emphasize that the sustainability benefits of AI are closely associated with human-centered approaches and the organizational conditions under which AI technologies are deployed. Extending this perspective beyond sustainability outcomes, Selgas-Cors [67] shows that AI is not merely a means of improving organizational efficiency but can also reshape social inequalities, data governance, human–machine relations, and institutional accountability. Taken together, these studies reinforce the argument that the contribution of AI to sustainable and effective governance depends not simply on technological capabilities, but on the institutional, human-centered, and governance arrangements within which those capabilities are embedded.

Overall, this review demonstrates that AI is reshaping diplomatic practice while simultaneously transforming the governance challenges associated with international cooperation. Maximizing the benefits of AI therefore requires balancing technological innovation with transparency, accountability, ethical responsibility, and multilateral collaboration. In relation to the research question, the reviewed evidence suggests that AI is transforming global diplomacy primarily by strengthening diplomatic capabilities and enabling new forms of information-driven coordination, while its implications for global governance and sustainable international cooperation depend on whether these capabilities are supported by responsible, inclusive, and internationally coordinated governance frameworks.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate substantial convergence regarding the potential of AI to strengthen diplomatic and governance capacities, but greater variation regarding the conditions under which these benefits can be achieved. The principal difference across the literature concerns the balance between technological opportunity and governance risk, which varies according to institutional capacity, regulatory arrangements, and geopolitical context [55,57,58,60–64].

4. Discussion

The findings suggest that AI is becoming an enabling capability within diplomatic practice rather than a substitute for diplomatic expertise. This interpretation reflects the convergence of findings across studies examining AI-related analytical, decision-support, communication, and coordination functions, while the available literature provides limited direct evidence on long-term effects on diplomatic outcomes. In interpreting these findings, AI-enabled diplomacy is understood as distinct from, but connected to, broader digital diplomacy. While digital diplomacy primarily concerns the use of digital technologies and platforms for diplomatic communication, engagement, and information exchange, AI-enabled diplomacy involves the application of AI-based analytical, predictive, and decision-support capabilities within these and other diplomatic functions. This distinction is important because the findings indicate that the significance of AI lies not simply in further digitalization, but in the increasing use of computational capabilities to augment diplomatic analysis and institutional decision-making [10,12,21,42,43]. Its value is particularly evident in information-intensive activities, where AI can assist with large-scale data processing, analytical support, crisis monitoring, communication, and selected administrative functions. This indicates a gradual reconfiguration of diplomatic work: AI can increase the speed and scale at which information is processed, while the interpretation of that information and the formulation of politically consequential decisions remain dependent on human actors. AI-enabled diplomacy therefore appears less as a form of autonomous decision-making than as an extension of existing institutional processes. The findings suggest that, in the age of AI, diplomacy is evolving from primarily human-centered information and decision processes toward institutionally augmented forms of diplomacy in which AI can expand analytical and coordination capacities, while effective global governance increasingly depends on the institutional conditions, human oversight, and international cooperation governing its use. Because this study is based on a systematic synthesis of published literature rather than primary data collection, these findings should be interpreted as patterns identified across the included studies rather than as direct empirical estimates of the effects of AI on diplomatic outcomes.

The findings further indicate that the transformation of diplomacy should be understood within a broader trajectory of digital technological change rather than solely through the emergence of AI. Digital technologies have progressively transformed diplomatic communication, information exchange, public engagement, coordination, and institutional processes, while AI builds upon this digital foundation by introducing more advanced analytical, predictive, and decision-support capabilities. Accordingly, AI-enabled diplomacy can be understood as part of a broader digital transformation of diplomatic practice, rather than as an isolated technological development.

This integration, however, is not technologically neutral. The quality of AI-assisted outputs depends on the data, models, institutional procedures, and human expertise surrounding their use. In diplomatic settings, this is particularly consequential because information is often incomplete, politically contested, and highly context-dependent. An analytically sophisticated system may identify patterns or generate predictions without being able to adequately interpret cultural sensitivities, political intentions, or the broader consequences of a diplomatic decision. AI should therefore be regarded as an augmentation of institutional analytical capacity rather than as an independent source of diplomatic judgment. This interpretation is broadly consistent with earlier scholarship on digital diplomacy and AI in international relations, which has emphasized that technological change modifies diplomatic practices without eliminating the institutional and human foundations of diplomacy [10,25,26,42,43]. However, the present synthesis extends this perspective by showing that AI-enabled diplomacy differs from earlier forms of digital

diplomacy not only in the speed or reach of communication, but also in its capacity to influence information processing, predictive analysis, and decision-support functions. The evidence therefore suggests a shift from the digital mediation of diplomatic interaction toward the computational augmentation of selected diplomatic functions. At the same time, the reviewed studies do not indicate a uniform trajectory of AI adoption. Differences in institutional capacity, technological resources, regulatory environments, and diplomatic objectives help explain why the potential effects of AI vary across contexts [8,20,51–56].

The review also reveals a tension between the efficiency gains associated with AI and the risks introduced by its deployment. Algorithmic bias, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, misinformation, limited transparency, and unequal technological capabilities can affect the reliability of AI-supported diplomatic processes. These concerns are not merely technical because they can influence institutional legitimacy and trust. In particular, the use of opaque systems in sensitive decision-making may make it difficult to determine how particular outputs were produced or who should be held responsible when those outputs contribute to an erroneous decision. The governance of AI in diplomacy consequently needs to address not only system performance but also accountability, traceability, and the allocation of responsibility [42].

Another implication concerns the changing relationship between technological capacity and diplomatic influence. The discussion of China illustrates that the diplomatic relevance of AI can extend beyond the adoption of individual applications. National strategies for AI development may intersect with foreign policy priorities, technological competition, international engagement, and approaches to digital governance. The Chinese case is therefore useful as an illustration of how technological development can acquire geopolitical significance, but it should not be interpreted as evidence that other states will follow the same trajectory. Differences in institutional capacity, strategic priorities, regulatory environments, and international positioning are likely to produce different forms of AI-enabled diplomacy.

Another important finding of this review is China's growing contribution to the global development and governance of AI. The reviewed literature shows that China's role extends beyond domestic technological development to include technology diplomacy, AI policy and regulation, and the development of international AI standards [52,55,56,59]. This broader role is also reflected in China's Global AI Governance Initiative, which promotes international cooperation, information exchange, technological cooperation, and shared approaches to AI governance [68]. Similarly, the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) provides an international platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and cooperation on AI development and governance [69]. Together, these initiatives illustrate how China is contributing not only to technological innovation but also to the international development and governance of AI. The Chinese case therefore reinforces the view that AI diplomacy is shaped by the interaction between technological capabilities, diplomatic engagement, international cooperation, and governance arrangements.

These developments also raise questions for global governance. AI systems increasingly operate within transnational information and technological environments, meaning that many of the associated risks cannot be managed exclusively through domestic policy. Issues such as data governance, cybersecurity, transparency, and responsible system development can affect interactions among states and international institutions. The findings consequently point toward a need for governance approaches that extend beyond organizational adoption and consider the international coordination of AI-related standards and practices. Such coordination is likely to be particularly important where differences in technological capabilities create asymmetries between countries. In practical terms, such governance arrangements could include mandatory human oversight for high-stakes

diplomatic decisions, clear accountability and audit mechanisms for AI-supported outputs, robust data protection and cybersecurity requirements, and shared standards for transparency and explainability. International organizations could complement national efforts by facilitating common principles, interoperable standards, capacity-building initiatives, and mechanisms for cross-border cooperation on AI governance. Such arrangements could help ensure that AI enhances diplomatic capacity while reducing the risks of fragmented regulation, technological inequality, and excessive reliance on automated decision-making.

The sustainability dimension should be interpreted within this broader institutional context. The reviewed literature does not demonstrate that the use of AI in diplomacy directly generates sustainable development outcomes. Its potential relevance is instead associated with functions that can strengthen cooperation, including information exchange, evidence-informed policymaking, coordination, and crisis response. These potential contributions can operate through several specific mechanisms identified in the literature. First, AI-supported information processing and coordination may facilitate international cooperation on transnational challenges, including climate-related risks and other environmental pressures [21,49,50]. Second, AI-enabled monitoring, early-warning, and analytical capabilities may support humanitarian response and crisis coordination by helping institutions process rapidly changing information and identify emerging risks [42,45–47]. Third, AI-supported information exchange and analytical capacity may contribute to public health and other areas of cross-border cooperation where timely coordination is essential. Fourth, strengthening technological and institutional capacity can help states participate more effectively in emerging forms of technology governance and international cooperation. These mechanisms should, however, be understood as pathways through which AI-enabled diplomacy may contribute to sustainable development rather than as demonstrated development outcomes. The reviewed literature does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that the adoption of AI in diplomatic practice directly improves specific Sustainable Development Goals or produces measurable sustainable-development outcomes. These functions may be particularly valuable when governments and international organizations confront complex challenges that cross national boundaries. Nevertheless, technological capacity alone cannot ensure that such benefits are distributed equitably or translated into sustainable outcomes. Institutional inclusiveness, access to technological capabilities, and effective governance remain necessary conditions.

The synthesis of the reviewed evidence indicates that the effects of AI-enabled diplomacy emerge through an institutionally and governance-mediated process. AI-based information processing, predictive analysis, natural language processing, automation, and decision support can strengthen functions such as diplomatic analysis, negotiation, crisis response, communication, and coordination. However, these capabilities do not translate automatically into improved diplomatic outcomes. Their effects are shaped by institutional capacity, human expertise, data quality, accountability, cybersecurity, transparency, and human oversight. Where these conditions are adequate, AI-enabled diplomatic functions may strengthen information exchange and international coordination, creating potential pathways toward cooperation on transnational challenges and, indirectly, sustainable development. Where such conditions are weak, the same capabilities may increase risks related to bias, opacity, cybersecurity, institutional dependency, and technological inequality. The theoretical implication of this synthesis is that AI should not be understood as an independent driver of diplomatic transformation; rather, its broader consequences emerge from the interaction between technological capabilities, diplomatic functions, institutional conditions, and governance arrangements.

Taken together, these observations indicate that the central policy challenge is not whether AI should become part of diplomatic practice, but under what conditions its use

can enhance institutional capacity without weakening human responsibility. For AI to genuinely enhance rather than merely supplement diplomatic practice, diplomatic institutions need to develop the organizational and human capacities required to integrate AI into decision-making processes effectively. This includes specialized training for diplomats, interdisciplinary teams combining diplomatic, technical, legal, and ethical expertise, clear procedures for human review and accountability, and institutional mechanisms for evaluating the reliability and consequences of AI-supported outputs. At the same time, effective AI-enabled diplomacy requires secure data infrastructures, strong data protection and cybersecurity safeguards, and interoperable standards that facilitate responsible information sharing across institutions. However, these conditions also introduce important challenges, particularly regarding the protection of confidential diplomatic information, cybersecurity vulnerabilities, algorithmic bias, and the risk of excessive dependence on automated recommendations. Without adequate safeguards and institutional oversight, the same technologies that can improve analytical capacity and coordination may instead create new forms of institutional vulnerability and undermine trust in diplomatic decision-making. This requires a balance between innovation and control. Excessive reliance on automated outputs may create new forms of institutional vulnerability, whereas overly restrictive approaches may prevent diplomatic organizations from benefiting from legitimate technological advances. A more appropriate approach is therefore one in which AI is embedded within clearly defined institutional responsibilities, human review procedures, security safeguards, and mechanisms for evaluating its consequences.

The synthesis also has theoretical implications for understanding the relationship between technology and diplomacy. Rather than conceptualizing technological change as an external force that independently transforms diplomatic practice, the findings support an institutionally embedded perspective in which the effects of AI are mediated by organizational capacity, human judgment, governance arrangements, and geopolitical conditions. This perspective helps explain why similar AI capabilities may produce different diplomatic implications across institutional and national contexts. Practically, the findings indicate that effective AI-enabled diplomacy requires more than technological investment. Diplomatic institutions need corresponding investments in human expertise, governance capacity, data protection, cybersecurity, accountability mechanisms, and procedures for meaningful human oversight. At the international level, the findings further support cooperation on shared standards and governance principles to reduce fragmentation and unequal access to AI capabilities [57,58,62,64]. From this perspective, AI-enabled diplomacy can be understood as part of a wider transformation in the governance of international affairs. The emergence of AI does not simply introduce another digital tool into diplomacy; it also raises questions about who possesses technological capabilities, how those capabilities are governed, and how their benefits and risks are distributed across the international system. The future significance of AI will consequently be shaped by the interaction between technological development, institutional adaptation, and international governance rather than by technological progress in isolation.

This review also has two important limitations. First, the restriction to English-language peer-reviewed studies may have introduced language bias and limited the inclusion of relevant research from non-English-speaking contexts, particularly China. This limitation is particularly relevant to the illustrative discussion of China, where reliance on English-language scholarship may not fully capture Chinese-language academic debates, policy documents, and locally grounded perspectives on AI diplomacy and technology governance. Future reviews should therefore incorporate Chinese-language and other non-English sources where feasible to provide a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of national approaches to AI-enabled diplomacy. Second, although the literature

search was conducted in June 2026 to ensure timeliness, the rapidly evolving nature of AI diplomacy means that studies and developments published after the search date may not have been captured.

5. Conclusions

At the intersection of technology, diplomacy, and global governance, this systematic review shows that AI is reshaping diplomatic practice primarily by supporting, rather than replacing, human expertise. The reviewed literature indicates that AI can strengthen information processing, analytical and decision-support capacity, negotiation preparation, crisis monitoring, communication, and selected administrative functions. These effects, however, depend on institutional capacity, data quality, human expertise, accountability, cybersecurity, transparency, and continued human oversight. The significance of AI for diplomacy therefore depends not only on its technological capabilities, but also on how these capabilities are integrated into diplomatic institutions and governed. Accordingly, the review makes two principal contributions. First, it synthesizes the literature by connecting AI capabilities with specific diplomatic functions and by showing that their effects are mediated by institutional and governance conditions. Second, it links these findings to global governance and sustainable international cooperation without assuming that AI adoption directly produces sustainable development outcomes. This distinction clarifies that the contribution of AI-enabled diplomacy to broader governance objectives depends on mechanisms such as international information exchange, evidence-informed policymaking, cross-border coordination, crisis response, and technological capacity building.

More broadly, the findings demonstrate that the technological transformation of diplomacy cannot be attributed to AI alone. Digital technologies have progressively reshaped diplomatic communication, information exchange, public engagement, coordination, and institutional processes, with AI representing a further stage in this broader transformation. The contribution of this review therefore lies not only in identifying the emerging role of AI in diplomacy, but also in situating AI-enabled diplomacy within the wider evolution of digitally mediated diplomatic practice.

The findings also suggest that the international consequences of AI are likely to be uneven. States differ considerably in technological resources, institutional capacity, regulatory approaches, and strategic priorities. These differences may influence their ability to adopt AI, participate in emerging governance arrangements, and shape international discussions concerning the use of AI. The illustrative case of China reflects this broader issue by demonstrating how AI can become intertwined with national strategic objectives and international engagement. It also highlights why AI diplomacy should be examined in relation to geopolitical context rather than as a uniform technological process. These mechanisms may contribute indirectly to sustainable development by strengthening cooperation on transnational challenges, although the reviewed literature does not demonstrate direct sustainable-development outcomes from AI-enabled diplomacy. In response to the research question, the study concludes that the significance of AI for global diplomacy extends beyond the automation or improvement of individual diplomatic tasks. AI is contributing to a broader transformation in how diplomatic institutions acquire, process, and use information, while simultaneously creating new governance questions concerning accountability, security, transparency, fairness, and technological inequality. Its implications for global governance therefore depend on whether institutions can adapt their practices and governance mechanisms alongside technological change.

A future research agenda should focus on the empirical and comparative study of AI adoption in foreign ministries, diplomatic missions, and international organizations, specifically examining how institutional capacity, national strategies, and regulatory frame-

works shape its implementation and effects. It should also assess whether governance mechanisms for transparency, accountability, cybersecurity, and human oversight yield measurable improvements in diplomatic effectiveness and international cooperation. Future studies should further examine cybersecurity risks associated with AI-enabled diplomatic systems, including data protection, system vulnerabilities, information manipulation, and the resilience of critical diplomatic infrastructures. Longitudinal research is needed to determine whether AI produces lasting changes in diplomatic practice or remains concentrated in specific functions. Such research would move the field beyond broad conceptual debate toward an evidence-based understanding of the institutional and governance conditions under which AI can support more effective, secure, accountable, and cooperative diplomacy.

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