

Valorizing Image Repair in Fractured South Africa-USA

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Abstract:

Fractured diplomatic relations hinder mutual collaborations between countries, creating far-reaching and adverse tensions that erode longstanding goodwill. In early March 2025, the South African Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool was expelled from the USA after allegedly uttering derogatory comments. The study examined the value of image repair for fractured diplomatic relations underpinned by Benoit's Image Repair Theory. A content analysis of 100 posts on X was conducted, focusing on conversational valence, public sentiment analysis and engagement metrics. Major findings reveal several tensions emerging from international and national online discourses, emphasising the importance of image repair for the restoration of healthy diplomatic relations.

Key Words: 2025 South Africa-USA Diplomatic relations; Image Repair; Conversational Valence on X; Digital Diplomacy