

INFORMATION WARS IN THE CONDITIONS OF GEOPOLITICAL CONFRONTATION

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Abstract

In geopolitics, winning the peace is more difficult than winning the war. That is why the government needs shrewdness to keep confrontation within the framework of diplomacy and to win by maintaining the peace. In modern geopolitical conflict, flexible power consistently replaces rigid power, which can force the enemy to surrender without a fight; this can be achieved by information dominance, which consists of culture, political values, and foreign policy. Because of these factors the world's leading states are attractive to newly independent countries, which cannot resist the challenges of the 21st century without the assistance of strong allies, and they have to follow "politics of chasing" due to realizing this danger.

The absolute majority of researchers interested in the topic consider that the study of information wars has acquired special relevance and significance in the conditions of geopolitical confrontation. In the age of modern information, wars, terror, struggle for power globally, confrontation of civilizations became daily matters. Millions of people were physically destroyed in "contact wars" in the 20th century, and now, in the conditions of information confrontation, information flows in "non-contact wars" separate the world into "insiders" and "outsiders" at high speed. The role of media and social networks has been particularly emphasized in the society formed by the liberal education system because they can transform former "friends" into "strangers", enemies.

Keywords: geopolitics, security, media, information war, manipulation, multipolarity.

Introduction

The period of the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century is called the information age due to the widespread usage of mass media, advanced computer technologies and the development of communications. On the one hand, it considerably expands the possibilities to create, accumulate and distribute instantly the information; and, on the other hand, the threat to manipulate with mass consciousness increases even more due to new technologies. Mr. G. Targamadze, Doctor of Social Sciences, focuses on the differences between traditional and industrial societies and writes/concludes that "in the information age, it is important to know not only the number of missiles, tanks, soldiers, combat planes and ships, but it is vital to have data/information about the specifics of the target audiences of the world or local media in certain country, as well as names and attitudes of the creators of public sentiments and opinions." (Targamadze, 2014, 3).

Before gaining the independence, until 1991, only few specialists had an awareness about the meaning of information war in the Soviet republics, including Georgia. Lately the term "information war" appears more and more often in the media that, in fact, mean a real revolution in the sphere of world political and military confrontation. Actually, Georgia, in the composition of the Soviet Union, was not an actor of great political confrontation. Consequently, the population of the republic was not informed about the expected big changes via media.

Mr. M. McLuhan, the Canadian philosopher, was one of the first who wrote about the information war phenomenon. In the last century wars the existed information technologies were not used on such a large scale. In the modern world, society is under the constant influence of information, which, according to McLuhan, immerses the entire population into a new, imaginative world, and by penetrating into consciousness, insensibly changes our perception of the world. (McLuhan, 2003 (1974)).

Nowadays, in terms of modern geopolitical struggle, military tools are gradually replaced by information ones, that are used to put pressure on the opponents, damage their reputation and create negative image in the society. Mass media, internet, social networks and global informatization play a significant role to make information confrontation an effective, fast and economically less expensive tool of political struggle. Today, forms and methods of information "operations" are becoming more and more aggressive and massive, and now they are called "information wars". "The modern technologies have created new opportunities, fighting operations have become more complex, threats have become diverse and interconnected. The usage of new technologies and approaches concerning resources and amount of weaponry, gave the weak states the opportunity to gain an advantage in the asymmetric warfare." (Maisuradze, 2021, 28).

Information war concept, transformation and manipulation tools

The term "information war" is not perceived as a surprise in the 21st century and it has become a common occurrence in both domestic and international conflicts. In geopolitical confrontations, concerning the scale of information dependency of modern society, it is almost impossible to achieve success without using these tools of war.

In a broad sense, the information war is only the usage of information to achieve national goals, and, the target of these goals is the human intelligence. Prof. M. Libitsky, American scientist, offers the interesting definition: Information war is the usage of information to attack information. While talking about the attack on information, Prof. Libitsky highlights the influence of consumers of this information on the decision-making process. (Libicki 2007, 20). The information war misleads the information consumers, coercing them to make a decision in favor of the attacker.

The information wars have experienced a transformation over the time. Today, in the information-saturated world, political conflicts occur mostly in the global media space, and the information war, improving the fabrication methods and tools, has become mostly the main tool of geopolitical confrontation, an integral part of its active phase, as it always precedes such classic forms of political destructive actions as military coup, civil war or military intervention. Furthermore, we have to consider that "military actions carried out using military weapons, or trade and economic sanctions damage the country and the population; but it is even more dangerous if you lose in the battle called the war for human consciousness and beliefs, namely, information-psychological war. Consequently, due to the loss of rational thinking, the enemy may not need to carry out large-scale military operations at all; or the rival may be so disoriented and demoralized that the fighting spirit and capabilities cannot be considered." (Targamadze, 2014, 4).

The main weapon in the information wars is mass media - television and radio, the content of their programs, and, in recent years, social networks. Government and political forces, which own and control the global media, have all possibilities to control human emotions and moral perspectives and to develop political opinions of spectators, listeners or readers in accordance with their own interests and goals.

The history of mankind is the history of the struggle for information. Who possesses the necessary knowledge possesses the world. The observation shows that the present reality is not so different from the one of 300 years past. The basic difference is the spreading speed and accessibility of information. Previously information was spread via newspapers, radio and television. Now, these methods of getting information have moved to background and given way to a new space of the information society development - internet. Internet is a place where you can easily find nearly any interesting information in seconds. This accessibility causes many problems and makes states, especially small and economically weak countries, even more vulnerable: "The information and computer revolution has opened wide opportunities for influencing peoples and power, manipulating the consciousness and behavior of people, even in remote areas. Taking into account the process of globalization of telecommunication networks taking place in the world, it is possible to assume that information types of aggression will be given priority in the future. Serious attention of experts of various profiles to this question is required to avoid the most negative consequences of this guilt for all mankind." (Khoroshko, Shelest, Tkach, Brailovkyi, 2021, 21).

Many geopolitical concepts consider information as a dangerous weapon, since information can be spread without limits, it is easily accessible, it is an universal weapon, and can violate the states borders without limits. Information-psychological and networking wars are the tools of the states to succeed in international, regional and domestic politics, as well as to get geopolitical advantage in the world. However, the latter is the privilege of the great powers, as they possess supremely large resources. "In the information era, social media and television

produce a 24-hour information environment where more information is available to people than ever before. Simultaneously, we all, regardless of education, social status, or opinions, are involved in this 24-hour information environment as information providers and receivers. Nowadays, anyone with access to the Internet also has potential access to millions of listeners, to the tools to affect their behavior and viewpoints. 50 years ago, it was necessary to transfer or recruit contacts and agents of influence on the ground to carry out an effective information influence operations. Today, considering the social media liberalization and the information environment, a small group of people, without even leaving their office, can significantly affect the behavior and mood of the population." (Shubitidze, 2021, 2). This causes a serious threat to small and weak economy countries, as they do not have an "information security umbrella". Consequently, in order to ensure their own information security, they try to maximally use the competences of strong partners. On the other hand, the "protectors", concerning their own geopolitical interests, manipulate the "protected countries" and turn them into a tool during confrontation.

The geopolitical information war is one of the contemporary forms of the struggle between states, along with an action system executed by one state to violate the information security of another state and, at the same time, to protect itself from similar actions from a hostile state. The representatives of the geopolitical opinion not only promoted this topic, but they also actively participate in the information confrontation as political technologists who create public opinion. We should consider another context here. Namely, "the democratic system relies on the ability of citizens to make beneficial decisions for the country and on the majority will. If an "outsider" person penetrates into the information environment of a democratic country and establishes himself/herself legally, this would cause a significant threat to accurately working and stability of the system. At this time, the villains use the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by democracy and undermine the system. We may say that they use democracy against democracy." (Shubitidze, 2021, 3).

The information war is an extreme form of modern geopolitical relations, the confrontation sphere of inter-state information that emerges because of conflicts of interests of the geopolitical competition subjects in the international information space. The essence of the information war is to defeat geopolitically enemies and get an information advantage over them. The information war may also begin even in the absence of armed conflict that makes this type of war one of the universal tools to ensure the geopolitical interests realization.

At all stages of the world history, the struggle for geopolitical superiority is carried out by means suitable for particular time. Nowadays, we may say that these are networking tools, thus the struggle is in the networking space.

"Color revolutions" have a substantial role in the development of the term "cyber war". During the "color revolutions", acting regimes were changed and destroyed without the use of military force. Thus, we can say that armed struggle is not a compulsory component of "networking

war": "It is proved that information war is an element of information confrontation - a political conflict in which the political struggle is conducted in the form of information and psychological operations with the use of information weapons." (Khoroshko, Shelest, Tkach, Brailovkyi, 2021, 25).

Mr. John Arquilla first mentioned the term "cyber war". He was actively involved in consultations with the Pentagon through all major operations. He is considered the first who paid attention to the concepts such as "cyber war" and "networking war". In 1999, Mr. Arkila and Mr. Ronfeldt presented the research about the American military strategy development. They suggested abandoning the strategy of "openness" which, in their opinion, contributed to the collapse of the USSR. The authors named the new approach that would restrict openness as secured openness. (Arquilla, Ronfeldt, 1999, 231).

Multipolarity and polycentricity

The scale of the geopolitical struggle particularly increased at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries. The struggle for strengthening political as well as economic influences becomes more and more ruthless. In such situation, it becomes of utmost importance to understand comprehensively the observations of the world's public opinion makers and of the people who have influence on real politics. Mr. Charles Kupchan, the Georgetown University professor, the senior expert at the Council of Foreign Relations and former member of the US Security Council (2014-2017), in his 2012 letter "Nobody's World", writes that the 21st century is remarkable not for the final triumph of the West, but for the development of a global state, which does not lead to the final goal, but it goes to the turning point. The West is losing not only its material advantage, but also its ideological dominance regarding the rise of new superpowers. In Mr. Kupchan's words, nothing specifies that all states are turning to the Western way as power is separated and politics is diverse. In this situation, for the first time in history, an interdependent world will exist without a center of gravity or a global watchdog. If such a global order emerges, it will be a blend of various political cultures and challenging domestic and international orders.

The fact is that there is an opinion in Western circles that the world not only strives toward multipolarity, but also toward another option of modernity - a politically diverse landscape in which the Western model will be only the one out of many competing concepts of domestic and international order. This already breeds a feeling that the West is already accustomed to the idea that not only "friendly" autocratic countries refuse to protect their own positions "against the liberal democracies", but also, and what is even more important, successful new democracies will constantly clash with the West. Mr. Kupchan does not rule out that the focal challenge for the West and the rest of the successful new democracies are to stand the global turning point and transform peacefully in to the new world order. The alternative is the

anarchic competition originated from the struggle between different concepts of various power and order centers. (Jentleson, 2015, 735-737).

In the same period, in 2011, the Prime Minister of Russia (1998-1999) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1996-1998) Yevgeny Primakov, in the preface for the monograph "Russia in the Polycentric World" (the main topic of which is the international problems of Russia's sustained existence and development), focuses on the transition reality in the polycentric world. This viewpoint is also based on the idea that the formation of a new world order, on the one hand, is an impartial process, and, on the other hand, it is or should be the result of the efforts of various countries, which goal is to ensure the world stability and security at the international stage.

Mr. Primakov underlines that it is quite characteristic that among the arguments that the countries initially supported the unipolar world order (their number decreased considerably), there was a statement (this position was stated, for example, by the former Secretary of State Ms. Condoleezza Rice) that the multipolar system was incompatible with the needs to unite national efforts with the interests of stabilizing the world. In addition, Mr. Primakov's statement is remarkable: ...while the 20th century history verifies the inability of different countries to promote their ideology globally, the 21st century shows that the unipolar order establishment would be impossible even if one superpower becomes the most powerful country in the world.

Mr. Primakov does not consider the transition into a multipolar system as one-time event and states that the constant development of the system and the modification of its form is ongoing process and various conflicts may arise and intensify. In his words, the reason for this is the inequality in the development of countries, or the success or failure of integrated groups. Unstable relationship - let's call it the policy of "restart" of relations and inertial lines of behavior of states - which arose in the Cold War during open confrontation, also affects the development of political, military and economic issues. In such conditions, control over the international agenda is vital. (Jentleson, 2015, 802-804).

The world leading countries realize very well that in order to dominate, increase their influence and strengthen their power, it is crucial to manipulate with public opinion using one of the most significant elements of the geopolitical struggle weapon - the information war. This method was normally used for centuries, both within the country and in relations with other states. Nowadays, it acquired more sophisticated forms with reference to the globalization conditions. Therefore, the role and importance of information in the national security system is growing even more, and the big states pay exceptional attention to both scientific potential and high-level culture of management, as well as improving technical capabilities.

Conclusion

The future geopolitical image of the world's leading states will be determined by a new distribution of zones of influence. In the conditions of the information society, a strong intellectual and technical potential in the spheres of information and high technologies obtain special significance, because information confrontations are already of daily matter and aim to undermine the sovereignty of the state, destroy the territorial integrity, change the national identity of the population and significantly affect the state infrastructure and public awareness. In order to succeed in the information war, it is essential to develop the information space as much as possible, since it is vital for the national security, for the strengthening of defense capabilities, and for the solution of political tasks. However, by study of moods and moral conditions of the opponents, it would become possible to foresee their future actions in order to maximize the possibility to achieve the desired goal by confronting the suitable means and methods.

The big powers have the capacity to mobilize serious resources and constantly improve the methods of information war and develop technologies, while the small countries are, at best, consumers, and, at worst, they become tools themselves. That is why the small countries have to be very cautious, so that in the process of the global confrontation, in the artificial world created for them, they may have left beyond the real world and in the captivity of illusions they may have lose their identity and even imaginary sovereignty.

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