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Characteristic Features of the Use of Information and Psychological Confrontation in the Middle East

Golubenko Alexey Yurievich

Associate Professor of the Department of “Professional Combat Training” of the Specialized Branch of the Tashkent State Law University of the Republic of Uzbekistan, u.z. docent
tel 97 343 9170
agolubenko505@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the characteristic features of the US information and psychological confrontation in Iraq and Russia in Syria, reflected in the conceptual and doctrinal documents during these armed conflicts.

Keywords:

Information and psychological impact, operations, doctrine, strategy, communication, armed conflict, mass media (media), armed forces (AF).

In the global system of military-political relations, countering the challenges stimulated by the processes of globalization becomes the most relevant. Among these challenges are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, international terrorism, demographic problems and ethnic instability, the activities of radical religious communities and groups, drug trafficking, information-psychological and economic (sanctions) confrontation, illegal arms trade and organized crime. The nature of the challenges is such that it is impossible to deal effectively with them within the framework of individual states. In this regard, the importance of international cooperation of law enforcement agencies, including special services and armed forces, is sharply increasing in order to coordinate counteraction against modern challenges and threats to the security

of states, taking into account advanced modern experience.

It should be noted that over the past decade, the International United Nations (UN), created to control and maintain balance in the world community in various spheres, unfortunately, are losing their influence on the decision-making process of world leaders. Regions rich in geological reserves are often of very significant interest in the national interests of hegemonic states, but still the most significant is the geopolitical issue of control and influence on the region as a whole relative to the competitor country. If the political, economic struggle comes to a standstill, then methods of armed struggle are used.

During the expanded meeting of the Security Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the special attention of the President of the country, Shovkat Mirziyoyev, was drawn to the

fact that, in modern conditions of confrontation in the information space, the strengthening of the struggle for "minds and hearts", especially the younger generation, the role and place of military-patriotic education is significantly increasing [1].

The defense doctrine of the Republic of Uzbekistan notes that in the conditions of ongoing globalization and transformation of the entire system of international relations, the military-political situation in the world is characterized by an expansion of the spectrum of challenges and threats to international and regional security – the strengthening of geopolitical confrontation, the predominance of a forceful approach to conflict resolution and crisis situations, lowering the threshold for the use of force, including weapons of mass destruction, militarization, intensification of international terrorism and extremism, increasing confrontation in the information space and cyberspace.

Ideological and psychological actions in the information and communication space are reflected as one of the threats to the security of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the military sphere. Based on this threat to national security, military specialists of Uzbekistan carefully study and analyze the best practices of information and psychological warfare in modern armed conflicts [2].

When considering the features of information and psychological confrontation during armed conflicts in the Middle East, it is advisable to reveal the features of this impact during the conduct of military operations by the United States and NATO coalition forces against Iraq, as well as to analyze how this impact was carried out during the armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic between regular Syrian troops loyal to the regime of Bashar al-Assad supported by Russia and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

At the beginning of the XXI century . In the eyes of the entire world community, the United States, being the leader of information and psychological impact technologies, actually suffered defeat in the information war against Iraq, which, logically, should have been easy to win.

Despite Washington's best efforts to convince the Iraqis and the whole world that the Americans are striving for the liberation of the oppressed Iraqi people, the war and occupation have confirmed that the United States has not retreated one step from its strategic goals of establishing control over the "Greater Middle East".

At the cognitive level, the information and psychological impact was based on the basic American values - the struggle for democracy, the liberation of peoples oppressed by authoritarian regimes, support for the free will of the population, as well as the principles of protecting their own territory and preventing any attempts to threaten security.

About the protection of these values by the US Armed Forces in Iraq, the United States itself and the whole world were convinced directly by President Josh Bush Jr. and his administration in all media (mass media). Thus, one of the oldest communication technologies was used: "if you repeat a lie many times, people begin to believe in it."

The concept of the US information war against Iraq, later became the basis of the doctrine and was called "Shock and Awe", according to its plan, a psychological operation against Iraqi troops and propaganda among the Iraqi population, were supposed to decide the outcome of the war in a relatively short time.

The international consequences of the application of this US doctrine allow us to identify a number of its main characteristics:

- openly violating the requirements of the Geneva Convention to the laws of war prohibiting collective punishment, the doctrine declares that its target is not only the Iraqi Armed Forces, but also "society in the broad sense", respectively, mass fear plays the role of the main strategy;
- one of the distinctive characteristics of the doctrine is a clear understanding of war as a TV show, simultaneously played out in front of different audiences: in front of the enemy, in front of the Americans and in front of any other potential audience;
- initially, the invasion of the US Armed Forces in Iraq was conceived as a message from Washington to the whole world in the language

of flashes and deafening sounds of explosions that shake cities. It was no longer just a strategy of war, but a "global experiment in human behavior management", a combination of simultaneous psychological warfare and direct combat.

Washington's American propaganda was multilevel and multidirectional. On one front, there were special units for information and psychological operations that simultaneously destroyed Iraq's communication systems and replaced them with their own. The second front was the world community, constantly under the gun of the American "propaganda machine", which constantly fired specially fabricated news releases (often misinforming). The third battlefield was America itself. In the United States, in order to gain public support, the main TV channels constantly whipped up a sense of fear of the terrorist threat. Some experts noted the emergence of the home alarmist industry in the United States.

Psychological pressure was also carried out through a demonstration of strength. The United States used the so-called "Mother of all Bombs", MOAB ("Mother of all bombs") as a deterrent weapon. At weight 8.2 tons is the world's most powerful non-nuclear explosive device, which generates a mushroom-shaped cloud three kilometers high, similar to a "nuclear mushroom".

During the fighting, the United States did not stop providing false reports to international news companies; inside America, the war was turned into a kind of sports show that amazed even the Americans themselves with its cynicism.

Meanwhile, Baghdad has behaved more flexibly in the information war. The Iraqi Ministry of Information has provided international accredited journalists with the maximum possible freedom when covering the war. Of course, the joint experience of the coalition's missile strikes also played an important role. Hence the sympathetic tone in the comments from Baghdad, even Western journalists.

Despite all the assurances of the Americans that they are making every effort to

reduce civilian casualties, the footage of the killed and wounded civilians who were victims of the bombing found a lively response everywhere in the world and refuted the promises of the United States. The undoubted success of Baghdad was the showing on television of demoralized American prisoners of war, as well as an Apache helicopter shot down, allegedly, by a rifle shot by an ordinary peasant [4].

The information and psychological confrontation during the counter-terrorist operation of a limited contingent of Russian troops in the Syrian Republic was seriously revised after the unsuccessful experience of covering the Chechen company and during the operation in Georgia in 2008. Then the coverage of events, the building of the information and psychological component of the operation was not given due attention and was perceived as secondary. As a result, the assessment of events by the majority of foreign media was based on distorted, and often completely false information.

In particular, the Russian political scientist Panarin I.N. emphasizes that in the "Unified Doctrine of Information Operations" adopted in 1998, the information war is defined as a complex impact (a set of information operations) on the system of state and military administration of the opposing side, its military-political leadership, which already in peacetime would lead to the adoption of decisions favorable to the country of the initiator of the information impact, and during the conflict would completely paralyze the functioning of the enemy's control infrastructure. Moreover, information and psychological confrontation is conducted not only during the most military clash of the parties, but also in peacetime, long before the first shot [5].

It can be noted that since the first days of the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011, an active information confrontation has been conducted on the territory of the state, in which at least one hundred news agencies and mass media participate. Among them, one of the most active is the largest Arab TV channel Al Jazeera and its Arabic website of the same

name, the main competitor of the first Arab satellite TV channel Al Arabiya, which usually presents a pro-Western interpretation of events, since it belongs to Saudi Arabia, an ally of the United States. In reports from Syria, rallies against the existing government of Bashar al-Assad were often broadcast, although viewers who understand Arabic could easily read slogans in support of Bashar al-Assad and his government on the slogans of the seemingly protesting masses. Such outright blunders have been and are quite common. And they testify to the desire to completely distort the events taking place in the republic. It should be emphasized that Russia and the United States found themselves on opposite sides in the Syrian armed conflict.

In September 2013, the ST TV channel published footage of the alleged use of chemical weapons by Syrian government forces near the city of Ghouta. In total, more than ten commercials were shown. They showed corpses that died due to the use of deadly gas. Some are convulsing with foam at the mouth. Those who survived are trying to help the children. When viewing these videos in detail, you can easily notice elements of falsifications, for example, the grimace of a bearded man suffering from suffocation, allegedly caught in the zone of destruction by chemical weapons, at the moment of transferring the focus of the TV camera to another object, it changes into an ironic grin.

On the face of the use of several propaganda techniques at once, labeling, transfer, appeal to the evidence. And the first impression technique is also actively used, because, as you know, it is the strongest. Debunking it, even if it is false, is difficult enough.

During the Syrian armed conflict, Russia is conducting an informational and psychological confrontation with the use of a number of very effective strategies:

The strategy of the primacy of democracy is the goal of this strategy to play the role of a mediator between the warring parties, offering to use exclusively negotiations among themselves. This strategy, of course, refers to the information, because the media,

like Russian, in the same way, the American ones illuminate and support the socio-political sentiments of the audience. For example, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in his interview with the Russian TV channel Russia Today, when asked by a Russian journalist about the possibility of resigning, said that only the people of Syria can solve this issue. Thus, the strategy of diplomatic primacy has proven itself well, and even the American side of the conflict agrees with it, further work on its development and active application will be built in Russia;

The strategy of International Order – in this strategy, the main focus is on the observance of fundamental rights and freedoms in order to restore the primacy of international order in a particular region and in the world as a whole. The policy of official Moscow is formed under a number of factors. First of all, this is a principled position

non-interference in the internal affairs and sovereignty of States. Russia has taken this position in other modern armed conflicts: Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. In confirmation of the effectiveness of this strategy, Vladimir Putin said in the New York Times: "We do not support the Syrian government, we support international law and order, which keep the world from sliding into the abyss of chaos";

The strategy of information dominance is one of the key ones, it is aimed at improving the reputation in the international arena and improving the image of the Russian Federation in the world [6].

Thus, having analyzed the features of the informational and psychological confrontation between the United States and Russia during modern armed conflicts in the Middle East, it is necessary to formulate the following conclusions:

During the armed conflict, the United States overestimated its information potential and was not quite able to cope with the tasks set. Studying the history of the information confrontation between the United States and Iraq, we are once again convinced of what large-scale resources of political influence information technologies represent in the modern asymmetric world. With the skillful

use of an information resource, weaker countries can have a significant impact on stronger ones, completely compensating for the lack of resources in other areas;

It must be remembered that information technology is both a powerful and dangerous tool of modern international relations. Using the example of the USA, we are convinced that Newton's third law is also applicable to the information and communication component of world politics: "There is always an equal or opposite reaction to any action";

It should be noted that Russia has taken into account the mistakes made in previous armed conflicts and is significantly improving its importance in the international information arena. This is due to the successful creation and application of national information warfare strategies. Therefore, the implementation of Russia's information policy in Syria can be called successful.

Based on the above, as appropriate proposals for implementation directly into the information security system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, based on the experience of the information and psychological confrontation between the United States and Russia, obtained during the armed conflict in the Middle East, determine the following:

In the state, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of information communication systems and objects from possible attempts to disable them, by building up a system to counteract the effects of malware, viruses and other types of exposure, by finding, attracting and financially motivating talented youth;

To date, as the main ways to protect military personnel from information and psychological impact, it is necessary to determine the following set of measures:

-forecasting of topics, channels and methods of information and psychological impact; - prevention of psychological operations;

- disruption of information and psychological actions;

- elimination of the consequences of negative information and psychological impact on military personnel.

Formation and development of citizens' sense of patriotism, ideological immunity, development of analytical abilities that allow them to independently assess political, economic and military events taking place in various regions of the world from the point of view of the national interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

To determine the relevant norms and criteria for the coverage of unreliable information by non-governmental sources, bloggers on social networks, to exclude the dissemination of information that pushes people to confrontation with state authorities and law enforcement agencies.

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