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KEY INDICATORS OF INFORMATION WARFARE RUSSIA AGAINST UKRAINE

The work is devoted to revealing the essence and key indicators of information warfare in the conditions of modern armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine. The concept of "information war" and the structure of such derivatives as: fakes, trolls, memes, messages, narratives, disinformation, propaganda are analyzed.

Purpose of the information warfare is clarified – is to loosen up moral and material forces of the enemy or opponent and to enhance their own that provides propaganda influence activities on the man conscience in ideological and emotional spheres. It is mentioned that destruction which is caused by information conflicts in social psychology, individual psychology, is equal by the scale and sense but sometimes is higher than consequences of armed wars.

Information war is considered as a qualitatively new type of warfare, one of the most dangerous types of weapons, active countermeasures in the information space, which includes: collection of tactical information; guaranteeing the security of one's own information resources, spreading propaganda or disinformation to demoralize the enemy's army and population; undermining the quality of the enemy's information and preventing the enemy's ability to gather information.

It is noted that in order to effectively counter the information war, it is necessary to regularly take countermeasures. Mass media, state institutions with a clearly defined level of responsibility of each individual executive body for ensuring information security play a major role in solving this task.

Keywords: *information warfare, fakes, trolls, memes, messages, narratives, disinformation, propaganda.*

Formulation of the problem. Information always played a key role in state and society life. From time immemorial, powerful statesmen have understood that the possession of information gives an advantage over others, enables victory, subjugation, and effective control. Today, the real power belongs to the one who forms information flows and manages them. Information wars come to the fore not only in military but also in peaceful life, in the struggle for the consciousness of citizens.

Immediate way of the information influence on conscience means to interact with people's beliefs, appealing to their minds using rational arguments, logic. At the same time, the subject of informational influence, addressing the minds of people, necessarily takes into account the real situation, the socio-political situation, the balance of forces, the interests of people that have developed at the moment in one or another environment. In modern circumstances, especially in the conditions of an unprovoked barbaric war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, it is very important to study and take into account the mental states and political attitudes of the masses. This will make it possible to take into account not only what lies on the surface, but also the hidden psychological tendencies of political processes, and accordingly to choose such measures that would be adequate to the existing situation. All this is necessary for understanding the target audiences, formulating narratives and messages that will be effective from the informational (psychological) impact on public opinion, from the imposition of certain ideological stereotypes by Russia.

The purpose of the article – to reveal the essence and key indicators of the information war in the modern conditions of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

Last researches analysis. The problems of general theoretical foundations, genesis of methodology and conceptual and categorical apparatus of information warfare in the context of political discourse were studied by the following scientists: O. Barna, B. Bidchev, V. Horbatenko, V. Horbulin, A. Dilai, O. Dubas, O. Zernetska . Sosnin, M. Taranenko, P. Shevchuk, B. Yuskiv and others.

Presenting main material. Informational weapon as main tool of waging the information warfare with necessity needs subjects that are able to use specific properties of information and technologies related

to it for selfish and criminal purposes. As a result, the methods and means of expanding the possibilities of social communication, created for the benefit of a person, society, and the state, begin to serve as a destructive task of waging information wars. Accordingly, along with rational ways of influencing consciousness, there are also irrational ones (J. Goebbels's "big lie" method, searching for enemies, repetition of stereotyped phrases in order to consolidate a certain set of propaganda clichés) [1].

Appearing in the late 1980s, the term "information warfare" quickly gained popularity; over time, a large number of interpretations of information warfare have arisen, which has led to confusion in the understanding of this phenomenon. The term "information warfare" has undergone considerable evolution, and it has often succumbed to attempts to adapt it to specific militant information attacks. Therefore, the problem of clarifying the concept of information war under the conditions of a full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is being updated [2, p. 3].

In 1996 in the report of the American corporation "RAND", prepared by the initiative of Ministry of Defense of the USA, "Strategic-information warfare. New face of the war" it was given wide definition of the "information warfare" term. It is characterized as opposition in informational space, referring to the fact that, although it is abstract, it exists in the same way as air, water, land. The main object of protection and – at the same time – attack in this type of war is the information infrastructure [3].

Since its inception, the term "information war" has undergone significant evolution. After all, at first it was very popular, but then, with the introduction of modern computer technologies, the civilized world tried to avoid the use of this term, replacing it first with the concept of "cybernetic war", and later on they began to use the term "information operation" [3].

If the war is an open armed confrontation, then the information war in Ukraine by Russia is a latent verbal attack, because not every recipient can understand that they are trying to influence him with the help of propaganda. The phenomenon of information warfare is aimed at systematically and completely influencing and, accordingly, changing human consciousness. After all, an information war is a war of words, images, interpretations, contexts, it is a media confrontation that changes opinions, disorients people, and therefore reformats their worldview with a certain selfish political goal [2, p. 15].

The authoritative Ukrainian researcher of information wars H. Pocheptsov believes that information war is a communicative technology of influence on mass consciousness, which has either a short-term or a long-term goal [4, p. 20], the main purpose of which is the destabilization of the state's leadership, primarily the military, in order to influence public consciousness [4, p. 169].

Professor V. Lyzanchuk interprets the information war as a springboard for the deployment of a real armed confrontation [5, p.13].

The most thorough definition of information warfare today was proposed by the American scientist M. Libiki. He singled out the typology of information war and based on this typology justified its definition, task and purpose. According to his research, it is through the collection, transmission, protection, manipulation, refutation, denial, destruction of information that one can establish superiority over the enemy. This will be an information war. Martin Libicki outlined the task of information war – it is not the destruction of physical force, but the destruction of society [6].

The tools of the Russian information war have a wide range and are chosen depending on the goals. Classic tools are mass media, "Troll factories" (organizations that employ people who publish comments on the Internet according to the purpose of customers using fake profiles in social networks); "bots" (programs that automatically send messages, for example, in response to the appearance of a keyword); "fakes" (false news messages intended to mislead media users), as well as texts, videos, audio, images, memes, etc. At the same time, individual political, public and even religious groups can be tools of information warfare. The main task of the Kremlin has become to "undermine" Ukraine from the inside, to create the belief that Ukraine and Ukrainians are inextricably linked with the image of Russia as a Eurasian state [7].

Mass media are not only message about military conflicts and also become attack objects especially of the disinformation in the way of spreading fake news [8]. Journalists have to be very careful when they are checking information connected with international affairs because the messages that they get, can be a part of disinformation activity of the different countries [9]. However, mass media websites can be the target of the hackers attack of the state which is waging an information warfare.

Mass media users are becoming casualties of the information war which is waged by traditional mass media and Internet publications. Evidence of propaganda and misinformation is present in numerous media reports, including traditional media as well as social media. Mass media users are increasingly aware that they are the objects of (dis)information activities aimed at influencing their perception of reality. Due to the

growing distrust of information appearing in the official circulation, to which Internet users turn, alternative sources of information, including citizen media and Internet blogs, are gaining popularity [8].

In times of war, the information front directly serves combat operations. That is, with various tools, the country helps itself in the fight with information [10]. And fakes are "soldiers" of the information army. They have a clear task. There are many of them compared to, say, technology. Russia's information and military tactics are very similar. They stamp out fakes in droves, just as they send their soldiers to fight. Bad fakes are sent to the Ukrainian information space in droves, and if they return – that is, they do not receive enough attention – then they are sent to battle again. There are fakes that have been thrown out over and over again for years.

Over fakes are messages – clear and understandable messages. Messages can be truthful, manipulative or completely untrue. This is their danger, because if everything is quite clear with a fake, then with a message it is not. The message consists of fakes, that is, Russia uses fakes, half-truths and manipulations to fill the message, shape it. There are far fewer of them than fakes, as resources are needed to create and promote a message. There can be several messages and sometimes they even contradict each other. For instance, with start of the full-scale invasion Russian propaganda spreads such messages: "Ukraine was preparing to attack the Belarus", "Ukraine was preparing to attack the Crimea", "Ukraine was preparing to attack the Transnistria". At the same time Russia constantly repeats message about the "weakness of the Ukrainian army". What does not prevent the Russians, when it is convenient for them, to say that they are opposed by a strong and numerous "American-trained" opponent [8].

In healthy strategic communication, messages should not contradict each other, but in the world of Russian informational influences, everything is different. Because often the task of Russia is to confuse the audience, to confuse it so much that its coordinate system is completely lost. That is, Russia does not necessarily want to force Ukrainians to believe in something, on the contrary, it very often tries to undermine trust and say that you cannot trust anyone.

A collection of messages is combined into a narrative. A kind of story, a story that explains the world around. The task of narratives is to form a certain worldview. It is the narrative that is strategically most important, because messages can be modified, and a narrative is a permanent story. It takes time and resources to create a quality narrative. Russia's most popular narrative regarding Ukraine is the claim of a "failed state". The messages that fill this narrative are about history, corruption, culture, economics, and more. That is, anything that can be used to support the narrative.

Another central narrative is the claim of "Ukrainian Nazis." It is this worldview that Russia uses as one of the reasons for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, to fuel this narrative, the Kremlin continues to talk about the denazification of Ukraine as one of the demands of the peace agreement. This narrative is also filled with various messages concerning both Ukrainian history and the present. In particular, that "Nazis are in power in Ukraine", "Ukraine forgot about the victory over Nazism", "UPA – Hitler's collaborators" or that the slogan "Glory to Ukraine!" – this is a tracing of the Nazi slogan "Heil Hitler!". This list can be continued.

So there is a narrative that consists of messages that feed fakes, manipulations and speculations. According to O. Batrymenko, "in essence, the narratives presented by Russia and Ukraine are diametrically opposed. Russia considers the war in Ukraine, which V. Putin persistently interprets as a "special military operation", as a necessary defensive measure in response to the expansion of NATO in Eastern Europe. The President of the Russian Federation also calls the military campaign necessary to "denazify" Ukraine and stop the alleged genocide that the Ukrainian government is carrying out against the Russian-speaking people. Ukraine's narrative, on the contrary, insists that the war is an open aggression by the Russian Federation against a sovereign nation other than Russia, and portrays its citizens and armed forces as heroes defending themselves against unjustified invasion" [11, p. 126].

One can be able to easily identify Russian fakes, but at the same time succumb to certain messages of Russian disinformation or generally believe the narrative. It is also important to remember that informational and psychological influence is always carried out with the aim of changing behavior. That is, every fake, provocation or speculation in its totality should push to action. For example, to vote for a specific party in the elections, to go or not to go to a protest.

That is, the tools may be different, but the meanings of information influence are always built according to the principle of "narrative – messages – fakes, manipulations, speculations." Understanding this on a personal level, first of all, encourages you to make sense of the information around you. Therefore, when we talk about critical thinking, we constantly encourage asking questions. When we see a Russian fake or manipulation, it is worth climbing up the pyramid, that is, think about what message and narrative

fills this fake. Moreover, for what, that is, what action or behavior should be the consequence of such informational influence [8].

Unlike most other governments, the Russian government has a long history of engaging in disinformation campaigns. Russian efforts to control and use information about the war are centralized, as the Russian government seeks to limit the spread of truthful information among its population and to promote its official justifications for invading Ukrainian territory. Russian state mass media are spreading the information about that invasion was a forced measure due to NATO and threats from the US and its Western allies. Russians, who fully trust the state media, may blame the US for the conflict, but the numerous protests across Russia suggest that this misinformation is not convincing everyone [11].

Such fakes are connecting by the senses to narratives which are directed on creating needed for Kremlin readers beliefs. The most common theses are about that “Ukraine is a failed state”, “government in Ukraine is captured by nazis and junkies”, “Ukraine is an artificial state which didn’t exist until 1991”. First of all, these statements are aimed at foreigners who have heard little about Ukraine, do not have a clear vision of the situation and do not want to delve into the details.

And huge amounts of money are spent on this. Thus, according to mass media, from January to March 2022, 17.4 billion rubles were spent from the Russian budget on the article "mass media". During these months of 2021, 5.4 billion rubles were spent on mass media, these expenses increased by 3.2 times. And the online publication "Focus" reports that Russian officials have decided to allocate 114.8 billion rubles to the mass media in 2022. According to statistics, 28,700,000,000 rubles will be received by the ANO "TV News" company (which manages the Russia Today TV channel). Another 25,200,000,000 rubles were earmarked for VDTRK, and 1,730,000,000 rubles for the all-Russian federal TV channel "Public Television of Russia". Financing of the First Channel will cost 6 billion, and the TV center "Ostankino" – 1 billion rubles. 7.5 billion rubles in the form of a collective subsidy will be received by "Pershiy Kanal", NTV, TRC "Petersburg", "TV Center" and "Karuseli". The "Zirka" channel owns 1.8 billion rubles [12].

Russian propaganda is the legal successor of Soviet propaganda. She improved and reached her maximum today.

Undoubtedly, in the first place, Russia started a full-scale war against Ukraine in order to realize the idea of reunification of the countries of the former USSR and the geopolitical redistribution of the Eurasian space under the leadership of Moscow. This idea gained special importance during the presidency of V. Putin. Reformatting the system of international relations, where Russia would have the status of a superpower, became the main hidden goal of the Kremlin. Ukraine is very important in his geopolitical plans, because it has become the line of collision between democratic and authoritarian values [13, p.14]. Therefore, when the Revolution of Dignity won and the Ukrainian people chose a diametrically opposite path of development, Russia could not accept it. We agree with the research thesis of the Center for Global Studies "Strategy XXI", which states that, despite the promoted power, Russia is afraid of a direct confrontation with the West, especially with NATO, since the economic and military potential of the parties differ many times not in favor of the Kremlin. This became the reason for choosing the hybrid war model [14].

The spread of the ideas of the "Russian world" is veiled in the Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in the Russian Federation for 2017-2030, which states that in order to form the information space of knowledge, it is necessary to: create conditions for popularizing Russian culture and science abroad, including for countering attempts distortion and falsification of historical and other facts; establish stable cultural and educational ties with contemporaries living abroad, foreign citizens and stateless persons who are native speakers of the Russian language, including on the basis of information and communication technologies [15]. In practice, this means using propaganda media abroad to spread the distorted Kremlin ideology. Such a policy of Russia was quite successful in the eastern regions of Ukraine and in Crimea. As E. Magda points out, thanks to the absence of state censorship and the commercial nature of Ukrainian publications, radio stations and TV channels, Russia quite easily took control of the information space of Ukraine and saturated it with the informational products of Russian show business [16, p. 290]. Moreover, the Kremlin has always assigned a special mission to the mass media, and considered them as a tool to support its interests. Television, film studios, radio and other mass media were seen as important components of national security.

In its practice of conducting information warfare, Russia uses the principles of Goebbels’ propaganda concept, which boil down to the following theses: propaganda must be planned and conducted from one instance; only authority can determine whether the result of propaganda should be true or false; black propaganda should characterize events and people with distinctive phrases or slogans; for better perception,

propaganda must arouse interest in the audience and be transmitted through an attractive communication environment [1].

Conclusions. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an unprecedented phenomenon of modern international relations, carried out contrary to international norms and the interests of stability on the European continent. However, the implementation of aggressive plans was not a one-time decision on the part of the Russian leadership, but turned out to be the embodiment of a long-term political course, an integral component of which was and remains the information war.

Information wars are implemented with specific tools, methods, methods, technologies, etc., but necessarily in the plural, jointly, at different levels, because the information environment with its information flows and information influences of various kinds is characterized by a set of dynamic factors capable of exerting a direct influence on a person or indirect, immediate or delayed effects.

Mass media became special catalysts and carriers of information wars. Critical discourse regarding this new media reality, inspired by states that support aggressive geopolitics, also relies on the achievements of psychology, the complex of knowledge presented by it regarding the massification of the psyche of the person-addressee, manipulation techniques as a component of communication technologies.

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Джус О. А. Ключові показники ведення інформаційної війни Росії проти України

Робота присвячена розкриттю суті та ключових показників інформаційної війни в умовах сучасної збройної агресії Росії проти України. Проаналізовано поняття «інформаційна війна» та структуру таких його похідних як: фейки, тролі, меми, меседжі, наративи, дезінформація, пропаганда.

З'ясована мета інформаційної війни – послабити моральні і матеріальні сили супротивника або конкурента та посилити власні, що передбачає заходи пропагандистського впливу на свідомість людини в ідеологічній та емоційній галузях. Зазначено, що руйнування, яких завдають інформаційні війни у суспільній психології, психології особи, за масштабами і за значенням цілком співмірні, а часом і перевищують наслідки збройних війн.

Інформаційна війна розглядається як якісно новий вид бойових дій, один з найнебезпечніших видів зброї, активна протидія в інформаційному просторі, яка включає в себе: збір тактичної інформації; гарантування безпеки власних інформаційних ресурсів, поширення пропаганди або дезінформації, щоб деморалізувати військо та населення ворога; підриє якості інформації супротивника і попередження можливості збору інформації супротивником.

Зазначається, що для ефективної протидії інформаційній війні потрібно регулярно вживати заходи протидії. Велика роль у вирішенні цього завдання відводиться засобам масової інформації, державним інституціям з чітко окресленим рівнем відповідальності кожного окремого органу виконавчої влади щодо забезпечення інформаційної безпеки.

Ключові слова: інформаційна війна, фейки, тролі, меми, меседжі, наративи, дезінформація, пропаганда.