

**Svitlana KOVAL**

Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs, Kharkiv  
Ukraine  
ORCID: 0000-0002-8165-5118  
khnuvs@univd.edu.ua

## INFORMATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFRONTATION IN HYBRID WARFARE

## KONFRONTACJA INFORMACYJNA I PSYCHOLOGICZNA W WOJNIE HYBRYDOWEJ

**Abstract:** The analysis of the development of the situation around Ukraine gives every reason to assert that today Ukraine is faced with such a form of military operations as hybrid warfare. A characteristic feature of hybrid warfare is that the information, psychological, economic and military components are the basis for its conduct. The article is devoted to a meaningful analysis of the information and psychological component of modern hybrid wars. The content of the information-psychological component is revealed through such concepts as ‘information war’, ‘psychological war’, ‘information-psychological confrontation’ and ‘information-psychological influence’.

**Zarys treści:** Analiza rozwoju sytuacji wokół Ukrainy daje wszelkie powody, by twierdzić, że dziś Ukraina ma do czynienia z taką formą operacji militarnych, jak wojna hybrydowa. Cechą charakterystyczną wojny hybrydowej jest to, że podstawą jej prowadzenia są elementy informacyjne, psychologiczne, ekonomiczne i militarne. Artykuł poświęcony jest wnikliwej analizie informacyjnego i psychologicznego komponentu współczesnych wojen hybrydowych. Treść komponentu informacyjno-psychologicznego ujawnia się poprzez takie pojęcia, jak „wojna informacyjna”, „wojna psychologiczna”, „konfrontacja informacyjno-psychologiczna” i „wpływ informacyjno-psychologiczny”.

**Key words:** information war, psychological war, information-psychological confrontation, information-psychological influence

**Słowa kluczowe:** wojna informacyjna, wojna psychologiczna, konfrontacja informacyjno-psychologiczna, oddziaływanie informacyjno-psychologiczne

Revolutionary changes in power and armed conflicts in the former USSR, the Middle East and North Africa, which have global resonance, indicate the emergence of new forms and methods used by leading states to resolve interstate differences and

achieve their foreign policy goals. Thus, 'hybrid warfare' is coming to replace the classic military aggression with armed forces.

The concept of 'hybrid warfare' first appeared in US and UK military documents. The opinions of experts on the definition of hybrid war are mixed. In general, it is interpreted as the subordination of a certain territory with the help of information-psychological and cybernetic operations combined with the actions of the armed forces, special services and intense economic pressure.

The essence of such a war is to shift the focus of efforts from solely physically destroying the enemy within the framework of a large-scale war to use so-called 'soft power' against the enemy country to cause its disintegration, change its leadership, demoralize it and draw it into a sphere of influence.

Hybrid wars have a hidden nature and certain features, namely:<sup>1</sup> aggression without an official declaration of war; concealment by the aggressor country of its participation in the conflict; widespread use of irregular armed formations (including under cover of civilians); the aggressor's disregard for international norms of warfare and existing agreements; mutual measures of political and economic pressure (with formal preservation of ties between the two countries); widespread propaganda and counter-propaganda using 'dirty' information and psychological technologies and confrontation in cyberspace.

Thus, the analysis of the development of the situation in Ukraine gives every reason to assert that today our state is faced with precisely this form of warfare. This is confirmed by the peculiarities of the development of the military conflict, the hallmark of which is the absence of direct military clashes between regular troops and the existence of a conspiracy of the aggressor state with non-state formations operating on the territory of Ukraine: militant detachments, 'Cossacks', local criminals and separatist groups from the local population.

A specific feature of the hybrid war launched against Ukraine is that the information and psychological component, alongside the economic and military, one has become the basis of its conduct and the main target in this war is not the enemy, but the population which is to be 'liberated'. Also, all means are used to influence the picture of events desired by the invader in the international community's perception.

The article aims to analyse in detail the content of the information and psychological component of modern hybrid warfare.

Based on the foregoing, an integral part of hybrid wars is the information-psychological component, which is described by specialists through such concepts as 'information war', 'psychological war', 'information-psychological warfare', 'information-psychological confrontation', etc. (V. Aleshenko, M. Getmanchuk, G. Kovalev, V. Krislata, E. Magda, E. Manuilov, T. Pashchenko, G. Pocheptsov, A. Prudnikova, I. Ruschenko, A. Saenko, M. Trebin, I. Feskov, F. Hoffman and others).

<sup>1</sup> G. Kovalev, *Information and psychological confrontation as a component of hybrid war. Modern war: the humanitarian aspect: materials of the scientific-practical conference of the KhNU PS im. I. Kozhedub*, May 31–June 1, 2018 Kharkiv: KhNU PS im. I. Kozhedub, 2018, s. 144–148.

According to A. Karayan, the most global and all-encompassing of the above concepts is 'information-psychological confrontation', reflecting different levels of counteraction of the conflicting parties, carried out by information and psychological means to achieve political and military goals. Such a broad interpretation of the phenomenon under consideration makes it possible to cover information and psychological actions carried out:

- at different levels (interstate or strategic, operational and tactical);
- both in peacetime and in wartime;
- both in the informational and in the spiritual sphere;
- both among military personnel and among the enemy's troops.<sup>2</sup>

Information-psychological confrontation as a direction of scientific research and practical activity has a long history, although, in a direct formulation, this term has entered theory and practice relatively recently.

In general, information-psychological confrontation is understood as a complex impact on the system of state and military administration, on the military-political leadership of the state, the population, the military and counteracting this influence from the opposing side.<sup>3</sup>

Today, depending on the scientific interest and the subject of research, regarding information and psychological confrontation in the scientific research of domestic and foreign scientists, several main directions can be distinguished:<sup>4</sup>

1. Formation of conceptual, theoretical and technological aspects of information and psychological confrontation (I. Zamarueva, A. Karayan, A. Lukyanets, A. Manoilo, G. Pocheptsov, S. Rastorguev, T. Ron, A. Ros, V. Tolubko, etc.).
2. Definition of theoretical and methodological problems of the essence and content of information and psychological impact and operations (V. Bogush, G. Grachev, Y. Zharkov, A. Kopan, V. Krysko, A. Litvinenko, A. Mateyuk, I. Melnik, M. Onischuk, G. Pocheptsov, A. Chernyak, A. Yudin, and others).
3. Coverage of the problems of developing information and psychological confrontation in the historical aspect (V. Ostroukhov, V. Petrik, K. Popovich, G. Pocheptsov, A. Ros, I. Rusnak, V. Telelim, V. Tolubko, A. Shtokvish, and others).
4. Generalization of the theory and practice of psychological and informational operations in modern local wars and armed conflicts (M. Dzyuba, S. Kuznetsov, V. Kolesov, A. Matsagor, V. Petrik, A. Permyakov, Prisyazhnyuk, etc.).
5. Conducting scientific research on information and psychological counteraction (I. Vorobyova, M. Markova, D. Popov, P. Shevchuk, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> A.G. Karayan, *Information and psychological confrontation in modern war*, Moscow: Military University, 1997, p.246.

<sup>3</sup> Ya. Zharkov, *Onischuk M. Information-psychological confrontation in the modern world: problem-historical analysis*, Bulletin of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. 2007 / 16–17, s. 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Information and psychological counteraction in the National Guard of Ukraine (psychological aspect)*: monograph / I.V. Vorobyova, Ya. V. Matsegora, I.I. Prikhodko et al. Kh.: Nat. acad. NG Ukraine, 2016, s. 265.

As D. Frolov and L. Vorontsova point out, the modern period of development of information-psychological confrontation is characterized by its special aggravation and reaching a qualitatively new level, which is due to the following main factors:<sup>5</sup>

- informatization of the main branches of activity of most states;
- the rapid pace of the formation of global information infrastructure and its transformation into an essential element of the life of the world community;
- significant advances in the development of information technology impact on the consciousness, will and feelings of people;
- active development of software and hardware for causing damage to computer and telecommunication systems;
- insufficient level of development of means and methods of ensuring the protection of information spaces and the consciousness of the population;
- imperfection of information policy.

In the system of information-psychological confrontation, which is carried out for military purposes, phenomena are distinguished that are qualified as ‘information war’ and ‘psychological war’.<sup>6</sup>

Today, the term ‘information war’ (IW) is still journalistic and has not yet received public recognition in Russian and foreign scientific circles – this is evidenced by ongoing discussions about what underlies this concept, what is the essence of phenomena related to information wars, as well as disputes over the correctness of the application of this term to the sphere of social relationships, which are commonly called information-psychological confrontation or conflict of interest in the information sphere of social systems. As a result, several dozen different formulations of ‘information war’ are used in the scientific literature. However, altogether these definitions quite completely and unambiguously single them out from the variety of relations existing in modern social society. Those social phenomena and processes can be distinguished into a separate group with the conditional name ‘information war’.<sup>7</sup> In general, they can be divided into three main groups.

The authors of the first group reduce the concept of IW to individual informational events and operations, informational methods and means of corporate competition or conducting interstate confrontation or armed struggle. The most famous specialist who classifies IW as information methods and means of warfare is the Ukrainian scientist G. Pocheptsov, who writes: “Information war is a communication technology for influencing the mass consciousness with short-term and long-term goals.”<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously, G. Pocheptsov refers to communication technologies as propaganda, advertising, electoral technologies and public relations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> A.V. Manoilo, *State information policy in special conditions*: monograph, Moscow: MEPhI, 2003.388, p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> A.G. Karayan, *Information and psychological confrontation in modern war*, Moscow: Military University, 1997, p. 246.

<sup>7</sup> A.V. Manoilo, *State information policy in special conditions*: monograph, Moscow: MEPhI, 2003.388, p. 240–247.

<sup>8</sup> G.G. Pocheptsov, *Information wars*, M.: Refl-book, M.: Vakler, 2000.576, p. 20.

<sup>9</sup> G.G. Pocheptsov, *Information and psychological warfare*, Moscow: Sinteg, 2000, 180, p. 3.

The authors of the second group – mainly representatives of the military departments, both foreign and Russian (S. Grinyaeva, S. Komov, M. Rodionov) – attribute IW to the sphere of military confrontation.<sup>10</sup> In general, Russian military thought has many points of view on the problems of information warfare, which complicates the implementation of a general analysis of the views of Russian specialists. But the main goal of the information war is still considered the mastery of the consciousness of the population and undermining the morale and combat potential of the armed forces of the eventual adversary.<sup>11</sup>

The authors of the third group of definitions of IW consider it a phenomenon of the external peaceful period of interstate confrontation, allowing the solving foreign policy problems in a non-violent way in the traditional sense.<sup>12</sup>

By IW means and methods, Russian authors have information, informational influences, or information technologies. V. Lisichkin and L. Shelepin believe that information war is a war of ‘a qualitatively new type, where information is a weapon, and the struggle is waged for a purposeful change in public consciousness.’<sup>13</sup>

A type of information war, waged mainly against social systems, is a psychological (information-psychological) war.

The concept of ‘psychological warfare’ was used for the first time by Dr. M. Campano in his book ‘The Experience of Military Psychology’, published in 1904 in Bucharest.<sup>14</sup>

The Americans first experienced psychological warfare in World War II. Until 1945, these actions were of an auxiliary nature, and then, during the Cold War, they acquired an independent character as a ‘psychological sphere’ of foreign policy. In 1948, the NSC Directive 10/2 was adopted, which obliged the CIA to conduct psychological warfare. It is still in force today. According to this directive, the main covert operations are propaganda, economic war, preventive direct actions (sabotage, assistance to underground movements and emigrant groups, etc.).

In Nazi Germany, the term ‘psychological sabotage’ was used, the main tasks of which were: splitting a hostile state, causing discontent among the population of a hostile state with the policy of its own government, isolating the hostile state from its allies, various obstacles in its preparation for war and creating opposition.

The characteristic features of modern psychological warfare are considered:<sup>15</sup>

- globality – impact on all spheres of life of the opponent, neutral states, allies, their population and military personnel;

<sup>10</sup> S.N. Grinyaev, *Intellectual counteraction to information weapons*, Moscow: Sinteg, 1999, p. 232; S.A. Komov, *On the methodology for assessing the effectiveness of information warfare*. Military thought 1997, No. 5, s. 42–44; M.A. Rodionov, *On the question of the forms of the information struggle*, Military thought 1998, No. 2, s. 67–70.

<sup>11</sup> A. Shevchenko, *Information and psychological operations: conceptual approaches of NATO and the leading countries of the world*, “Social Psychology” 2004, No. 2, s. 111–121.

<sup>12</sup> N.I. Cherginets, *State policy in the field of information security: state and development prospects*. National security: management and information technology support, Minsk 2000, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> V.A. Lisichkin, L.A. Shelepin, *The third world (information and psychological) war*, M.: Institute of Social and Political Research ASN 1999.304, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> V. Yagupov, *Military psychology: textbook*, M.: Tandem 2004.656, p. 336.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 337.

- totality – penetration into all spheres of life: into diplomacy, economics, culture, social relations, social and psychological, and the like;
- technicalization – the widespread use of the achievements of science and technology both for processing the content, methods and techniques of psychological warfare and the forms and methods of their implementation;
- organization – the creation of various bodies of psychological warfare and precise coordination of their efforts and areas of activity (in all developed countries, they are united into a single state structure).

The goal and objectives of psychological warfare are classified and specified following the conditions for conducting psychological warfare (purposes and objectives of psychological warfare in peacetime, war and post-war times, as well as during peacekeeping operations), subjects of psychological warfare (military personnel, civilians, the higher military-political leadership of the enemy and their allies, as well as world public opinion and allied countries) and the time frame of psychological warfare (strategic, operational, tactical).<sup>16</sup>

In an everyday sense, psychological warfare is a spontaneous, unskilled use of means of communication and mechanisms of social and psychological influence by some people against other people to subjugate them to themselves or create favourable conditions for their existence and activity.

In this form, psychological warfare exists (is applied) throughout the entire lifespan of a person. Whereas in the past people were able to influence each other only in direct communication, influencing their interlocutors with the help of words, intonation, gestures and facial expressions, today the ways of influencing human consciousness have become much more diverse, effective and elegant due to the accumulated experience, as well as through the creation of special technologies for communication and people management. In this context, the term ‘psychological warfare’ can be characterized by:

- the political activity of individuals, groups, parties and movements;
- electoral companies of candidates for various electable positions;
- advertising activities of commercial structures;
- the struggle of individuals (and small groups) in the rivalry for leadership in industrial, scientific and other teams;
- political, economic or cultural confrontation of rival ethnic groups;
- negotiation processes between competing firms or organizations.

Therefore, information and psychological warfare is a combination of various forms, methods and means of influencing people to change, in a desired direction, their psychological characteristics (views, opinions, value orientations, moods, motives, attitudes and behaviour stereotypes), as well as group norms, mass sentiments and public consciousness in general.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> A.K. Yudin, V.M. Bogush, *Information security of the state: a tutorial*, Kharkov: Consum, 2005.576, p. 116–117.

<sup>17</sup> A.V. Manoilo, *State information policy in special conditions*: monograph, Moscow: MEPhI, 2003.388, p. 250.

The use of information-psychological influence (IPI) in Western terminology has acquired the form of psychological operations (PsyOp). According to Western experts, psychological operations are understood to be the conduct of planned propaganda and psychological activities in peacetime and war, designed for foreign hostile, friendly or neutral audiences in order to influence them in a favourable direction to achieve political and military national goals.<sup>18</sup>

Depending on the purpose, nature, scale and content of the tasks to be achieved, psychological operations are subdivided according to their level into strategic, operational, and tactical, according to the time they are conducted – into those that are conducted in a peacetime (threatening) period, in wartime and during peacekeeping operations. Psychological operations are additionally divided into PsyOp for misleading the enemy, PsyOp against the civilian population of the enemy, PsyOp in support of hostilities, PsyOp to assist opposition forces and dissident movements, PsyOp for cultural expansion and sabotage, consolidating PsyOp and PSYO during peacekeeping operations.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, psychological operations are carried out using information and psychological influences.

The main objects of negative information and psychological influences are distinguished:<sup>20</sup>

- the ideological, psychological environment of society, associated with the use of information, information resources, and information infrastructure to influence the psyche and behaviour of people;
- resources that reveal spiritual, cultural, historical, national values, traditions, the property of the state and nation in various spheres of society;
- information infrastructure, that is, absolutely all intermediate links between information and a person;
- the system for the formation of public consciousness (world view, political views, generally accepted rules of behaviour, etc.);
- the system of forming public opinion;
- a system for developing and making political decisions;
- human consciousness and behaviour.

In terms of content, informational and psychological influences are targeted, systemic, time-coordinated strikes throughout the public information space – in the zone of formal and informal communication, the target of which is:

- a) self-identification of a person, their social and role identification, which sets the general intentionality of an individual and society as a whole;

<sup>18</sup> V. Klimenko, *Moral and psychological aspects of modern information wars*, Bulletin of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv 2007, 14–15, p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> A. Shevchenko, *Information and psychological operations: conceptual approaches of NATO and the leading countries of the world*, “Social Psychology” 2004, No. 2, p. 113.

<sup>20</sup> N.A. Maruta, M.V. Markova, *Information-psychological warfare as a new challenge of our time: the state of the problem and the direction of its overcoming*, “Ukrainian Bulletin of Psychoneurology” 2015, Vol. 23, Issue. 3 (84), p. 21–28.

- b) self-awareness as an individual's understanding of their own identity, and the identity of the community in society, which are reflected in cultural traditions, beliefs and mentality indicated in the language;
- c) basic human values that underlie their assessments and judgments.<sup>21</sup>

An important feature of IPIs for individual consciousness is that they are unnoticeable by the target person themselves. Experts argue that dangerous IPI for individual consciousness can lead to two types of interrelated changes.<sup>22</sup> Firstly, these are changes in the psyche and mental health of a person. Since information influences, it is difficult to talk about the boundaries of the norm and pathology. An indicator of changes can be the loss of the adequacy of the world's reflection in consciousness and one's attitude to the world. We can talk about personality degradation if the forms of reflection of reality are simplified, reactions become coarse and a transition from higher needs (in self-actualization, social recognition) to lower ones (physiological, every day) occurs. Secondly, this shifts values, attitudes, landmarks and the world view of the individual. Such changes cause instances of deviant antisocial behaviour and pose a threat to society and the state.

According to domestic experts,<sup>23</sup> 45% of the information disseminated in the Ukrainian information space shows signs of targeted external manipulation and is a manifestation of IPI directed against the Ukrainian state.

Negative IPI is experienced by almost the entire population of Ukraine, which can be divided into direct targeting of IPI, that IPI which results from negative experience (Donbass war veterans, veterans' family members, relatives of those killed in action, prisoners of war, hostages and their relatives, temporarily displaced persons and refugees, the population living in combat zones, medical staff assisting the wounded and volunteers) and IPI through indirect information flows.

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<sup>21</sup> A.M. Dubina, *Information-psychological wars and their influence on mass consciousness*, Kiev: NTUU „KPI” 2011, p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> V. Petrik, Y. Zharkov, M. Dziuba, *Personal dangers in the information space*, "Legal Journal" 2007, No. 2, p. 45–46.

<sup>23</sup> M.V. Markova, *Information and psychological war: medical and psychological consequences and strategies of counteraction*, "Problems of continuing medical education and science" 2016, No. 4, p. 6–10.



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## Summary

Hybrid warfare is one of the main types of military aggression in the modern world. If this war is properly planned and conducted, the advantages of it are as follows: the aggressor country is not an aggressor of the international community; small losses of personnel (the armed forces are not widely used) and achieving the goal with low economic costs. The main component of hybrid warfare is information and psychological confrontation. It allows the achievement of the goal in full. Therefore, at present, in the advanced countries of the world, information measures and psychological counteraction is taking place on an ongoing basis and is a matter of not only military but also state significance.