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**Implications of Action Components and Communication in Hybrid
Developments**

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Abstract: Hybrid warfare presents a complex, fluid, surprising and chameleonic way of communication and conducting today's belligerence. The form of confrontation makes extensive use of non-kinetic modalities of military as well as non-military engagement. It is in this line of thought that psychological, intelligence and informational-related operations, media operations, propaganda involvement, as well as classic methods of confrontation will be carried out in which *hard power* will excel in the confrontation space. The most important non-military forms will be provided by the economic and technological potential, both of which are fueled extensively by a massive financial support. Even if the objectives of the confrontation are fixed, the methods of deployment will know non-template deployments. All hybrid deployments will exhibit high cloaking capacity, malignant, dangerous cognitive load, and harmful influence on target audiences. The action mechanism consists in the circulation of genuine disinformation and propaganda campaigns towards the opponent. Multiple channels (mediums) will be selected so as to saturate the target audience, without leaving them any opportunity to analyze, relate, compare, systematize or make value judgments. The multidimensional approach results in overwhelming target audiences with data, information and messages by using creative, fast-changing and different modes of action compared to previous events in that category.

Keywords: nonkinetic; communication; soft power; lines of effect; information warfare; propaganda; diplomacy; information support; intelligence; economic dimension; psychological dimension; media operations; disinformation

1. Soft Power

In the hybrid confrontation, the strategic decision level will consider the establishment of various missions for non-military organizational entities. Based on the orders and dispositions of political decision-makers, the participation, involvement and efforts of non-kinetic structures, official or

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clandestine will be possible. Based on the action plan, complex impact lines will be activated in all areas of major impact. Lines of effects are specific to non-military fields, and in the military field lines of operations can be developed. The summation of the achieved objectives ensures the outline of the final state estimated by the aggressor – the state dissolution of the attacked international actor. All the actions developed by the institutions of the hegemon state will be launched synchronously, the involvements being complementary (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 79).

It must be emphasized that special importance must be given to the synchronization and the relationship established between the lines of operations and those of effects. Concretely, an effective coordination mechanism must be established between the use of military force and the use of non-military possibilities, strictly necessary to produce large-scale effects on the opponent's potential and countermeasures – which will be achieved through the competences of the single strategic command (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Vasile, 2023, p. 70).

2. Communication in the Hybrid Confrontation

Communication represents the transmission of a thought, positions, situations, hypotheses, states and acts of will, intentions through the use of words, images, sound, holograms, various signs and symbols. It intervenes between two or more people, directly or by means of technical means, the participants having to be successively or simultaneously in stations for sending and receiving bidirectionally or multidirectionally circulated contents.

It must be recognized that the communication function is a complex process, making it possible to transmit data, information and content of interest through the communication platforms established by the responsible factors. In a hybrid context, communication is conceived as having a one-way format, the transmitted contents being massively marked by untruths, false constructions, intentions to mislead the recipients. The end users of the communication, the members of the target community who receive the messages are individuals accepted as opponents to the sender. In the face of these recipients of the messages, the issuer wishes to intoxicate, demobilize, instill fear, extend the alterations intervened in the field of knowing the exact reality, reverse the way of manifestation of affective states, induce some harmful motivations to modify the patriotic behavior.

The elements of communication will be found in the own ways of using soft forms in the hybrid spectrum. Thus, we will find specific uses for information operations, media, psychological operations, propaganda, diplomatic acts, etc., all uses being in accordance with the possibilities of each state, the level of training of the specialists, intentions, technical equipment and software used (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Vasile, 2023, pp. 69-71).

3. The Informational Component

Regardless of the name used – information operations (INFO OPS), information war, information aggression or the involvement of the information component – we admit that it represents a particularly important tool in support of achieving hybrid interests. The multi-channel communication achieved produces particularly strong effects on the adversary. Information warfare is conducted non-stop, in peacetime, in crisis and during hybrid warfare, in highly versatile forms. It is recognized as the most powerful non-kinetic tool in the panoply of hybrid warfare (Ulrik, 2015). It contains extremely numerous manifestation possibilities, unsuspected developments, in accordance with the technical and human possibilities of the international actors who orchestrate it. So, it bundles propaganda techniques and

procedures, partisan media developments, biased engagements on social networks, social pressures and diplomatic approaches deliberately damaging to the adversary (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 80). The effect of inducing the destabilization of the target society can be achieved by using working methods from the range of deception. Thus, counterfeit, totally or almost totally false operational information is circulated to the opposing force structure and population, which facilitates the adversary to adopt an incorrect and subsequently damaging decision. Having a chameleon-like development, the informational war presents an autonomous generation and evolution, the instantaneous resettlement of the ways of production, in natural correlation with the socio-political environment in which it manifests itself (Darczewska, 2015, pp. 13-15).

The information operation (INFO OPS) is considered to have the objective of providing “...*advice and coordination of military intelligence activity, in order to create the desired effects on the will, understanding and capabilities of the adversary ... in support of the achievement of the objectives...*” (NATO, 2011, p. 4). In practice, INFO OPS achieves the substitution of truthful, objective states by producing data, arguments, interpretations, situations, actions, by building a reality situated as a counterweight to the true state. The counterbalance built by the disinformation specialists will contain only tiny truthful segments, extensively combined with intentionally distorted interpretations, biased intentions, lies and questionable positions, distortions of the truth (Chifu & Oazu, 2016, p. 6).

The main effort is aimed at disrupting the natural decision-making process of the adversary, negatively influencing the will of the opponent, thereby facilitating the achievement of one’s own political and military objectives. Harmful informational development will be produced in an integrative manner, knowing a permanently increased intensity (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 80). Thus, a massive flow will be activated and in continuous progression, regarding the design of key information, the transmission of essential messages that make sectors or persons vulnerable, the transmission of the positions of official factors in critical issues. Critical information will be disseminated to carefully selected audiences in the international media of interest (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Vasile, 2023, pp. 70-71).

Information warfare is the tool that ensures the maximum impact on the target for the confrontations of the turbulent 21st century. Similar to the phrase “hybrid war”, the term “information war” selects a surplus of conjunctural assessments, fueled by little conceptual clarification. The purpose of the informational effort is to influence the target population, to disrupt the perception of the target social groups in a destructive sense, by transmitting poisoned information and false information. The transmission engine is the information thoroughly counterfeited by the disinformation specialists, by the technicians regarding the art of tricking (cheating, deceiving) the beneficiary. The opponent will receive fake news continuously (Ivan, 2020, pp. 24-25).

4. Propaganda

It is the communication method of the top state level that deals with the release of intentionally biased data, the promotion of official approaches filled with erroneous aspects, the transmission of distorted information. In the propaganda effort, the presentation of explanations, points of view, technical or official notes – are deliberately made as political support of the international actor for the beneficial promotion of ideas, actions, intentions or equipment. As an official concern of the state, it is an option in plain sight that is carried out continuously on all occasions. Propaganda is concerned with bringing praise to increase the confidence of some communities or samples of their own populations. It has a

mobilizing role for its own populations (military forces) and demoralization, weakening the confidence of opponents (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 84).

Through extremely aggressive developments, propaganda and the media will be interested in demonstrating across meridians that the authorities of the aggressor state are concerned with establishing stability and balance in the region, based on observing historical truth and abiding by international law. Obviously, the strong actor will be constantly present everywhere, the weaker actor being prevented from presenting their own position in the world by any means (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Vasile, 2023, pp. 72-73).

In the hybrid spectrum, propaganda will induce additional valences to the messages, deliberately assigning exaggerated qualitative dimensions to the information circulated. It is intended to influence the target audience, to intoxicate and impair the decision-making capacity of decision-makers, as well as to divert the attention of the targeted audiences (Ivan, 2020, pp. 27-28).

5. The diplomatic effort

Diplomacy is the official type of communication between states that interact with the respective international actors, wanting to establish and develop different relations of their own state in an international context. The permanent use of dynamic, multi-directional, balanced diplomacy, with the activation of security tools to counter the actions of the opposing state, to thwart similar adverse intentions is being considered (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 85).

A broad campaign will be circulated through diplomacy, unleashed to demonstrate that the opposing state is guilty of violating the norms of international law, being the generator of the actions that violated human rights. The actions of the diplomatic level will be supported with forged documents containing multiple lies. These lies and untruths will be presented continuously, on all occasions and through all official channels (Kříž, Bechná & Števkov, 2016, pp. 11-13).

6. Information Component

Communication is responsible for securing the critical data and information necessary to produce the complex hybrid effort. At the highest level, there has to be noticed the supply to the strategic decision maker of critical data so as to eliminate the production of strategic surprise intervened on their own state, i.e. the aggression carried out by surprise by another international actor.

The form of communication will work closely with information operations, propaganda, media, as well as with all other components (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 85).

7. Media Operations

They are represented by communications circulated through the multitude of information transmitted with the aim of erroneously forming the opinion of numerous communities on some subjects of interest to the aggressor power. The negative action occurs on the target individual's mind, shaping the target individual's personality cognitively, affectively and behaviorally. In the first place of the malignant information it is the leader that is placed, in the background being the fighter and the ordinary citizen. In other words, the media operation represents a distinct typology of media communication activities, being responsible for establishing the flow of public information of an intentionally hostile nature, continuously, encompassing multiple

palettes, promoting distorting aspects of reality (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 93). The complete and comprehensive form of the flow of media operations is generated by the concept of quick, proactive and poisoned message informing of target audiences (Munteanu, 2014, p. 361). Media operations are promoters of the interests of power groups or strong states, in order to position themselves in the context of regional and global security (Government, 2003, pp. 1-4).

It works closely with all components of hybrid warfare. In terms of priority, collaboration is extremely close, especially with information warfare and psychological operations.

8. The Economic Component

In the 21st century, the design and promotion of economic interests is unanimously appreciated as a decisively important instrument for placing the state on the international stage. The economic-financial, technological and commercial potential, designed to function as a unified whole, are considered as decisive aspects in establishing the hierarchy of states (Mihalcea, Sirbu, & Vasile, 2023, p. 74). Economic implications with hybrid desires can be present in the period preceding the confrontation itself, during the belligerence, during the classic armed confrontation or after the end of the state of tension. During the hybrid confrontation, the practices of maximum hardness, the protectionist policies, the blockades are amplified, registering the transfer of the aspects of tension and insecurity, towards the economic space. Various measures and practices will intervene, such as blocking the opponent's accounts, stopping exports and imports, eliminating previously agreed contractual clauses, stopping investments, etc.) (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 93-94).

Economic-financial institutions will promote an offensive policy, towards the economic strangulation of the international target actor. For this, extreme protectionist levers will be used, typical mechanisms of force in exchanges and relationships of various natures, with the strong adjudging previously non-agreed possibilities. The flow of energy resources, the transit of strategic raw materials, the previous trade of the target state with other states will be hit hard and blocked (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Vasile, 2023, p. 74).

It is possible to limitatively protect the interests of the strong actor, to destabilize only the adversary with reduced capabilities. Improper economic practices can also be practiced, aimed at the economic-financial bankruptcy of the companies of the weaker state, the decrease of the domestic product, the inflation of the national currency, the reduction of social welfare, the production of internal convulsions that are difficult to overcome. Regarding internal security, it is desired that the state cannot be controlled by the legally established authorities (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, p. 85).

9. Psychological Operations, PSYOPs

Psychological operations refer to the wide range of communications, specialized products, ideas and intentions, integrative factors and actions, circulated towards foreign target audiences in order to influence the emotions, motivation and behavior of target audiences, combatants or opposing citizens. Communication supports the achievement of the strategic command's major objectives by affecting the behavior of governments, diverse audiences, and target foreign individuals (Mihalcea, Sirbu & Vasile, 2023, p. 74). It will have taken into account the beliefs of psychological specialists, according to which "In war, the real target is the thinking of the opposing commander..." (Hart, 2003, pp. 1-4).

Psychological operations will produce permanent, complex, massive, and intelligent damage to the morale of the *Force* and the opposing populations, being carefully synchronized with information operations and public relations. Disparaging concerns will be constantly increased, with the support of written and audiovisual media. The negative impact will be accentuated by cyber means, affecting the functioning of the essential institutions of the target state, the stability of critical infrastructures, making it possible to destabilize the government (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 85-86).

PSYOPs are found at the national strategic level, being the responsibility of the decision-maker, that is the head of state. In military terms, the decision to carry out PSYOPs missions rests with the Chief of the Defense Staff. As found, PSYOPs have a clear and secure chain of command, specialized staff, involving well-trained specialists with valuable and long experience (Army, 2005, pp. 1-4).

The major role of PSYOPs involves the value and action outclassing of similar adversary strategy and diminishing the fighting will of opposing troops^(Pop, 2016, p. 4), achieved through the following.

Influencing external target audiences are the priority of efforts, with rigorously processed information being circulated, with pronounced characteristics of manipulation (Bucur, 2015, pp. 78-82).

The achievement of public information in the target space beyond the borders supports the development of humanitarian activities, establishes and emphasizes the legitimacy conceived by the decision-makers, maintains the internal rules established in the foci of ethnic division (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 89-90).

Conveying the intentions of the commanders marks the true spokesperson of the Force commander or the acting as the spokesperson. It will be transmitted to the population of the target outbreak, along the lines of credibility, authority and social balance.

Countering and reducing adverse involvement, including propaganda, truncated information, disinformation, fake news, all are made to reduce the objectives proposed by the opponent (Army, 2005, pp. 1-3).

The multitude of PSYOPs intervention possibilities will be highlighted through explanatory, incisive or defensive programs, in close correlation with the efforts of the national instruments of power, involved in the hybrid confrontation (Vasile, Mihalcea & Sirbu, 2022, pp. 91-92).

10. Conclusions

In the desire to project power across meridians by discreetly circumventing the norms of international law and misinforming public opinion everywhere, the hybrid war typology is attractive to states with high potential held in the military, economic and technological fields, through the preconceived use of malignant communication. However, each state involved in the act of belligerence trumpets that all the data of its own communication are truthful, so they represent truths. As already known, states that have high military, technological and economic potential can find themselves in the position of an aggressor state. Therefore, the hybrid confrontation makes the adversary abandon the practice of territory control as an indicator of military success achieved, channeling its efforts into information operations, cyber, media, psychological operations, propaganda - communication of a certain type, basically - for the collapse of society, influence and control communities, the predilection of minority groups.

The success of the hybrid confrontation is based on the combination of military and non-military efforts, by enabling the expanded range of measures, actions and effects. The soft manifestations – the development of which intervenes before, during and after stopping the hybrid confrontation – involve

the exacerbation of informational, psychological, media and propagandistic activities, thus of untrue, tendentious, lying communications. Along with the soft demonstrations, the inevitable classic conventional operations will also take place. The soft and hard actions carried out have as the final state desired by the aggressor power, the serious damage to society and the dissolution of the state. In all situations, sequences and moments involved, participants in the hybrid confrontation use malignant communication through complex, synchronized actions, intelligent exploitation of vulnerabilities, applying successive series of strikes on society, government institutions and security structures.

Communication must be used in the future in a strictly positive, beneficial sense. To be used to strengthen cooperation between states, harmonize international relations and support the establishment of peace in the world.

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