

MODERN INFORMATION WARFARE AND SPIRITUAL SECURITY OF RUSSIA: THREATS AND LIMITING STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: We analyze the specifics of modern information wars and their impact on the spiritual sphere of Russian society. The innovative technologies of modern information warfare have a huge destructive potential. These technologies have an impact on the minds of people and may change their value orientations, impose alien cultural systems and destructive ideas forming models of social behavior. All that determines the need to study the main spiritual security threats that faces Russian society and strategies to resist them.

Methodology: The methodological basis of the study is the concept of the information society, which allows understanding the specifics of new information reality. The risk logical approach is methodologically significant for the study of threats associated with the new information reality. All that gives an opportunity to analyze the new social spiritual security threats associated with development and operation of new information technologies. The theory of information warfare is conceptual for the study, as it considers the modern ways and means of information impact on individual and social consciousness. Information warfare is treated as a new type of geopolitical confrontation in the modern world.

Results: The study concludes that in the context of modern geopolitical confrontation, the spiritual sphere of Russian society becomes one of the main objects of destructive information impact, manifested in the devaluation of traditional cultural values, introduction of Western liberal ideas, spread of mass culture and consumerism ideology. Such a destructive information impact leads to atomization of society, to a socio-cultural split on social, intergenerational and ethnocultural grounds. Substitution of the national spiritual and moral tradition with the values of Western mass culture leads not only to destruction of historically developed social behavior models but to reformatting the cultural code of society.

Applications of this study: The results allow us to understand the destructive potential of information impact on spiritual sphere of Russian society and the need to develop an effective strategy to resist information threats that undermine the foundations of Russian statehood. The limiting strategy of information risks should include not only legal measures implemented by the state, but social reflection on the principles of transparency, borders, and mechanisms of its compliance and, above all, the mechanisms of protection from destructive impact of information for the individuals.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The spiritual sphere of Russian society is characterized by extreme instability and lack of ideas, able to integrate it. The society faces a crisis evidenced by such trends as the mutual alienation of society and state, political indifference of citizens; weakening of social solidarity, ethnic tension, underdevelopment of civil society institutions. The main survival condition for the Russian society in new historical realities associated with globalization of the information sphere is restoration of stable spiritual life, preservation of the value-ideological core, formation of ideology shared by the majority of citizens.

Keywords: *Russian society, information warfare, spiritual security, geopolitical confrontation, information threats, information technologies.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, information technologies have entered all the spheres of society and become an effective tool for the construction of social reality. The information factor has an obvious growing influence on social spiritual security.

The intensive development of information technologies resulted in radical changes in various spheres of public life. Many scientists considered this factor to be the solution to global problems of the modern era, caused by the previous industrial stage of social development. A. Toffler (2002) was particularly sharing this view. He believed that the possibilities of information society would allow to find alternative sources of energy, minimize environmental threats, free mankind from routine production activities.

The technological optimism of early-staged information society has been gradually replaced by humanitarian pessimism. The information technologies entered human private life (Tastan & Davoudi, 2015; Galushkin, 2018; Kvon et al., 2017; Yorov et al., 2019; Bak et al., 2019). That resulted in significant changes in personality. The Negative trends of

information society in relation to a person are expressed in social atomization caused by the emergence of virtual reality; identity crisis, the growth of psychological stress, manipulative practices in information space; the spread of radicalism in networks, etc.

Scientists state, that the modern information technologies are able to change the "psychocosmos" (consciousness) of a person, "in its extreme manifestation that can lead to the radical technological transformation into another "being" ([Davoudi et al., 2018](#); [Fartash et al., 2018](#); [Polikarpova, 2011](#); [Masalimova et al., 2019](#)) and the results of this transformation are unpredictable.

Most researchers argue that today we are in situation of bifurcation, which carries further development alternatives: "either artificial intelligence and information technology will become effective "servants" of society, improving the quality of human life and degree of our freedom, or they (or rather, their creators) will become rigid "owners", depriving a person of autonomy and the right to true choice" ([Malkov, 2018](#)). Thus, modern information technologies can have a destructive impact on the sphere of culture, which manifests itself in destruction and change of human values, ideological foundations of life.

New information technologies have huge destructive potential. It relates both to the technical means of military protection and the technologies aimed at consciousness, destruction of values, imposition of alien cultural systems, and introduction of destructive ideas that affect social behavior. This fact determines social and scientific importance of studying the specifics of modern information warfare and its impact on spiritual security of Russian society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In scientific discourse, the topic of information warfare is considered in the problematic context of the new information threats of the modern world. In foreign scientific literature W. [Beck \(2007\)](#) and G. [Behnam \(2010\)](#) present a deep analysis of the new information threats. Analyzing the current state of society, the authors note that the new risks that humanity will face are associated with excessive technological and scientific progress. The negative consequences are associated with radicalization of information sphere, cultural expansion, destruction of traditional forms of identity; information overload affecting human psyche, etc.

Currently, representatives of various social disciplinary practices are turning to the study of the problem of information threats and to the national security of states. This problem is discussed in the spheres of political science, conflictology, sociology, psychology, and social philosophy. Within the framework of the interdisciplinary approach, there are two main vectors of modern information warfare: information technology and information psychology.

Information technology direction is studied mainly in the framework of natural science, in particular, in Physics, Cybernetics, Mathematics, Applied Computer Science, and Mechanics ([Sabiroya, Fedorova and Sandalova, 2019](#)). In this case, the infrastructure of information technology such as communication systems, telecommunications, electronic means, computer networks, etc. becomes an object of information impact.

In turn, information psychology direction is researched by psychology, social philosophy, sociology. Here the object of information and psychological influence is the psyche of people, as well as the system of public opinion and decision-making. It is obvious that along with the development of global information networks (and primarily the Internet) there has dramatically increased the effectiveness of information warfare and the possibilities of its implementation have significantly expanded ([Pashchenko, 2018](#); [Moskalenko et al., 2019](#)).

The researchers note that "information warfares at the present stage are equated to the weapon of mass destruction, since they pursue many goals: from destruction of state administration system, military control points, counteraction to the means of fire control to the impact on the personnel, moral and psychological state of society" ([Babayan, 2011](#)).

Due to the complexity and novelty of the problem, there is no "stable" terminology associated with understanding of modern information warfare in scientific literature. Some authors define the information warfare as "...communicative technology characterized by the impact on mass consciousness with short-term and long-term goals" ([Pocheptsov, 2000](#)).

Some researchers consider information warfare to be "the military implementation of methods and means of information impact on the psyche of people, primarily on their individual and social consciousness, as well as on the technical means in order to achieve the goals of the impacting party" ([Prokofiev, 2003](#)).

The others propose to treat information warfare as "aggressive intentions and actions of one state, causing damage to the manpower and material objects of another state, aimed at weakening its sovereignty and limited by the aim to deprive it of the sovereign state subjectivity" ([Sulakshin, 2011](#)).

The analysis of approaches existing in scientific knowledge, suggests that modern information technologies have immense destructive potential, which makes possible the spread of new means of geopolitical warfare, called information warfare.

RESULTS

In the framework of the study, it is important to choose adequate theoretical and methodological tools to comprehensively consider the specifics of information warfare and its impact on the spiritual sphere of Russian society. In modern scientific

discourse, we can distinguish a number of approaches for a comprehensive study of the specifics and methods of modern information warfare: geopolitical, psychological, communicative, and conflictological.

As a part of the geopolitical approach, information warfare is an interstate confrontation that covers a wide range of modern forms of warfare, including not only military but also the non-military methods of confrontation (information, economic, cultural interventions, etc.). Among the most popular technologies used in modern information warfare's, there are "controlled chaos", "soft power", "smart power", "color revolutions", etc. ([Manoylo, 2015](#)). The experts state, that "information warfare is a rapidly evolving sphere of current interests of defense policy specialists and politicians that is still difficult to be clearly determined" ([Kihtan and Kachmazova, 2018](#)).

In this aspect, the countries resolve their tasks of foreign policy through the modern information technologies and aim to achieve "not military but humanitarian enslavement of the enemy" ([Shtofer, 2018](#)).

Proponents of the psychological approach believe that the essence of warfare is the ability of information to have a hidden impact on different levels of consciousness (mass, group, and individual). Manipulation of consciousness is carried out for the purpose of hidden management of the unconscious objects of information impact: intellectual, psychological, and socio-cultural processes. ([Lisichkin and Shelepin, 2000](#)). Information and psychological attacks are carried out at any time (both in times of peace and war), in various fields (both in information and spiritual) and among various groups (both military and civilian).

From the standpoint of the communication approach, information warfare is considered to be "...a communicative technology characterized by the impact on mass consciousness with short-term and long-term goals" ([Pocheptsov, 2000](#)). The methods of information warfare are extremely variable. These methods may include both propaganda campaigns and diplomacy. The main channel of influence is the information system of the enemy, including the media.

The conflictological approach considers information warfare through the prism of military and political confrontation, including confrontation within the state (between the state and social groups of the citizens). The information warfare is described primarily as a political confrontation, carried out by military actions with the use of information weapons: information technology ([Der Derian, 2000](#)) and information psychology (Shevchenko and Shtofer, 2015). Both the state and various social groups, including the mass social subject such as region population, may become subjects and objects of information warfare.

It seems that these approaches are quite conceptual for the study of the specifics of information warfares and their impact on the spiritual security of Russian society.

Today, the scientific literature describes spiritual security as a leading factor of Russian national sovereignty and cultural identity preservation. The concept of "spiritual security" is still in the process of conceptualization, but it is introduced into Russian scientific discourse due to the need for revival and translation of spiritual values. Such a revival can become the basis for the consolidation of the Russian society in conditions of a deep socio-cultural split.

In the space of Russian researching practices, there are several approaches to understanding social spiritual security. Some researchers have traditionally considered spiritual security from positions of the state-centric approach, as protection of vital social interests and protection of the state's interests in spiritual sphere from internal and external threats ([Vozymitel, 2008](#)). As a whole, in this aspect spiritual security partly coincides with the concept of national security.

Some authors interpret spiritual security as a state of personality, society, and state, that ensures normal existence and functioning in relationships and interdependence. In this aspect, attention is paid to creative cultural and civilizational development of society, in particular, to the process of preservation and reproduction of spiritual phenomena (ideas, ideals, values, norms, traditions) ([Hadjarov, 2015](#)).

The scientific discourse has developed a comprehensive approach to the understanding of spiritual security in the unity of three aspects: as the ability of individuals, society, and state to maintain and develop positive, creative spirituality, as a state of protection of vital interests and needs of the individual, society and state; as a system of relations between the subjects of social life, providing favorable conditions for spiritual life and spiritual development ([Vereshchagina, Samygyn and Shevchenko, 2016](#)). All that gives grounds to consider spiritual security as a very complex system covering various spheres of society: cultural, religious, ideological, etc. This system provides normal functioning of the state's public institutions responsible for spiritual reproduction of society.

DISCUSSION

The actualization of spiritual security problem is the result of deep social and cultural split in the country and the need for consolidation of the Russian society ([Shevchenko and Tihonovskaya, 2018](#); [Sergeeva et al., 2019](#)). This consolidation is possible only on the basis of revival of the foundations of national culture. We shall ensure the socio-cultural continuity with the previous generations. In spiritual sphere globalization is objectively associated with the opposite trend - cultural expansion of the West ([Starostin, 2018](#)).

This process touches Russia as well, as the global information networks mainly broadcast spiritually flawed examples of Western mass culture. That has a destructive impact on the consciousness of the mass audience, narrowing life horizons,

understating cultural needs and making people more primitive. When there is no counteraction to such destructive information influence the moral problems of society deepen.

The substitution of the national spiritual and moral tradition by Western mass culture leads to the destruction of historical foundations of social behavior and changes in the cultural code of society. K. Mannheim noted "...people automatically use the existing patterns not only in external behavior but also when thinking" ([Mannheim, 1991](#)). Therefore, the destructive stereotypes, introduced into public consciousness from the outside, threaten not only the spiritual sphere but, ultimately, the national security of Russia, imperceptibly undermining the foundations of Russian statehood.

For a long time, as a result of the post-Soviet ideological transformations of Russian society there remained a vacuum in this sphere. The loss of ideological homogeneity that used to be a characteristic of the Soviet period and the cultural pluralism of the post-Soviet era demanded to find a nation-uniting idea. Even now the political power is unable to offer a viable and attractive social project of the future, some understandable and meaningful goals and values ([Shevchenko and Shtofer, 2016](#)).

In the field of values and worldview, collectivism was replaced by violent individualism; the historically established values associated with priority of the spiritual principles were subjected to total criticism, replaced by the rough material and practical orientations. As a result, the minds of modern Russians represent an intriguing combination of the original collectivist mentality and selfish, individualistic Western orientations.

In the religious sphere, there were attempts to revive Orthodoxy. At the same time there have developed diverse and, most often, destructive religious practices and cults. Restoration of traditional beliefs was rather painful as well, as it exposed confessional and civilizational contradictions lying behind. These contradictions primarily affected relations between the Orthodox and Islamic civilizations within the framework of the united Russian statehood and led to large-scale social violence and bloodshed.

In the sphere of education, there took place non-critical borrowings of the Western model of higher education. Educational institutions have become a part of the service sector and lost their educational function. As a result, the formation of the student's personality was not included in educational process and began to occur under the influence of less predictable factors.

As a result of the transformations which took place in the spiritual sphere for the last decades, there emerged the society that has not yet been able to express itself in meaningful ideals and values or determine the vector of its own spiritual development. Such a society is extremely unstable to external destructive influence, especially of information nature.

The range of risks of information nature is extremely wide: from information deprivation of citizens when people lack truthful, vital information and are provided with deliberate misinformation - to violation of non-disclosure principles when dealing with confidential information. Discreditation of the state, its political goals, and the means of their realization by the media is an information threat as well. Therefore, the problem is to develop some effective strategies of protection and restriction, first of all, for the modern national state. This process requires development of public consciousness protection system for the Russian citizens.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual state of modern Russian society is extremely unstable, therefore there remains a risk of destructive information impact. The main reasons are mutual alienation of society and state; mass political indifference of the population, the lack of patriotism; weakening of social solidarity and its consequences - atomization of society; unformed civil society and civil disappointment in various political forces.

Despite this fact, the Russian society still has a sufficient spiritual potential, the source of which is the wealth of historically developed national culture, its humanistic orientation, spiritual and moral potential. However, Russia needs a new system of spiritual values, which would reflect changes in the material and practical life of society and preserve the traditional values of the Russian people and the united peoples of Russia. It is no exaggeration to say that the restoration of a stable spiritual life, preservation of its core values and worldview is one of the main conditions for survival of the Russian society in the new historical conditions associated with globalization of the information sphere.

The spiritual sphere of modern Russian society is one of the main objects of destructive information impact, therefore it becomes an important aspect of national security. In this regard, it is necessary to form an effective system, aimed at timely identification and repulse of information threats in the spiritual sphere. This system should be modern and consider the new geopolitical realities. It should be aimed at strengthening geopolitical rivalry in spiritual space, its functioning being oriented at priority of national interests.

The strategy of limiting information risks involves regulation of the media and the formation of appropriate legal framework. These tasks cause certain difficulties within democratic legal systems since they affect freedom of the press and journalistic activities. Equally, limiting information risks is associated with monitoring of bloggers and social networks. All that violates civil rights and freedoms. Therefore, the strategy of limiting information risks should include

not only measures of legal nature implemented by the state, but also social reflection on the principles of transparency, borders, and mechanisms of its observance focused on protection of individuals from the destructive information impact.

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