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THE ROLE OF THE COMMANDER IN COMBATING FAKE NEWS IN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

We are currently going through an interesting stage of re-establishing society on new principles with rules, ideologies, restrictions and perspectives still fluid. The history shows us that in the medium and long term, the current stage will undoubtedly be a step towards evolution and progress but for contemporaries, the current challenges can be debilitating, from the perspective of the confusing social environment, enhanced especially by the explosion of information sources. It thus become obvious the need to identify and implement solutions to combat mental contamination, especially within the structures of the public order and national defense systems and the first direct filter is the direct driver. The modern leader's duties must urgently include a dedicated set of acquisitions to identify, control and minimize the impact of fake news, as well as develop communication with subordinates to a level that protects them from psycho-somatic disorders inherent in certain types of missions.

Keywords: Psychological contamination, critical thinking, influencing, clickbait

The current frame of resetting society underlines the importance of implementing a set of rules to identify and minimize the negative effects of disinformation, especially in the area of the national defense and public order systems. The series of new type crises recently crossed, have revealed as clearly as possible a series of vulnerabilities, starting from personal, group, community level, going to the organization of important mechanisms of states (educational systems, medical, military and public order etc).

We already know that all people's actions are motivated either by fear or greed so fluid entities with hostile interests can benefit from these psychological constants. We have repeatedly demonstrated for some time that for an illusory state of security we abandon too quickly the ideals of the individual. Against the background of the informational explosion generated by the technologicalization of the Internet, the society is relocated in a confusing, opaque framework and the divergent interests that are more veiled or more obvious, even test fundamental values established by the Constitution.

Recent conflict developments in Crimea, Kosovo and Afghanistan call into question the importance of hybrid warfare, PsyOps structures, social engineering, perception management, misinformation, active on the increasingly blurred frontier between war and peace.

Influencing mechanisms consist of specialized actions of disseminating certain information to the target audience, selected in order to introduce or consolidate attitudes and behaviors favorable to the initiator. The opinions, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of the circumscribed sphere of interests are monitored.

Recognized as an important player in the elite of the field, along with the USA, Germany, Russia, China and Israel, Romania can inevitably become a target for such practices and a refresh and update of self-protection methods for the basic echelons of the defense system it is more necessary than ever.

Psychological contamination is not as obvious as physical one, but it can lead at the individual level to somatic disorders and at the societal level to division, frustration, collective neurosis, generalized conflict. The collective psychological dimension of a defense structure can and must be guided by education and correct information and for this we must be able to convince decision makers to overcome the tendency to minimize their importance and to obtain and involve the necessary resources (human, temporal, know-how, financial etc).

The modern leader should be an excellent diplomat and communicator rather than a fearless warrior. Avoiding overt conflict at all costs is the first option (as it involves much less casualties than any other military actions) and if the commander's skills in a military organization are not sufficient, the intimacy of the decision-making cell must find a place for a psychology, sociology and misinformation expert, with the role of permanent advisor to the decision maker.

In the process of defending against disinformation are still valid the basic principles, such as verifying information from several independent sources and analyzing their credibility, maintaining a moderate skepticism, specific to critical thinking, protecting peers by avoiding the dissemination of information that appears false which they seek to induce. The excess of information proves as bad as their lack, a perspective from which the importance of the competent leader and intelligence body is demonstrated by filtering and evaluating correct, complete and timely data, while eliminating ballast and poisoning. Unethical alarmist messages dangerously combine negativity, sensationalism and alarmism, contributing to the weakening of society.

Global official campaigns against fake news are proving ineffective for the time being; the most advanced project belongs to the FaceBook platform and manages the counterperforming of identifying toxic narratives with a delay of up to a week, which makes the whole effort almost useless. The European Union has launched an intervention in this area of the Code of Practice against Disinformation, requires to giant platforms monthly reports on the fight against disinformation, but the most effective individual means of protection against this type of aggression for now remains the intensive use of logic and common sense.

In the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, the authorities required those who came into contact with an infected person to isolate themselves at home or in an established quarantine unit. Specialist studies on the psychological effects of quarantine show significant increases in the symptoms of post-traumatic stress, confusion, anger, anxiety, sexual deviations, high consumption of prohibited substances. The identified sources of stress concern, as expected, the prolongation of the quarantine period, fears related to the possibility of infection, frustration, boredom, insufficient supplies, inadequate information, financial losses and stigma.

With the new rules, restrictions and ideologies obviously increases anxiety and depression in general (recent studies speak of a multiplication of values at European level by 8.5 times in the last year), decreases initiative, confidence and risk-taking, the effects being long term.

The new order removes the classic structured model of work and education, but the online environment does not involve a rigorous daily schedule, with fixed places, hours and outfits; on the contrary, a flexible, open style, lack of organization and hierarchical control most of them. As a result, both school performance and labor productivity are steadily declining, which should be a concern for decision-makers, in the sense of disciplining and standardizing the proximal environment by implementing guides and models of good practice until the partial and gradual return to previous conditions of closeness and socialization.

However, opportunities can also be identified in the hybrid system, in the sense of intelligent use of the combination of physical presence and online input, better accessibility to the resources of others through the platforms used, increased addressability through modern video camera systems, free and instant data exchange and experiences, encouraging innovative approaches with outstanding results, making the work schedule more flexible, stimulating creativity through contamination with different approaches, perspectives and visions. Like education, defense is a conservative, inert social system. But the future is accelerating, it is impatient and we are urgently needed to find ways to synchronize the intervention force with the current challenges.

In order to excel in the field of public order and national security, it is not necessary and sufficient to have impressive financial resources, fabulous facilities or employees that the big head-hunting companies fight for. It is also necessary to establish ideals and a sense of motivation of members under the command of balanced leaders, modest and prepared in a correct organizational culture. Lifelong learning is not just a find of Western partners, but a way to periodically validate the personality of leaders at all levels.

The team must be attractive, have a meaning beyond the daily missions and that is the role of the leader. People should feel part of an important construction that goes beyond routine tasks.

Simultaneously with globalization we can observe shifting the focus to short-term results (sometimes overlapping the electoral cycle), ignoring a broad strategy in important areas, both in our country and in Western partners. We sense the existence of parallel roadmaps, which turn decision makers into simple operational managers, who, on top of that, are satisfied with a mediocre status. They no longer seek to discover themselves, they no longer dream, no longer criticize, no longer self-evaluate, they do not permanently correctly relate to the future.

The charisma of an authentic leader consists in the mentality, the prism through which he sees himself and perceives those around him and especially the relationship between himself and others. As a natural consequence of the created inner picture, then comes the type of behavior and the way we approach problems. A welded and efficient leadership formula with an authentic culture is the secret to success, along with vision and priorities. And everything starts from the selection system, which should not be flawed, underestimated or ignored.

The current selection system often points to narcissists, ambitious, charismatic people, good speakers, who have only certainties about the future, strongly convinced of their right to reach the top, to the detriment of thinkers who sometimes have doubts, reluctance or restraint. The former will come to influence broad strategies and the lives of subordinates, keeping permanently hidden an egocentrism and superiority through which they will frequently neutralize the individuality and creativity of subordinates. In reality, such people compensate through the exacerbated self-image created an inner insecurity, an inferiority complex.

Carefully observed and through guided questions, a leader displays quite easy whether he is only interested in the power obtained through the position occupied or even pursues serious results and performance. Excellence is achieved through work, dedication, overcoming comfort and mediocrity. Employees not involved with the leader feel the rupture, gradually disconnect, but often they choose to make an internal compromise to keep their job and salary.

We must not ignore the power of the media in our information campaigns, nor reject the hypothesis in which an occult group manages to concentrate the sources of information in order to destroy the critical discernment of society. Directed information can control the mind of the average person, but specialists in the field are obliged to identify, resist and counteract the hypothetical attack by the means they control.

We must understand and be aware that no one is bypassed by the risk of taking on the role of "useful idiot" in the game of disinformation. Originally defined by Lenin (as an agent of influence cheaper and more efficient than the mercenary or spy), the useful idiot has been chiseled in recent decades by refined scientific techniques of social engineering. At present, he fights with conviction for propaganda causes, which he assimilates intimately, without taking into account the flagrant contradictions with reality or traditional values. Schools graduated too easily, but with numerous

diplomas and pompous titles, give him a false sense of self-worth, motivate his claims to important positions and functions, which he receives suspiciously easily and thus becomes an internal element in the architecture of various systems. It responds instantly to any suggestion of the unseen resort that promoted it, it is not uncomfortable, it does not ask questions, but it can argue (by remote control) on any topic in the interest of the overall mechanism of which it is part.

Disinformation is not rocket science. It's something much more difficult.

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