

Igor Nicolaevich Panarin

InfoWar and Authority

The third millennium will differ in essence from the second. In the 21st century the majority of countries will build up their information society. The global leaders will be countries which possess powerful intelligence and information potential. Therefore in the USA, Russia, Japan, Germany, France, Great Britain, China, India, Israel and other countries the closest attention is being given to information, since this has become the prevailing factor in the world today. Info-psychological struggle now is the main tool of the conquest by and preservation of authority (political, economic, and intellectual).

Info-psychological struggle uses special (political, economic, diplomatic, and other) methods to exercise influence on the information sphere of the enemy while protecting and preserving one's own interests and achieving one's own aims.

Info-psychological influence represents teleological creation and the distribution of specific information, affecting by direct influence (positive or negative) the information sphere of another state, the minds and traditions of its political leaders and its people.

Psychology and propaganda are basically forms of info-psychological struggle. At the end of the 20th century, because of global information space, the attention of leading countries of the world to a social information phenomenon has improved rapidly.

Merely the fact of the development of social information is a good indication that the information sphere of the state is functioning effectively. It plays a key role for authority in info-psychological struggle. Perhaps the Americans were the first in the world to realize it. In 1967 the Senate of the US passed a law about opportunities, national interests and priorities. This document determined the information strategy of the US in attempting to establish information world domination by the end of the 21st century. It predicts the results of the info-psychological struggle between the West and communism. Despite its military superiority, the USSR has suffered complete defeat by the US in the information sphere. It has resulted in the loss of political, intellectual and economic authority on the part of the Soviet leaders, and finally in a break-down of the USSR.

That's why the cognition of the objective laws of info-psychological struggle is important today. At the beginning of the 80s the role of info-psychological struggle in the US national security system grew rapidly. Once President Ronald Reagan had arrived in the White House, he put forward his own strategy for national security, consisting of four components: diplomatic, economic, military and information. That was when the world info-psychological struggle for domination in the information sphere began with the use of the newest information technologies on the basis of the coordinated activity of all state structures and transnational corporations.

Therefore the mechanism of the globally coordinated info-psychological influence on the global community with the purpose of dominating the political, economic and intellectual spheres of the world infosphere came into being:



Certainly, the coordinated activity of the info-psychological structures (state, public and commercial organizations) has yielded fruit. The US have become the only superpower in the world. The USSR has disappeared. Reagan's ideas were advanced by subsequent US presidents. The end of the 20th century is characterized by the global financial-credit system becoming the main scene of the info-psychological struggle among leading states of the world. The financial crises of the years 1997 and 1998 testify to it. In the course of conflict in the financial-credit sector during the Asian financial crisis of 1997, China sometimes successfully counteracted the American info-psychological strategy in the Asian region. The US now completely dominate the information sphere and intend to consolidate their strategic leadership there in the 21st century. However, at the same time this American leadership is a source of development of negative tendencies in its own society (rapid increase in stress conditions among all sections of the population, etc.) and at the same time a main threat to the existence of the US as a unit. The most recent extreme incidents in the US (plenty of air and automobile accidents, sex scandals around President Clinton, shootings at schools and offices etc.) prove that American society is today on the brink of a psychological catastrophe. The psychological crises of the nation could cause the disintegration of the United States within the next 10 years.

Here are a few examples in 1998. On March 24th four girls and a teacher were killed and 10 pupils injured in Arkansas by two pupils aged 11 and 13. On April 24th during a party at a school in Pennsylvania a 14-year old student killed a teacher. On April 28th a boy of 14 killed two pupils in California. On May 19th in Tennessee a brilliant 18-year old student shot a classmate in the school yard. On May 21st 1998 America was shocked by the news of a murder committed by a young man in Springfield (Oregon). 15-year Kiplend Kinkel, who had been excluded from school for carrying a fire-arm, opened fire on classmates with an automatic rifle. One of them was killed, 23 injured. Before that incident, Kinkel had killed his parents.

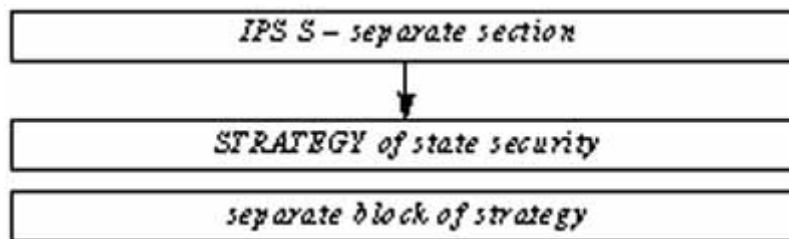
During the process of info-psychological struggle for domination in the information sphere, all spheres of life in American society are under powerful information pressure. And American culture doesn't cope too well with the growing information flow. This gradually leads to the loss of the cultural Authority of American political leaders in the state, and the disintegration of society. And the other countries of the world should draw conclusions for themselves, and not repeat American errors. The information society is characterized by the constantly increasing speed of various information flows, in interaction with the psyche of that society, as it is one of the components of a communication chain. It regards preparation of the people's minds to changes in global information or events, participants of which they are or can be, as one of the prime practical problems.

Revising priorities in interpreting the interaction between info-psychological struggle and authority has presented science with an absolutely new problem—that of psychological security.

Fundamental changes which have speeded up recently in the world require the protection of the minds of the political leaders and the people from negative information influence during global info-psychological struggle. Any state in the world, regardless of its ideological and economic orientation, requires an info-psychological security system.

The info-psychological security of a state (IPS S) is a part (subsystem) of the national security system of a state, enabling the coordinated activity of state bodies, public organizations, political parties and citizens to be organized to ensure the safety of the information sphere in the state, and the info-psychological security of its political leaders and people.

Place and Role of IPS S in a General State Security System



Objects of IPS S

- The info-psychological environment of a state (IPE S) is a part of the information environment of a state and is connected to the use of the information, information resources, information infrastructure to influence (affect) people's thoughts and behaviour.
- Information resources (about intellectual, cultural, historical, national values, religious beliefs, traditions etc.).
- System of creation of public awareness (world outlook, political views, spiritual values).
- System of public opinion formation.
- System of political decision-making.
- Way of life and traditions of the political leaders (as they are the most active people in the country to participate in the info-psychological struggle.)
- Way of life and traditions.

IPS S directions

- Theoretical, to include developing a scientific-conceptual machine, studying the forms and methods used in the course of the info-psychological struggle by the opponent to cause damage to IPE S, mislead the political leaders and people of a state.
- Organizational, to include creating structures, engaging IWS, preparing various materials.
- Permanent work, directed to providing safety for the info-psychological environment of the state, and the psychological security of the political leaders and people.

In connection with the appearance and accelerated development of mass media, the role of public opinion has rapidly gained in importance. It has great influence on political processes in the whole world, is a feature of how the info-psychological environment of a state functions, and reflects the state of mind of a whole country during armed conflicts (Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq-91, the Balkans, Somalia, Chechnya, Iraq-98). That's why seeing the way public opinion is formed is also one of the main objects of info-psychological security. Hence, studying how and why public opinion works is necessary during armed conflicts, on the basis of which it should produce practical ideas for ensuring psychological security for everyone concerned.

Study of the armed conflicts of the second half of the 20th century shows that there was often a concentration of efforts in applying info-psychological influence at a earlier period (from several months to several years before the beginning of actual hostilities) and that this sometimes involved new methods being researched to exert this influence. This is best seen in the example of the American Armed Forces in 1991 in Iraq and in Bosnia. The role and place of info-psychological struggle in the national security system of every state is gradually growing. The leading countries of the world at present have powerful information potential (first of all the US, Russia, Japan, France, China, India, Israel), which can help them achieve their political and economic aims, as there are no international legal norms for info-psychological conduct. In order to keep the situation under control, it is necessary to begin joint work on creating an international legal basis for regulating info-psychological struggle. This work should begin immediately in a UN framework. The problem of ethical norms laid down by the establishment for info-psychological struggle in INTERNET networks must also be analysed.

Thus, it is necessary to draw the conclusion that the prosperity of any state in the 21st century will depend on effective functioning of the info-psychological security system. The author considers that it is time to discuss the problem of legal and moral regulation of methods of the info-psychological struggle at international level (in a UN framework, countries of the G8 etc.)