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EVOLUTION OF PATHOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION'S MILITARY DOMAINS, FROM PROPAGANDA TO INFORMATION OPERATIONS

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This paperwork aims to analyse some milestones of the conceptual history of pathologic communication in the military area, a type of communication successively manifested under different, more or less institutionalized forms, from the oldest and most generalized ones, like propaganda, to more elaborate and specialized forms of unconventional aggression, such as psychological warfare, that became psychological operations (PSYOPS), aggression which has developed later under the broader framework of information operations. The paperwork aims to demonstrate that pathological communication in the military field has been a constant concern of many state and non-state political actors over the years, and that this concern is vigorously manifesting itself in nowadays military operations, which are based on the massive usage of information, on the "soft" means of engagement in conflict.

Keywords: *Pathological Communication, Propaganda, Psychological Warfare/Operations, Information Warfare/Operations, Unconventional Aggressions*

The military environment nowadays possesses a wide range of means, besides the classical, conventional ones, making use more frequently of "soft" means, which are non-lethal, non-kinetical and unconventional. In this research, I will attempt to determine if the domains pertaining to the military field, being based on information manipulation, on forms of pathological communication, appeared in a spontaneous way, if they influenced each other, what the nature of their relationship is, and how their developing process unfolds.

Pathological communication is that form of communication having as objective the deliberate influence upon the will, understanding, perception and capacity of acting for a receptive entity (target), with the purpose to induce its reaction or inaction, in order to support the intention of the source of communication act. The types of pathological communication used for this type of persuasive operations are: manipulation, propaganda, misinformation, intoxication and rumor, all based on lies[1].[7] Within the military system, these techniques of influencing the free will of the opponent, the quality of the decisional act, by exploiting the fundamental needs (survival, information, integration or self-assertion), the social reflexes, by inducing emotions and motivating the individual or collective sub-conscience, even if they appeared during the Antiquity in empirical forms, they gained consistence and became refined, mostly during the last half of the century. The following is an analysis of the main military domains in which the pathological communication has been produced.

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[1] Vasile Tran and Alfred Vasilescu, *Tratat despre minciună. Repoziţionarea etică a conceptului de minciună*, ed. Comunicare.ro, Bucureşti, 2003, pp.133-141.

1. PROPAGANDA

The propagandistic aggression is a very old concept. A milestone relatively accepted by the specialists is represented by the institutionalization by the Catholic Church of the counteraction measures to stop the expansion of the Protestant Reform, by creating the Fide Propaganda College, in 1622. Propaganda was refined and applied massively at the social level, first by Great Britain, in the First World War, then by the Nazi regime (Joseph Gobbels[2] is known to have been an authority in this field), in the first part of 20th century, and by the communist regimes, until nowadays. The undemocratic regimes were not the only ones to have developed such instruments to maximize their social control and to keep the power. Democratic states, like Great Britain, excelled in making use of these techniques. Sefton Delmer is considered to be one of the greatest propaganda men of all times, at least of black radio propaganda led by him in the Second World War.

Afterwards, the propaganda was specialized on different fields (political, military, civic, and economical) being closely connected to the development of the means of mass communication. From it, different branches have emerged: the psychological warfare, the misinformation techniques, the image campaigns, or the mass media confrontations which, in time, gained distinct identities and doctrinaire autonomy, all based on persuasion techniques. Persuasion, seen as the psychological nucleus of propaganda, either manipulating or not, was based on rumor, misinformation, intoxication or other linguistic superstructures of lies and it was used more and more by state political actors as a coercion alternative.

Today, *propaganda* may be defined as an assembly of "persuasive communication actions planned, supported by a sponsor, having as end state the influence and even the alteration of atitudes and behaviours of a selected target audience, to satisfy the needs of some political interests of the sponsor, using false, partially true, distorted information and arguments together with the true ones and accompanied by various forms of constraint and censorship."[3][1] Ostracized from the vocabulary of the Western states to define their own actions by reasons of "political correctness", generated by the compromising of the term during the totalitarian regimes, *propaganda* still exists under different semantic avatars. The raw term is today preferably utilized to name the activities of the undemocratic regimes or to suggest a certain category of communication acts from a historical point of view. The place of propaganda was gradually taken by other concepts, like the following one.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Napoleon was the first military leader who used mass media as an effective weapon during his military campaigns, by a rigorous control (censorship) of the entire French mass media of that time. Therefore, he succeeded to intimidate enemies, and, at the same time, to stimulate the combat motivation of his soldiers. He said: "Three hostile newspapers are more fearless than a thousand bayonets."[4][2] During the Paris Commune, in 1871, more exactly, during the siege of the Prussian troops against the French capital, the first flyer dissemination from the balloon took place. And in 1915 France founded the Air Propaganda Service, with the mission to act the same way in the territories occupied by the Germans. Even if the French seem to have been the promoters of this type of unconventional activities, the circumstances of the First World War stimulated other states also, to develop this type of capabilities. As a counteraction measure, the USA approved in 1917, "*The Espionage Act*", by which the government could repress the points of view which may have influenced, in a negative way, the military actions. Russia followed its own way, after the

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[2] Minister of Public Propaganda during the Nazi regime, between 1933 and 1945.

[3] Călin Hentea, *Noile haine ale propagandei*, Ed. Paralela 45, 2008, p.135.

[4] Călin Hentea, *Arme care nu ucid*, Ed. Nemira, Bucureşti, 2004., pp. 35-36.

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triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution, by creating the Department of Agitation and Propaganda.

Born from another concept, that of psychological warfare, abandoned at the beginning of the 60s, in the last century, because it was excessively aggressive for the mentality of the public oppinion, psychological operations (PSYOPS) are the continuation of propaganda activities in the military field.

Being consolidated by the Nazi propaganda during the Second World War, this discipline was reconsidered both by the British and the Americans, who reestablished special structures like: the British, Political Executive Warfare in 1941, and the Americans, Office of War Information and Office of Strategic Services, in 1942. The term of *psychological warfare* had appeared for the first time in the title of a structure (*Psychological Warfare Branch*) in the headquarters led by General Eisenhower, in 1942. And the first PSYOPS doctrine may be considered *the Operative Memorandum no. 8*, issued by SHAEF – Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces, in Europe, on March, 11, 1944. The document defined and set three types of actions (strategic, combat and consolidation) as well as their type of development. Even if psychological operations were derived from propaganda, the Anglo-Saxons tried to avoid this term with negative connotation, choosing to replace it with *information warfare* (the Americans) and *political warfare* (the British). The French use another terminology to name psychological operations: *local communication*, *actions in the psychological field* or *influence military operations*. In the special Soviet literature, PSYOPS represented a part of the ideological battle, seen as a complex system of actions, used for diversion, rumors, defamation, misinformation and force demonstrations having as a purpose the

weakening of the material and spiritual power of the enemy.[5][1] After the blow back of PSYOPS after the Vietnam War (1964-1973), the revival took place in the 80s as soon as the American DoD issued a new policy, called *DoD PSYOPS Master Plan*, establishing that psychological operations could be carried on both during peace or crisis time not only in war situations. The positive results could be seen during the operations *Just Cause* (Panama 1989), *Desert Shield, Desert Storm* and *Provide Comfort* (The Persian Gulf, 1991).

The American doctrine which appeared in 2003, considered PSYOP (the specific acronym used overseas) a vital part of a wider area of diplomatic, informational, military and economical activities of the USA.[6][5]

This vision was taken over by the NATO PSYOPS doctrine, but with some restrictions concerning politics.[7][11] NATO's definition for psychological operations, according to MC 402 policy, is related to those 'planned psychological activities in peace, crisis and war directed to enemy, friendly and neutral

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[5] Călin Hentea, *Noile haine ale propagandei*, Ed. Paralela 45, 2008, pp.190-193.

[6] On June 21st 2010, Admiral Eric T Olson, Commander of US Special Operations Headquarters, announced the decision to completely replace the sintagm *psychological operations* with *military information support operations* (MISO). The decision was supported by General George Casey, US Army Chief of Staff, and approved by the Secretary of Defense. About this transformation Admiral Olson said: *This will be a complete organizational, training and doctrine change*. It is interesting that a similar attempt took place in The United Kingdom, where *15 (UK) Psychological Operations Group* changed its name, under political pressure, into *15 (UK) Information Support Group*. Because the change was a failure result in extremely high costs the initial title was reused. *Cf.* Alfred Paddock, Jr., „PsyOp" Renamed „Military Information Support", Small Wars Journal, 26 iunie 2010, in http://afpakwar.com/blog/archives/5874 retrieved on 19.11.2010.

[7] ***AJP 3.10.1*, art.0104.

audiences in order to influence attitudes and behavior affecting the achievement of political and military objectives."[8].[8]

PSYOPS which was also called *"the algorithm process of the military propaganda"*[9][2], is, without any doubt, one of the strongest, longest and most spread unconventional means of action today. But its independent, isolated action can not produce the cumulative effect of more non-kinetic action instruments. This vision found its expression in a way, which is complex and conceptually daring, specific to the American army, after the application of the *informational warfare* theory.

3. INFORMATION WARFARE

The concept that represented the basis of the smashing American victory during the First Gulf War and which meant the beginning of a new era in the military art was, finally, the *joint* concept, and it consisted in the assembly of the energies belonging to all branches, in adding the informational instrument and in enabling the efficient use of the new informational technologies and high precision weapons by this entire military conglomerate. The *integration* model was good for the four American military services, but for the newly born concept of informational warfare it was the vital catalyst. The informational warfare was based on integration, on the coordination of separate elements, on the syncronization and synergy of their effort. The practical success opened the way for the informational warfare (IW) theorization almost at the same time with the unfolding of the Gulf military operations.

Information Warfare included those "information operations conducted during times of crisis or conflict to achieve or promote specific objectives over a specific adversary or adversaries."[10][13]. It had been intuited by the

political and military analyst Thomas P. Rona since 1976, which had been experienced by Americans during the Gulf War, in 1991, being officially launched in 1992 and named by the Department of Defence in September 1995.[11][1]

Thomas P. Rona defined the *information warfare* as „the strategic, operation, and tactical level competitions across the spectrum of peace, crisis, crisis escalation, conflict, war, war termination, and reconstitution/restoration, waged between competitors, adversaries or enemies using information means to achieve their objectives."[12][3]

Characteristics of the *informational warfare* emphasized its ideal configuration for unconventional aggressions initiators: of no geographical borders; the multitude of targets; the absence of clear warning indicators; the difficulty in quick counter-attack; using high-performance technology, but also those simple and cheap, largely spread and available; difficult to establish clear, accurate and exhaustive responsibilities by the specialists; relatively low cost compared with the potential results (effects); improved manipulation capabilities; erasing certain distinctions between levels of command; the possibility of denying the government involvement in operations; the existence of multiple gaps in national and international laws and the lack of effective international cooperation in the field .[13][4]

In addition to those five classical military areas from the command and control warfare (C2W, the parent concept of information warfare)[14], namely psychological operations,

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[8] ***MC 402 NATO Psychological Operations Policy

[9] Călin Hentea, *Arme care nu ucid*, Ed. Nemira, Bucureşti, 2004, p. 66.

[10] ***Joint Pub 3-13, Joint Doctrine for Information Operations*, 21 January 1997. It is interesting that the first draft of the doctrine, from April 1996, it was named *Joint Doctrine for Information Warfare,* which shows

that at this point it happened the so called „doctrinaire leap" between the two concepts.

[11] Călin Hentea, *Noile haine ale propagandei*, Ed. Paralela 45, 2008, p.229. Another related concept is the *soft warfare*, which was launched with great resonance in 1991 by the American strategist Charles John „Chuck" de Caro, in *Providence Journal Bulletin*.

[12] Martin Libicki, *What is Information Warfare?*, National Defence University Press, ACIS, Washington D.C., 1995.

[13] Gheorghe Nicolaescu and Vasile Simileanu's abridgment, *Războiul informaţional*, Ed. Top Form, Bucureşti, 2004, p.16.

[14] *Command and control warfare* was defined by Americans in 1995 as "a form of applying of the

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military deception, security operations, electronic warfare and physical destruction (all supported by information), *Information Warfare* included the unconventional cyber media, economic or financial actions.

U.S. military forces have not only been interested in developing a so complex mechanism. Concerning Russian specialists point of view, *informational warfare* included: the destruction of the enemy's C2; radio-electronic combat, radio-electronic reconnaissance, cyber warfare, psychological warfare and use of information obtained from open sources. In addition to the first component, all others would have been used in peace time, the concept which encompasses them being *informational combat*. *Information Warfare* was one of the powerful and resonant concepts that marked the military area in the last decade of the previous century.

4. INFORMATION OPERATIONS

At one point, however, the concept of information warfare has become too "tight", too restrictive for military theorists who wanted to impose another term, more "soft" to define actions in peacetime, crisis or military operations other than war. They have realized more and more that to achieve maximum desired effects, defensive and offensive information operations had to be set up since the period of peace and that is long before the crisis or conflict had started. This type of military action could not be applied but the terminology of information warfare. Consequently, it was proposed a new phrase, that of *information operations*. *Information*

operations had clear advantages, because they could take place continuously and also on a temporal and geographical coverage larger than the *information warfare*. But both could be applied from the tactical to strategic level.

This division of roles, however, raised a semantic difficulty, which may cause confusion. In this report, *information operations* appear to be broader, gathering a greater range of possibilities than the *information warfare*, which contradicts the classical military theory sense, where the operation is a subsidiary of the war. Therefore we assume that the chosen term *operations* from the syntagma *information operations* does not express the level of waging military action but, above all, the fact that most non-kinetic (the used means) and non-lethal (the produced effects) character of information confrontation. Moreover, U.S. psychological operations doctrine from 2006 (JP 3-13) renounced to the phrase *information warfare*, which shows a tendency to permanently and completely replace this expression with the *information operations* (as in "lifting language" of replacing the phrase *psychological warfare* with the *psychological operations*).

On the other hand, as noted above, there is a distinction between *information warfare* and *command and control warfare*, the latter being only devoted exclusively to operational or tactical levels (never strategically), the enemy's military centres of gravity (command centres, communications nodes, etc..).

After a famous phrase, we say that information operations (INFOOPS) were designed as a mechanism of coordination and synchronization of "non-lethal weapons"[15],

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information warfare in battlefield or in military operations, a basic component of this."

[15] This„*non-lethal weapons* "are widely analysed in Călin Hentea's homonym research paper, quoted in its reference.

some of the most appropriate offensive and defensive means in the unconventional aggressions era. This type of non-kinetic weapons were defined by the U.S. military as "special weapons designed and primarily employed to neutralize personnel and equipment, while minimizing the number of dead, seriously injured and unwanted damage to the property and the environment "[16][12]. Their ammunition is the information, having as aim not destroying the alive force of the enemy but winning the mind and soul of the opponent.

Coordinated areas by *information operations* are diverse, some older, such as military deception or the attack and physical destruction, and some newer, that is the electronic warfare, computer network operations (CNO) or perception warfare. *Civil-Military Co-operation* (CIMIC), or in American version, *civil affairs* (CA) and also *public affairs* (PA - former public relations/public information) are also coordinating with INFOOPS, but from autonomy positions.

Invented by American pragmatic sense, the expression offset the extreme specialization on different areas of expertise, bringing back to the forefront of non-kinetic military actions the synergy of coordinated actions, the overview, that of "the big picture" so necessary to tackle a multitude of unconventional aggresions, with an equally large variety of different tools, but often redundant or, alternatively, unexploited optimally. In fact, information operations are the application of the Effects Based Operations (EBO) in the field of information.

Between 1990 and 2010 various U.S. military institutions (TRADOC - Training and Doctrinal Command Center, ARSTAF - Army Staff or LIWA - Land Information Warfare) worked to redefine the information warfare policies. They have redesigned both *the framework* (integrated policy - joint, military policy, command and control design), *the interim capabilities* (necessary military structures, appropriate technology) and *necessary institutional changes* (concepts,

doctrines, training, organization, material resources, human resources).

We have considered that the counter-balance of the unconventional aggressions have to include not only policies of creating information and public relation structures, psychological operations structures, secret services, mass media and research but also the establishment of a legal, management and organizational framework, appropriate for their both offensive and defensive action.

NATO Doctrine (inspired by JP3-13/1998, the first specific American doctrine) defines information operations (INFOOPS) as "co-ordinated actions to influence decision-making of adversaries in support of the Alliance overall objectives by affecting their information, information-based processes and systems while exploiting and protecting one's own"[17][9]

In other words, all the things related to information have been considered as part of the *information operations*. Using this pattern, it has been difficult to determine those military capabilities which were *not* part of the information operations spectrum.

Around 90's, the concept of "INFOOPS means everything" was firmly promoted. The demystification of this idea started in the American Army after 2002. INFOOPS is now focused on integration, not only on synchronization. By comparison, *integration* is "The arrangement of military forces and their actions to create a force that operates by engaging as a whole."[18][12]. For instance, in 2006, the core capabilities of the INFOOPS, according to American doctrine were: electronic warfare, network warfare operations and influence operations, those which had supplied many engagement opportunities, able to "control, interrupt, corrupt or usurp". This doctrine developed influence operations in six other sub-capabilities: PSYOPS, military deception, operation security (OPSEC), counter-intelligence, counter-propaganda and

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[16] ***JP 1-02 Department of Defence Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, November 2010, amended in January 2011, p. 261.

[17] ***NATO MC 422/1, *Information Operations Policy*, April 2002.
[18] ****JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, November, 2010, amended in January 2011, p. 179.

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public affairs operations. Furthermore, the joint-level planners had to feasibly integrate all the above mentioned capabilities in the campaign of the Joint Force Headquarters. The doctrine agrees that INFOOPS firstly provides non-kinetic capabilities for the combatants, as well[19][14]. Outstanding progress has been made in the last decade (quite sinusoidal) due to transition from quantity based operations to effect based operations.

A different approach of the *informational operations* content focuses on the "less is more" concept, trying not only to limit but also to cut down the domains from the coordination of INFOOPS. The obstacles generated by the inner institutional vanities from INFOOPS carried on to a relative definition and, paradoxically to the loss of synchronism in the working process of this mechanism, whose only purpose is synchronism! Consequently, there have been particular perspectives[20][6] (of the services) about information operations, many of them being entirely desynchronized. Different American military specialities have aspired to concentrate on their specific role and also to favour this role within INFOOPS: the communicators from the Air Force focused both on computer network and on providing intelligence to information operations. The intelligence community concentrated on gathering and exploitation information by engaging ISTAR capabilities[21]. In the United States, at least, after 30 years of improper financing, electronic warfare forces agree with

the fact that one cannot decide if the integration mechanism of INFOOPS will be helpful for themselves or will prejudice the future of their status, as a legal pattern of their missions. Space forces have suggested INFOOPS to focus on relevance of the counter-space missions. Aerial transport has kept its own concepts which are nowadays almost forgotten, such as military operations other than war (MOOTW). The public affairs would like to attend to INFOOPS missions, setting up at the same time a limit between them and the influence operations, as PSYOPS, and military deception. It has been difficult also for PSYOPS, being a subsidiary of the INFOOPS, within the doctrine. Consequently, in all the states with strong or emerging INFOOPS, the spasm of this adapting process has been observed, due to the old concepts of the decision-making committee and, equally due to the clannishness military services spirit, to the difficulty, complexity and novelty of the unconventionality or, in other words, due to the battle for resources at military institution level. I therefore consider this symptom as being specific to an "growth disease" similar to the one generated by the implementation of the "joint" concept, at the beginning of 90's, in different services and armed forces. INFOOPS has now a more difficult issue to solve not only due to the bigger number of the involved actors but also to the difficulty to assess the result of their specific effort.

Defining the precise limits of the information operations has always been fluctuating as it has barriers coming from inside and because it has been permanently open to new non-conventional domains. New theories and domains come to light that INFOOPS can't ignore. Firstly, they have to prove their helpfulness in order to be included in the official panoply of INFOOPS, such as

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[19] ***Air Force Doctrine Document (AFDD) 2-5. *Information Operations, J*anuary 2005: 1.

[20] Kelly G. Robinson prejoratory named this manner as „ tribal perspective ". Kelly G. Robinson, *The Death of Information Operations: Making The Case for Non-Kinetic Operations*, research raport for Air Command And Staff College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, April 2005, p.3.

[21] Intelligence Surveillance Targeting Acquisition and Reconnaissance.

other sub-domains of pathological communication previously does.

This project has given me the opportunity to notice that the security solutions based on the usage of pathological communication had a certain pattern of genealogical development by dividing/specialization of some activity domains (for instance *propaganda – military propaganda – psychological warfare – psychological operations*) as it has happened to different sciences, derived from the philosophy common trunk.

Furthermore, I have also noticed that *propaganda,* a favourite term of both policies and security strategies until 1990, is almost absent in nowadays practice; this concept has been replaced by others which haven't been morally used and compromised by their main promoters, communist and Nazi regimes.

I would like to mention that in the chronology of security solutions integration referring the counter-balance of the unconventional aggressions provided by pathological communication, there are two important moments: the first one is represented by the First Golf War (1991) when the USA became the first global superpower after the communism breakdown and felt the need to reaffirm its global supremacy using a new set of informational instruments and, the second, represented by 11 September, 2001 terrorist attack, the peak of counter-reaction against American foreign policy. The beginning of the second moment concurs with another important one: Vladimir Putin became president and started his geopolitical counter-offensive, by information vectors, in a favourable security environment.

Finally, I have also noticed that chronologically, there are some directions when talking about pathological communication: from simple to complex; from independent to joint actions; from military to non-military; from conventional to unconventional; from primordiality of structures to that of the effects; from kinetic to non-kinetic means; and from lethal to non-lethal effects.

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