THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN HYBRID WARS: UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE

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The rapid development of technology has dramatically changed the information environment we live in. The capabilities provided by information technology allow anyone to capture, edit and share information, images and videos in real time, regardless of whether traditional media report any events. This gives everyone the opportunity to become an actor in the information process and potentially distribute messages to audiences of unlimited numbers and sizes around the world. It is worth noting that governments and traditional media are no longer the most important players in the information

space; now, they must compete for keeping their spot among all other actors in the media. Mass media is one of the types of media, the main purpose of which is the simultaneous influence, i.e. the transfer of information to a large group of people.

Mass media is believed to be the main channel of transmitting and reproducing information by such means as television, radio, the Internet, and the press (newspapers, books, magazines). In addition, the term "media" can be applied to organizations that control the above means, i.e. publishing houses and television channels. Since 2013, the mass media have become the Kremlin's main "weapon" for spreading propaganda and disinformation about Ukraine in the world.

Media arise as a result of standardization and mechanized mass production, in particular the invention and improvement of book printing. Mass media in the modern sense of the means of communication, related to electrification and electronics, emerged in the first half of the XX century, namely, this applies to radio and television. In the 1980s, "new media" emerged related to the use of Computer technology and networks, including the Internet. Modern mass media is deeply integrated with computer networks of Web 2.0 technology, where there are many equivalent centers with numerous connections. They are characterized by high fragmentation, which offers consumers a choice - what information and when to consume.

Today, mass media occupy one of the main places in the development of international relations, because it is the main conduit for the transmission of information in society. The main efforts of mass media are aimed at

covering important social and political events, discussion, and critique of various processes and phenomena. On the other hand, mass media may pursue more pragmatic, material goals - to make a profit from publishing articles. Both politicians and some government agencies can sponsor "ordered" materials. In this case, mass media, in search of sensations to raise ratings, widely use the means of propaganda to influence society. This is confirmed by fake photos, articles, and interviews published by the Russian media. The Kremlin's main "weapon" in the hybrid war against Ukraine is Russia and Russia 24 TV channels, which fully comply with state orders. In addition, such TV channels as Channel One, TV Centre, Russia Today are under the influence as well.

One of the main initial conditions of hybrid war is the impossibility of fully establishing a responsible force, and/or collecting and further submitting incontrovertible evidence to the court. Information warfare today is an integral part of modern society. By denying or distorting the facts, one can easily manipulate the population and persuade politicians. When analyzing mass media as a participant in world politics, the following problems can be

identified:

1.The problem of subjectivity - it is necessary to understand whether mass media act as a simple mediator in the reproduction of political communication, an ordinary "performer", or a full-fledged actor, pursuing their own goals.

2.Different degrees of participation in international information exchange - mainly due to the affiliation of the media to different national centers with their political and cultural specifics.

It is becoming clear that today mass media can not only focus public attention on important events but at the same time create a new reality and make adjustments to the development of international relations.

Modern mass media in hybrid war are characterized by the following indicators [1]:

• Speed. Social media provides the ability to spread information quickly and in large volumes. The biggest impact can be achieved in a very short time. A new information environment is a controversial environment in which all participants compete to be heard. Any hesitation causes others to tell your story for you. Thus, the words of one person can be interpreted in favor of another, which contributes to the spread of disinformation and depicts the wrong impression of certain events.

• Anonymity. Anonymity on the Internet allows people to express themselves freely without taking responsibility. Anonymous users can

manipulate the audience by creating visual and textual content, spreading fake information and rumors, or attacking other participants in online discussions with impunity. Anonymity also contributes to the spread of "Kremlin bots" on various information websites, social media where they create posts and write comments that compromise the image of Ukraine in the eyes of ordinary citizens. Such comments have a certain pattern - every time some events in Ukraine were mentioned, there were mass attacks in the comment sections of news articles, blog posts, etc. An unprecedented number of comments from "Kremlin bots" have led researchers to believe that this activity is somehow synchronized. Reports on the same incredible number of comments came from many countries (including Finland, Poland, Germany, USA, UK, and others).

• Large amount of information. The amount of information that is exchanged around the world every day is extremely wide. Some of this information can be critical to a wide audience (danger warnings, traffic information, etc.), while much of it can only be of interest to close friends and relatives of a social media user. With an incredible daily flow of information, tracking and distinguishing between useful information and unnecessary information or disinformation becomes more difficult. This phenomenon is

typical not only for social media but also for online sources of print media. For example, during the events of February-March 2014, the news feeds were full of news, so among the authentic messages approximately one or two of them were propaganda actually and the reader would perceive this information as real, without even analyzing it, because his consciousness was already under the influence of rapid information flow.

Mass media and propaganda of the Russian Federation had been working against Ukraine during the so-called preparatory period, focusing on traditionally pro-Russian industrial regions of Ukraine (which also had close economic ties with Russia), as well as certain target groups in the Central, Northern and Western regions of Ukraine. Among these groups of citizens were: civil servants, the elderly, intellectuals and artists. Russia's presence on social media was also significant (primarily the most numerous and most popular social networks in the post-Soviet space, Odnoklassniki and VKontakte), where various thematic groups and communities were created, as well as pro-Russian messages were published. The Russian Federation began testing and improving its technology in 2010, during internal election campaigns. Cyber activity in the preparatory phase was minimal; however, it intensified significantly during the Euromaidan, when quasi-independent hacker groups such as CyberBerkut acted in the interests of the previous

political regime in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The information media component of the hybrid war has become relevant for all Russian aggression in its active phase. Relying on many years of preparation for the informational and psychological "brainwashing" of Ukrainian citizens, Russia has managed to significantly disorganize Ukrainian society at the early stages of aggression. The Russian campaign included a partial buyout of Ukrainian media (local and national), the use of strategic content (books, series, films, pseudo-scientific and scientific research, etc.), and an active campaign on social networks. In addition, the enemy has used and continues to use methods of electronic warfare, seizure of telecommunications equipment directly in the conflict zone, as well as carried out partially successful cyberattacks on public authorities or facilities critical to infrastructure [2].

In conclusion, it is worth noting that a significant contribution to the system of combating hybrid aggression is adjusting one's own strategy for working with society to form public opinion through state and media-oriented media, as well as proving the country's position at the international level. The effectiveness of any state power is directly dependent on the content and methods of communication and information transmission, both within the authorities themselves, and on the content and methods of involving citizens in government decision-making processes. Under such conditions, the functions of the main subjects of information and communication activities

also change, as social interaction has a two-channel character and is carried out vertically and horizontally at the same time. However, despite the greater efficiency of direct information communications, public opinion in society is formed primarily under the indirect influence of mass media [4].

The activity of such a system should be provided with appropriate legislative, organizational, financial, methodological, and logistical support from the state. The principles of information security are specified in the "Doctrine of Information Security of Ukraine" from 2014 [3]. Accordingly, for the effective use of the media in order to protect the national interests of the state, the following should be implemented: state support for domestic producers of information products, information, and telecommunications equipment, information security and cybersecurity, national telecommunications operators, and information security structures, in particular by creating regulatory, financial, fiscal and other prerequisites for increasing their competitiveness in the global and national markets of information and telecommunications services. It is necessary to establish mandatory requirements for the protection of information processed in the

telecommunications networks of critical information infrastructure, regardless of ownership, protection, and control over their observance.

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