MAJOR EFFECTS OF PSYOPS ON MILITARY ACTIONS

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Abstract: Day by day, the international environment shows that psychological operations (PSYOPS) are absolutely essential in order to achieve success in a modern military operation. PSYOPS are less expensive than other military actions but can have long lasting effects. They could be used for both defense and attack and for other operations during crises or peace time.

With respect to what I previously stated, the results of a psychological campaign are not instantly obvious, they cannot be scientifically evaluated and measured and are not immediate. Furthermore, these effects of psychological action are difficult to assess mathematically, with the exception of those situations when urging the enemy to surrender. Forcing procedures in an effort to produce faster and more convincing results of a psychological campaign may inadvertently lead to saturation, intoxication, and also to an aggressive campaign which sometimes could be too much for both the intentional real target audience and the unintentional one. This could easily generate a boomerang effect with unwanted or disastrous results for the originator.

Keywords: psychological operations, major effects, boomerang effect.

All military actions known as core of PSYOPS have many common features describing not merely means and methods but also military objectives.

Approaching this topic was quite comprehensive and gave us the opportunity for an easier identification of all critical PSYOPS features: acquiring knowledge, thwarting the enemy's attempts at the acquisition of

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knowledge, misleading the enemy to build a database containing inefficient and useless information.

Nowadays, in the 21st century, battles are not won by the army that possesses the most brute force. Success goes to the one that possesses ingenuity, the ability to: leverage, cause diversions, create deception and employ espionage techniques. Another issue concerns the art of the commander to ensure the soldiers' psychological comfort. The idea that supports that previous knowledge of a conflict constitutes an advantage is untrue. It is more important to understand both the reason and the source of a conflict than to foresee it. This is the moment where use of the aforementioned, either INFO OPS or PSYOPS, can lead to advantage or victory.

This change of center of gravity, from tangible area to information area, poses a major risk for all those not taking into account the information systems and their use of data, in their approach of the power and the stability of the National Security System.

The three components of joint war are not typical of a particular military service or branch. .

The area of INFO OPS and PSYOPS is becoming more and more present in modern warfare. This new design of battles takes into consideration The Trinity of Power depicted by Alvin Toffler in his book *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century*.[1] In his view, there are three main sources of power: *Knowledge, Wealth and Violence*. Every one of these sources can be turned into the others. The most important and the most powerful of these sources is knowledge. Rough power, ultimate force is immutable and can be used exclusively for punishment. Furthermore, it is limited by resources. Too much force could destroy what we actually want to defend. Wealth is an efficient tool of power, too. It can be used either to punish or to reward. Unfortunately, it is also limited. Knowledge represents the most powerful form of power or the highest quality of power, as it were. It can be used as punishment, reward, a tool of persuasion and conversion. The other form of

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[1] Alvin Toffler, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century,*1990 Bantam Books, USA

power relies on knowledge and it is not limited. We can always generate knowledge[2].

Deception, intelligence, handling of the community, the art of the commanders to take care of the mental health of soldiers are items which lead us to victory, regardless of the number of the enemy's troops or their brutality.

During modern encounters, *vox populi* is more important than the reality of life. Everything which belongs to human behavior, feelings and attitudes can be changed using different incentive methods and means so that the perception of reality be as the provider wishes. As a matter of fact, the community will have a false sense of the reality of the world and the conflict. This could change the world and its development.

RAPIDITY IN CONCLUSION OF CONFLICT

A continuous investigation and good rationales of both area of interest and area of influence lead to the possession of a useful database acquired in peace time. This database contains information about different current actors, both governmental and nongovernmental, in the area of interest. This information is to be used without disclosing the sources that provided it.

These types of operations can be carried out without a deployment abroad. All personnel and technical assets can be located inside the national border and the superiority against the enemy is achieved relying on knowledge raised from this database.

An efficient deconfliction between INFO OPS, PSYOPS and Special Ops, brings about an advantage at both strategic and operational levels relying on intelligence prepostency. Therefore, if these operations were carried out early and successfully they could prevent conflicts or deter aggressions. In this manner, they do not merely mitigate casualties but also help to achieve national objectives. A PSYOPS campaign that is well directed and coordinated with the PA can shrink to zero a country's appetency for a fight. A good share of INFO OPS, PSYOPS and Special Ops among the stages, levels and forms of operations will generate a

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[2] IAW Alvin Toffler, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century,1990 Bantam Books, USA*

battlefield without human beings. Furthermore, an adequate deconfliction and synchronization of these military actions generated by military structures in a joint effort with both governmental and nongovernmental actors bring about a new type of battlefield without casualties or blood.

If a fight cannot be avoided, an operation by INFO OPS, PSYOPS, Special Ops or all of them, well planned and well performed, would cause considerable casualties. This could have the impact of an entire army and could destroy the adversaries' will to fight.

LOW COSTS

The capabilities developed by these operations are not the exclusive privilege of well-developed countries. Regardless of whether an actor is a governmental or nongovernmental entity, as long as it is involved, it could easily enhance these capabilities relying on its own objectives and the manner in which it decides to apply these capabilities throughout the operational area.

The use of even one server full of untrue information as a source for adversary sensors makes this capability one of the cheapest. Furthermore, it is very difficult for an adversary to check that amount of information and its credibility. In addition, the speed of conveyance makes effects to be immediately apparent but due to a large area of dissemination the source is hard to locate. In other words, it is inexpensive to make use of deception using only one server but it is very expensive to check a huge database on its credibility.

Mobility is provided without any effort. In exchange for a small amount of money everybody has access to the internet or to a mobile network. So, both conveyance and reception can be achieved without effort. All in all, this proves that the info area is no longer exclusively used for military purposes. It is an open source to everyone.

In support of my previous statement, concerning the low costs of these operations, I can provide an example from the Golf War, where the cost of *Burning Hawk Operation* represents just one percent of the entire military operation, but it led to the surrender of 60.000 Iraqi soldiers to NATO. It was possible due to effective PSYOPS. More Iraqi soldiers were persuaded by PSYOPS to leave Kuwait than by any other military operation.

LOW COLLATERAL DAMAGE

The movement of action from the field into an info area accomplishes one of the most important advantages. In this manner we avoid the killing of soldiers in action (KIA) due to the non-lethal character of this type of operation. Actually, this belongs to a new fashion of military actions, non-lethal but with strategic effects. There are a lot of reasons to involve the community, mass media and nongovernmental organizations. Early information, about either a target audience or a military target that needs to be blocked, destroyed or captured, is generated by a very good synchronization and close-cooperation of planners and warriors from IFO OPS branch. In this manner, we have matters with respect to fratricide and collateral damages equal to zero. The force impact was replaced by mental impact to be more easily handled after the conflict than during the conflict.

A very good plan for the pre-conflict period and during the conflict mitigates the effort through the post-conflict period of time.

TRANSPARENCY

The difficulties of proving PSYOPS and the scarcity of arguments to demonstrate or to evaluate PSYOPS make it a debatable phenomenon.

Combined PSYOPS and media operations provide information not merely to local audiences but also to the international community. In this manner, the international community finds the possibility for its own rationale. These rationales can be independent of the winner's position or of the loser's perspective. Definitely, this perspective raises the new relations among the countries, governments and agencies.

As a result what should be understood by actors of a conflict is the fact that these INFO OPS are like an iceberg. So, it is not merely what we can see that causes effects, but it is also about what we cannot realize at the moment. These give more and longer effects than before.

THE BOOMERANG EFFECT

Regardless of the level of planning, command and execution, every action encompasses risks. The INFO OPS planner should not forget that *the*

road to hell is paved with good intentions[3] . An excessively aggressive campaign and black propaganda could have a rather unanticipated effect on both own troops and the community. Furthermore, the enemy can also react in an unplanned way.

The INFO OPS planner has to have a good theme and a proper dissemination area. In addition, the INFO OPS have to target the proper audience in a certain moment, following steps tailored on campaign objectives.

On the contrary, the messages will generate effects on own troops and psychologically destabilize the audience. For this reason we must again emphasize the main role of synchronization of everything that is INFO OPS.

In conclusion, we have to point out the importance of both cooperation and coordination for all INFO OPS board planners in order to synchronize all of these actions.

At certain times, it is necessary to also synchronize the INFO OPS with the rest of military actions in the area and INFO OPS teams with maneuver units.

Everything stated above emphasizes the necessity of having a coordination authority for INFO OPS tactical teams for their sphere of activity (branch) and at the same time a command authority on the chain of command. This can be stated from the beginning of the operational planning process by the commander through OPORD.

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