MURINSKA SANDRA,
PhD in Communication Science, Researcher of Business and Social Processes,
Research Centre of the Faculty of Economics and Management,
Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Latvia

ALEKSANDROVA OLENA,
Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor, Dean of the Faculty of History and Philosophy,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine

DODONOV ROMAN,
Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of Philosophy,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Ukraine

INFORMATION WARFARE:
FUTURE CHALLENGES OF LATVIA AND UKRAINE

The article covers a social and philosophical analysis of essential attributes and multiple manifestations of the information hybrid warfare in Latvia and Ukraine. The combination of forms, methods, means and tools in preparation for and committing hybrid aggression varies depending on the conditions of its implementation, response of international community and regional specifics.

Further, there is a certain general algorithm for launching hybrid warfare. Usually it comprises a number of stages and the role of mass media at each is different.

The initial hybrid influence of Russian media in Ukraine can be traced back to the period following the victory of the Maidan in 2014. At the first stage the hidden information aggression of Russia against Ukraine manifested itself in absolutization of language and confession issues, speculation on economic difficulties, emphasizing the incompatibility of values of the West and East of Ukraine, which are focused on Europe and Russia, respectively. The second stage unfolded concurrently with the Revolution of Dignity. Media purposefully presented a unilaterally distorted "picture" of social disorder and collapse of the government machinery at the time and aggravated the pre-developed stereotypes and myths in respect of the fundamental incapability of the Ukrainians to have their state. The third stage fell at a "hot phase" of the armed conflict. It featured a great number of fake news and information as well as blatant lie of Russian media.

As to the information aggression of Russia against Latvia, it should be primarily taken into account here that the latter is a member of the NATO and European Union, which Moscow is unwilling to enter into an open conflict with, therefore using an arsenal of non-military tools of hybrid warfare against EU countries.

Key words: hybrid warfare; hybrid aggression; informational influence; conflict; mass media; Ukraine; Latvia.

Formulation of the problem. The Russian Federation claims to unconditional domination in the former Soviet Union escalated into the undeclared hybrid war, which involves combination of both military and unmilitary tactics and techniques. Neo-imperialist ambitions of Moscow become real threat to peace in Europe. In Ukraine, such policy has already led to a hot stage of the conflict, which resulted in the military operation in Donbas. In Latvia, which is a member of the European Union, it is limited to the information war. However, in cases, a hybrid aggressor relies on citizens of those countries it enters into a confrontation with. Moscow considers a part of them as its active allies, a kind of the "fifth column", another part - as the local opposition undermining stability of the national political system, and the rest - as "fellow men" filled with nostalgia for Soviet order.

It is likely that there are certain common factors of hybrid aggression and this research is intended to determine them. Under conditions of information war, there is much tension around the issue of a national security system, which involves protection of country's humanitarian space.

Research analysis and research publications on this issue. The essence, content and general trends of hybrid warfare are covered in works by Volodymyr Horbulin [2017], Oleg Bazaluk [2017] and Yevgen Magda [2015].

The most recent methods of informational influence in the context of hybrid warfare were examined by such authors as Stephen Blank [2014], Phillip A. Karber [2015], Volodymyr Mandragelya [2003], Volodymyr Biletskyi, Grygorii Kovalskyi and Oleksandr Shtokvysh.

Specific aspects of manifestation of the information confrontation in Ukraine were studied by Artis Pabryk, Andis

Kudorsa, Roman Dodonov [*2016*], Vira Dodonova [*2016*], Serhy Yekelchyk [*2015*], Olga Lazorenko [*2015*], Tetiana Chernenko [*2015*] and Andrew Wilson [*2015*].

Peculiarities of the information aggression of Russia against the Baltic States in general and Latvia in particular were looked into by Ainars Dymants, Vilson Maili, Ieva Berzina, Janis Berzins, Martiņs Hirss, Toms Rostoks, Nora Vanaga [*2016*], Vadim Poleshchuk [*2013*], Diāna Potjom-kina [*2014; 2015*], Valery Stepanov and Elizabete Vizgunova [*2014*].

However, beyond the limits of scientific discourse is still the comparison of methods and forms of informational influence of Russia in the countries which have already faced armed conflicts, on the one hand, and where the hybrid confrontation was not accompanied with military actions, on the other hand.

The purpose of this article is to analyze essential features and a variety of hybrid warfare manifestations in Latvia and Ukraine.

Presenting the main material. The state and society have always used false information to confuse enemies. Manifestation of present-day Russian propaganda has a qualitative difference even in comparison with the former decade as deception is a pivot of the current Russian military strategy. It clearly reflects the logic of the deception process - intentional paltering with facts, creation of mess in society, promotion of insecurity and distorted perception of general events, problems and processes. There is no interpretation of various or different facts. There are only lie and truth. It obstructs public space, creating chaos in interpretation of specific facts, events and processes. Pro-paganda always aims spreading of needed fallacies with a view to stand against audience, cultivating of terror and winning support of faithful persons. Professor S. Veinberga recognizes that: "In case of Ukraine it is very clear: from the very first day of the Maidan the Russians from the Kremlin say that these events are abetted from Washington and Brussels. The Kremlin-led TV shows make active use of "eyewitnesses" who even didn't take part in this event, … but make comments on very emotional episodes and thus produce needed emotions without any arguments" [*Vein-berga, 2016*].

However, there is still an unanswered question - why are some citizens sensitive to manipulative influence and others are able to make a stand? Which factors, psycho-logical, sociocultural, ideological etc., contribute to the sustainability of an individual? A recipe of countermeasures to external manipulation, and thus sustainability of national policy space, depends on answers to these questions.

Researchers of hybrid warfare [*Гібридна війна, 2017: 84-86*] state that the combination of forms, methods, means and tools in preparation for and commitment of hybrid aggression varies depending on its implementation conditions, response of international community, regional specifics etc. Saying that, there are several fundamental principles of aggression, specifically:

- uniqueness and dependence of hybrid forces, their structure and potential on the specific conflict context, which is called forth by time, geographic, sociocultural and historical factors;
- availability of specific ideology within hybrid forces which form the internal basis of the organization. This ideology is inextricably intertwined with the strategic context and based on sociocultural or religious identity. In case of the hybrid war of Russia against Ukraine, it was the ideas of "Russian World" and Orthodoxy;

- availability of an existential threat of a potential enemy. Its apprehension makes hybrid forces refuse conventional military thinking and a course of action for the purpose of long-term survival. Any attempt of the Ukrainian state to step up military pressure on separatists results in esca-lation of the military confrontation, which forces it to return to status quo as happened near Avdiivka in January 2017;
- flexible balance between regular and irregular forces. As a rule, the first component is much smaller than the second;
- dynamic combination of military and non-military technologies, wide use of hidden methods of fight. They may also include terroristic and criminal practices;
- reliance on a defensive type of operations in the first place, which does not exclude individual offensive actions;
- continuous use of tactics of harassing and draining the enemy's strength, both physical as well as moral and psychological.

Further, there is a certain algorithm for waging a hybrid war. As a rule, it includes a number of phases:

- Non-military asymmetric actions (collection of infor-mation, coordinated moral and psychological, ideological, diplomatic and economic actions within the framework of a plan for developing a favorable political, economic and military context).
- Special operations for deluding political and military heads of a state owing to coordinated measures involving diplomatic channels, media, government and military institutions as well as through feeding distorted or false information, orders, directives, instructions etc.
- Intimidation, delusion and bribery of public and military officials, aimed at their treachery of the own people and negligent performance of their official duties.
- Use of destabilizing propaganda for provoking displeasure of population, build-up of sabotage.
- Establishment of an air-exclusion zone throughout a country, set up of blockades and wide use of private military companies in close collaboration with armed opposition units.
- Beginning of active actions which are directly preceded by large-scale reconnaissance and sabotage operations. The entire possible range of types, forms, methods and forces is then used, including special operations forces, radio, radio engineering, electronic, diplomatic and secret intelligence services as well as industrial espionage.
- Combination of targeted informational and electronic operations, aerospace activities and continuous pressure of air forces coupled with the use of precision weapons launched from various platforms (long-range artillery and arms based on new physical principles, including non-lethal biological weapon).
- Continued suppression of resistance points and exter-mination of enemy units in the course of special operations, expansion of clean-up territories until the final break down of the enemy's resistance.

According to P. Karber [*2015*], the Russian model of hybrid warfare has three stages, the first one implying the country destabilization through boosting the internal instability and conflict, the second one aimed at destroying the respective state at the expense of catastrophic ruining of its economy and infrastructure, the third one targeted at replacement of local authorities with supporters of Russia and "invitation of rescuers". Accordingly, the role of mass media at each of the stages is different.

The initial hybrid influence of Russian media in Ukraine can be traced back to the period following the victory of

Maidan in 2014. It is from that particular period that a so-called index of aggressiveness (an indicator showing a ratio of negative materials about Ukraine to the number of neutral publications) has been gradually growing. A report of Valerii Gerasimov, Chief of General Staff of the RF Armed Forces, which was published in Russian newspaper "Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer", indicates that the above was no coincidence. The General emphasizes: "Informational confrontation opens up manifold asymmetric possibilities for reducing the enemy's combat potential. In North Africa we witnessed the implementation of technologies for influencing government institutions and population through information networks. It is essential to improve our actions in information space, including those for protection of our own facilities" [*Герасимов, 2013*]. He continues that in modern warfare the proportion of non-military and military actions is 4 to 1, and through informational influence even an "entirely well-off state may in a matter of months or even days turn into an arena for severe armed struggle, become a victim to foreign intervention, fall into a vortex of chaos, humanitarian disaster and civil war" [*Герасимов, 2013*].

At the first stage the hidden informational aggression of Russia against Ukraine manifested itself in absolutization of language and confession issues, speculation on economic difficulties, emphasizing the incompatibility of values of the West and East of Ukraine, which are focused on Europe and Russia, respectively. Today it is already known that to agitate against Ukraine in social networks there was a so called Center 18 set up within the structure of the Federal Security Service of Russia in 2006, "thought leaders" bribed, who had an influence on decisions of the expert environment, parliamentarians, politicians, ministers even the president. Any negative phenomena of Ukrainian life were presented as logical consequences of criminal actions of the authorities which, unlike the Russian ones, care about their own interests rather than those of the people. Concurrently, the RF geopolitical project in the form of a Russian World concept was promoted. Such presentation of information fostered spreading of schizogenetic and later openly separatist moods in Ukraine, especially in the Crimea and Donbas which are densely populated by many ethnic Russians.

The late summer of 2013, when Russian central TV channels joined the campaign, is considered the transition from hidden influence to a direct information attack of Russian media at Ukraine (let us recall Dmytro Kyseliov's program with his known "motors are dying, not everyone will survive", as of September 24, 2013).

The second stage unfolded concurrently with the events at the Euromaidan, also known as the Revolution of Dignity. It is difficult to definitely assert whether the turmoil was entirely inspired by Russian intelligence services or the latter only took advantage of the situation but the state of "controlled chaos" which resulted in a paralysis of the military and political leadership and its inability to defend the country from the external aggression absolutely served the interests of the assaulter. Media purposefully presented a unilaterally distorted "picture" of social disorder and collapse of the government machinery at the time and aggravated the pre-developed stereotypes and myths in respect of the fundamental incapability of the Ukrainians to have their state. Russian media tended to call the post-Maidan Ukrainian authorities "junta", "fascists", "banderovtsi" and mutual affronts of TV show participants became standard communication practice.

The third stage fell at a 'hot phase' of the armed conflict. It featured a great number of fake news and information as well as blatant lie of Russian media. It suffices to recall the denial of the presence of the Russian military in Donbas, non-recognition of shooting down the Malaysia Airlines Boeing Flight MH-17, classification of the number of Russian military casualties in time of peace etc. Russian media have however performed their function of engendering mass discontent in the enemy camp, contributed to mobilization and consolidation of anti-Ukrainian forces, gave rise to an illusion of implementation of the "Crimean scenario" in Donbas and eventually ensured holding of a referendum dedicated to establishment of self-appointed republics in the East of Ukraine, oriented to join the RF. Only the resistance by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, volunteer units, support of the civil society, particularly volunteers, and a strong stand of global community prevented the Russian General Staff from implementation of its plans to the finish.

Today, in four years after the beginning of the military activities, the tone of Russian publications and broadcasts about Ukraine is noticeably more restrained and moderate. The peak of tension and aggressiveness is past as it is impossible to incessantly support artificial hysteria. On the other part, the index of aggressiveness of Ukrainian media has also dropped. According to Russian media-metrie data, it came to 3.85 in May of 2017 [*Николайчук, 2017*]. For reference, almost a similar indicator (3.4) was then reported in Lithuania which faced no armed conflict with Russia and had no numerous casualties, damage and hundreds of thousands of migrants from the occupied territories.

As to the informational aggression of Russia against Latvia, it should be primarily taken into account here that the latter is a member of the NATO and European Union which Moscow is unwilling to come into an open conflict with. According to Stefan Blank, Russia uses a somewhat different arsenal of non-military tools of hybrid warfare against EU countries, specifically:

- investment in key sectors of economies of European states;

- use of Russian investment, trade and capital for bribes and stepping up an influence on economy and political elite of western countries;

- bribery of representatives of western media and support to anti-integration and pro-Russian political parties;

- sales of arms and military equipment to influence military decision taking by foreign countries;

- large-scale infiltration of the intelligence service into European organizations;

- establishing links between Russian organized crime and local criminal elements;

- establishing contacts with religious institutions which use unresolved ethnic conflicts and consider campaigns against the "rights of minorities";

- significant support of Russian information overseas;

- massive coordination of cyberattacks on selected targets [*Blank, 2014*].

Researchers emphasize the fact of hybrid technologies existence in Latvia. As in Ukraine before 2014, there was strong informational influence directed at creation of the "fifth column" from the Russian-speaking population there. As indicated by Ainars Dimants, Professor of the Riga University, after the outbreak of the conflict in the East of Ukraine the Russian-speaking population of Latvia got polarized: 36% of the people support the policy of

Volodymyr Putin, aimed at expansion of the "Russian World", 20-30 % focus on Latvia affiliated to the European Union and the others have not yet decided [*Балтия и информационная война..., 2015*]. Typically, Russian media present the situation as follows: the hybrid attack is delivered by Latvia against Russia rather than vice versa. Thus, having analyzed the dynamics of the index of Latvian media aggressiveness, which values grew from 0.4 in 2013, 1.0 in 2014 and 4.2 in 2015 to 5.0 in 2016, Igor Nikolay-chuk draws an absurd conclusion that the above is a consequence of an "order from Washington" and is in no way related to neo-imperialist ambitions of the Kremlin [*Николайчук, 2017*].

At the initial stage of aggression attention is focused on a biased content and interpretation of information, use of a historical memory content, reaching out to values of the Soviet period etc. Due to a geographic and sociocultural specifics of Latgalian region, in particular a significant number of Russian-speaking people living there, it is a weak point of Latvian system of humanitarian security. Just like Donbas in Ukraine, Latgale is very sensitive to ideologemes of "Russian civilization" and is one of the most vulnerable regions in Latvia.

The above should be supplemented with the fact that Latgale [*Латгалия, 2017*] is the poorest and backward region of Latvia and its inhabitants are more interested in survival issues than development of native culture.

In 2012 the Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian Republic approved a plan for salvage of Latgale. 98.8 million Euros were invested in the region, the Latgale Center for Entrepreneurial Activity set up, 47.48 million Euros attracted for improvement of the business environment and 9.07 million Euros allocated for repair of roads. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Latvian Republic adopted a plan for development of Latgale in 2015-2017, within which it was intended to create 818 jobs there and attract 52.18 million Euros from the European Regional Deve-lopment Fund for renovation of the neglected territories.

The state invests in Latgale also for fear of this territory potentially becoming an epicenter of instability. More than a half of its inhabitants are the Russians (including Old Believers who had settled there as long ago as in the 17th century), the Poles, the Byelorussians, the Ukrainians and the Lithuanians.

Though the Latgalians inhibiting the eastern part of Latvia are officially considered the Latvians, they differ from the latter in both religion and language. If the prevailing religion in other parts of the country is Lutheranism, the Latgalians are Catholics.

To date the state legislation of Latvia declares maintenance, protection and development of the written Latgalian language as a variant of the Lettish language. The Latgalian language is taught in the Latvian and Daugavpils Universities as well as in the Rezekne Higher School. It is not however learnt in schools, neither is it used in the state sector.

The Latvian media space is diverse and saturated. Media content is available mainly in the Latvian and Russian language, corresponding with the nation's ethnic composition. Media content in the Russian language is created by media which is registered in Latvia, as well as media from Russia which is available in Latvia. The Latvian media space is characterized by not only the availability of content in two languages, but also their differences for Latvian and Russian speaking target audiences. These differences in content have developed and have existed since the renewal of Latvia's independence, and this provides the basis for academics and media experts to speak about two information spaces as a long-term problem within Latvian society [*Šulmane, 2006*].

Media researcher Signe van Zundert stresses that the content of Russian media is threatening all three Baltic States: "Media is not only content - media shapes reality and fosters a sense of belonging to a community. If the average media-user in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania does not find a locally produced media outlet that satisfies, then the likelihood of turning to Russian media is large. Today, both TV and online audiences are continuously exposed to biased information from Russia" [*Van Zundert, 2016*].

The study on Latvian national security also concludes that the Latvia's media space has to be strengthened: the Russian media definitely influence Latvia, especially in relation to the Russian-speaking audience, but the scope of its influence does not exceed 40% of the population. The most effective way to reduce the influence of Russian media is to strengthen the Latvia's media space and look for ways to keep in touch with all Russian-speaking residents in Latvia [*Bērziņa, 2016*].

Consideration should be also given to the media market of Latvia. The local media market in Latvia is stable, especially among the printed communication tools. In each region of Latvia there are local newspapers issued two or three times a week with the number of copies 5000-6000. Among the regions of Latvia, there are differences among newspaper systems; for example, in the Latgalian region several newspapers are issued in two languages - Latvian and Russian, having an identical content. It is defined by the region's multi-ethnical environment. The local media market consists mostly of newspapers which encompass local towns and the nearest rural territories [*Murinska, 2013: 52*].

Conclusions

Strategic communications gained ground not only due to spreading Russian fake news within the context of certain actual events, but also aiming communication on issues important for the whole world, such as political elections in the countries which are leaders of the global society, natural and technogenic disasters etc., in public space. As Russia had annexed the Crimea and begun supporting Ukrainian separatists, the concept of "hybrid war" which describes Russia's strategy in this conflict, materialized in everyday practice. Latvia, in view of its history and geopolitical situation, also faces hybrid informational influ-ence, although it has different performance and variants.

The main task of national media policy both in Ukraine and Latvia is to achieve sustainability and fidelity of their own media landscape. Mass media play a fundamental role in ensuring humanitarian security of Latvia. A strategic objective of mass media is not only to protect social environment but also give rise to the development of culture and spirituality, spreading of democratic values, streng-thening of the Latvian language, securing stability in socio-political environment.

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Мурінска Сандра,
доктор комунікаційних наук, науковий співробітник
Центру дослідження підприємницьких та соціальних процесів
факультету економіки та менеджменту,
Технологічна академія, м. Резекне, Латвія

Александрова Олена,
доктор філософських наук, професор, декан Історико-філософського факультету,
Київський університет імені Бориса Грінченка, Україна

Додонов Роман,
доктор філософських наук, професор, завідувач кафедри філософії,
Київський університет імені Бориса Грінченка, Україна

ІНФОРМАЦІЙНА ВІЙНА: МАЙБУТНІ ВИКЛИКИ ЛАТВІЇ ТА УКРАЇНИ

У статті здійснений соціально-філософський аналіз сутнісних ознак і різноманітності проявів інформацій-
ної гібридної війни в Латвії та Україні. Комбінація форм, методів, засобів, інструментів при підготовці та здійсненні
гібридної агресії варіюється в залежності від умов її проведення, реакції міжнародної спільноти, регіональних
особливостей.

Крім цього, існує певний загальний алгоритм розгортання гібридної війни. Зазвичай він включає декілька
стадій, і роль засобів масової інформації на кожній з цих стадій є різною.

В Україні початок гібридного впливу з боку російських ЗМІ може бути зафіксований після перемоги Майда-
ну 2004 року. На першій стадії прихована інформаційна агресія Росії проти України проявлялася в абсолюти-
зації мовної і конфесійної проблем, спекуляції на тему економічних труднощів, підкресленні несумісності цінно-
стей Заходу і Сходу України, орієнтованих, відповідно, на Європу та Росію. Друга стадія розгортається пара-
лельно з Революцією Гідності. На цій стадії ЗМІ цілеспрямовано подають однобічно викривлену "картинку"
суцільного безладу, руйнації державного апарату, поглиблюють сформовані раніше стереотипи і міфи про
принципову неспроможність українців мати свою державу. Третя стадія припадає на "гарячу фазу" збройного
конфлікту. Її характерною рисою є величезна кількість фейкових новин та інформації та відверта брехня
російських ЗМІ.

Щодо інформаційної агресії Росії проти Латвії, то тут слід, насамперед, враховувати, що остання є членом
НАТО і Європейського Союзу, з якими Москва не бажає вступати у відкритий конфлікт, тому проти країн Євро-
союзу Росією використовується арсенал невійськових інструментів гібридної війни.

Ключові слова: *гібридна війна; гібридна агресія; інформаційний вплив; конфлікт; ЗМІ; Україна; Латвія.*

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