GEOPOLITICS AND INFORMATION WARFARE

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ABSTRACT: The emergence of an information society has led to a revision of old positions in politics in general and geopolitics in particular. The article is devoted to the analysis of the basic qualitative changes reflecting the new conditions and the content of geopolitical competition in the information society. The main reasons why the threat of information and psychological confrontation in the geopolitical space should be taken seriously.

Keywords: *geopolitics, information expansion, information aggression, information warfare.*

For any state, the state of its political relations with other states is a determining factor for internal stability and security. Politics as a line of work is an important mean of external influence that can take the form of aggression and lead to a political undermining of the power of the aggrieved state, the destruction of its military and economic potential, and even to the complete or partial separation of the entities and territories, its constituents. The standardization of architectural principles of construction, equipment and software of personal computers, high mobility of software and several other features determine the relatively easy access of a professional to the information contained in the information system. If the information resources are used by a group of users, it may be necessary to restrict access to the information of different users.

Since information technologies are developing rapidly and spreading in all spheres of human life, so information is increasingly becoming a strategic resource of the state, productive power and expensive goods. This causes the desire of states, organizations and individuals to gain benefits of taking possession of information that is not available to their opponents, as well as damaging the opponent's information resources and protecting their own [1,2,3].

In terms of intensity, scale and means used, the following terms should be distinguished: information expansion, information aggression and information warfare.

The severity of interstate information warfare can be observed in the defense matters, the highest form of which is information wars nowadays. We observe it ourselves in our country. The issue of information confrontation at the level of organizations and individual citizens is equally distressing. This is evidenced by numerous attempts by cybercriminals to gain control over computer technology and information for material benefit [1, p. 258].

The confrontation of the state in the field of information technology, the desire of the attackers to misuse information resources, the need to ensure the rights of citizens in the information sphere, the presence of many accidental threats cause the urgent need to protect information in computer systems, which are the material basis of informatization of society.

It can be argued that in the information sphere, aggression escalates into war if one of the parties of the conflict begins to use information weapons against its opponents. This criterion makes it possible to distinguish from all the diversity of processes and phenomena occurring in the information society.

Information warfare is the highest level of information warfare aimed at outbreaking socio-political, ideological, as well as national, territorial, and other conflicts between states, peoples, nations, classes, and social groups through the widespread use of information violence tools and methods.

With the advent of the information society era, the geopolitical picture of the world has changed dramatically. First and foremost, information and information technologies have become a major resource in the information society, which have displaced or reduced the importance of strategic resources such as natural resources, populations, territories, etc.

With the advent of global telecommunication networks, the factor of relative openness or closedness of continental and maritime powers has changed, as well as the factor of remoteness and

reach. Information can now be transmitted over open telecommunications systems almost instantaneously, thus, in an information society, territories with underdeveloped network infrastructure may be more distant from public life and civilization than islands in the Pacific equipped with satellite systems. The level of development of network technologies, their integration into different spheres of public life, the concentration of nodes of network infrastructure and other network resources in one area and their lack in others always leads to industrial, economic, cultural backwardness and general regression of territories and states located away from information flows.

Studying who actually controls information flows and network infrastructures by channeling them across different territories may suggest the idea of dividing all states in the information space into those with information and network technologies and those without communication in in this area and dependent on the orientation of the information policy of the dominant states in the information space, which inevitably leads to the infringement of the national interests of the states with less information potential. Such states in the information and psychological sphere are almost colonially dependent on the states-owners of networks and technologies, which allows to speak about the origin in the information society of the processes of division of territories into colonies and metropolises, the processes of modern information neo-colonialism [2, p. 315].

With the emergence of information and telecommunication networks, borders between states have become transparent for the main resource of the information society that is information. The emergence of transnational provider corporations has transformed their relationship from traditional to geopolitical. The emergence, along with the traditional types of political, economic and armed confrontation of information and psychological wars, markedly changed the military-strategic balance that had developed in the post-World War II world and led to a reassessment of the damage caused by conventional weapons, and, consequently, to the reassessment of military-political potential, which is an important geopolitical category [3,4].

The formation of the information society has led to a revision of the old positions in politics in general and in geopolitics in particular. The main qualitative changes reflecting the new conditions and the content of geopolitical competition in the information society are the following [3,4,5]:

1. Expansion of the concept of geopolitical space and space of geopolitical competition itself. In the information society, the geopolitical space is taking on a full dimension, including the space of information and psychological relations of modern society.

The struggle of geopolitical actors, their alliances and coalitions to achieve the informational advantage of acquiring more advanced information resources, which open up better opportunities to control the information resources of rivals in this struggle, becomes the main focus of geopolitical competition and significantly changes its nature.

2. Changes in the evaluation of strategically important resources. Information resources of the information society, including information flows, information and telecommunication networks and objects of their infrastructure, as well as sources that generate information or provide it with new quality in the process of analysis and processing (e.g. research portals centers with high intellectual potential), is the most important strategic resource for any subject of geopolitical competition, for the possession of which the geopolitical struggle, which results in gaining benefit be one subject and loss for the others, which affects the state of their safety.

3. Changes in the selection and evaluation of traditional allies and opponents in the geopolitical struggle. As a result of a change in the hierarchy of strategically important resources for the possession (or the right to influence their production, distribution and use) of which between particular geopolitical entities. Moreover, competition for the priority of information resources in assessing the power of the subject of geopolitical relations is unfolding, and the role of the geographical position of the states in relation to transport communications and mineral resources is emerging, as well as the interests and strategies of their achievement in the "maritime" and "continental" states that were pursued in the former the geopolitical picture of the world is the opposite of goals, converging and becoming virtually identical, enabling them to successfully overcome these differences and join alliances and coalitions. In an information society, the choice of traditional allies and opponents in the geopolitical struggle depends not on their island or continental location and the predominant role of maritime or land communications in the movement of human resources and material assets, but on the level of development of information resources and their compatibility (opportunities common goals), as well as the compatibility of national ideologies with their improvement and further development. At the same

time different states can act as a coalition in the information and psychological struggle, pursuing common geopolitical goals.

4. New subjects of geopolitical competition (virtual coalitions). In addition to the traditional subjects of geopolitical competition, that are acting at the global and regional levels of states and various international coalitions in the information and psychological space, fundamentally new centers are involved in the geopolitical struggle – virtual alliances and coalitions, that consist of states, transnational corporations, media holdings participating on the equal basis, whose scope of activity is global (covers large territories), and the results of the activities may affect the policies of states and their coalitions at the international level. However, state sovereignty, its own territory and population is not a prerequisite for the subject to participate in geopolitical competition, and this significantly differentiates the information society from the industrial one.

5. The possibility of a conflict-free combination of cooperation and confrontation in geopolitical relations. Geopolitical competition was carried out within a single geographical space and resources distributed within it. In these circumstances, it was practically impossible to combine allied relations and competitive struggle between allies without internal contradictions. As a result of competition, they were carried out secretly, often leading to the collapse of the union (coalition).

The information (informational and psychological) sphere with its intensively developing processes, in which some states increase their information potential and others lose it (as information, as well as money, has high mobility and concentrates where its turnover and implementation creates the most favorable conditions), creates many independent directions and varieties of social relations. For geopolitical subjects, the desire to control these social relations and processes (which is a prerequisite for achieving excellence in ф part of the information and psychological sphere) may cause geopolitical competition to emerge on this basis [5,6].

The nature of information space allows different subjects of geopolitical relations to be allies and competitors (opponents) at the same time. Geopolitical entities may at the same time conflict with other entities of geopolitical competition over the influence on one or another part of the information and psychological sphere and in the coalition over the influence on the other part.

6. Changes in the system of assess the strength of the subjects of geopolitical competition in the information-psychological sphere. The aggregate power of objects of geopolitical relations in the informational and psychological sphere is estimated by the following categories:
- ability to control own segment of information space;
- the ability to effectively compete within the information field;
- the ability to expand the sphere of its influence in the information space.

The ability to control one's own segment of the information space is conditioned by the presence of enough information (intellectual and scientific-technical) potential, which ensures the independence and sustainable development of the national segment of the information space for the subject.

In the past, geopolitical conflicts have been arising around the physical and military-political division and redistribution of the world and its individual regions and, accordingly, have been gaining a form of armed, military-political, or ideological, with military preparations for confrontation. Nowadays the main battle for the spheres of influence is conducted in the informational and psychological sphere by special latent methods and means. The power of a geopolitical subject, in addition to its information resources, possession of information weapons, and practical experience of its use, includes the potential to reflect information-psychological aggression, which includes the mental health of society and factors that link the information society into a single socio-cultural whole – national awareness, national ideology and a clear, consistent and effective information policy.

7. Information and psychological influence as a way to ensure geopolitical balance. Informational confrontation implemented in the form of informational and psychological operations. The main tool of ensuring a geopolitical balance in the modern multipolar world that has reached the stage of building an information society.

8. Information expansion. Traditionally, expansion in geopolitics has been understood primarily as territorial acquisitions and establishment of military-political spheres of influence, as well as activities in this area (expansion policy). Today, expansion is a continuous political process aimed at many objects and, as a result, conflicts of interest give rise to a complex set of diverse conflicts. The so-called "peaceful" expansion is carried out by many states and their groups in relation to each other, so we can talk about their "interpenetration" or, in other words, the formation of a complex of

interdependencies and contradictions (for example, providing information supremacy). The intra-coalition expansion is periodically accompanied by "voluntary" mutual concessions of the parties, although their overall balance, of course, contributes to the strongest of them.

9. Neo-colonialism of the information society. An important feature of information and psychological expansion of the subjects of geopolitical competition is the so-called information and psychological neo-colonialism, which divides all countries and regions of the world into subjects, dominant in the information and psychological space and are sources of expansion, and subjects, who do not possess the necessary information resources, technologies and developed information and telecommunications infrastructure and are therefore information dependent on the dominant entities. [7,8]

It is seen that the concept of information confrontation in the geopolitical space includes the whole spectrum of conflict situations in the information and psychological sphere - from interpersonal conflicts to open confrontation of social systems. Information psychological warfare is definitely one of the types of information warfare. There are several main reasons why the threats of information and psychological confrontation in the geopolitical space should be taken seriously and their laws and conditions of development carefully studied [9, p. 198]:

- first, modern wars are increasingly becoming psychological and reminiscent of a large-scale PR company, and their own military operations are gradually sidelined and play a well-defined and limited role, given to them in the overall scenario of a military company;

- secondly, modern technologies of psychological combat can inflict no less damage on the enemy than an armed attack, and information weapons built on the basis of technology of psychological influence have a much greater penetrating and selective ability than modern systems of precision weapons;

- thirdly, in international politics they are displaced from political practice or replaced in it by other, more influential forms of political regulation than war in general and military actions in general;

- fourth, there is a need to emphasize the high social dangers of some contemporary organizational forums and technologies of information and psychological influence that are used for political purposes.

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