

## METHODS OF PREPARING AND CONDUCTING MODERN HYBRID WARS.

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**ABSTRACT:** The analysis of the conduct of wars and armed conflicts shows that confrontation in the military sphere is increasingly moving into the verbal, i.e. informational space. Information warfare implements asymmetric solutions and involves special measures. Destructive influence on the object is also achieved by carrying out informational and psychological operations directed against a person, a group, society and the state and affect their moral and emotional stability, as well as decision-making motives. Such influence is achieved through modern electronic means of communication and mass information. Based on the example of Ukrainian-Russian relations, the article examines the goals of information and psychological warfare, as well as the methods and models of influence used today.

**KEYWORDS:** *information warfare, information confrontation, disinformation, psychological impact, information attack*

### Introduction

The modern world is characterized by systemic instability, imbalance and chaos. Qualitatively new dangers and threats of a global scale were added to the challenges and threats of the "Cold War" era. Almost all military conflicts of the late 20th and early 21st centuries did not develop and proceed according to the classical schemes of military art. Military actions in the East of Ukraine and the analysis of the situation preceding these events allowed us to conclude that Ukraine was faced with a sophisticated form of war, in which informational aggression via informational influence takes place before the capture of territories.

The analysis of the conduct of local wars and armed conflicts shows that confrontation in the military sphere is increasingly moving into the verbal, i.e. informational space [1-4]. Information warfare implements asymmetric solutions and involves special measures. Destructive impact on the object is also achieved by conducting informational and psychological operations (IPO), which are directed against a person, group, society and the state and affect their moral stability, emotions and decision-making motives.

Modern war (hybrid war) is increasingly becoming a war to defeat and destroy the enemy's consciousness and consolidate the consciousness of the population of one's own state. Ukraine, unfortunately, became an example of such a situation. It is the object of a well-organized and planned information war on the part of the Russian Federation. Therefore, the issue of identifying and counteracting the informational-psychological impact (IPI) on the object (person, group, society and state) is relevant right now.

It should be taken into account that even before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia tried to occupy the Ukrainian information space and did everything to distort information about the European Union, about the European integration and NATO, in order to bombard Ukrainians with false historical facts about Ukraine and Russia. In fact, it uses the Ukrainian space to divide society and

## **Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)**

implement the Kremlin's plans for Ukraine, namely political and cultural expansion. At the same time, the Kremlin used such methods as follows [5,6]:

- imposition of opinions about the inability of the current military-political leadership of Ukraine to manage the country and make rational decisions, which leads to unjustified casualties among the forces of the operation of the joint forces;
- creation of the idea that business interests are more important for the Ukrainian elite than the interests of the state and events in the East;
- dissemination of the views that the Ukrainian armed forces in the East of Ukraine are demoralized and unable to conduct combat operations, and their personnel do not trust the military leadership;
- imposition of the idea that that Ukraine cannot survive without Russia, its economic and industrial potential;
- support for the topic of Malaysian Boeing with the accusation of Ukraine in concealing the facts, shelling by the forces of the combined forces operation of the area of the airplane accident.

The target audience of the Kremlin's IPI was the internal population of Russia and Russian-speaking diasporas abroad, the population of Ukraine (including the audience of the occupied regions of Donbas and Crimea), the audience of Western countries, and the audience of states close to Russia in terms of political views.

Therefore, it is very important to take into account Russia's intentions and its information potential, which consists of very powerful mass media.

In addition, the authors remind the readers that the history of relations between Ukraine and Russia is a history of a constant struggle, which has been going on for many centuries. For Ukraine it is a matter of protecting its independence, whereas for Russia it is a matter of making slaves of Ukrainians

### **Main part**

In the era of globalization processes, the mass media confidently occupied a prominent place among the means of communication. Globalization itself is a phenomenon, which would not be possible without the activity of modern electronic means of communication and mass media that cover the entire planet.

Mass media play almost the most important role in the modern political life of most states. They act as the main subject of forming public opinion in society about events and phenomena occurring in the world and in every country. At the same time, a reverse pattern can be observed: the more developed the information network of the state is, the fewer opportunities remain for using information for the benefit of any one entity, and vice versa - with a less developed network, there are more opportunities for its monopolization and the provision of information in a distorted or incomplete form.

Now everyone understands that we live in the information sphere and we will never escape from it.

It is safe to say that in such a short period of time, the process of reprogramming society took place very quickly.

Before, certain difficulties could have been experienced, inasmuch as it was necessary to somehow convey information to a person, as people did not always understand it. Today, by connecting to the Internet, you can get any information. The web helps translate any text you have into any language.

## **Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)**

It should be noted that information and psychological warfare is not an action of today. Many methods of information warfare arose thousands of years ago with the emergence of information systems - the history of human learning, this is a kind of constant information warfare.

It should be noted that the main goals of informational and psychological warfare (IPsW), which includes IPO and IPI, are:

- ensuring decision-making and prompting the authorities of the victim (object) country to take actions that would satisfy the needs of the aggressor country;
- undermining the legitimacy of the political power and international authority of the victim country;
- destabilization of the situation in the victim country, provoking political protests, social conflicts, undermining the moral and psychological state of the population of the victim country;
- undermining the defense capability of the victim country and the combat capability of its armed forces;
- supporting the actions of internal forces aimed at destroying or harming their state, including by corrupting the authorities and political elite;
- replacement of the socio-cultural identity of the entire population or part of it in the victim country, altering the national values and foundations of state formation.

At the same time, active participants in these actions are the military and political leadership of the Russian Federation, its armed forces and special services, as well as pro-Russian forces of Ukrainian society and pro-Russian political figures of some countries of the world.

A full range of communication channels are used to achieve important goals: mass media (electronic and printed), television, the Internet, and social networks. At the same time, all methods and means of IPI and IPO are used.

IPI has two methods of influence [7,8]: law and speech. The influence of the word is not in the victorious use of weapons and in terrorist acts. The word itself shows that this type of influence is a painful phenomenon, exciting, thrilling, and affecting the nerves of the people. Nevertheless, IPI should be considered one of the main means of hybrid warfare: offensive propaganda helps to weaken the enemy, defensive propaganda strengthens the morale of the country that has become the object of the attack.

It should also be taken into account that the sources of information danger can be natural (objective) and intentional.

When considering the theory of IPI in the political sphere, it should be taken into account that the danger occurs at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

Basically, the political elite should act at the strategic level, and the information units of the political clan - at the operational and tactical levels.

According to experts, IPsW consists of actions taken with the aim of achieving information advantage in providing national, military, strategic and political ways of influencing the information and information systems of the enemy while simultaneously strengthening and protecting one's own information and information systems and infrastructure.

Further development of hybrid warfare with the advent of cyberspace was developed in the form of cyber warfare and IPsW.

## Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)

Conceptual questions and foundations of the theory of the network -centric system of management and organization of combat operations and cyber operations and the actual consideration of military operations and their organization from the standpoint of military cybernetics were formulated for the first time by N.V. Ocharkov (1977-1984 chief of the General Staff of the USSR Armed Forces) in the late 1970s and early 1980s of the 20th century.

Consecutive, typical component stages of a hybrid war were defined in this concept as follows:

- innovative aggression (cyber war, economic pressure, information and psychological attacks, etc.);
- the use of irregular armed formations or private armies (separatist movement, Cossacks, self-defense);
- official military action or show of force (identified uniforms, weapons, official identification of participation in the conflict).

The IPO of the Russian Federation in Crimea was planned according to Ocharkov 's concept and the system model of the enemy based on Warden 's theory. The basis of this theory is the concept of "centers of gravity". An object with a critical cybernetic infrastructure ("center of gravity" according to Warden) is the point where the object or subject of influence is most vulnerable. According to this theory, if we consider the object or a subject of influence as a system with a critical cybernetic infrastructure, it can be presented as a system consisting of five rings (Fig. 1) [7, 10].

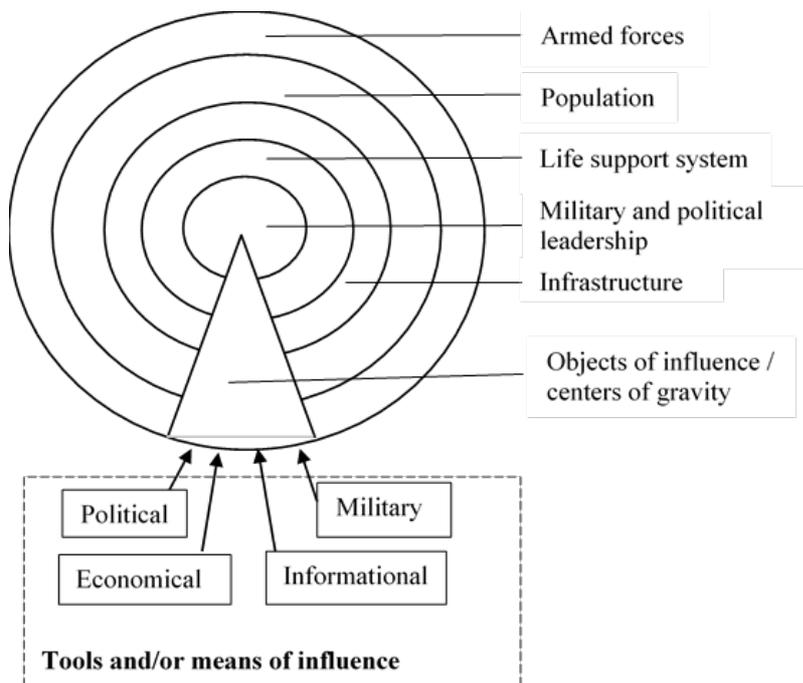


Fig. 1. The influence model is built according to Warden 's theory.

At the heart of Warden 's model is the military-political leadership and national leaders, who form a critical component in the architecture of the national security system and the system and are protected by the other four rings. Thus, the second ring is the life support system, production, electric and nuclear plants, enterprises of various purposes, oil supply plants, banks, which during the war are vital for ensuring the functioning of the military-industrial complex.

**Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)**

State infrastructure - highways, railways, power lines - create the third ring.

The fourth ring is the population (society), and the fifth outer ring stands for the armed forces.

This model implements the "war from the inside - outside" scheme. It should be taken into account that Warden's model works well in conflict zones, when the armed forces are considered by the local population as an external aggressor.

In contrast to this model, Russia for a long time had the support of the local population and significant military formations of the Black Sea Fleet on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which were not perceived by it as an aggressor or enemy (Fig. 2) [7]

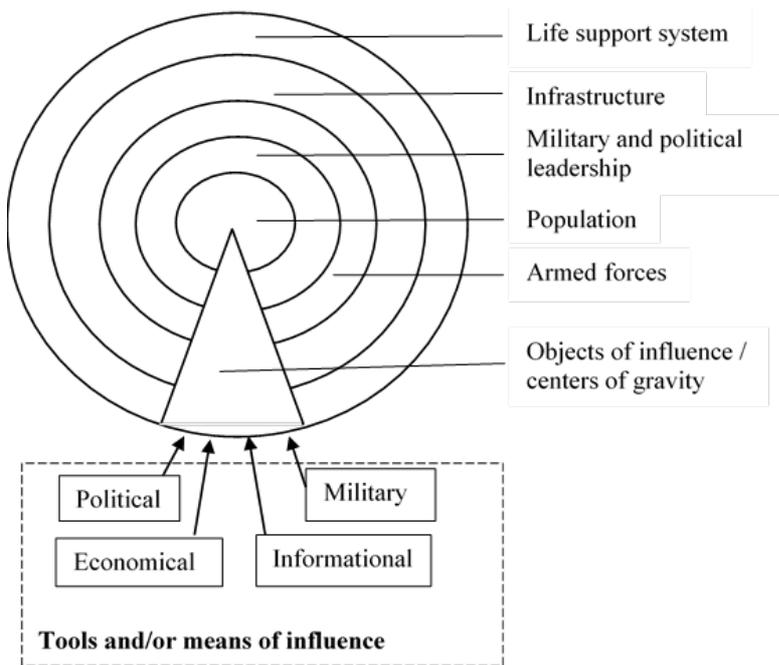


Fig. 2. The influence model used by Russia in Crimea

Russia exerted a long-term, planned and intended influence on the population of the Republic of Crimea with the aim of perceiving the servicemen of the Russian Federation as defenders of the population and correcting the "historical mistake" regarding the accession of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954. With the beginning of the Revolution of Dignity, a powerful influence on the leadership of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol began, and along with this, a massive influence on the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. It should be taken into account that the IPI of the Armed Forces of Ukraine was carried out constantly, for example, the housing issue of Russian servicemen was resolved, and the material support of Russians was an order of magnitude higher than that of Ukrainian servicemen. In addition, every second resident of Sevastopol was connected with the Russian Black Sea Fleet. 24,000 military personnel permanently lived in the city. The military and the Black Sea fleet for Sevastopol are enterprises, work, wages, social infrastructure. The fleet seemed to grow into the city. Therefore, the introduction of the Russian armed forces into Crimea and Sevastopol went without opposition and had the signs of a prepared and planned IPO, aimed primarily at Russians and, on the other hand, at Ukrainian and Western communities. At the same time, the main objects of the transport infrastructure, life support systems and military objects of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were first taken under control.

The annexation of Crimea showed that it was a well-planned and organized operation. It should be noted that pro-Russian organizations in the Republic of Crimea have been used as the 5th column of

## **Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)**

the Kremlin in Crimea for years. They were financed by the Russian government, and their leaders were agents of influence of the Russian special services and actively conducted anti-Ukrainian activities.

All this created comfortable conditions for Russian information and propaganda activities. On the territory of Crimea, television channels and radio broadcasts of Russian channels were rebroadcast by Crimean television and radio channels, and Ukrainian versions of Russian newspapers were distributed among the residents of Crimea.

Through the mass media of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, the Russian side continued to actively influence the information space of the Republic of Crimea. Under the guise of defending the interests of the Russian-speaking population of the region, the naval mass media organized an information company aimed at shaping the image of Russia as the only reliable guarantor of stability in the region. The capabilities of the fleet's information support bodies were widely used for the distribution of relevant materials. With the active support of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, Moscow administration created the most powerful urban cable network in Sevastopol.

Numerous Russian figures actively spoke in the pro-Russian mass media: political scholars, philosophers, religious preachers, who conveyed relevant ideological references.

The Russian Orthodox Church and its controlled Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, as well as various brotherhoods of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, were actively involved in inciting the ideas of autonomism, separatism and Russian chauvinism.

For many years, Russia conducted subversive activities in Crimea and carried out anti-Ukrainian propaganda. Moreover, almost all pro-Russian organizations in Crimea cooperated with various special services of Russia. The Main Intelligence Department of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defense and the intelligence units of the Black Sea Fleet, the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia, and the Federal Security Service of Russia had the greatest influence on the socio-political situation in Crimea.

The tactics of the hybrid war used by Russia in Crimea were also used in the East of Ukraine with some changes (Fig. 3) [5]. Thus, the main influence was concentrated on the population of Donbas. The next objects of IPI were state infrastructure and the life support system. The fourth and fifth rings of influence became the Armed Forces and the military and political leadership of Ukraine.

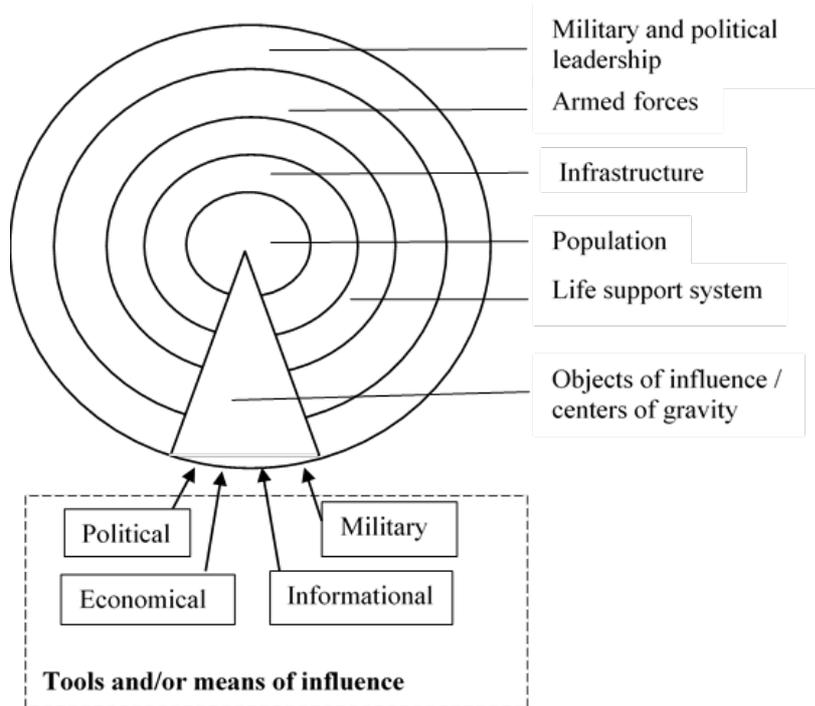


Fig. 3. The influence model used by Russia in Donbas

A feature of Russia's IPO in Donbass and Ukraine was and is the constant search and use of relevant information sources capable of forming the necessary public opinion. At the same time, the main influence was exerted on the spheres of revision of the history of Ukraine and Russia and inter-confessional relations.

To solve these problems, Russia used the methods as follow: [11,12]:

- 1) groups of special journalists (3-4 people), who have clear instructions on how to cover events in the East of Ukraine and work directly for Russian information channels;
- 2) operative groups of psychological operations, which numbered 2-4 people and performed the following tasks on the territory of the occupied Donbass:
  - oral propaganda, including work with the local population;
  - dissemination of propaganda literature and other information;
  - creation of local propaganda groups in annexed settlements, organization and coordination of their actions;
  - favoring the work of the Russian mass media, gathering information and identifying the most pressing problems of the population in order to use this as an informational opportunity;
  - monitoring the current moral and psychological state of the local population.
- 3) psychological operations unit, located near Rostov-on-Don together with the command post of the intelligence center of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Directorate of the Armed Forces of Russia.

Its tasks are as follows [3]:

- collection, processing and analysis of information regarding the current moral and psychological state of the population of Ukraine and units of terrorist and military formations;
- management of units of psychological operations performing special tasks with IPI;

## Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)

- development and implementation of IPO on the territory of Ukraine;
- the use of agents of subversive psychological work in unoccupied regions of Ukraine, who will perform the following assignments:
  - to create sabotage and propaganda groups in unoccupied regions of Ukraine;
  - train local groups to conduct subversive propaganda campaigns;
  - to provide groups with the necessary material and technical property;
  - direct holding of rallies, protest actions and distribution of propaganda materials.

The information situation in Ukraine worsened after the tragedy with the Malaysian Boeing. It was during this period that the Ukrainian media space was able to create a rather powerful information barrier to Russian propaganda. The Kremlin tried to create an informational noise with a huge number of versions around the liner disaster in order to distract the attention of the audience from the real causes of the tragedy and to find the most plausible option for Russia. However, Ukraine has won in this information struggle.

The hybrid war has reached a new level. Information influences are applied more powerfully and purposefully. Thus, Belarus under the leadership of Russia conducted an information operation in the countries of the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan) to attract residents of these countries (mainly Kurds) to "employment" in Germany. The migration crisis on the border of Belarus with the EU countries actually began in 2021, after Lukashenko promised to loosen controls abroad for migrants due to EU sanctions against his regime.

Thus, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia faced a large increase in the number of migrants from Belarus. Belarusian travel agencies issued illegal migrants from the countries of the Middle East with visas for entering Belarus, travel permits, and provided them with plane tickets for a flight to Minsk. Migrants were transported to the borders with the European Union in an organized manner by Belarusian security forces. Thus, with the hands of Lukashenka, Moscow tried to destabilize the situation in the EU and provoke a new migration crisis. At the same time, the mass media of Belarus and Russia carried out directed propaganda about the inhumane treatment of Polish border guards towards migrants.

In November 2021, the situation worsened, when migrants without permission to enter Europe tried several times to break through to Poland from the territory of Belarus.

Numerous investigations confirm that migrants were purposefully invited to Belarus with the support of the Minsk authorities, although Minsk denies this. According to the estimates of the special services of Germany, 800-1000 migrants arrived in Minsk every day. At the same time, Lukashenko said that he will not protect Europe from the molasses of illegal migrants. In turn, the Belarusian Ministry of Defense threatened to involve Russian troops in "ensuring the country's security".

At the same time, it should be noted that Putin is ready for the escalation of the so-called hybrid conflict - a combination of military and other means for the purpose of destabilization, in particular, in the use of humanitarian crises, similar to the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border.

This migration crisis, along with hacker attacks and Russia's ultimatum regarding their security, has greatly strained relations between the West and Russia.

The activity of Russian special services and propagandists in social networks, at least in Ukraine, has long been known. The "trolls" hired by them began their active work during Euromaidan in 2014. After the seizure of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbas, which has been going on for eight years, they waged an active and powerful information war against Ukraine, and since 2020, the IPI and IPO have increased.

## **Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)**

Russia 's cyber war became the escalation of the situation around Ukraine with the accumulation of troops near the Ukrainian borders and the threat of further escalation of aggression. The accumulation of Russian troops near the Ukrainian borders has become an element of blackmailing the world community and putting pressure on it in order to fulfill all the Kremlin's demands. At the same time, the Russian Federation and its mass media declared on all state channels that it was in danger and that all states and NATO personally wanted to attack it. Therefore, it is unclear what kind of danger Russia can be in when the federation itself is the aggressor and attacker.

And on February 24, 2022, Putin launched a special operation against Ukraine, that is, a large-scale aggression against a sovereign state. It should be pointed out that the information war reached a new level. The mass media, as the mouthpiece of the aggressor, focused on the following topics: the defense of the LNR and the DPR from the attack of Ukraine, the de-Nazification and demilitarization of Ukrainian society, namely the protection of the Russian-speaking population.

On the night of February 23 to 24, Russian hacker groups (ART 28, ART 29, Vermin, Sandworm and others) carried out a number of powerful cyber attacks on the websites of state institutions and mass media of Ukraine. These actions echo the actions of Russia, the aggressor in the war with Georgia in 2008, [3] when they carried out cyber attacks on Georgian state websites. But Ukraine's cyber defense worked powerfully, which made it possible to protect most websites and, first of all, mass media.

According to the Russian plans announced by their mass media, they were supposed to capture Kyiv in twelve hours, and completely occupy Ukraine in ninety-six hours. But these plans failed.

Therefore, the Russian mass media began to manipulate the population of Ukraine and the world community that their plans are the liberation of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in full and the creation of the Kherson People's Republic. At the same time, Russian "mouthpieces" falsely cover the situation at the front. They are engaged in praising the Russian military, which inflicts only pinpoint strikes on military targets. And not a word about the bombing of civilian objects and shootings of the civilian population (elderly people, women and children).

They are silent about the fact that the army has a direct instruction regarding the genocide of Ukrainian citizens (Bucha, Irpin, Makariv and other cities). In addition, they abuse and torture the population of the eastern regions, which have been captured and where hostilities are taking place, and are mostly Russian-speaking. Therefore, the thesis about the protection of the Russian-speaking population from the so-called nationalists remains unclear.

Moreover, Russian mass media compromise and discredit themselves. For example, they showed on television how they prepared a mannequin for filming and declared that it was preparation for the falsification of the events in Bucha. However, the film worker, who participated in shooting the film, claimed that it was preparation for the filming of a Russian TV series, where this mannequin was supposed to be thrown from a high-rise building. And this is a repeated situation.

And what can be said about the statement of the Russian media regarding the creation of American biological laboratories in Ukraine, which develop various viruses, and also developed Covid -19 and where the pandemic spread from?

In addition, the Russian mass media put a lot of fakes on the Internet, which the Russians themselves refute. And what are the statements of their television "mouthpieces" about nationalists, humiliating the Russian-speaking population and other lies, that the Russian army does not have a direct order to shoot Ukrainian civilians and that only Ukrainian nationalists do it. At the same time, the " telekillers " of federal Russian TV channels are brainwashing the population of Russia and zombifying their citizens about the tasks of the war in Ukraine. Kremlin propagandists accuse Ukraine of all mortal sins and more acutely present the image of Ukraine as an aggressor and a Banderiv - fascist entity. In our opinion, this is an IPO and IPO against the citizens of Russia and the world society.

Taking into account the methods and means that should be carried out primarily by the anti-IPI units of Ukraine during the period of hostilities on the territory of the state, it should be noted:

## **Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)**

- generating content and counter -information operations that will work for the unification of Ukrainians,
- carrying out a quality check of this information and combating fakes,
- campaigning and propaganda that would highlight the real intentions of the aggressor,
- clarification of the goals of foreign policy and actions to establish peace in Ukraine,
- informing the world community, influential foreign, political, governmental, business and cultural circles, as well as foreign media about actions to establish peace and end the war in Ukraine,
- discrediting the military and political leadership of Russia.

In today's environment, it is very important to study and take into account the mental state, political attitudes of society. Research of public opinion makes it possible to take into account not only the moods that lie on the surface, but also the hidden psychological tendencies of political processes, and accordingly choose such measures that would be adequate to the situation that has arisen. Knowing the state and dynamics of public opinion means fulfilling the basic requirement that is necessary for making the right political decision. [thirteen]

Public relations play an important role in society. Initially, mass media were created to inform the public about key events in the life of the country and power structures, and they gradually began to perform another equally important function - influencing the consciousness of their audience in order to form a certain attitude to the facts, phenomena and reality that are reported. This influence is carried out with the help of methods of propaganda and propaganda agitation developed over more than one thousand years. [14]

To achieve the influence of mass media on modern opinion, people actively use them to satisfy their needs. Therefore, mass media is very versatile and is expressed in [14]:

- informativeness of the public;
- instructions to society, determination of society's behavior;

The results of media influence can be:

- changes in society's behavior;
- changes in society (because behavior and instructions cannot be equated);
- changes in society's knowledge as a consequence of its simple informativeness.

It should be noted that mass media have a great influence on society as a whole and on an individual person.

The influence of mass media can be short-term and long-term. The reaction to a specific message, news, event is fleeting. The complex and constant influence of various channels of information affects the deep layers of public and human consciousness.

Global mass media form a universal, global system of values. For a developing society, building, maintaining and protecting a symbolic system is one of the main tasks. If the symbolic system is destroyed, then the society drastically changes the traditional patterns of behavior, which can have unpredictable consequences. Symbols that form a society into a nation and a people may be under threat.

Destructive influence on the existing system of values in society is carried out primarily thanks to information and mass media as universal channels of its transmission, it can be stated that mass media are not just subjects of influence on mass consciousness, but also a tool through which it is directly

## Scientific and Practical Cyber Security Journal (SPCSJ) 6(3): 1-12 ISSN 2587- 4667 Scientific Cyber Security Association (SCSA)

formed. Mass media create their own reality by forming new myths and stereotypes, often detached from life. At the same time, since such a reality is perceived by millions and even billions of consumers at the same time, it becomes the one that deserves trust [14,15]

So, we can distinguish three main channels of mass communication: television and the Internet, radio and the press. Each of the mentioned types of mass media has its own characteristics that determine the success of its influence on the audience.

First of all, mass media cannot be considered as equally effective tools of information dissemination. Radio, television (Internet) and the press answer three fundamentally different questions and, accordingly, each of them covers its own aspect of a certain event. The radio answers the questions: "What?", "What happened?". Television and the Internet provide an answer to the questions "How?", "How did the thing that the radio already reported happen?" The press explains: "Why?", "Why did exactly what the radio talked about and how it was shown on television and the Internet happen?" Such is the objective "division of labor" between the main communication channels. And only a systematic approach, based on three complementary answers, can give a comprehensive picture of what really has happened.

### Conclusions

Currently the information war between Ukraine and Russia has reached its peak, while it should be taken into account that a full-scale war is going on. Everything that appears in the mass media, in social networks, in Russian information resources, must be carefully studied, analyzed and filtered. In the age of the Internet, it is simply impossible to completely secret certain actions. The information policy of any state should be such that there is no underestimation of the possibilities of informational and psychological weapons, and measures to counter influences that would satisfy the aggressor.

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