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Nowadays, the idea of influence is at the very center of operational planning. Planners use levers of influence to achieve operational objectives: skillful internal communications; deception operations; psychological operations and well-constructed external communications. The primary objective is to influence an enemy audience to legitimize specific strategic objectives. These methods focus on an opponent's inner socio-cultural decay ensuing from a culture war exploited by specially prepared forces and commercial irregular groupings. The battleground extends beyond the traditional three dimensions to incorporate contactless information or psychological warfare to become a perception war in cyber-space and the human mind. A combination of political, economic, information, technological, and ecological influence campaigns creates permanent asymmetric warfare as the natural state of life in an identified operational environment.

This gives the possibility for establishing a narrative that serves as an alternative reality as military strategy, where the support for the strategic objectives of war by society in a country at war, in other words, the legitimization of war, is fundamental to achieving victory. In other words, the success of military campaigns in the form of armed conflicts and local wars is much dependent on the relationship between military and non-military factors - the political, psychological, ideological, and informational elements of the campaign - then on military power as isolate variable. The security of information systems at a technological level and the willingness of citizens to defend their country at a cognitive level are fundamental elements for guaranteeing the security of any country. These tactics involve a notion of permanent war that denotes an equally permanent enemy.

Therefore, one of the main aspects of modern warfare is the idea that the main battle-space is the mind. As a result, new-generation wars are dominated by information and psychological warfare, aiming to achieve superiority in troops and weapons control, and morally and psychologically depressing the enemy's armed forces personnel and civil population. The main objective is to reduce the necessity of for deploying hard military power to the minimum necessary, making the opponent's military and civil population to support the attacker into the detriment of their own country, its values, culture, political system, and ideology.

This is facilitated by the almost absolute freedom of information combined with the general public's appetite for conspiracy theories and postmodern relativism. Combined with social media becoming one of the most important sources of information, the result is a situation in which everything is true, and nothing is true at the same time. An invisible occupation, like one in the informational space, cannot

be considered an occupation by definition like a military one. In implementing influence operations, it is recognized that the human mind is warfare's main battle-space. Information and psychological warfare subsequently dominate post-modern wars achieving superiority by morally and psychologically depressing an enemy's armed forces and population. This strategy can be resumed in five main points:

i. Every available means is used to invigorate the unlawful activity of various extremist nationalist, religious, or separatist movements, organizations, and structures aimed at violating the unity and territorial integrity of the country under attack to destabilize its internal political situation.

ii. Purposeful actions to provide support for subversive forces, both directly and indirectly.

iii. Distributed attack to destroy the country's social and ideological system.

iv. The mechanism of self-destruction and self-annihilation penetrates into the state's internal structure, into its governance system, as a virus does, surreptitiously and spontaneously.

v. The chief target of the informational impact is self-awareness of the population, the nation's mindset.

A significant part of influence operations takes place at a mental level. It is easier for the adversary to achieve its objectives if the society of the state being attacked believes that their country is a failed state that does not care for the interests and needs of the population, and the loss of current statehood will bring better living conditions. Thus, public discontent with the social and economic development of the state can result in a significant security vulnerability, if war is to be conducted by non-military means. The following nine points summarize the main objectives to be achieved with influence operations:

i. Stimulate and support armed separatist actions with an objective to promote chaos and territorial disintegration.

ii. Polarize the elite and society, resulting in a crisis of values followed by process of reality orientation to values aligned towards Russian interests.

iii. Demoralize armed forces and the military elite. iv. Conduct strategically controlled degradation of the socioeconomic situation.

v. Stimulate a socio-political crisis. vi. Intensify simultaneous forms and models of psychological warfare. vii. Incite mass panic, with loss of confidence in key government institutions.

viii. Defamation of political leaders not aligned with Russian interests.

ix. Annihilation of possibilities to form coalitions with foreign allies.

The success of these methods is directly dependent on the level of "exit" found within a country. This can be understood by using A. Hirschmann's theoretical framework of voice, exit, and loyalty. People can express discontent in two ways: one, by directly communicating their dissatisfaction by voice, other, by exiting, usually the result of a citizen becoming convinced that voicing has no results. The conclusion is that more voice is equal to more loyalty, but more exit means less loyalty. To exit makes sense in economics, as it is the way the market mechanism works. However, at the political level, it is associated with negative trends, as voice is the basis for political participation, therefore for the democratic system to work. In this sense, the most radical form of exit is emigration. In this way, a theoretical logic development of Hirschman's framework is the case when instead of emigrating, people become, voluntarily or not, isolated from the political, economic, cultural and social system of the country where they live. Most of the times, it results from the combination of multiple factors, although the most important seems to be political and economic alienation. In this case, the level of internal exit is positively correlated to the population's level of loyalty to the country's macrostructures. Thus, it is also correlated to the level of influence of foreign narratives championing the interests of other countries.

To integrate resilience into defense planning against information warfare, it is necessary to monitor the information environment and social resilience. It starts with a general strategic assessment to determine possible attackers' main objectives and strategic goals. After this initial analysis, the concept of "resilience to information warfare" must be operationalized by constantly performing Target Audience Analysis to understand influence triggers within the society. This includes the analysis of the cognitive processes which determine the level of exit within the society or within a specific population, including but not limited to the willingness to defend the country, trust in state institutions, trust in the political system, judiciary, corruption, just to cite few. This gives the opportunity to understand how the attacker might try to weaken or destroy the independence of a country's regime or political system.

At the same time, it gives the base for choosing the right way to communicate with the society by establishing an appealing narrative to increase the awareness of the population creating an attitude of resistance at the same time delegitimizing the attacker's objectives. It enables the government to strength the weak points and to reinsure the strongest parts of society to minimize foreign influence. It is also important to develop a system to monitor social media, at the same time making social media providers being responsible for removing fake news as quickly as possible, like in Germany. The main task is to decrease the gap between governments and societies, the notion that the political class broke the social contract, which is the main vulnerability that can be used as leverage by adversaries. Therefore, the main points to neutralize foreign influence should be focused on reducing the gap between politics and politicians and the population. Some concrete measures are:

i. Constantly performing Target Audience Analysis to monitor the population's level of openness for influence and the issues and weak points that might be exploited. Therefore, it is necessary to develop this capability or to outsource to competent companies;

ii. enhancing the critical thinking of the population, government officials, and politicians. In this current era, when everything and nothing are true at the same time, the use of Public Relations by the government and politicians to try to neutralize the effects of bad political choices, policy failures, or just incompetence turned to be a plague. When people do not have contact in real life with the issue in question, this sort of public relations strategy might work, although with limitations because of the reaction of the press and mouth to mouth spread of information. Nevertheless, the part of the population directly affected in real life will become convinced that the government or the politicians are lying. Therefore, Public Relations is to be avoided and accepting criticism and openly discussing failures and problems with the public is fundamental, even if counterintuitive;

iii. in case of suspicion of foreign influence operations, the government must seize the initiative as a preemptive attack. This means informing the population about the possibility of such an operation be ongoing, explaining the attacker's interests, motivations, and objectives; iv. creating direct channels of communication between the government and the population. It is fundamental that the government explain the logic and motivations determining public policy. This can be done by using social media, Youtube and other means of direct communication, including promoting discussions at the local level such as conferences and seminars;

v. increasing the direct participation of society in formulating public policy. This has to be done on two levels. First, at the micro level or the policies directly affecting individuals, a community, a neighborhood, a minority. Second, at the macro level or the policies affecting the country as a whole as educational policy, health policy, education policy, etc. It is not rare, at least in the West, that politicians and government officials will use populism to justify policy choices against the public will and/or contrary to what they promised during electoral campaigns. The result is people losing faith in the political and economic elites, in the government, in public institutions. This significantly increases the margin of sucess of influence operations.