SOCIAL INFLUENCE IN THEBATTLEFIELD OF THE MULTICULTURAL MINDSET

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Abstract: The social influence capabilities have encountered many challenges during the recent years. The new technology requires a swift adaptability for all those capabilities to the change of social environment. An effective social influence capability must develop updated and very flexible policies, doctrines, strategies, tactics, techniques and procedures and simultaneously a highly up to date infrastructure. The last NATO Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) doctrine has been released in 2007and the remaining period has faced a lot of changes in the field of mass - media and communications. The good news is that NATO PSYOPS has issued his first draft of handbook (2013) and this came into effect a year later. While NATO PSYOPS has released his first and weak handbook, US Military Information Support Operations (US MISO) has continuously developed politics, a joint doctrine, field manuals regarding techniques, tactics and procedures and a designated infrastructure and up to date capabilities in order to keep the right track with the last technical and social development. The new revolution of the social networks has made many changes in the architecture of the media and social engagements. A senior strategist position in the field of social influence is highly required and this must effectively integrate a social media cell in the actual battlefield of ideas, beliefs, and values: CULTURE. The television component of both NATO PSYOPS and US MISO should enlarge their programs by developing relevant talk shows besides advertising slots they actually do. The main focus on the individual and group psychology should be transferred to the area of the scientific arguments and rhetoric.

Key-words: *social influence, culture, arguments, rhetoric.*

Another evidence of the power of social influence has been recently produced: the effects of a particular content of Charlie Hebdo magazine. It is the most significant event of how a certain media organization could reach a very important pillar of the people's daily life: *Culture*. Furthermore, the above-mentioned print media had subsequently the power to reach a very broad range of audience that would have affected the national security of many nations.

But the intent of this scientific research is to analyze the most significant differences between concepts, documents and structures of an important exponent of the influence communications - *psychological operations(PSYOPS)* - in real-life situation: the perception of US and NATO PSYOPS communities over the concept of Strategic Communications, an in-depth analysis of US and NATO PSYOPS handbooks and the way the US and NATO PSYOPS engage their capabilities in theatre of operations.

1.Strategic Communications (StratCom). Although PSYOPS is one of the StratCom's capabilities[1], the perception of PSYOPS community regarding this matter seems to be different. NATO PSYOPS Handbook does mention the cooperation between these two entities, but the real term is coordination, since StratCom is the one which incorporates PSYOPS. In the theatres of operations, Afghanistan for instance, StratCom is the

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[1]*ACO Directive (AD) 95-2*, SHAPE, Belgium, 21 May 2012, pp. 4-5

communication pillar that coordinates PSYOPS. The same document[2] mentions that Military Public Affairs (MPA) is part of Stratcom whilst in the real-life situation MPA operates under Command Group authority and it is a standalone capability. A very compatible StratCom structure came into effect on 1st of January 2009 in Kosovo (KFOR)[3]. Joint Effects Centre (JEC) has integrated five capabilities and functions: Information Operations (Info Ops), PSYOPS, Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), Liaison Officers (UN & OSCE LNO) and Liaison Monitoring Teams (LMT). JEC consisted of two entities: the staff and the execution capabilities and functions. JEC's staff emerged through the redeployment of the Planning (PLANS), Operations (OPS) and Target Audience Analysis/similar (TAA) of the each of five capabilities and functions so that JEC PLANS, JEC OPS and JEC ASSESSMENT has gathered experienced military staff in the broad spectrum of the non-kinetic operations.

2.US Military Information Support Operations (MISO) vs. NATO PSYOPS process. There are seven steps for both: *planning, target audience analysis, product design and development, product approval, production, distribution and dissemination and evaluation*[4], but the way the two handbooks depict this process is completely different. The US field manual[5] allocates very detailed explanations for all MISO specialists in order for them to use a high quality standard for applying a very feasible MISO process whilst NATO PSYOPS handbook[6] is quite superficial and weak in terms of feasibility and accuracy of the PSYOPS process. An essential difference is given by the series development[7] which is designated to build synergy among various influence products (visual, audio and audio-visual) and actions in order to achieve the preferred behavior change. During the long-lasting history of psychological operations it has been demonstrated that only on very rare occasions a sole product can change the target audience's behavior. The US MISO field manual follows the StratCom guidance in terms of overcoming the potential gap of "say-do" messages. In this regard, MISO planners realize a very accurate synchronization with conventional and non-conventional combat and support forces in order to make sure that what has been said will be accurately done. Once the influence strategy is reinforced by particular actions the overall originator takes advantage in terms of gaining credibility. If, for instance, the influence capabilities convey a society and economic development message through a variety of media outlets, at the end of the exposing stage, CIMIC forces start building essential infrastructure pillars: roads, bridges, schools, hospitals e.g. The concept of NATO PSYOPS overlooks the series development and it seems rather confused in the description of a logical process that would enable PSYOPS specialist to effectively use a strong toolkit on their way of achieving the desired end-state: target audience behavior change.

3.Communication/Influence strategy and the strategist. In the MISO/PSYOPS community the responsible entity for designing the influence campaign is the Operations and Plans Section (Ops/Plans) which is led by Executive Officer (XO).[8] The Ops/Plans Section is

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[2] Idem, pp. 4-5

[3] Personal observations within HQ KFOR, March – October, 2009

[4] *FM – 3-05.301 – Psychological Operations Process, Techniques, Tactics and Procedures*, Fort Bragg, August, 2007, pp. 10-12

[5] Ibid., pp. 13-158

[6] *NATO Psychological Operations Handbook*, Draft version 1.1, April, 2013, Brussels, Belgium, pp. 33 - 40

[7] Op.cit, *FM – 3-05.301*, pp. 75-92

[8] Ibid., pp. 75-84 and *NATO Psychological Operations Handbook*, pp. 34-36

in charge with the design of the development of the whole communications/influence campaigns. This commonly creates plans: *Annex L* – the main PSYOPS plan, *supporting plan* (SUPLAN) and few others in accordance with the current mission requirements.[9] The job requirements for influence planners comprise a broad range of knowledge from "NATO planning tools policies and doctrine relating to information activities, to combined/joint operations planning skills with knowledge of PSYOPS policy, doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, force structure and capabilities and particular cultural awareness."[10] A senior strategist might be the appropriate solution for any influence communications/influence structure with an advanced knowledge in integrated marketing and communications, advertising, journalism and multimedia. It is quite a real challenge to implement this position in a PSYOPS structure but even a bigger challenge is to train such an asset. It would be imperative to educate him in other institutions than the Military only and it would be used as "the PSYOPS visionary" being one of the main assets of the MISO/PSYOPS commander.

   4.Social Media. Despite its significant role in the very recent military conflicts with a high impact on the entire spectrum of political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment and terrain (PMESII-PT) the social media issue is vaguely reached.[11]A few words about this essential communications outlet have written and the main message is that the influence through social media is encouraged. The target audience would rather prefer to be part of the communication process and this must be accepted as a reversible action: from sender to receiver and vice versa. A target audience should not been seen as a passive receiver at any reason and this requires a very special attention, analysis, development and swift action in terms of social media engagement. A political-military organization like NATO may fail if it would rigidly engage the target audience by wording as an organization. Another crucial influence activity would be done by generating content. A useful information should be sent whenever available answering to a specific need of target audience. The continuity of the contact must be of the highest priority and this requires building a designated structure in charge with social media influence. Techniques, tactics and procedures for social media influence should be designed taking into consideration all the particularities of this quite new and different environment. The training of MISO/PSYOPS operators in this field should exploit their media and written/verbal communication skills

   5.Psychology-based arguments vs. arguments and rhetoric. A PSYOPS argument represents the overall argument used to get the desired behaviour from a specific target audience. This argument is built in four stages: the main argument, the supporting arguments, the appropriate appeal and the last, the persuasion/influence technique.[12] These specifications are very useful for a MISO/PSYOPS operator which is deployed in a theatre of operations. This is feed with relevant analysis and information by an important asset – Strategic Studies Detachment- from the home-base unit through reach-back.[13]The speech-act theory[14] reveals

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[9]AJP- 3.10.1 (B) - *Allied Joint Doctrine for Psychological Operations*, pp. 48-55
[10] Ibid., p.39
[11] Op.cit., *NATO Psychological Operations Handbook*, pp. 60-61
[12] Op.cit., *FM – 3-05.301*, pp. 66-71
[13] Ibid., p.44
[14] Austin, J., *Cum să faci lucruri cu vorbe*, trad. de Sorana Corneanu, Bucureşti, Editura Paralela 45, 2005, pp. 94 - 111

that the verbal communication is seen as an enabling acts tool. The act is incorporated in the enunciation as the affirmative answer to the question "Will you marry this woman/man...?" where the actor doesn't intervene upon the description; hence he performs a very particular act. This is to reveal another perspective of the way to see and develop arguments in the field of MISO/PSYOPS. Who develops the influence messages in that case? Who really does the wording? According to US MISO anyone in charge with target audience analysis (TAA) and whoever has skills in journalism, public relations, advertising or marketing may develop the influence arguments. NATO PSYOPS shows a very similar approach with regard to the influence wording being much more confused with this particular task. *Copywriting* might be the appropriate answer. A copywriter is a trained person in charge with the wording in the field of advertising. His position is at the same level with the Art Director (very similar with chief PDC[15] or Media Director in MISO/PSYOPS) with whom he cooperates to effectively synchronize the layout with the messages/wording. He would be used as a significant asset to create the scripts for radio, television and Internet products. This shortfall can be overcame by the influence organizations by reconsidering the role and the power of wording and by training or outsourcing a senior copywriter who requires a specific training in the field of Military, MISO/PSYOPS, mission requirements, cultural particularities and the work with interpreters.

6. The television and its formats. The constant advancement of the new technology significantly increases the call for MISO/PSYOPS to keep the appropriate tempo with emerging audio-visual media outlets and channels of dissemination.The main MISO/PSYOPS activity in this field is the television production, a process that goes before the broadcasting of television products using their own assets (deployable transmitter systems) or via available outsourced television stations. Television products usually include spots/commercials, commentaries, documentaries or news reports considered to be of specific interest to the TA and thus fit to convey the right messages that carry the influence arguments/themes in accordance with the MISO/PSYOPS campaign.[16] It is very well known that movies, documentaries, and at the moment video transmitted over the Internet have the real power to call upon profound emotional responses. Even the most remote location has the opportunity to get access to the television and Internet because of the digital technology via communications satellites. But, as the social media requires an active involvement of the audience, the television industry has adjusted its programs and has recently developed a new concept that is broadly accepted by the audience: the *talk-show*. This new concept is designed to actively bring the common people into the social, economic, political, military e.g. The TV producers select representatives of the common people and, by analogy, the last ones would identify themselves with the talk-show's participants. The talk-shows have the power to effectively sell the illusion of keeping the regular people involved in the daily life of his local administration, government, parliament, and social, economic and political organizations e.g. This is the reason an effective influence communications capability should swiftly adjust itself to the actively and reversible communication needs of the audience and to develop and implement structures/resources, training, techniques, tactics and procedures in this regard.

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[15]*Product Development Center*
[16] Op.cit., *NATO Psychological Operations Handbook*, p. 57

7. *Media products dissemination*. Any influence communication campaign should use various media outlets, mass-media and non-conventional ones, and to take into consideration a few media indicators in order to meet the criteria of success. US MISO and NATO PSYOPS documents solve the first part of this essential problem and this would be the time slots media products acquiring in the external media outlets (insert in newspapers/magazines, radio and TV spots, SMS/MMS, Internet), the management of the media products and the development of media products placement strategies. The media or communication plan is limited to a strict record of assigned media outlets, the time of exposure of the disseminated products by tracking numbers, the budget.[17] The media plan, the last part of the media in advertising[18], comprises all the media outlets, the indicators of effectiveness of the overall advertising campaign, the deadlines and timeslot and the budget. A media plan usually consist of the evaluation of the media outlets that could be used in the campaign, the selection of the best media vehicle, the identification (from the time point of view) of the key events of the campaign, the budget and the size of the capital/investments for each phase of the active communication.[19] The real-life influence communication capabilities within the theatre of operations have usually in its crisis establishment (CE) a one single position filled by an officer or the media director/PDC chief is extra charged with this additional task. Despite the available media outlets for product dissemination are crucial for an influence communications campaign, the US MISO/NATO PSYOPS don't use the main audience indicators in this process: *market share, rating, reach/cumulative rating* – which can be *daily, weekly*, and *monthly*, or *per program* or *per channel*. Another significant audience indicator is the *gross rating point (GRP)* which means the total amount of messages absorbed by a particular TA. The effectiveness of the investments (the allotted budget) can be determined through two other indicators: *cost per thousand (CPT)* and *cost per point (CPP)*. A very important variable is the budget-product effectiveness correlation which is based upon three indicators: *reach, frequency and continuity.[20]* The reach and the frequency show how many people of a particular TA are exposed to the designated messages (how many times) in the dedicated timeslot. In terms of communication campaign effectiveness, the advertising specialists use the effective reach and the effective frequency in order to determine how many times a person must be exposed to a message in order to take the desired action: *behavior change*.[21] US MISO/NATO PSYOPS staff officer dissemination/similar is a sole asset who is continuously struggling to increase the effectiveness of the influence communication campaigns, but his limited resources and tools do not allow him to perform the appropriate work.

Conclusions:

1. Strategic Communications (StratCom) overtakes the Military area and this is the highest coordination authority of Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs, Military Public Affairs, Info Ops and PSYOPS. Its spectrum of activities sets at the national and international/multinational level where all the above-mentioned entities work in an integrated

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[17] Personal observation within influence communication campaigns in the West Balkans and Middle East
[18] Dan Petre, Mihaela Nicola, *Introducere în publicitate*, Editura Comunicare.ro, 2004, pp. 153-154
[19] Ibid., p.155
[20] Ibid., pp. 169-170
[21] Ibid., pp. 170-173

manner. Since Info Ops coordinates PSYOPS[22], the Military environment would solely operate with Info Ops coordinating PSYOPS rather than StratCom coordinating others coordinator;

2. US MISO depicted a very strong influence process whilst NATO PSYOPS has a quite weak one. NATO PSYOPS doesn't take into consideration the psychological actions (PSYACT) which is a very strong tool for arguments/messages reinforcement;

3. US MISO and NATO PSYOPS have both specialists in planning whose background relies on the MISO/PSYOPS basic course, and occasionally planning courses. The package of knowledge of a strategist must include integrated marketing, advertising, multimedia, journalism;

4. Despite social media environment shows a huge potential in the field of communications and influence, both US MISO and NATO PSYOPS are not adjusted to it, a very powerful reason for them to investigate and develop the appropriate guidance and resources;

5. Both US MISO and NATO PSYOPS don't have a designated arguments developer. Qualified personnel (copywriter) would be a feasible solution, instead of randomly nominating such a crucial asset. This asset would be placed at the top of the hierarchy in order to enable the cooperation with the media director/chief PDC;

6. Despite US MISO and NATO PSYOPS admit the two-way communication process, they continue to consider TA a standstill target from the television standpoint. Since the talk-show succeeds to capitalize over other TV formats, it would be of the utmost importance for both influence entities to adjust their TV products to TA's requirements;

7. US MISO and NATO PSYOPS don't exploit properly their media dissemination assets in terms of media planning, especially in the theatre of operations. An effective media planning should flawlessly use the media audience indicators in order to support the overall influence communications campaign.

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[22] MC-422/4 - *NATO Policy for Information Operations*, 2012

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