

# Збройна боротьба: теорія, забезпечення, досвід

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## THE EXPERIENCE OF UKRAINIAN COUNTERACTION TO THE NEGATIVE INFORMATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

*The main methods of information and psychological struggle, used by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and the system of negative information and psychological influence on Ukraine by the Russian Federation are considered. The main causes of Ukraine's inability to provide an adequate response to the actions of the aggressor; negative consequences of the informational and psychological influence of the enemy on the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine; the main measures to protect troops from this influence are identified. The positive and negative experience of the organization of counteraction to the negative informational and psychological influence of the enemy based on the experience of carrying out the operation of the united forces (anti-terrorist operation) are analyzed.*

**Keywords:** *hybrid war, informational and psychological struggle, informational and psychological operation, informational and psychological influence.*

### Introduction

**Problem statement.** A characteristic feature of the late XX – early XXI centuries is the confrontation in the information and psychological space. Information and psychological struggle is conducted in all areas of the vital activities of states, including military ones. In the military sphere and, above all, in the period of exacerbation of the military and political situation, there is a clear shift of the center of gravity from open force methods to hidden, non-power, information and psychological methods and means in the preparation and conduct of combat operations. There is a clear tendency to turn episodic propaganda into a system of information and psychological attacks, activities and operations directed against the enemy troops and population, coordinated according to the purpose, place and time.

**Analysis of recent researches and publications.** Information and psychological operation are the obligatory components of warfare and allow a significant increase in the effectiveness of the use of troops (forces). Therefore, the problem of organizing and conducting the information and psychological struggle in the military sphere is sufficiently relevant [1–8].

To date, the so-called "hybrid wars" come to replace classical forms of armed struggle. A number of leading Western political and military experts call them "wars of a new generation".

The Russian Federation demonstrated the nature of the new type of war clearly by first annexing the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in the spring of

2014, and then began a covert invasion of Ukraine, which led to an actual loss of control over part of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The Russian Federation applied the concept of a "hybrid war" against Ukraine, which in many respects is unique, so from the structural and functional point of view – in form it is "hybrid", and in content – "asymmetric" [3] and can be traced in six elements, namely: political blackmail, creating areas with special status, trade and economic pressure, manipulation during negotiations, demonstration of military force and open military incursion.

The Russian Federation uses in Ukraine:

a) all components of hybrid wars – regular army, illegal military formations, terrorism, informational, economic, social, energy and cybernetic struggle;

b) all components of asymmetric war (a war between opponents, in the military forces of which there is a significant imbalance (asymmetry) or which use fundamentally different strategies and tactics). In order to compensate for the imbalance of traditional means of combat, The Russian Federation resorts to unconventional means – guerrilla warfare, passive resistance, terrorist acts, psychological warfare, support for anti-government groups, support for anti-government movements (parties), etc.

At the same time, the Russian Federation violates a number of international and interstate treaties with respect to Ukraine. Legitimization of these violations was reflected in the abolition by the State Duma of the Russian Federation in December 2015 of the primacy of

international law (the basic principles of international law, which are peremptory norms) in the national legislation of the Russian Federation.

**Purpose of the article** is to consider the experience of counteracting Ukraine with the negative informational and psychological influence of the Russian Federation.

### **Presentation of research materials**

During the information and psychological struggle against Ukraine, the Russian Federation focused on such targets as:

- information infrastructure of the state;
- conscience, will and feelings of servicemen and different sectors of the population, especially during crisis situations;
- systems for managerial decision-making in the political, economic, social, scientific and technical spheres and in the sphere of ensuring the security and defense of the country;
- contingent is critical (opposition, dissidents, criminals, etc.) as a means of strengthening the crisis in the enemy's society.

The basis of the anti-Ukrainian information and psychological struggle by the Russian Federation was attempts to destroy the institutions of Ukrainian statehood and tolerance in society, the spread of national and religious hostility. The information struggle has acquired a new meaning, which is characterized by encroachment on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine, violent propaganda to change the constitutional system and the structure of our state.

In 2014, Ukraine was not ready for such tactics, since Crimea was occupied, and then annexed by the Russian Federation.

The main reasons for Ukraine's inability to provide an adequate response to the aggressor's actions are:

- a) external:
  - the UN security system and European security institutions have proved ineffective in influencing countries with significant economic power in the world and nuclear capability;
  - lack of tools to influence the situation, since the role of international treaties and international obligations is significantly reduced, and their implementation can be ignored;
  - Russia's active use of levers of economic pressure;
- b) internal:
  - disunity of the society, civic immaturity, multi-vector patriotism;
  - inability of the political leadership to compromise and the creation of new formats for dialogue;
  - deepening the crisis of trust between the center and the regions, fueling an atmosphere of hostility in society;

- loyalty of the local Russian-speaking population to servicemen of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation;

- attempt by one of the political forces to monopolize power and keep it at any cost makes it difficult for national reconciliation;

- weak diversification of sales markets for Ukrainian products;

- lack of adequate information and cultural policies has caused a cultural occupation of the conscience of a significant part of citizens;

- the Ukrainian information space without proper Russian-language and English-language content turned out to be closed, uncompetitive, not ready to convey the Ukrainian position to the world community.

After the annexation of Crimea, which was used to intimidate the military and political leadership of Ukraine and create an entry point for further strengthening the position of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, the main efforts of the Russian Federation in the field of information and psychological struggle in the mainland of Ukraine were concentrated in its eastern and southeastern regions.

To achieve its goals, the Russian Federation combines an information campaign, economic pressure, cyber warfare and the use of special forces.

In the information and psychological struggle, the Russian Federation uses a number of such methods as:

- manipulation of social conscience and political orientation of social groups in the country with the goal of creating political tension and controlled chaos;

- creation of an atmosphere of negative attitude to the enemy's cultural heritage, loss of national conscience;

- destabilization of political relations between parties, associations and movements with the aim of provocation of conflicts, inciting distrust, suspicion, exacerbation of political struggle, provocation of repression against the opposition and even civil war;

- decrease in the level of information support for the administrations and authorities, the incitation of erroneous managerial decisions;

- disinformation of the population about the work of government authorities, undermine their authority, discrediting the administrations;

- provoking social, political, national and religious clashes;

- initiation of strikes, riots and other actions of economic protest;

- the difficulty of making important decisions by the administrations, the pressure to take them;

- undermining the international authority of the state, its cooperation with other countries;

- damage to the vital interests of the state in political, economic, energy, defense and other spheres.

To implement a negative information and psychological influence on Ukraine, the Russian Federation created a powerful system, which includes:

- state informational agencies and television of the Russian Federation (for example Russia Today);
- private media owned by the Kremlin (the global video agency Ruptly);
- popular TV hosts and managers of major media;
- Ministries and departments;
- Internet bloggers and actively-minded citizens of Russia and pro-Russian citizens of Ukraine ("agents of the Kremlin")
- Internet bots (robots).

Russian propaganda is aimed at four categories of recipients - the internal audience in Russia, the Crimeans, the pro-Russian-minded people of Ukraine and other countries watching the conflict and trying to be mediators in it:

- messages aimed at the Russians - "Russia is a super state", "we will not leave our own in trouble", "we are opposed to the world evil," etc.;
- on the population of Crimea – "do not leave our own in trouble", "the one people, Crimea – Russia";
- for the pro-Russian-minded people of Ukraine - "the Ukrainian government is illegitimate", "we are the one people", "banderovtsi" captured the power", "if you act - we will come to protect you";
- for foreigners – "Ukrainian government is illegitimate", "the fascists and extremists captured the power", "Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine are in danger", "Ukraine is an unreliable partner", etc.

Messages aimed at Ukrainians, who are determined to be pro-Ukrainian, are more veiled and aimed at provoking a negative reaction, intimidating or eliminating equilibrium.

Such an effect may become dangerous for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The main consequences of a negative informational and psychological impact on servicemen may be:

- blurring the feeling of pride for their country, membership in its armed forces, undermining the conviction of servicemen in the need to fulfill their constitutional duty to protect their country;
- reduction of the moral and psychological state, creation a situation of uncertainty and anxiety of the personnel regarding their own future, the future of the armed forces and the state, the weakening of the will to carry out constructive reforms, and in wartime to armed resistance;
- split of military collectives by political, religious, ethnic, official and other motives, opposition of ordinary and officers;
- reduction of the combat capability of units by reducing the military activity, desertion, simulation of the disease, evasion of execution commanders orders, betrayal, fluctuations and doubts in the reliability of

weapons, in invincibility, suppression of freedom, the creation of a distorted picture of hostilities, combat conditions;

- incorrect perception of military personnel of existing threats to national security, real plans and intentions of the enemy.

Now the Russian Federation is trying to "freeze" the conflict in the East of Ukraine, forcing us to recognize the separatists as a "negotiating part" and to start negotiations with them on theirs, and in fact, on the Russian conditions. To this end, Russia enforces its pressure on Ukraine, including increasing the number of its troops near Ukrainian borders and in our occupied territories. The Russian Federation denies its participation in the conflict and at the same time conducts a large-scale information campaign of anti-Ukrainian orientation.

The experience of carrying out the operation of the united forces (OUF) (anti-terrorist operation (ATO)) shows that the main reasons for the ineffective counteraction to the negative informational and psychological impact on the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are:

- the unpreparedness of the commanders of the military units to organize combat activity under the conditions of negative information and psychological influence (IPI) and carry out large-scale information-psychological operations and propaganda companies and, as a result, low psychological readiness of the personnel (first of all, who arrived from reserve) to perform military service duties;
- insufficient training and psychological readiness of the personnel to act in non-standard conditions, as a result, lack of determination, initiative, ability to think and act in a difficult conditions, as well as finding ways to realize the capabilities of military units;
- weak system of personnel and population protection from negative informational and psychological influence of the enemy and absence of effective hierarchically constructed structure of planning and implementation of information and psychological counteraction;
- absence of positive interaction with law enforcement agencies in the crisis regions of Ukraine;
- ineffective solution of social and domestic problems of personnel and their families due to the imperfection of regulatory and legal framework and the targeted financing;
- the system of moral and psychological support, the regulatory framework, planning documents, and the training of officers working with personnel in general was aimed at ensuring the fulfillment of tasks for the direct assignment of military units of the Air Force. The implementation of tasks under the action of sabotage groups, blocking of positions, and obstruction of aggressively-minded groups of civilian population was taken into account to a lesser extent.

– the technical means of upbringing have become morally and physically outmoded, do not meet the requirements of today and considerably inferior to modern models;

– the management of moral and psychological support is complicated because of lack of appropriate functional connections in its structure and the need for direct work with each military unit by the forces of educational and socio-psychological work, which in recent years has been reduced by almost twice.

In order to counteract the negative IPI in the zone of OUF (ATO), a number of measures have been taken to improve the moral and psychological state of the personnel. The main ones are:

– transition to operational forms of informational and propagandistic support and military and ideological training. The activities of informational and propagandistic support of personnel of the Air Forces of Ukraine in field conditions were organized in accordance with the implementation of the tasks;

– the methodical materials for military-ideological and legal training were realized, information reference materials for assistance to specialists in work with personnel were performed;

– it was organized dissemination to military units and units that perform tasks outside the points of

stationary basing of information materials placing them on a certain Internet resource: newsletters; daily review of socio-political events in Ukraine; methodical materials for carrying out classes on military-ideological preparation, legal informing and other information measures;

– it was created group of monitoring media and counteracting the negative informational influence of moral and psychological support unit of the rear command post of the Air Forces of Ukraine;

– it was organized an effective interaction with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to provide support and assistance to the military units;

– it was organized an effective interaction with the mass media for the information support of the military units' life, photo-video of fixing illegal actions of sabotage groups in relation to Ukrainian servicemen;

– it was organized work with volunteers, representatives of business and public organizations on providing material, financial, psychological assistance to military units and military personnel, members of their families to solve current problems.

Counteracting measures of the negative IPI in the zone of OUF (ATO) allowed gaining some experience in its organization. Positive and negative experience of counteraction to negative IPI is presented in the table. 1.

Table 1

Positive and negative experience of counteraction to negative IPI

№ з/п	Positive experience	Negative experience
1.	The system of personnel recovering after the psychological trauma is established.	Insufficient level of the primary level (company, platoon, department) commanders training in counteracting the negative IPI
2.	Instructional and teaching training with psychologists, volunteers and officers of military units to study forms and methods of work were organized	Psychologists, in addition to specialized tasks carry out explanation of social security, decisions of the state government and the Armed Forces of Ukraine
3.	Assistance to the officers of the work with the personnel structures on the part of psychologists-volunteers	Insufficient level of preparation of a significant number of officers of the work with the personnel structures that are called for mobilization
4.	Ensuring by periodicals and organizing the prompt delivery to the performing tasks military units	The normalization and regulatory dealing with publications circulation increasing because of increasing number of personnel after completing military units is absent
5.	Interaction with military and civilian media to present positive aspects of application of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and refutation of false information about their activities	The need to create high-quality video clips and stories, films, televisions and video about heroics of Ukrainian troops in the past and modern Armed Forces of Ukraine for broadcast on major TV channels
6.	The cultural support was organized	There are insufficient number of modern technical means of education

In conditions of tense military and political situation in Ukraine, maintaining by the Russian Federation, prevention of psycho-emotional overload of military personnel, including servicemen of Kharkiv National Air

Force University, and their adequate response to potential threats and provocations becomes very important.

The main measures of troops (forces) protection from negative informational and psychological influence are:

- analysis and forecasting of information and psychological influence;
- prevention of information and psychological influence;
- disruption of information and psychological influence;
- liquidation of the consequences of informational and psychological influence;
- organization of counter-influence.

## Conclusions

Nowadays the informational and psychological operations in military doctrines of some world leading countries are already considered, on the one hand, as an important component of the preparation and conducting of military operations, on the other hand, as an independent form of fighting. They are increasingly becoming a decisive factor in armed struggle.

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**ДОСВІД ПРОТИДІЇ УКРАЇНИ НЕГАТИВНОМУ  
ІНФОРМАЦІЙНО-ПСИХОЛОГІЧНОМУ ВПЛИВУ РОСІЙСЬКОЇ ФЕДЕРАЦІЇ**

А.О. Зварич

*Розглянуто основні способи інформаційно-психологічної боротьби, які використовує Російська Федерація проти України, та систему негативного інформаційно-психологічного впливу на Україну з боку Російської Федерації. Розглянутий опит протидії України негативному інформаційно-психологічному впливу Російської Федерації, а саме: об'єкти ураження, на які Російська Федерація зосередила основну увагу в ході інформаційно-психологічної боротьби проти України; основні причини нездатності України дати адекватну відповідь на дії агресора; основні способи, що використовує Російська Федерація в інформаційно-психологічній боротьбі проти України; основні елементи системи, що створена Російською Федерацією для здійснення негативного інформаційно-психологічного впливу на Україну; категорії реципієнтів, на які спрямована російська пропаганда; основні наслідки здійснення негативного інформаційно-психологічного впливу на військовослужбовців Збройних Сил України. На основі досвіду проведення операції об'єднаних сил (антитерористичної операції) визначені: основні причини недостатньої ефективності протидії негативному інформаційно-психологічному впливу на особовий склад Збройних Сил України; основні заходи, спрямовані на поліпшення морально-психологічного стану особового складу, для протидії негативному інформаційно-психологічному впливу. Проаналізований позитивний і негативний досвід організації протидії негативному інформаційно-психологічному впливу противника на основі досвіду проведення операції об'єднаних сил (антитерористичної операції). Визначені основні заходи захисту військ (сил) від негативного інформаційно-психологічного впливу. Зазначено, що у сучасних умовах інформаційно-психологічні операції все більш стають вирішальним чинником збройної боротьби.*

**Ключові слова:** антитерористична операція, гібридна війна, інформаційно-психологічна боротьба, інформаційно-психологічна операція, інформаційно-психологічний вплив.

**ОПЫТ ПРОТИВОДЕЙСТВИЯ УКРАИНЫ НЕГАТИВНОМУ  
ИНФОРМАЦИОННО-ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКОМУ ВОЗДЕЙСТВИЮ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

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*Рассмотрены основные способы информационно-психологической борьбы, используемые Российской Федерацией против Украины, и система негативного информационно-психологического воздействия на Украину со стороны Российской Федерации, также рассмотрен опыт противодействия Украины негативному информационно-психологическому воздействию Российской Федерации. Определены: основные причины неспособности Украины дать адекватный ответ на действию агрессора; проблемные вопросы по ведению информационно-психологической борьбы в военной сфере; негативные последствия информационно психологического воздействия противника на личный состав вооруженных сил Украины; основные мероприятия по защите войск от негативного информационно-психологического воздействия направленные на улучшение морально-психологического состояния личного состава, проанализирован позитивный и негативный опыт организации противодействия негативному информационно-психологическому воздействию противника на основе опыта проведения операции объединенных сил (антитеррористической операции).*

**Ключевые слова:** антитеррористическая операция, гибридная война, информационно-психологическая борьба, информационно-психологическая операция, информационно-психологическое воздействие.