



"HENRI COANDA"  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
ROMANIA



GERMANY



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"  
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER  
AFASES 2011  
Brasov, 26-28 May 2011

## INTEGRATIVE CONTEMPORARY THEORIES ABOUT UNCONVENTIONAL AGGRESSIONS OF INFORMATIONAL TYPE, BASED ON PATHOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION

Alfred VASILESCU

Chief of CIMIC and PSYOPS Structure within the General Staff Operational Command Center

*The reasoning of this paperwork begins with the idea of the existence of continuity between certain key concepts and theories, which have appeared in the last decades and are based on the instrument of communication, which is founded on the manipulation of information, especially in the military field. Whether they are dilemmatic under a semantic aspect, as they are manifesting in the non-kinetic vs. non-lethal operations binomial, or they have conceptually reinvented themselves, as it is the case of public diplomacy and strategic communication (STRATCOM), or they are identitarily fluctuating, as perception management does, they all present however, a common trait: they are part of the informational arsenal of unconventional aggressions, which political actors use more and more intensively in the international security environment.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Pathological Communication, Non-kinetic & Non-lethal Operations, Public Diplomacy, Strategic Communication, Perceptions Management, Unconventional Aggressions*

The occurrence of unconventional aggressions, especially of the information related ones, lead to the adjustment of military thinking, theoretical background of policies, strategies and doctrines as required by the new realities determining international confrontations. The advanced states in this area of expertise, usually the great world powers, have developed new concepts in order to cover the complexity of the new types of confrontation between statal, non-statal and supra-statal actors, as confrontations may be psychological, informational, media related, symbolic, imago logical etc. This paper tries to explore the evolutions of military action related domains in which pathological communication manifested itself, emphasizing their tendency to unify in a shape of some integrative theories, subsequent to those represented by *information warfare* and *information operations*.

Recent studies (published after 2005) have put forward a new approach which replaces the old concept of *information operations* with *non-kinetic operations*. Being more than just a change in terms, this new label has represented the bond between electronic warfare, influence operations and network warfare operations. According to Robinson, by adopting the term *non-kinetic operations* as the succeeding of *information operations*, the logical premises of *integrated operations* have been created, the only type of future operations which matter while performing operations based on joint effects.<sup>1</sup>[6]

---

<sup>1</sup> Kelly G. Robinson, *The Death of Information Operations: Making The Case for Non-Kinetic Operations*, Research report for Air Command And Staff College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, April 2005, p. iv.

In an article from *Newsweek*, Evan Thomas and John Barry stated that this conflict in terms generates „a generational gap in the Army“ in a period of time when the structure, size, and budget of the American Armed Forces will constitute a pressing issue for the Obama administration. *The Economist* named this phenomenon „the Army broken“ referring to the competition between the old officers, stubbornly bond to a structure that was victorious in the two wars against Saddam Hussein and the new generation of military more focused on wining the „war of hearts and minds“.<sup>2</sup>[2] Kenneth J. Burgess, major in the US Army, states in his master dissertation his vision regarding the forms of unconventional military actions.<sup>3</sup>[1] His suggestions included structural changes related to the decentralization of resources, the narrowing down of command systems and the enhancement of intelligence personnel ability to integrate, mobility and population cantered capabilities (civil affairs, information operations, military police, civil infrastructure) down to the lowest levels (battalion or company).<sup>4</sup>[1] Senator John McCain offered solutions himself to this problem. In the November – December 2007 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, he advanced the idea of setting up an Armed Forces Advisors Corps which would include experts in unconventional warfare, civil affairs and psychological warfare, special/covert operations and anthropology, advertisement and other relevant areas, governmental or not, and these experts will train and work together with military personnel, especially in post conflict reconstruction situations.

FM 3-0 US Army Operations, 2008 version, uses the terms *lethal* and *non-lethal* and not *kinetic* and *non-kinetic* actions. There

---

<sup>2</sup> Alan D. Campen, *Can a Regular Army Fight an Irregular War?*, in CyberInfoWar.com, September 2008, retrieved on 04.05.2010.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth J. Burgess, US Maj, *Organizing for Irregular Warfare: Implications For The Brigade Combat Team*, Master Dissertation, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, US, December 2007, in [http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2007/Dec/07Dec\\_Burgess.pdf](http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2007/Dec/07Dec_Burgess.pdf) retrieved on 08.11.2010.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth J. Burgess, *op.cit.*

are some differences between these terms. Therefore, the term *kinetic* refers to, or is characterized by movement. For example, an action of the Special Forces meant to find and neutralize a terrorist group, action performed using satellite surveillance, fits in this category, even if those forces acted or not at ground level, in a lethal or non-lethal manner. Similarly, if the target surrendered without fighting, without one shot, we are still dealing with a dynamic operation, a kinetic one. On the contrary, a CIMIC patrol assessing a certain locality should be considered a *non-kinetic* operation, and it turns into a *kinetic* one only if shots are fired on the patrol or the patrol reacts with open fire. The distinction between the two possibilities is that *lethal* and *non-lethal* actions are subsets of *kinetic* operations; they cannot replace this concept, regardless of their chronological occurrence. On the other hand, a *non-kinetic operation* is by definition exclusively *non-lethal*. The option of using the concepts of *lethal* and *non-lethal* instead of *kinetic* and *non-kinetic* when it comes to operations implies absurd situations as for example when the enemy shots a soldier who doesn't fight back, but it is wounded or killed because his own side doesn't hit back, this in its own views could be a non-lethal mission! For this reason, a careful use of the terms characterized by the lack of synonymy, case by case, is something to be desired.<sup>5</sup>[7] Another clarification that I submit to your attention would consist of the statement that the terms *non-kinetic* and *kinetic* refer to the types of target engagement *means* while the terms *lethal* and *non-lethal* can and be used to describe the desired *effect* upon the target.

Information operations are intuitively *non-kinetic*. Psychological operations (PSYOPS), military deception, public affairs operations, they all point towards the cognitive domain, in order to persuade or inform a specific or global audience. Yet, one must not mistake kinetic platforms (helicopters for PSYOPS flyers

---

<sup>5</sup> Argument from Herschel Smith, *Kinetic and Nonkinetic Versus Lethal and Nonlethal Operations*, in <http://www.captainsjournal.com/2008/06/30/kinetic-and-nonkinetic-versus-lethal-and-nonlethal-operations/>, retrieved on 04.06.2010



"HENRI COANDA"  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
ROMANIA



GERMANY



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"  
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER  
AFASES 2011

Brasov, 26-28 May 2011

launching, passive jamming measures, the destruction of a computer network hardware etc.) for the non-kinetic type of operations to which they may contribute.

Robinson, as a contribution of the American Armed Forces to the concept of joint operations, advances the idea of replacing the syntagma *information operations* with non-kinetic operations, because: it is easier to understand and integrate in the architecture of operations by military leaders; it 'demystifies' information operations with effects on budgeting a decrease in classification level of documents, it clarifies and creates integrated carrier opportunities for the personnel.<sup>6</sup>[6]

The three components identified by Robinson (electronic warfare, influence operations and network warfare) have the capacity to produce both lethal and non-lethal effects on the battlefield although due to their nature they provide non-kinetic capabilities. This particular type of approach has already started to be taken into consideration by the American policy makers and also by their NATO partners, but somehow in a prudent and skeptic manner by the European armed forces

Another concept related to pathological communication which has been vitalized in the last decades is *Public diplomacy*.

*Public diplomacy* manifested as a integrating force of the unconventional means of information related actions, the last few years being such a comeback of this area of expertise. For this reason it is useful to place this concept in the context of the theories that have agglutinated unconventional actions forms through the years.

*Public diplomacy* is not a newly born concept, it appeared as a collocation in 1856 in Great Britain, and only 100 years later, in 1965, it was introduced in international

relations by Edmund Gullion (an associate of the United States Information Agency – USIA) in order to describe the lead of foreign affairs by engaging foreign public, which often was an euphemism for propaganda, truth projection or lobby relations. In contrast with the classic diplomacy which was meant for foreign leaders, *public diplomacy* is centered on the means used by a country or an international organization to communicate with citizens of other societies, starting from the premises that dialogue is essential in achieving foreign policy goals. A great importance is given to the promotion of values and own image by specific products (films, music, television, sports competitions, and video games, cultural and artistic activities) and adequate messages which effect on target was assessed in a specific cultural context in order to develop more efficient instruments of persuasion. For the American foreign policy, *public diplomacy* has represented for decades an essential element not only during the Cold War but also after the vanishing of the communist block, or, after the events from 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. The American foreign policy considered that not only states have a great importance in a technologized, globalised world characterized by massive migrations phenomena, but also nations, and as a result the promotion of a foreign affair policy centered on people.

Starting from the end of the 1940's there was in the United States a Advisory Commission for Public Diplomacy which was in charge of the evaluation process related to own efforts. After the war, USIA took over, the disappearance of the commission taking place only in 1999, long after the fall of the communism. Forged but not forgotten, the term was still used by the State Department especially as a broad equivalent for *public relations* with foreign countries. As instruments of concept promotion were created

---

<sup>6</sup> Kelly G. Robinson, *op.cit.*, pp.24-25.

global radio stations like The Voice of America, student exchange programs, seminars, academic and economic meetings, but also indirect activities in the areas related to culture, tourism or computers. Although *public diplomacy* was coordinated by the government, it was also the appanage of non-state actors, independent media or private contributors.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1983 the president Ronald Reagan signed the Secret Directive no. 77, in which *public diplomacy* was defined as being „formed by actions of the US government meant to support national security objectives.“ The directive appointed a Special Planning Group as part of the National Security Council, group which coordinated a Public Affairs committee (its role being to explain and support American foreign affairs initiatives); a International Information committee (promoting „truth projection“ policies); a International Politics committee (to coordinate the efforts to counterattack the Soviet Union’s diplomatic, military, economic, and information aggressions) and an International Broadcasting committee (which coordinated the mass media sponsored by the government, like The Voice of America or Free Europe).

Once the cold war over, the '90's brought a less direct approach to the *public diplomacy* collocation and to its adjacent policies. The American doctrine defined them at the time as being “those overt international public information activities of the United States Government designed to promote United States foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.“<sup>7</sup>[9]

On October 30, 2001, the US government founded the Department of Strategic Influence within the Department of Defense, an organization which was tumultuously criticized not only by the media but also by the officials

---

<sup>7</sup> \*\*\*Joint Pub 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, November 2010, amended in January 2011, p. 297.

and the civil society. As a consequence, this initiative was rapidly abandoned within only 4 months, at least at the public level. On January 21, 2003, on the initiative of the White House, the Global Communications Department was established, seen as a continuator of the Coordination Committee of Strategic Communication Politics which had been set up in September 2002. Unfortunately, due to the lack of a good coordination, resources and especially because of poor cultural assessments, none of these departments was successful.

The modern *public diplomacy* is latterly used not only by the USA but also by some other nations, such as France (with an accent on the cultural diplomacy), Great Britain (successful in radio transmitting), Japan (directed to academic exchanges) or Russia (based on psychological operations).<sup>8</sup>[4] Although the public diplomacy can nowadays have different aspects, such as the action in cyberspace or the usage of Diasporas and expats, its classic components are still actual.

Another concept based on the use of the pathological communication techniques is the *strategic communication* (STRATCOM). This concept was issued in 2004 in the United States, being defined as “a variety of instruments used by governments for generations to *understand* global attitudes and cultures, *engage* in a dialogue of ideas between people and institutions, *advise* policymakers, diplomats, and military leaders on the public opinion implications of policy choices, and *influence* attitudes and behavior through communications strategies.“<sup>9</sup>[12] The following areas are aimed by *the strategic communication*: transcultural agreement, the proactive dialogue between citizens and institutions, the guidance of politicians and the control of attitudes and behaviors of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past*, USC Center for Public Diplomacy, Annenberg School, Figueroa Press, Los Angeles, 2009, p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> \*\*\**Report of the Defence Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense For Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Washington, D.C., September 2004, p. 11, in <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dsb/commun.pdf>.  
retrived on 23.09.2010.



"HENRI COANDA"  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
ROMANIA



GERMANY



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"  
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER  
AFASES 2011

Brasov, 26-28 May 2011

foreign audiences using various methods such as: public diplomacy, public affairs or information operations.<sup>10</sup>[11]

*The strategic communication* of nations involves a sum of institutional vectors which are run based on a plan and coordinated procedures. In the military field, this strategic communication has provided a cultural shock, a serious transformation, changing not only the whole attitude of the system towards communication, but also its position as a central element of thought and daily actions, as a self-value of the military confrontation. However, the effects of this strategic communication in the military field have not reached yet the standards as the practice and theory in politics, economics or social life.<sup>11</sup>[8]

Nowadays, *the strategic communication* is a concept in rising which, at the level of NATO headquarter, is viewed as a native integrator of public business and of INFOOPS, in spite of the reticence upon the full collaboration between the above mentioned elements.<sup>12</sup>[3] As a matter of fact, the concept is also functional in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, where it is already represented in different institutions.

As well as the public diplomacy and strategic communication, *perception*

*management* is mainly represented in politics, these three concepts maintaining a certain distance towards the military elements coordinated by *information operations*, in order to assure a better service of the nation's interests at the strategic level, using the agreed terms in political communication or international relations fields. However, this does not mean that perception management is not silently performed or unmentioned in the high military levels of the national security institutions.

*Perception management* is defined in the American doctrine as it follows: "actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator's objectives."<sup>13</sup>[10]

Some researchers<sup>14</sup>[5] use a stronger collocation, that of *perception warfare* in order to identify this type of actions which are not similar to the *informational warfare* (or even an euphemism of it) and *public diplomacy*. Although it is considered that there are numerous similarities between these concepts, sometimes they are not identical, the difference being perceived in the occurrence and the way of using the new technology. This concept of *perception warfare* has been first issued during the Iraq War 2, admitted as a new weapon used by the USA in this "battle of ideas", in

<sup>10</sup> \*\*\*NATO Strategic Communication Policy, 29 September 2009, pp. 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Jan Techau, *What Makes Communication Strategic? – Preparing Military Organizations for the Battle of Ideas*, Research Paper, Research Division – NATO Defense College, Rome, No. 65, Feb. 2011, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> An argumentative opinion of INFOOPS transformation in STRATCOM can be also found in Tony Corn's *From Info Ops to Edu Ops: Strategic Communication in the Age of the Long War*, thesis presented in the inter-session conference Strategic Communication: Managing Knowledge to Win Wars, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, 6-7 March 2006, in [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/navy/nwc\\_stratcom\\_conf06/corn.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/navy/nwc_stratcom_conf06/corn.pdf), retrieved on 22.09.2010.

<sup>13</sup> \*\*\*Joint Pub 3-53, *Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations*, September 2003, p. GL-7.

<sup>14</sup> Henrik Friman, *Perception Warfare: a perspective for the future*, Discussion paper, The Swedish National Defense College, Department of Operational Studies, 1999, in [www.militaryscience.org/public/media/publications/Fri-man\(1999\)PW.PDF](http://www.militaryscience.org/public/media/publications/Fri-man(1999)PW.PDF), retrieved on 23.09.2010.

order to gain the upper hand over the insurgents appealing to the worldwide mass-media.

The final aim of this *perceptions warfare* is to change the way of thinking and the volition not only of the opposing leaders but also of the population, this being achieved through the lesion of the right perception upon a certain situation and manipulating the truth using both rational and emotional methods of the pathological communication such as: security operations (OPSEC), undercover missions, deception, the projection of the truth or psychological operations. No need to mention that this *perceptions warfare* is not the exclusive prerogative of the state political actors, this being also started by non-political aggressors: international holdings being in a trade competition, financial trusts, in order to improve their image all over the world, terrorist organizations looking for legitimacy, or even individuals, celebrities interested in their “rebranding”.

The integration process of all these action and coordinating informational non-conventional methods does not only refer to the theories previously analyzed. It also includes concepts such as: *Entropy-Based Warfare* (issued in 1998), *Unrestricted Warfare* (the strong Chinese theory issued in 1999), the modern *counter-insurgency* concept (rebranded in its actual configuration in 2006) or the *Comprehensive Approach* (as considered to be the conceptual phase of the Entropy-Based Warfare – EBAO – since 2006, at a higher level though).

During my research, I have noticed that most integrated politics and doctrines regarding the non-conventional aggressions based on the pathological communication have been launched recently, more exactly after 1991, even if some of these concepts have been rebranded, prefaced by their “archaic” start point (*public diplomacy* or *strategic communication*).

In the present study, I have also noticed that the security solutions based on the use of the pathological communication have had a certain pattern so far, one of a genealogical development, by adding new qualities to the

previous nuclei (as in INFOOPS – non-kinetic operations – STRATCOM succession), the evolutionary process remaining not only intensive, but also outgoing and creative.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Burgess, Kenneth J., US Maj, Organizing for Irregular Warfare: Implications For The Brigade Combat Team, Master Dissertation, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, US, December 2007.

2. Campen, Alan D., Can a Regular Army Fight an Irregular War?, in CyberInfoWar.com, September 2008.

3. Corn, Tony, From Info Ops to Edu Ops: Strategic Communication in the Age of the Long War, thesis presented in the inter-session conference Strategic Communication: Managing Knowledge to Win Wars, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, 6-7 March, 2006.

4. Cull, Nicholas J., Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past, USC Center for Public Diplomacy, Annenberg School, Figueroa Press, Los Angeles, 2009.

5. Friman, Henrik, Perception Warfare: a perspective for the future, Discussion paper, The Swedish National Defence College, Department of Operational Studies, 1999.

6. Robinson, Kelly G., The Death of Information Operations: Making The Case for Non-Kinetic Operations, Research report for Air Command and Staff College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, April 2005.

7. Smith, Herschel, Kinetic and Nonkinetic Versus Lethal and Nonlethal Operations, in <http://www.captainsjournal.com/2008/06/30/kinetic-and-nonkinetic-versus-lethal-and-nonlethal-operations/>, retrieved on June 4, 2010.

8. Techau, Jan, What Makes Communication Strategic? – Preparing Military Organizations for the Battle of Ideas, Research Paper, Research Division – NATO Defense College, Rome, No. 65, February 2011.



"HENRI COANDA"  
AIR FORCE ACADEMY  
ROMANIA



GERMANY



"GENERAL M.R. STEFANIK"  
ARMED FORCES ACADEMY  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE of SCIENTIFIC PAPER  
AFASES 2011

Brasov, 26-28 May 2011

9. \*\*\*JP 1-02 Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, November 2010, amended in January, 2011.
10. \*\*\*JP 3-53, Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations, September 2003.
11. \*\*\*NATO Strategic Communication Policy, September 29, 2009.
12. \*\*\*Report of the Defence Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense For Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, Washington, D.C., September 2004.