

## PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

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***Abstract:** The paper has the purpose of shading some light upon what is a very interesting concept, yet still not a common one, that being the concept of „Psychological Operations”.*

*The first part is about defining the concept, because in order for us to be able to further understand it, theoretical aspects are imperative to be understood.*

*The second section of the text is about the types of missions and methods used in order to achieve expected results. Additionally, it is exploring the importance of logistic support.*

*In the last part we have two examples. The psychological operations initiated by America during the war in Korea in 1950, and operation “Just Cause” from Panama, in 1989. These two examples perfectly demonstrate the critical importance of extensive planning. In this domain superiority will be gained by the one who is best prepared.*

**Keywords:** *Interests, influence, feelings, morale, behaviour, domination.*

### 1. THE CONCEPT OF “PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS”

Everybody knows about the visible part of a conflict, the physical one, but actually it has two parts, the physical and the psychological one. The psychological operations are those types of operations of which purpose is to affect the psychological side of the conflict. Those are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audience, in order to influence the emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and in the end, their behaviour.

*“The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting” [1]*

By influencing the enemy personnel’s behaviour, we can reduce their combat efficiency, and lower their moral. In such circumstances aggressive actions can be discouraged until the point when the enemy will surrender. There are three categories of military psychological operations, strategic, operational and tactical operations.

#### 1.1. Military psychological operations

Military psychological operations are classified as follows according to their importance or magnitude.

#### 1.1.2. Strategic psychological operations

Strategic psychological operations are international information activities conducted in order to influence foreign attitudes, perceptions and behaviour in favour of our forces, or country’s interests during peacetime and during conflict. These activities predominantly take place outside the military arena, and support initiatives such as international counterdrug mass-media programs. This type of operations can be used to influence the world-wide perception when it comes for a specific subject. This operations can be used with no negative outcomes in time of peace.

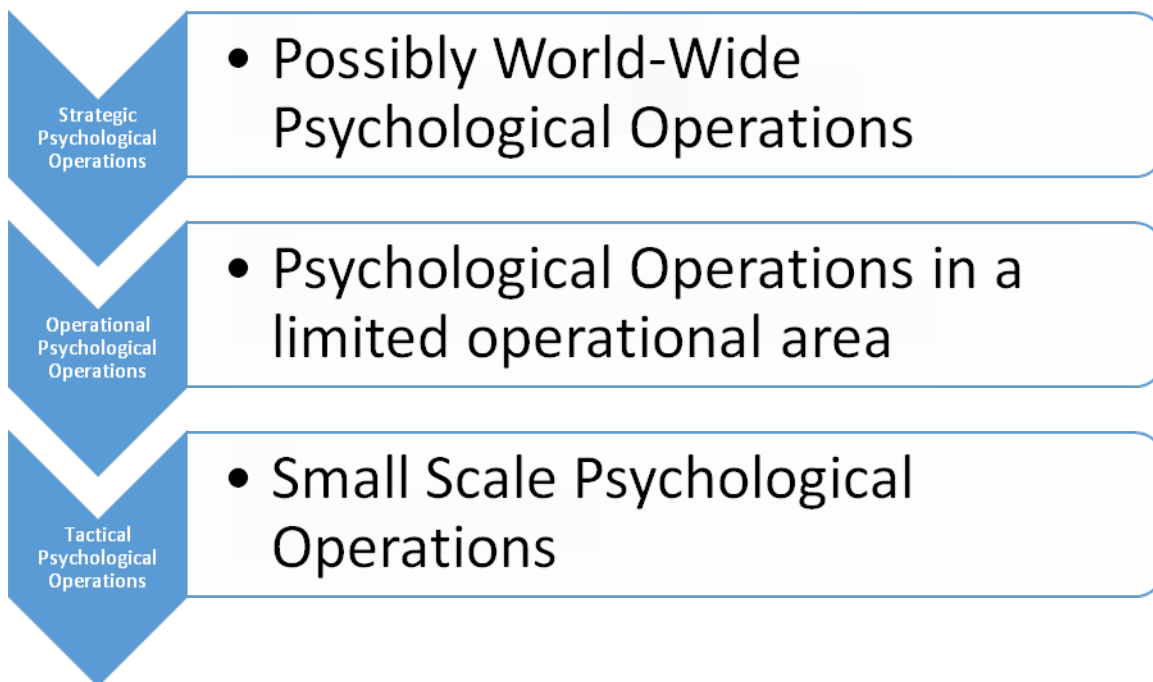
### 1.1.3. Operational psychological operations

Operational psychological operations are conducted across the range of military operations, including during peacetime, in a defined operational area, with the same thing in mind, to promote our interests, and to persuade foreign personnel to submit to our will.

### 1.1.4. Tactical psychological operations

Tactical psychological operations are being conducted in an assigned area, and has the purpose of supporting tactical missions against opposing forces.

All military operations must be planned having in mind these two components, the physical and the psychological one.



Types of psychological operations

In order to be able to influence the perception of others psychological operations are being carried by the usage of mass-media (newspapers, television broadcasts, radio broadcasts, internet), and other ways, as seen fit. When it comes for mass-media, those planning the operations must take in to consideration a whole range of factors. The best way to influence others is to make them think that whatever new idea they have, it is one of theirs. If you succeed, then you have already won the fight, even before it starts.

The first factor, and a very important one is to use, as much as possible the types of media that are compatible with the way foreign populations are accustomed to receiving information. For that outcome there are a few problems that must be studied. Those problems are the type of language, journalistic style, theatre, art, music, visual cues, and media format.

Once these problems are solved then there comes the problem of large scale dissemination. Those attending to this problem will attempt to leverage as many different media as possible to ensure access to all target personnel.

In case of an open conflict, military forces conducting these operations, understand they usually are handling, and to a large extent, controlling, the lives of people who are demoralized, desperate, apprehensive, and distrustful. These emotions can create a volatile atmosphere that is dangerous to the military forces. The psychological operations are conducted in such way that they will have the function of dispelling rumours, create

dialogue, and pacify or indoctrinate designated targets in order to minimize violence, facilitate efficient camp operations, and ensure safe and humanitarian conditions persist.

“If we do go to war, psychological operations are going to be absolutely a critical, critical part of any campaign that we must get involved in.” [2]

## **2. TYPES OF MISSIONS**

The specific missions come as related to the theoretical aspects of the psychological operations, and are specific to their scale and complexity level.

The most complex mission types are those that are at the highest level, strategic operations, because the amount of workhours, manpower and other type of resources is very high. Their effectiveness, if the job is done well is one of the greatest. Like this entire countries can, at least at theoretical level, be indoctrinated in such way that a military intervention in the area, would no longer be necessary. One of the most important resources in this case is time. The bigger the cultural differences between the two countries, the greater is the amount of time required. There is no possibility to reduce the time consumption, because of the fact that, the indoctrination must seem to occur naturally. If things are to be in some way forced, the whole operation will fail and more than that, it will have the opposite effect.

Even if the strategic psychological operations succeed sometimes military presence and classic confrontation, are necessary.

When it comes for influencing such great amount of people attention must be given to each of the fallowing activities, as being so closely related, or intricately involved, in audience impact, civic action, civil affairs, community relations, public information, intelligence, troop behaviour, populace and resources control. At this level, the operations are being sustained by agencies and organizations that must act as pieces of a bigger puzzle in order to ensure the necessary logistic support that is of great importance.

Given all those above we can say that at this level the most important objectives are to prepare the target country's population for the introduction of foreign military forces, to minimize civilian interference with military operations, to capitalize on opponent's defeats, to counter the enemy propaganda and to encourage disaffection of opponent's forces and population.

The next type of psychological operations are those at the operational level, and are operations that, as theory says, are conducted in a defined operational area, with the purpose of supporting military operations in that area. The logistic support can at this level be assured by the navy or by the air force. Broadcast platforms can be installed on airplanes or on ships. The most important objectives, at this level are, to lower the opponent's morale and combat efficiency, to increase the psychological impact of lethal weapons, to support deception operations, to facilitate the occupation of opponent's areas by delivering ultimatums and giving rallying point locations or directions for the cessation of hostilities, to support strategic operations by furnishing timely information on local vulnerabilities that might be used in strategic plans and operations, to give information and directions to friendly forces that are operating in the area, to give direct, specific support to commanders on short notice and to build a favorable image of friendly forces.

The last type of operations, those at tactical level request the least amount of effort and resources and have objectives as to promote a favorable image of allied and friendly forces, to promote the support of key communicators, to enlist the cooperation of the population in restoring order, to reduce support for saboteurs and to promote rebuilding and reorganization of a functional system of government.

### 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS DURING THE WAR IN KOREA

The war in Korea, was a war that caught America and its allies unprepared, because CIA did not believe that North Korea will attack the South Korea or that China will support North Korea.

“While North Korea could take control of parts of the South, it probably does not have the capability to destroy the South Korean government without Soviet or Chinese assistance...” [3].

“There is little Chance of a large-scale Chinese intervention.”[4].

The next day 30,000 Chinese troops entered North Korea. Under these circumstances psychological operations had to be initiated as fast as possible. Psychological operations were used by both sides.

Propaganda was used extensively by both sides during the Korean conflict. Aircraft and artillery delivered United Nations leaflets. B-29 bombers dropped strategic propaganda deep behind enemy lines. Front-line tactical propaganda was dropped by light bombers and spotter aircraft, or fired from 105mm howitzers. More than 20 million leaflets a week were prepared and disseminated by United Nations Forces at the height of the conflict. When the conflict evolved toward its final days loudspeakers were also used in addition to leaflets. The messages used were informing the hostile troops that they would be treated in a godly manner if they surrendered and that it is useless to die for an unjust cause.

“Cease resistance! Come over to the United Nations side. Do not die for nothing! Your safety is absolutely guaranteed! The United Nations will give you good treatment.”[5]

In the end the communist invasion was stopped, this being one of those occasions where even if psychological operations were efficient, a very important military force was also necessary.

### 4. OPERATION “JUST CAUSE”

This operation began on December 20, 1989. Its purpose was to defend a building complex from where the civilian personnel could not be totally evacuated. Therefore the situation had to be solved, if possible, without a fight that would have endangered the lives of civilians.

During the following night the troops got in to position, and using loudspeakers, the enemy troops were warned that any resistance would be useless, facing the strength of the opposition. As demonstration, multiple categories of weapons were used, even 105 howitzers. These actions made the enemy to surrender the next day without firing a single shot.

General Noriega, the enemy leader, fled into a Vatican embassy, the problem being the fact that the military could not assault the embassy. The problem had to be solved without violence, and still in a favorable manner. During the next day, the embassy was surrendered by loudspeakers that played rock music at a deafening level. The effect was that the general, and the staff inside could not withstand the psychological pressure so the general surrendered in a very short amount of time.

### CONCLUSIONS

All the theoretical aspects presented in the first part of this paper are of the utmost importance as the two conflicts presented showed us.

If psychological operations are well prepared and executed they can win battles without firing a single shot, and by doing that, they achieve their maximum potential, but if they are not well prepared, and the involved services make mistakes, then, like it happened in Korea, the psychological operations will not be able to play a major role and the military confrontation will be longer and will cause more casualties on both sides.

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