

THE CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS IN UKRAINIAN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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Abstract: The article analyzes the concept of strategic communications, which appears in the dimension of international security, refers to the task of influencing other participants in strategic interaction through the use of information operations, such as, in particular, electronic warfare, operations in computer networks, military deception to obtain advantages necessary for strategic victory. It is clarified how, under the given scenario of the development of events on the world stage, strategic communications help the international actor to form a clear strategic perspective and strengthen its own effectiveness in terms of improving existing and forming new networks of international interaction, which provides new opportunities for achieving national goals and realizing national interests. It has been studied that in the Ukrainian scientific space, strategic communications represent an important component of managing complex social systems, such as the state, ministries, administrative regions, international organizations, business corporations, political and public structures, financial institutions, etc. Also, in scientific intelligence, attention is paid to strategic communications as an integrated use of various communication tools to promote and protect the interests of the system in the long term, in accordance with its mission and strategic goals.

Keywords: strategic communications; security; scientists; Ukraine; Russia; information and communication technologies.

1 Introduction

Researchers believe that the revival of research on the topic of strategic communications in Ukraine is largely the result of the “hybrid war” unleashed in 2014 by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the entire civilized world. From the moment of the actual and formal collapse of the USSR until the present time, there has been a civilizational confrontation between Ukraine and Russia, “own-alien”, connected with Ukraine's historical desire for independence and Russia's efforts to restore the world hegemony lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the Russian strategy, Ukraine occupies a key place: without its complete subordination to Russia, the successful continuation of the aggressive foreign course of the Russian Federation, according to many practicing politicians and political scientists, is impossible. The main goal of Russian aggression against Ukraine is the actual transformation of Ukraine into a satellite of Russia while preserving the formal political independence of Ukraine. Since 2014, Russia has chosen special operations in the informational, political, spiritual, and economic spheres as the main means of achieving its goal, which were to provide cover for Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, to cause a technical collapse in certain sectors of Ukraine's economy, and to promote the change of political elites in certain countries of the West and international organizations loyal to Russia [25].

Russia uses a different spectrum of strategic communications, manipulation and disinformation for its aggressive aims: the use of the mythologemes of the so-called “Russian world” and the promotion of the image of the “other/alien”, the “European enemy”; collaborative activity of pro-Russian parties in Ukraine; historical narratives; the religious factor; manipulation of the language issue; violations of information hygiene and disinformation in the information space of Ukraine, etc. [16].

Namely the search for effective methods of repelling the aggressor forced Ukraine and other international actors, who have already felt the aggressive pressure of Russian neo-imperialism, to improve the ways and mechanisms of internal and external strategic communications. It is, in particular, about the neutralization of informational influences of the Russian Federation, which destabilize international relations and international information content, bring significant outrage to the international and domestic picture of strategic communications, the world and regional “agenda”. Namely from this position, the

study of the issue of strategic communications is extremely important.

2 Materials and Method

In the second half of the 2010s, new and interesting publications were published that investigate issues of strategic communication between the EU and Ukraine. Thus, in 2018, the collective monograph “Strategic Partnership in International Relations” [19] was published, in 2019 - the monograph “Strategic Communications in International Relations” [18], in 2020 - the monograph “Global Trends in International Relations” [3]. Conceptual and applied aspects of strategic communications as an innovative tool in the field of international relations are explored in these thorough editions; the role of strategic communications in the practice of diplomatic activity of leading international actors and Ukraine is analyzed. The author's team consists of well-known scientists who work in various scientific and educational institutions of Ukraine, namely the Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, the National Institute of Strategic Studies, the Information Security Service of the NSDC Apparatus of Ukraine, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, etc.

Today, strategic communications still remain a complex concept that is in the process of acquiring content in various vectors. The problems of strategic communications were studied by such researchers as B. Hamilton, S. Tatham, K. Paul. Among the Ukrainian researchers whose studies we will focus on below are V. Bebyk, D. Dubov, S. Danylenko, V. Kopyyka, E. Makarenko, I. and G. Mingazutdinov, M. Ozhevan, N. Pipchenko, E. Tikhomirova, O. Shevchenko, and others. Their works are mostly devoted to general issues of the development of the strategic communications system, or to specific components. This study was carried out as part of research by scientists of the Faculty of International Relations, who present this article, during the 2022-2025 project “Strategic communications of the European Union: countering destructive influences” (ERASMUS+ JEAN MONNET MODULE No. 101047033 - EUSCCDI - ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI -TCH-RSCH). “Strategic Communications of the European Union: Combating Destructive Influences” (ERASMUS + JEAN MONNET MODULE No. 101047033 - EUSCCDI - ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI-TCH-RSCH).

The purpose of this article is to investigate the importance of scientific substantiation of the emergence and use of strategic communications in the context of information security of the state. We see this issue as extremely relevant in connection with Russia's hybrid (military-information) war against Ukraine.

3 Results and Discussion

The concept of strategy in modern international relations has a multidisciplinary meaning, whereas once upon a time, the concept of strategy was used more in the context of analyzing the course of military operations. One of the most popular definitions of strategy was presented by K. von Clausewitz, for whom strategy is “...a way of combining existing goals and available resources ... to obtain a certain benefit” [2]. Foreign policy strategy is a state's vision of its current position in the system of international relations, as well as its desired future role, a vision of the priorities of interaction with other participants in international relations, the main spheres of activity and priority ways of implementing foreign policy. The goals of such a strategy depend on the political regime of the state and the form of its government, as well as depend on the economy, geographical location, history, traditions and culture of the state, on interaction and relations with other participants in international relations. The implementation of the foreign policy strategy belongs to the competence of specialized state bodies, institutions of the Ministry of Foreign Policy and Defense, systems of diplomatic and consular institutions, as well as trade, scientific, cultural missions, etc. [23].

The concept of foreign policy strategy can also be characterized as “the art of managing social processes” or as “the art of managing something based on correct and long-term forecasts”. A characteristic feature of such a strategy, according to V. Vlasov, is: “a well-thought-out concept of the space and time ratio of forces and means, which the state possesses and which it can freely maneuver; determination of key stages in achieving the main goals; awareness of the specifics of each stage of action and its advantages and disadvantages”. Among the main tasks of the foreign policy strategy, there is the vocation to determine the principled positions of the state on cardinal, long-term, global and regional issues of international relations, namely: issues of war and peace, long-term plans of the state's foreign policy activities, the main directions of foreign policy. The foreign policy strategy uses different methods of achieving its goals (peaceful and non-peaceful); it chooses fundamental areas of cooperation and confrontation, and also creates ways of developing relations with leading states [17, 18, 24].

The foreign policy strategy of the state is a system of large-scale political decisions made by the country's leadership. These decisions determine the direction of the state's foreign policy and the perspective of its development. The main task of the foreign policy strategy is to ensure the implementation of national-state interests in the field of international relations.

Today, the search for an answer is focused on the large-scale and intensive implementation of the concept of “strategic communications” in the practice of information work of state bodies, which is already enshrined in official documents (in particular, in the Military Doctrine of Ukraine). In 2015, the roadmap of the Strategic Communications Partnership Program between Ukraine and NATO was signed. There are scientific and educational events devoted to the problems of strategic communications in the conditions of hybrid warfare.

The very concept of “strategic communications”, at least in American military thought and practice, has undergone a long period of reflection and was defined differently at different stages. For example, mentions of the concept of “strategic communications” can be found in research documents of the US Army College in 1966, although the term itself was used earlier. However, then it was about “strategic communications” in the context of ensuring a strategic level of communication during large-scale military conflicts, including nuclear ones. It is interesting that as early as 2002–2003, the practice of using the term “strategic communications” in this way was preserved in the American army, although discussions had already taken place and the first state organizational decisions were made, specifying this term in its modern interpretation.

In 2004, the Defense Research Council of the US Department of Defense prepared a new report that clearly articulates the term “strategic communications” – “Final Report of the Task Force of the Defense Research Council on Strategic Communications”. In it, strategic communications are defined as “a variety of tools used by a state to generate understanding of global relations and cultures, to engage in a dialogue of ideas between people and institutions, to advise decision-makers, diplomats, and military leaders on what the political decisions and influencing attitudes and behavior through communicative strategies consequences will be for public opinion”.

The creation and implementation of a strategic communications system in the security and defense sector of Ukraine is determined by Presidential Decree No. 92/2016 dated March 14, 2016 “On the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine” dated March 4, 2016 “On the Concept of the Development of the Security and Defense Sector of Ukraine” [10], by the Concept of Strategic Communications of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which was approved by the order of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine dated 22.11.2017 No. 612. The document states that “coordinated and timely application of strategic communications is of crucial importance in countering threats in the information space, becomes a source of active dissemination of information in mass media and response to the spread of false information” [10].

Important documents are the Order of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine dated February 5, 2016 No. 47 “On some measures to ensure the openness of the work process of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, its bodies, People's Deputies of Ukraine and the Apparatus of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine”, which, in order to create favorable conditions for the implementation of Declaration of the openness of the parliament and improvement of the quality of Ukrainian parliamentarism by implementing measures, aimed at ensuring transparency and predictability in the activities of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, its bodies, people's deputies of Ukraine and the Apparatus of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, created the Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration of the Openness of the Parliament and the composition of the Monitoring Committee on the Declaration openness of the parliament. Its purpose is to ensure more transparent work of the parliament and the involvement of citizens in the parliamentary processes in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of the Openness of the Parliament [9]. Decree of the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine dated November 21, 2017 No. 486 “On additional measures to implement the Declaration of the Openness of the Parliament”, approved the Communication Strategy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for 2017-2021 should also be mentioned [7].

The sphere of application of strategic communications – information security of society – is the possibility of seamless realizations of their rights, connected with the opportunity of quick receiving, creation, and dissemination of information by society and its individual parts, as well as the extent of their protection from destructive information influence.

Information policy - the activities of the state and its citizens in the field of production, distribution, exchange, protection of information, and its use in management processes - is designed to contribute to information security as much as possible. State information policy is an important component of the country's foreign and domestic policy and covers all spheres of society's life. The rapid development of the information sphere is accompanied by the appearance of fundamentally new threats to the interests of the individual, society, the state and its national security [15].

Information security is considered by scientists as a component of the country's national security, as well as a global problem of information protection, information space, information sovereignty of the country and information support for government decision-making. Approaches are proposed to ensure the continuity of the state's information security system in order to monitor new threats, identify risks and levels of their intensity. The biggest threat to information security is hybrid wars – wars that combine fundamentally different types and ways of conducting it, which are used in a coordinated manner to achieve the set goals. Typical of hybrid warfare is the use of both classical methods of warfare, irregular armed formations, as well as other forms and methods of inflicting significant losses on the enemy, including manipulation, disinformation, hacker attacks, interference in the information space, gatekeeping, and spin doctoring.

Since the role of information resources for people growth every day, and the level of enhancement and use of information and communication technologies raises and determines the modern way of life, it becomes evident that the problem of information security requires continuous and greater attention to itself. The work of many scientists is devoted to the study of methodological aspects of national information security – in particular, the works of E. Belyaev, M. Buklenko, C. Grynyaev, O. Danilyan, O. Dziobyan, G. Yemelyanov, V. Lopatin, O. Pozdnyakov, L. Cergienko, V. Tsygankova, M. Chechnokov, O. Babkina, V. Bebyk, V. Bekh, V. Horbatenko, A. Dugin, O. Zaclavskaya, and other researchers. The development of theoretical and methodological principles for the study of mass communication, the concept of information society is presented in the works of D. Bell, O. Toffler, K. Boulding, Z. Brzezinski, J. Halbreit, R. Aron, Yu. Habermas, M. McLuhan, etc.

V. Kopyyka should be noted among domestic scientists and researchers of foreign policy and strategic communications. He offers his own vision of strategic communications in international relations. He believes that the modern logic of the formation of a new world order is supported by information and communication, and the new international practice is aimed at modeling the surrounding social environment inside and outside the national territory. This goal generates sustainable communication strategies that should change the behavior or attitude to the situation in other actors at the level of communication as a mode of social management [5].

In turn, T. Sivak examines the international experience of forming and using strategic communications as a tool for implementing internal and external policies, the experience of using strategic communications in the EU and NATO, and determines the main aspects of their institutionalization. The scientist proves that public diplomacy, as a component of strategic communications, is an effective tool for the implementation of foreign state policy, implementation of international relations and open political dialogue. Strategic communications, both in interstate organizations and unions, and in individual countries, is ensured through appropriate legal, structural, and organizational support, a clearly defined goal, direction, and a developed strategy [17].

Studying the history, doctrine and practice of US strategic communications, E. Makarenko pays special attention to the conceptual foundations of strategic communications in the American scientific discourse: theories of international systems; theories of international order; theories of international security; theories of communication and communicativistics. The researcher emphasizes that the effectiveness and modernity of the tools of strategic communications compels the USA to include them in the foreign and security policy and national program documents for the representation of the state in international interaction, since at the moment namely innovative communication technologies contribute to ensuring international and national interests in today's turbulent world. Makarenko turns to consideration of the national idea as a tool of destructive strategic communications. Destructive strategic communications are characterized by the researcher as tendentially directed propaganda content against critically important areas of life and functioning of the international community, dangerous due to its impact on mass consciousness, which necessitates the creation of an international countermeasure mechanism and prevention of information and propaganda interference in the activities of international actors within the framework of political competence of international and national institutions [6].

E. Tikhomirova analyzes the priorities of strategic communications in the field of EU foreign and security policy. She claims that the specifics of the strategic communications of ISIS and Russia require countermeasures by individual European StratComs, which are already active in the Arab and Eastern regions of the European Neighborhood Policy, as well as the expansion of dialogue, cooperation and coordination of EU and NATO actions in the field of strategic communications in the Eastern and Southern directions [21, 22].

O. Shevchenko emphasizes the EU's strategic communications regarding climate change. The researcher claims that the majority of European information campaigns within the framework of strategic communications on climate change are focused on explaining to target audiences the causes, threats, and consequences of global climate change, models of behavior and actions that make it possible to adapt and mitigate negative climate consequences. She defines the leadership of the EU in this matter and emphasizes the need for more active involvement of the public of other European countries - non-EU members, especially in conducting information work in these states and raising awareness of the climate goals defined by the Paris Agreement and recorded in the main strategic documents of the EU [13, 14].

I. Mingazutdinov and G. Mingazutdinova analyze the strategic communications of European countries: Great Britain, France, Germany. Scientists conclude that the management of information

for the purpose of forming public opinion within the country is a strategic approach to the coverage of important public information, with the help of which state governments manage communications to influence the target audience (citizens) and shape their attitude to the agenda in the field of international relations and social and political existence, and changes in the field of resources for the implementation of strategic communications in Western Europe may in the long run lead to changes in the implementation of state policy as a whole. Scientists claim that for the countries of Western Europe, in this regard, the implementation of collective security measures within the framework of the structures of the European Union, as well as at the level of individual security of the EU member states, is fundamental [4].

Foreign policy, economic and security aspects of the strategic communications of the People's Republic of China were studied by V. Bebyk. The scientist emphasized the special role of the CPC Central Committee in general and, in particular, the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, which cooperates with leaders of public opinion (past and future) and foreign mass media, which in the conditions of the formation of a global information society become increasingly influential. The scientist notes that there is systematic coordination of the activities of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People's Republic of China, which plan and coordinate their activities to protect China's national information space and active information and influence work abroad, providing informational support for China's global leadership in today's international environment.

N. Pipchenko studied the strategic communications of Ukraine and concluded that communication technologies can become an effective mechanism for establishing communication between the government and citizens, a tool for managing public opinion, and a means of organizing the actions of supporters of various political, social, or cultural preferences, which will contribute to effective state management at all levels. This will contribute to the fulfillment of the key tasks of Ukraine's foreign policy and the maintenance of a sufficient level of the country's defense capability due to the creation of modern means of response and prevention of global informational threats [11, 12].

S. Danylenko expertly analyzes the concept of strategic communications. The researcher believes that the efforts of professional societies, which unite specialists in the field of communications, as well as representatives of higher educational institutions, state institutions, including central state authorities, on this issue should be directed, first of all, to the revision of normative acts, that regulate the educational process in higher education, with the aim of properly representing among the list of fields of knowledge and specialties those that ensure the development of the field of communications. This, in his opinion, will provide an opportunity to update the system of training of communication specialists in higher education in accordance with market and state administration requirements and will strengthen the role of communication specialists at the state level [1, 18, 19].

4 Conclusion

The gradual formation of the information society in Ukraine presents for its political agenda many questions related to the peculiarities of the functioning of the political system. The most relevant among them are the prospects for the formation of new forms of democracy caused by changes in the nature, forms, and quality of the political process and the reduction of the distance between citizens and political institutions with the help of new principles and technologies of the functioning of political communication systems. Taking into account the fact that the integration of new information technologies and approaches into the functioning procedure of traditional political institutions is potentially capable of ensuring the democracy' adoption of more effective political decisions and increasing the legitimacy of democracy as a political regime, the problem of democracy' acquiring new qualitative characteristics that allow it to be

evaluated as an informational one is being actualized in political science. An important factor in this process is the information openness of the government, which transforms communication, in a broad sense, from a necessary tool for the exercise of power into a powerful resource, the absence of which takes the subject of power out of the competitive political field. Strategic communications are vitally important for the national security of any state and its foreign policy; therefore, much attention is paid to this topic in both academic and governmental circles. The scientists also formulated the elements that constitute the core of the strategic communications system: public diplomacy, public relations (public affairs), international broadcasting services (it is interesting that in another part of the same report, "international broadcasting services" are actually replaced by another element – "open military information operations"), information (including psychological) operations that are well coordinated among themselves. Undoubtedly, the researchers came to the opinion that it is necessary to raise the level of strategic communications issues in the general decision-making system regarding national security as much as possible. For this, it is necessary to carefully study and improve strategic communications.

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AD, AO, KA