



Considering Information War

OE Watch Commentary: As the Russian General Staff studies the nature and role of information war, their military science discipline considers that information war may be best understood as being outside the military sphere and impacting the nature of war itself. In the current volume of the Russian General Staff Academy's journal, *Vestnik*, the authors, V.K. Novikov and C.B. Golubchikov, claim that the "information age is changing the essence and content of modern war."

The article defines information war in this way: "Information war is an extension of a country's politics that consists of purposeful, comprehensive, and methodical informational impacts against foreign information targets in order to achieve political, economic, territorial, national, religious and other goals with minimal loss of life and physical damage and without occupation of foreign soil while protecting its own information sources." In the Russian military, definitions have a doctrinal quality to guide operational developments. The article goes on to say, "The main goal of information wars is to gain control over the minds of individuals and society as a whole and impose upon them the will of the victorious side."

Reiterated throughout the article is a theme of US and Western contrivance and dominance in information war. The article also catalogs instances of information war that occurred outside the Western bloc. China, for instance, is noted as carrying out information war in Thailand in 2014. Overall, the authors calculate that information war events took place in 39 countries since 1991 with an 81 percent success rate. While this sort of analysis is consistent with the Academy's empirical rigor and feeds calculations for correlation of forces, it is also significant that analysis of Russian information war actions is missing. Such data might be considered classified, however.

The article concludes that information war is an alternative to conventional war... "to impose reflexive governance..." The authors state that "In the modern world, such military terms as 'operation', 'battle' and 'combat' often cannot be applied to describe processes occurring to resolve conflicts, particularly political, economic, territorial, national, and religious. Those notions no longer fully correspond to today's realities and hinder the development of the armed forces' capabilities and forms and methods of their application." Elsewhere, the authors argue that "Informational-psychological aspects of war should not be regarded as complementary to conventional weapons or cyberwar."

The authors conclude by suggesting that, in the long term, the key to successful information war will be personnel training. In the short term, they recommend a list of amendments to Russian federal regulations and policy as well as assessing secondary school education with a view to the information war threat. Overall, this article shows that even as Russia is conducting information war, its military is still working out its place in military science. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wilhelm, Vainer)**

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Source: В.К. Новиков, С.В. Голубчиков, Вестник, "," Вестник, 3 (60), 2017, стр. 10-16. (V.K. Novikov and S.V. Golubchikov, "Color Revolutions in Russia: Possibility and Reality," *Vestnik*, 3 (60) 2017, pp. 10-16).

Today mankind is entering a new technological stage, an information stage, that is moving from embryonic phase and actively entering its growth phase. This information stage is changing the essence and content of modern war. In other words, humanity is entering the phase of information war, which has already become a reality. This technological stage stimulates the development of multiple forms of informational-psychological impact on individual and social levels in order to direct the impetus in the needed direction.

Perceived Western domination in such areas as nano-, bio-, information telecommunications technology-, communication-, energy engineering, and science in general, based on new technological principles, results in US and Western superiority in all other aspects of human activity and creates favorable conditions for various activities including information wars.