Information and Communication Technologies in the Implementation of Foreign Policy Strategy of the United States

Abstract

The article discusses innovative information and communication tools of influence used in foreign policy of the United States of America. The author examines the practice of modern technologies application in achieving of «global leadership» as the main strategic priority of the United States. The widespread use of software, high-tech computer equipment, and electronic payment systems of American manufacturing has formed in developing countries a kind of «digital dependency» from a geopolitical hegemon. Control over social resources of the Internet, indirectly carried out by the US authorities through a network of non-profit organizations, allows to generate the global information agenda and control the political behavior of citizens throughout the world. In these conditions, Russia should not only defend its digital sovereignty, but also develop its own information and communication capacities.

Key words: «soft power», foreign policy, US politics, the manipulative political technologies.

Author

Feldman Pavel Yakovlevich

Ph. D. in Political Science,
Associate Professor,
Department of Philosophy
and Political Science,
Academy of Labour and Social Relations
(Moscow, Russia).

In modern post-industrial society the major factor of strategic superiority in the military-political sphere is the so-called «smart power», combining diplomatic, scientific and technological, cultural and informational aspects of the impact. Identifiable by the expert community the transformation of the cold war into the «hybrid» war forces to reconsider the approaches of geopolitical domination factors detecting. Under these conditions, with high probability it can be stated that there is a blurring of the boundaries between military and information technology capabilities of the countries. National security of modern Russia requires the evaluation of the corresponding potential of the leading global powers. At the same time, due to the objective circumstances, the most attention should be focused on the United States.

During the last 25 years, the United States has accumulated a considerable potential in the information technology, which is used to

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ensure global leadership. Most of American IT products and social innovations have not only commercial, but also political and military purpose. Due to the fact that a significant share of the global market of computer hardware, software, Internet technologies owned by American companies, the government and special services of the USA get ample opportunities in the sphere of control of global communication processes. Moreover, America is the world's largest manufacturer and supplier of information. The leadership in the field of science, technology and innovation was identified as one of the strategic goals in The National Security Doctrine of the USA 2015. This program document notes that « the scientific discoveries and technological innovations are major drivers of global leadership, which ensures the US supremacy in the military sphere, promotes economic development, improves the quality of life of the citizens» [8].

At the end of XX — beginning of XXI century computer equipment and software (including antivirus) of American production has received the extremely wide spread. These products are equally in demand by private users, companies and governmental agencies that provide the technological presence of the USA in almost every office of the world. This opens up the opportunities for American corporations and other structures of potential access to personal data of the users and to information of political-military values. Thus, the United States get the opportunity not only of collecting and processing of secret information, but also of forming the «digital addiction» from their products in other countries. The awareness of this fact has already come to the Chinese authorities and they, for security reasons, had banned state procurement of Microsoft, Apple, Symantec devices and software. Faced with sanctions policy, in 2014 Russia decreased state procurement of Windows system 4.4 times. It is highly possible, that in order to ensure the information sovereignty of Russia, there will be prohibited by law to purchase some certain types of

American IT products at the expense of the state funds.

Innovative development of the infrastructure of the American economy has given the US the ability to track and coordinate global financial flows. The servers of the largest payment systems Visa, MasterCard, American Express, located on the American territory, accumulate data about transactional operations around the world. Since 2001, the US government under the pretext of combating terrorism got the access to the information database of the payment system SWIFT. USA occupies the leading position in the field of virtual commerce: the American services of PayPal, eBay, Google Wallet, Apple Pay carry out a significant proportion of the international trade transactions online. This allows the US to exert political pressure on other countries, threatening them with the disabling of payment systems and services. Similar pressure was felt by Russia in 2014–2015.

Digital power of the United States is largely stipulated by the rapid development of the Internet, which was originally created by American specialists for military purposes and only in early 1990-s became available to ordinary users. Dominating in the global network, according to the Doctrine of the National Security of the United States, is no less a priority than the control of cosmic, water and air spaces. At the same time, America considers the preservation of its global Internet leader status, providing access to cyberspace for all inhabitants of the Earth as its geopolitical mission. Of course, such a goal setting is not so much a humanistic reason, but a desire to involve the largest possible number of people in the field of information influence of the United States, which today the «global web» is. Extremely popular American Internet services indirectly contribute to the improvement of the external image of the country, and, consequently, the growth of political influence of the United States on the world stage.

Military-political interests of the U. S. government are closely intertwined with the commercial interests of the corporations

and numerous NCOs. International nonprofit organization ICANN, established with the active participation of the US government and based in Los Angeles, serves as the main regulator of the Internet, monitoring issues related to assignment of domain names and the allocation of IP addresses worldwide. The enormous potential of «soft» cultural and information influence embodies socially oriented products of such companies as Google, Yahoo, Facebook etc. Search sites, mail services and social networks do not come under national media laws, although provide its users with news content. Thanks to the popularity of these resources, USA makes shape of the global information agenda and broadcast their political values around the world. Moreover, such services collect information about user search queries, often violating the principle of confidentiality of personal data. Spy scandals of recent years suggest that personal information from the Internet often falls into the hands of US intelligence service. In particular, some Apple gadgets and services has been repeatedly criticized by experts and human rights defenders, for accumulating in virtual storage data on their users and if necessary, providing them to the US authorities.

America outpaced other countries and started to apply Web 2.0 technology to manage the informal communities' network around the world that became a true revolution in the field of virtual political communication. Such resources as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, involved millions of people in the process of online socialization. The impact of social networks on political processes was clearly demonstrated during the so-called «Arab spring», when they succeeded in dismantling the legitimacy of regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, etc. Moreover, the use of Web 2.0 technologies contribute much to the cultural expansion of the United States, because social networks provide a «fertile environment» for the propagation of pseudo-values and cultivation of a surrogate of Western individualism in the societies of a traditional type.

«Wiki technologies» are widely used for the purpose. The largest net encyclopedia Wikipedia is owned by California's «charity organization», today claims to be the main source of knowledge for ordinary Internet users around the world. Such communication innovations open wide possibilities for application of technologies of «color revolutions» and «controlled chaos».

Innovative manipulative techniques are actively developed by The Defence Advanced Research Agency of the Department of Defence (DARPA). Nowadays, the Agency implements control mechanisms for the perception and interpretation of political information of the individuals. This method, combining the latest achievements of neurobiology and communication studies, is based on the generation of specific narratives (news reports, videos, statements), which are able to guide human thought on a programmed path. By using this technology in the Internet and mass media, an artificial virtual political reality is created, claiming for objectivity and truth. Thus, the pseudo history, answering American geopolitical interests, is created with Ukrainian neo-Nazis as fighters for democratic values, and Russia as the aggressor and the threat to the Western civilization.

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The application of Web 2.0 technologies in combination with mechanisms of narrative manipulation gradually transforms the social services in the Internet into the «narrative network» exercising ideological control over their users. It is obvious that information and technological capability of the United States is easily converted into political capability and the informational leadership endows the US government with a «monopoly on truth».

In the beginning of XXI century, the United States with a wide arsenal of innovative technologies try to turn the global information space into the area of its military-political influence. In these conditions, Russia needs to develop a system of adequate countermeasures aimed at providing technological, political, cultural and informational sovereignty. The thing of the absolute necessity is the comprehensive import substitution of American IT-products and software (especially in the public sector), as well as the dynamic development of national online services, payment systems and means of mass communication.

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