

«DRAGONS» AND «CHIMERAS» OF HYBRID WARS

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Abstract: Review of the book by Egorchenkov D.A., Danyuk N.S. Hybrid Dragon and Chimera of War. Moscow, UNITY-DANA Publ., 2019. 367 p. (in Russian)

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«Hybridization» is one of the main characteristics of the changes taking place in world politics. The «ideal storm» of the world political organization, the likelihood of a new Cold War, the rapid growth of local conflicts and the destruction of nation-states are global trends that are under scrutiny of research [1]. Under the increasing international tensions, the term «hybridization» is increasingly used to characterize the processes of «reorganization of social spaces and the emergence of mixed forms of cooperation and trans-local cultures» [1, p. 7]. In social and scientific discourse, «hybridity» is increasingly being blocked with tools and mechanisms of «hard power», shaping the phenomenon of «hybrid wars». Initially a systematic study of this phenomenon appeared in the United States and, up to a certain point, it was a prerogative of the military. Currently, the issue of «hybrid wars» is becoming relevant and in demand in the Russian political science. It is indicative that young researchers have shown particular interest in the study of methods and practices of conducting hybrid wars, as well as its concomitant «fakes» and «chimeras».

The book by D.A. Egorchenkov and N.S. Danyuk is an attempt to comprehensively analyze such phenomena as «hybrid warfare» and «hybrid threat». As its known, hybrid warfare (GW) implies «the convergence of the physical and psychological, kinetic and non-kinetic, combatants and non-combatants» [2, p. 34]; «The use of military and non-military means in an «integrated campaign» aimed at achieving a surprise effect,

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at seizing the initiative and obtaining both psychological and physical advantages using diplomatic means»¹.

The authors are supporters of the «hybrid warfare» concept that is combining unconventional forms of confrontation, the purpose of which is to undermine the enemy-state from the inside, without using any military force, at least not at the first stage. In their opinion, the GW has a global, transboundary nature and is carried out in the form of a complex external pressure in order to stimulate instability within the targeted state. Under GW conditions, «strikes» are directed against all external and internal areas of the vital activities of States, including the political, socio-economic and spiritual spheres. As tools and mechanisms of hybrid warfare, the authors are considering political destructive technologies, «color revolutions» as «modern practices of state coups» [4, p. 27], ideological attacks, economic and sanction pressure, information wars, the use of terrorism and extremism. In the world we live in, «war is a dragon ... war is Chimera, whose modern image is far from the canonical description, because the head and neck of the lion is personified in terrorism and extremism, the goat's body has been turned into a financial and economic pressure, the tail of the snake are «color revolutions», and the fire erupting from the mouth became a cultural-informational aggression» (p. 10). Young scientists – representatives of the Institute of Strategic Studies and Forecasts (ICIF) of RUDN – thoroughly analyze the aforementioned manifestations of hybrid wars using specific examples.

«An integral part of the hybrid war ... is the information warfare; in a broader context – information-psychological warfare. Its main task is to suppress the enemy's (a geopolitical and geo-economic competitor) will to resist and force them undertake actions in favor of the information-psychological aggressor» [3, p. 5-6]. It is not by chance that information-psychological operations (IPO) are being actively used by the world politics leading actors in order to achieve their economic and political goals.

According to the authors, information warfare is a complex «tool of asserting controlled socio-psychological impact on the society as a whole and on each individual separately in the enemy country in order to change psychological characteristics in the desired direction for the influencing party (views, opinions, worldview, values, attitudes, stereotypes)» (p. 124). A key feature of such warfare is the hidden nature of the attacks. Informational attacks are a serious threat, since they contribute to internal division and weaken the morale of the population, as a result of which, in the case of a direct external threat, the population is not capable of mobilizing and implementing a consolidated resistance. IPO can lead to irreversible consequences: complete disruption of the State governance system and informational chaos.

As a case of informational-psychological aggression directed from the outside, the scientists are exploring the political crisis in Ukraine in the 2013-2014. The book highlights three stages of the information campaign during the implementation of the coup

¹ The Military Balance 2015. IISS. URL: <https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance/the-military-balance-2015> (accessed: 29.03.2019).

d'état – the «color revolution» scenario. The first stage refers to the highly intensive financial injections into the so-called «independent» media, as a result of which a media pool is formed, ready to fulfill directives to discredit the government and stimulate protest moods. The second stage – the corruptly hired media reinforce in the public mind the «chimera» about the rightness of their actions manifested in destructive and aggressive protests. The third stage is the legitimization of the results of the coup d'état. Considering the widespread practice of «color revolutions», it can be argued that in the context of further hybridization of world politics, the focus of actions will increasingly shift towards IPO, allowing for the interested party to achieve its goals without launching the «hot» conflict phase. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that not every IPO allows solving all the tasks set by its initiators and sponsors. In this case, the IPO is an «advanced cognitive preparation work prior to open armed conflict» [3, p. 5].

The authors are convinced that in the conditions of the information war launched by the West against Russia, Moscow should perceive information attacks as a threat coming during a conventional war. Therefore, it is necessary to actively develop mechanisms of counteraction to destructive information and misinformation, which is aggressively imposed from the outside both on Russian society within the country and on the Russian diaspora beyond its borders, which is a direct threat to its national security and sovereignty.

Of all the tools of a hybrid war, international terrorism and extremism are the most horrific «dragons». The book thoroughly describes how terrorism has already become part of a hybrid war, analyzing the process of how the leading actors of world politics are using international Islamist terrorist organizations, starting with Al-Qaida and the Taliban, created with the direct involvement of the CIA to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and ending with the «Islamic State». The West prefers to call ISIS, the Front of En-Nusra and other terrorist Islamist organizations «the democratic moderate opposition», as long as they realize its goals. In Syria, Afghanistan, Libya and other states, terrorist groups of extremists are used to destabilize large spaces, to eliminate specific political regimes, while terrorists in the world media are represented as «freedom fighters».

No less interesting is the section devoted to the analysis of implementation of destructive political technologies used to change political regimes. It is noteworthy that authors have revealed a close relationship not only between the «color» revolutions of the last 20 years, but also with the events of the Cold War period. The events in question are Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1981. The comparison of «color» and «velvet» revolutions is relevant both from a scientific and practical point of view. The method is the same, the technic of execution is different. What messengers can do today was carried out by word of mouth in the late 1980s. The main conclusion of the authors is as follows: the so-called democratization of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe was not an objective historical process, but, on the one hand, it was the result of the planned activities of the Western intelligence services to destroy

the socialist bloc. On the other hand, this process was initiated by a part of the Soviet elite, who were perusing their own tasks.

As for the collapse of the socialist bloc under outside influence, the book provides an analysis of the whole complex of subversive activities. These include the creation of anti-communist, anti-soviet and russophobic bourgeois-nationalist groups that acted both within Eastern European countries and worked with diasporas in Western states; extensive studies in closed research institutes of psychology and social expectations of citizens of the target country; the creation of vast agent networks in each country; use of economic sanctions, etc.

Today we are witnessing the intensification of «all new destructive scenarios in which sometimes insignificant events (anti-constitutional actions of small groups, sabotage and subversive activities of an extremist and terrorist nature, etc.) with the assistance of political agents on the ground (for example, middle and upper echelons of power) and heated media-protest masses are transformed artificially into events of a nationwide scale» (p. 69).

Sanctions and various kinds of financial restrictions — the «chimeras» of hybrid warfare — have always been used as coercive methods. Restrictions may apply to economic, political, diplomatic and other fields of activity. The authors analyzed in detail the economic pressure that was put on Russia, Yugoslavia, Iran and North Korea, and concluded that financial and economic pressure is not effective by itself. Of course, with the help of sanctions, the economy of a state or region can be weakened, but achieving one's goals without using the most destructive political technologies that are very conveniently superimposed on a particular country experiencing unfavorable social situation is virtually impossible. For example, the use of sanctions as a coercive instrument on Iran since 1979 after the Islamic revolution has not yielded the desired result for the US. Iran has not changed its political discourse. The same outcome was achieved as a result of the use of sanctions as a coercive instrument against the USSR, and then against Russia. Therefore, a comprehensive toolkit of subversive actions had to be utilized.

It should be noted that «the overtness in formulating the task aimed to preserve global domination with the use of all available tools has to rely on the established ideological basis» (p. 61). Therefore, for effective countermeasures to sanctions, it is necessary to act not only in the field of foreign policy, but also domestically. The authors emphasized social and economic measures, but especially some necessary efforts in education – the creation of «active patriotism» within the society.

In today's postmodern world Fernand Braudel's words that «capitalism only triumphs when it becomes identified with the state» best explain, according to the authors, the US policy of promotion the idea of «a world without borders», to undermine the international legal system and facilitate the practice of «humanitarian interventions» and the implementation of other aggressive actions (p. 54). Only strong states can resist such a hegemonic policy. Authors are optimistic about the future. They are convinced that, having gone through trial and error, and external threats and provoca-

tions, the Russian Federation has embarked on a sustainable trajectory of national development. Despite the unfavorable influence of the «aggressively obedient majority»², which still supports Washington, Russia will be able to protect itself and its allies from the «dragons» and «chimeras» of hybrid wars.

The book under review is not only a serious scientific study, but also a sharply polemical text, which, of course, will cause both positive responses and disagreement. The book itself should be considered as a vivid example of the Russia's political and information resistance against the West. The authors should be praised as selfless warriors fighting dragons and chimeras in a brave new world of hybrid warfare.

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«ДРАКОНЫ» И «ХИМЕРЫ» ГИБРИДНЫХ ВОЙН

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² A term, used by Yuriy Afanaseyev, USSR Deputy, member of the Interregional Deputies Group, addressing the delegates voting for the Presidium at the First Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in 1989.

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