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ESZTER TÓTH1

Preparing Leaders Against Hostile PSYOPS Activity

Vezetők felkészítése az ellenséges PSYOPS tevékenységgel szemben

Abstract

This article will explore the information operations including PSYOPS. It will define PSYOPS and describe why and how it works, furthermore it will outline the steps of PSYOPS and the methods of defense. The second part of the article explores a range of techniques for management development; introducing ways of developing management skills to become a successful leader.

The final part describes how army leaders can prepare against PSYOPS and how they can eliminate its negative effects.

Key words: information operation, PSYOPS, leader development

Absztrakt

A cikkben bemutatom az információs műveleteket, ezen belül részletesen foglalkozom a PSYOPS tevékenységgel. Kifejtem, hogy mi a PSYOPS, hogyan és miért működik, milyen lépései vannak és hogyan lehet ellene védekezni. Cikkem második felében ismertetem a vezető fejlesztés különböző módszereit, azt hogy milyen módon válhat egy vezető sikeressé a szakmájában, hogyan fejlesztheti képességeit. Végül kifejtem, hogy a katonai vezetők, hogyan készülhetnek fel az ellenséges psyops tevékenységek negatív hatásainak kiküszöbölésére.

Kulcsszavak: információs műveletek, PSYOPS, vezetők fejlesztése

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INTRODUCTION

The success of future's, but even today's wars is determined by information. In this article, I would like to draw attention to the relationship between information operations, including psychological operations and the preparation of leaders. As for the subject, I wondered how to prepare commanders against hostile PSYOPS activity. I think if leaders were aware of the functioning of PSYOPS and knew the weaknesses of their own forces through which the enemy could influence the personnel, they could be prepared against the effects of the enemy's spreading of news. In my article, I'm looking for an answer to how this could be done. To this end, I present the functioning, the mechanism of action of PSYOPS and the leader development methods that can have authority in the army and which can effectively facilitate preparation.

1. INFORMATION OPERATIONS

Information operations, according to NATO, are "a military function that advocates and coordinates military information activities in order to create the desired effects in the will, understanding, and abilities of enemies, potential enemies and other groups approved by the North Atlantic Council to support the Alliance's mission." (1.p.45.) The understanding of the intentions and the assessing of the capabilities of the enemy, of the potential enemy and of the approved groups are in the focus of information operations. (2) In order to achieve these goals, information operations may be directed to the enemy, to our own or to neutral forces to influence the situation. The purpose of the actions is to influence the perception and intent of the enemy, to undermine morality, thereby weakening the cohesiveness of their troops and, through them, to transform the battlefield in favor of our own forces. This can be achieved by questioning the legitimacy of the leadership of the enemy or by separating the leader from his supporters. (3) The purpose of information operations is to achieve information superiority, information dominance and, ultimately, leadership superiority, time-shortening for own-run leading time cycle, and time-lengthening for the lead time of the opposing party, and thereby facilitate to access the operational superiority. (4) Elements of information operations include operational security, military deception, psychological operations, physical destruction of information infrastructures and of command points, electronic warfare, computer network warfare, civil-military cooperation and mass media (5.) Information operations take place in three dimensions. Physical operations involve the physical destruction of information infrastructures and infocommunication systems, "Hard Kill" attacks and their protection. The aim of the operations in the information dimension is to influence the electronic data flow, data processing, communication, etc. without any direct physical impact. This is the so-called "Soft Kill". At the same time, our own information processes are continuously protected. Information activities in the conscious (cognitive) dimension directly target human thinking - perceptions, sensations, interpretations, opinions and beliefs - with real, slippery or false information. (6) PSYOPS operations take effect in this dimension. If you look closely, PSYOPS is actually a kind of advertising.

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Therefore, the easiest way to reveal PSYOPS is through the operation of the advertisements. The purpose of advertisements is to sell a product, to promote an organization, a company, by influencing the thinking and emotions of potential buyers. In that case, the purpose is that the "victim" exposed to the advertising, at the right moment, when he or she is in the shop in front of the counter, should remove the very product from the shelf that marketers have pushed in his or her mind. You may not need it, not sure if it is the best, but if your ad is good, you will buy it. Thus the experts have already achieved their goals. The most effective way of this is through emotions. Most commonly, advertisements are associating positive emotions and mood with a particular product. For example, Coca-Cola's "Open to Happiness" campaign suggests that if you drink it you will be happy. The campaign itself is trying to convey a sense of life that the customer can identify with, that he or she wants. Through this, the process of advertising can work. If we look at it, advertisements, like PSYOPS, affect perceptions, sensations, interpretations, opinions. Remaining at the example of Coca-Cola: the target group encounters advertising: on TV, on posters, on promotions, that is, they detect it. At various events, festivals, the company often appears and offers a free product sample. This way, the customer perceives and tastes Coca-Cola. The message of the advertisement is quite simple, so it will be easy to interpret: if you drink it, you will be happy. This is how the opinion is made: I drink it, I'm happy, so Coca-Cola is good. This is followed by the fact of buying at the moment. That is, advertising has reached its goal.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS

Psychological operations work in the cognitive dimension of information operations and seek to understand the target groups and influence their will. According to the 2007 NATO Psychological Operations Doctrine, psychological operations are designed psychological activities that use communication and other methods to change the attitudes, manners and behaviors of approved groups, thus affecting the achievement of political and military objectives. This interpretation is extensively outlined by the NATO Military Committee's guidelines issued in 2012 and takes into account essentially all planned activities for influencing approved groups. (2) In the interpretation of NATO, the purpose of PSYOPS is to induce or reinforce the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of groups approved by the North Atlantic Council in order to support the achievement of the Alliance's political and military objectives. In addition, PSYOPS may reduce the effects of hostile propaganda against own forces, local populations and other important groups in NATO. The three main objectives of psychological operations are to weaken the will of the enemy or potential hostile group, to strengthen the commitment of the friendly groups and to win the support and cooperation of the insecure or undeclared groups. (2) The United States Army issued a new title in 2010 to the capability formerly named PSYOPS. One of its aims is to break down the negative prejudices associated with the former name, and to renew psychological operations in content. The name change was soon followed by the release of a new doctrine. According

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to a joint force level publication titled "Military Information Supporting Operations", published in December 2011, the MISO: "Operations planned to direct selected information and indicators towards foreign groups, to influence the emotions, motivations, objective arguments and ultimately the behaviour of foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals, in a way that is consistent with the originator's goals. "(7. p 49.) The forming of the attitude of groups is obtained by sending targeted messages. This is achieved through various methods. The method used is defined by where the easiest and simplest way is to reach the target group. The question is how much time is available and what resources we can get for it. The selected but credible message must always be directed to the specific audience in a controlled manner. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways: by direct communication, by delivering flyers, placing billboards, radio and TV broadcasts, interviews, and social media information. Most importantly, these messages should have an effect on emotions, and, through these, behaviors. (8)

2.1. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF PSYOPS ACTIVITY

In order to understand how and why psychological operations can work, it is essential to know certain concepts. In the AJP 3. 7. NATO doctrine, PSYOPS activity was based on Kelman's theory. He distinguishes between three processes of responding to social influences: submission, identification and internalization. The essence of the process of submission is that someone is doing or not doing something because he or she is hoping for a reward or fearing a punishment. Its effect only lasts until this dependency relationship, according to the beholder, exists. In Kelman's theory, the second process is identification. In this case someone does or does not do something because he wants to become like the other. Identification retains its motivating, behavioral control while the model remains modeled. The third process is internalization. In this case, someone does / does not do something because what they expect from him will fit with his own values, ideas, and plans. Action does not happen because it is rewarded or punished, not because we want to be compared to others. But because we agree with the behavior we have been waiting for. As our value system changes very slowly, which we take through internalization, it will last for a long time. Social influence, of course, affects not only behavior but also the world of values, attitudes, norms. (8)

Norms are a particularly important part of culture. In order for a society to function, its members must follow certain behavioral **norms**, otherwise their behavior will become unpredictable to other members of society and thus render cooperation impossible. There are many norms in society. There are legal norms, moral rules, religious norms, rules of law, and fashion rules. The violations of norms can be judged differently by society. There are certain misbehaviors that are just disapproved by other members of the society, but in other cases they may have a more severe punishment for non-normative behavior. Think of a serious criminal offense.

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After the norms, the values are the factors that PSYOPS works with. **Values** are cultural principles that express what is considered desirable and important, good or bad in a particular society. Values and their order may vary by society and age. (9)

The third factor that professionals want to influence are **attitudes**. "Attitude refers to any cognitive representation that sums up an evaluation of an object of attitude, ourselves, others, objects, actions, events, or ideas." (10. p. 378.) Attitudes can be positive, negative, or neutral. People can have attitudes towards anything, for example about others, about themselves, their own and outside groups, with objects, themes, ideas, etc. (10).

2.2. DESIGNING A PSYOPS OPERATION

We have seen what PSYOPS activity have to take effect on, now I am going to show how this can be achieved by the experts.

When designing an operation, it is important that professionals take into account a number of important factors. The objectives must be clearly defined; the changes in the world, the region and the country must be studied; the message conveyor, the symbols to be used, the channels of communication, the target group, the methods of impact measurement must be determined; the counter-propaganda must be taken into account and the anti-propaganda action must be planned.

In order to realize the project, after setting the goals, professionals will set up nine steps. First, by using different methods (eg. listening to opinions, studying broadcasting, cultures, etc.), they collect data on the target group that they are processing. This step is the same as in any social science research and the first step in the above mentioned advertising design. Try to get to know the group to be influenced using as many sources as possible. Remaining in the world of advertising, since at some level the PSYOPS is a kind of advertising, a company orders a survey that reveals the main features of the consumer circle. Here, we need to think not only of gender, age, but of specific features such as the daily routines of the target group, or its Internet, TV and radio using customs. This is to prevent the message from accidentally avoiding the consumer.

The internet and social media opportunities are just beginning to be discovered today. A typical example for this is when we are looking for something on the web, then ads related to the topic will appear in the sidebar. All of these are also key questions for PSYOPS. After getting to know the target group, specialists select the possible topics. They always designate more topics so that if one does not work, there is another alternative. The selected themes are compared to find out which one suits best the goal. In the world of advertising, it looks like there are more advertising plans that are tested by the target group; the most favorably evaluated one will become later the actual advertising. After that, the final theme is identified, for which the most authentic channel will be determined. This can vary according to target groups: to persuade a retired person, they use a different channel, different tools than for example a young mother. They then formulate the

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message, select the appropriate media, and finally determine the intensity of the distribution. These steps happen in the same way for advertisements and PSYOPS.

All nine steps are important, but for the sake of success, the significance of the message could still be highlighted among the others. Generally, the message is built around three main themes.

The first is the corruption of enemy troops and the spread of opposition among the various categories of personnel, for example, between lower and higher officers. The other characteristic theme is the theme of inescapability, and suggests a single solution: "Our victory is inevitable, resistance is senseless, give up yourselves."

The third is the legality of the themes. In doing so, they emphasize the correctness, eligibility and legal basis of the matter (custom, international law, historical traditions).

Let's look at a fictitious example for the PSYOPS operation. Suppose the members of the hostile forces are dissatisfied with their equipment, their placement and supply conditions, and there are serious conflicts between the particular personnel categories. Soldiers use a lot of social media and TV. The first question is how data collection methods can be used to access this information. The most obvious is the regular monitoring of social media sites. As few people set up appropriate security protocols, a lot of posts and photos are made public that should not be. An innocent-looking photograph, sentence can be telling to the savvy. Another very easy way is to monitor the media. A lot of information can appear in statements, in the form of opinions, in an interview with a newspaper article that can be abused later. A third possible method of obtaining information is conversation. You can also hear important information during a conversation that can be valuable to one party. Especially in the case of a foreign acquaintance.

After discovering the current problems, they define the topics that are to be considered: in this case the equipment, conditions and tensions. Of these, they choose the most important. In our fictional example, let this be equipment. The primary propaganda is based on this theme. For example, on social networking sites, there are pictures and videos that compare it with the better equipment of the enemy. Or, in the form of various shocking pictures and videos, they show you what problems the bad equipment is causing. To this, historical examples could be drawn to what the consequences of a bad shoe had been in the past. At the same time, overwhelming threat is often deterrent. There is a need for a message that explains how to survive, "to get rid of" this threat. This could be giving up, capitulation.

Let's say the primary media would be the internet, these videos could also appear in the form of a virus, so whoever gets it could not stop it on his or her device. After that, the right question is how to defend against enemy propaganda.

In order to overcome the destructive effect, it is important to develop a high level of motivation for defenders (patriotism, team spirit, conviction of the correctness of the fight). Effective protection requires the recognition of enemy news, as well as the effective and rapid provision of information to its own troops and the population about misleading infor-

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mation. It is still important to build the right counter-propaganda, to disclose the denials, to expose the disclosures, to obstruct dissemination, and to reject hostile propaganda. (11) In the following I would like to examine how military leaders can be prepared to reduce and prevent the effects of such an attack.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERS

It was commonly accepted in former times that leaders must be born. Nowadays, however, it has become accepted that leadership skills can be improved. Improvements include short and long term changes, gaining knowledge, and changing the personality favourably. Short-term development involves the acquisition of knowledge, the acquisition of a particular skill. From personality development, it involves solving private life and career problems that serve short-term development. Long-term development involves increasing adaptability and the development of personality and self-image.

Leader development needs to meet different requirements in public service and in the business world, in small businesses and in international environment. Therefore I delineate the model of Mullins and Aldrich (12), which combines the elements of development of leaders.

Formerly, the acquisition of knowledge meant leadership aptitude. In fact, this is the foundation on which to build, but this is not the sole criterion for a successful leader. The leader has a duty to constantly improve himself or herself.

The leader needs the right self-knowledge about where he or she is now, where he or she is going, how he or she wants to develop. Development areas can be such as personality, value system, attitude, relationships, motivation and ability.

The leader must integrate with the subsystems of the organization. He or she must be in line with organizational goals, familiar with work processes, with interconnections between elements, and, what is most important, in the treatment of people development is essential, because a leader is dealing with people.

A leader's basic activities include setting goals, planning, organizing, motivating, developing, evaluating. General activity is communication, coordination, integration, taking responsibility, making decision. If the leader is weak in one of these, he or she must work deliberately to develop that attribute.

The leader needs to know what to do and what he or she only thinks he or she needs to do. Know his or her limitations, playing space, where he or she can move. There are also choices that indicate activities that he or she does not necessarily have to do.

It is up to the leader to decide which position, which leadership style to use, the most effective way of achieving individual and organizational goals. In this case, the development is aimed at the leader recognizing his / her own roles, which one he / she needs to change and the best possible play of these roles. On the other hand, training can also be used to apply which style of leadership in a particular situation.

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A leader must do good things well. This gives effectiveness and efficiency. In this case, development should focus on the weaker area.

Leadership efficiency should also be measured. The three forms of this measurement are well-known: formal, informal and self-assessment. During the formal evaluation, formal criteria (skills, attitudes, knowledge) are assessed at regular intervals; informal evaluation is based on the advice from other leaders, the signals from the employees' behaviour. The essence of self-assessment is to make the leader aware of his / her own feelings and thoughts, thus he or she may be more sensitive to the expectations of the body and employees.

To become a successful leader, he or she must get feedback on his or her performance. Feedback has two forms: continuous and posterior. The essence of continuous feedback is that feedback is constantly being followed. Continuous feedback is the basis for mentoring relationships. Posterior evaluation will be performed after completion (eg. annual performance evaluation). Feedback should take into account the individual's goals. (12)

Leadership development can be done individually and in groups. Group methods include learning groups and training groups. Individual methods are formal training and mentoring system.

A learning group is recruited by the leader of the group and then meets regularly at a given time and at a specific time. It is a good opportunity to exchange and discuss experiences. In learning groups learning means familiarization with new notions. The process is best suited to the spontaneous learning of children. Everybody knows the notions and happenings, but the group gives the opportunity for the participants to consider the examples in different contexts, giving them different meanings, thus revealing the hidden structure of the notions. Learning group members gain new experience and with this new knowledge they return to everyday life. Self-knowledge, human knowledge, social and leadership skills, collaboration, communication and problem-solving skills can be efficiently developed by training groups. The training aims to develop existing skills and abilities. The training is based on the principle of participatory learning, and in the lessons the participants have the main role. There is considerable progress in the training sessions for the participants. There are also powerful emotional effects that can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviours. Experience has shown that the participants self-knowledge, internal autonomy, individual effectiveness get better, team members' relationships become closer, more tolerant, more open to each other, more confident in the atmosphere.

Individual methods include formal education and mentoring.

Formal training attempts to teach a particular curriculum in a specific way. These may include long, high-level courses (including university and college education) and shorter-term courses.

Mentoring is a tutorial method for leaders. The mentor is usually a senior executive who is not superior to the person to be trained. He or she is the person who gives insight into the life and culture of the organization, and he or she helps to carry out tasks. The mentor

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seeks to challenge his mentored person, so as he or she can prove abilities and can get the right opportunity. The benefit of the mentoring system is to increase the self-confidence of the mentored person and to promote the career of his or her professional career. The disadvantage is that the mentored may become too dependent on the mentor, a conflict may arise between the mentor and the mentored, and the mentor may not be able to establish an effective relationship with his or her mentored. (13)

Let's examine how it could appear in a military environment. Military leaders can learn about PSYOPS operating mechanism as a school subject. Here they can learn the basics of what this is about, how it works, what it can do, that is, the PSYOPS theory. As a first step, they can learn about the problems of our own forces within various social sciences subjects. They could be helped by sociologists and psychologists, as those are the ones who deal with it, who are familiar with the problems through regular surveys. In addition, the experience of the exit interviews with personnel leaving the military could be used as a professional material within the framework of the education. In these interviews, it is precisely there why soldiers leave the army. That is, it reveals the areas of criticism. Considering the fictitious example, this can be equipment, circumstances, colleagues, etc. This would be the theoretical part of the development of leaders. Within the framework of learning groups and training groups, solutions could be found to the problems encountered. This would be more pragmatic. Theoretical knowledge is required for it, but the point would be on the individual approach, the brainstorming process. It would be a matter of how the group could solve and deal with the problem of bad equipment. Concrete solutions to potential problems in these groups could be created. In the future, for example, in a real life situation, one should no longer wonder how and what to react, how to handle the situation, but there would be a ready-made solution, an elaborated reaction that could be applied. This would save time. By these methods, ready-to-use solutions could be used to address all potential problems. That would be the purpose of the groups.

The mentoring method is perhaps the only one that is somewhat more difficult to adapt to military domain. In a simulated situation, I can imagine the method when it comes at a domestic exercise to respond to the deterioration of morality. Then the mentor can help who has previously encountered such a situation, managed successfully and is credible in this role. The mentor would serve the purpose of helping the leader to figure out how to handle the problem properly, under safe conditions. The ultimate goal here is not so much to design a scheme for a problem, but to develop a thinking process.

4. CONCLUSIONS

By presenting PSYOPS and leadership development methods, my goal was to examine how military leaders could be prepared to reduce the impact of hostile PSYOPS activity. Generally speaking, leaders need to be aware of the concept and operation of PSYOPS. This knowledge can be taught through the education system, through university, college, and training courses. It would also be important to know the weaknesses of our own forces.

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This could be achieved by making PSYOPS, a negative campaign against our own forces, with a preventative, preparatory goal. This way it can also become clear for the leaders what they can expect of a hostile operation. They would be aware of what areas are expected to be attacked and if they know the weak points they can be prepared for the elimination of them. There might be targeted preparation for the leaders to solve problems that have been identified. This could be achieved by learning groups or training groups described above, where common sharing of knowledge and collective wisdom could be used to prepare for the effects of hostile propaganda. The same goal would be achieved by the mentoring program, with the help of mentors who have met such a situation and have successfully managed it. In order not to face negative effects first in real life situation, this process could be accomplished in domestic exercises where hostile PSYOPS activity and its impact could be simulated, and reaction to it could be immediately started, it could be worked out how to overcome it.

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