

THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITOLOGY & HISTORY

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-23>

INFORMATION WARFARE IN THE MODERN WORLD

Agasiyeva Elshana Aziz,
PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor,
Baku Slavic University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-3931-5873
shanel_agasi@gmail.com

Abstract. The relevance of research in the field of information wars lies in the fact that every state has a need to ensure the security of the functioning of its information systems and to protect them from deliberate influence. Conflicts based on information warfare are becoming more and more frequent. The topic of information warfare is relevant today because it is one of the active instruments of modern geopolitics, which has an impact on the political, economic, and cultural life of a given society. Unlike the wars known to human history, the goals of information warfare are not the physical destruction of the enemy, but a negative impact on the adversary through the distortion of information in order to manipulate public consciousness. Information warfare in the 21st century is acquiring a more total character. The information sphere is also becoming an arena of interstate confrontation, and therefore it can threaten national security. At present, ideological-informational war also includes propaganda, which, by substituting historical facts, manipulates people's consciousness. For example, all of Facebook is teeming with pseudo-history about the so-called "Great Armenia". The history of Armenia is being falsified, and these fictitious narratives are accompanied by emphasis on the supposed long-suffering and special character of the Armenian people, who allegedly are unique. But no matter how much Armenian pseudo-historians and politicians praise themselves, sometimes all their information reaches the point of absurdity, since they resort to fantasies.

Key words: information warfare, religions, manipulate Armenian occupiers,

Introduction. In the modern world, the mechanisms for unleashing wars are linked to methods of information warfare, and this in turn is connected with the emergence of the Internet, which has raised all these mechanisms to a qualitatively new level.

The relevance of research in the field of information wars lies in the fact that every state has a need to ensure the security of the functioning of its information systems and to protect them from deliberate influence. Conflicts based on information warfare are becoming more and more frequent.

The topic of information warfare is relevant today because it is one of the active instruments of modern geopolitics, which has an impact on the political, economic, and cultural life of a given society. Unlike the wars known to human history, the goals of information warfare are not the physical destruction of the enemy, but a negative impact on the adversary through the distortion of information in order to manipulate public consciousness (Boisot, 1998).

This topic is also relevant because it is connected with the need to introduce a separate educational system on information security. The concept of "information warfare" includes the manipulation of information for the fulfillment of assigned tasks. In particular, with the advent of the Internet, it has become possible to spread both truth and lies on a global scale. The essence of information warfare leads to social consequences such as escalating contradictions within society and disorienting the population.

The purpose of the research. The purpose of the article is to show the role and significance of information wars in a historical context.

Analysis of the latest relevant research and publications shows that this topic has been widely discussed by scholars such as Nye J., Forno, R. and Baklarz, R., Boisot M.H. and etcs. Although as

a term “information warfare” appeared in the mid-1970s, even in ancient times, when waging wars against a particular country, the leaders of the attacking side used various methods of information manipulation in the form of spreading false rumors to achieve their goals. For example, in Ancient Greece, during the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), letters were used to spread rumors about their enemies in order to cause distrust among the population. Over time, when printed letters appeared, printed literature began to be used to spread false texts in order to mislead people. And with the development of technology, information wars became more extensive. In the 20th century, propaganda on radio and television became one of the key instruments accompanying conflicts. At present, broad propaganda is being conducted on Russian television with the aim of justifying military actions in Ukraine, drawing the image of an enemy out of the Ukrainian people in order to mobilize new recruits for the war. In fact, such suggestion is based not on logic, but on the ability of people to perceive the words of the speaker as an instruction.

Results. One of the first researchers to introduce the term “information warfare” was the American expert Thomas Rona in 1976. Information warfare is one of the problems of modern society. Any state needs to take measures aimed at strengthening the information culture of society as a whole. The informatization of modern society leads to the problem of information warfare, the main elements of which are news, messages, and various reports.

The use of disinformation takes place through psychological influence, and the most widespread device of information warfare used to influence society is the fake. In the mass media, fake news has lately become a dangerous method of influencing people’s opinions. In general, information warfare uses persuasion for long-term shaping of attitudes in order to cause people to feel hostility toward this or that object of criticism. Psychophysiology is also used, that is, the right to be the first to report certain events, since the first report usually inspires the greatest trust. For older people, fictional stories are usually communicated in the morning, while for young people, the most effective time for planting false information is considered to be the evening. Most often, propagandists of false stories seek to evoke people’s sympathy in order to manipulate their consciousness. Beneficial information is presented in more detail, while information that is unfavorable to the propagandist is reduced to a minimum. There is also such a method of suggestion when one and the same idea is repeated in different versions, or inserted at every opportunity; in this way, the adversary achieves the imposition of their ideology (The Treaty of Gulistan).

For example, Armenian politicians began their fake information, seemingly from something quite simple – from cooking – by advertising the national Azerbaijani dish “dolma” as Armenian, and this was done with the help of Russian cinema and television, starting from the end of the Soviet period. Yet the word “dolma” in Azerbaijani means “to fill” (that is, to fill a grape leaf or the leaf of another plant), while in Armenian this word has no meaning at all. Thus, Armenian false informers use methods of psychological influence on people’s consciousness, as if they have especially exquisite cuisine, although most of the recipes of Azerbaijani cuisine are presented by them as their own. In addition, many musical works and songs whose authors many years ago were Azerbaijani composers are, in recent years, performed by artists in the Armenian language and passed off as their own. National clothing and dances have also been adopted in the Azerbaijani style, although there is evidence and photographs showing that when Armenians were resettled to the Caucasus with the help of Russia in the 19th century, they had completely different clothing.

During the rule of M. S. Gorbachev, beginning from the 1980s, an information war against the Azerbaijani population clearly began to manifest itself: Azerbaijanis began to be persecuted and expelled from Armenia and Karabakh, while on Soviet television everything was presented in the opposite way. Everything that was done by Armenian terrorists was attributed in television, radio, and the press to the Azerbaijani side. And when many Azerbaijani refugees who had been subjected to violence walked through mountains and steppes with exhausted children and settled in the city of

Sumgait, which is located several kilometers from Baku, the KGB of the Soviet Union staged events so that it would appear as if these refugees had killed several Armenians in Sumgait in one night, although the investigation later proved that this was done by KGB operatives with the support of Gorbachev's policies, in order to spread fake information about Azerbaijanis. At that moment, this fake was disseminated throughout the world, and everyone condemned the Azerbaijanis; it was very difficult to prove the true picture of events, because Armenian politicians and the Gorbachev government did this together in order to present everything to the world in a way that was beneficial for them. This was a genuine information attack – a planned campaign to spread false information, whose goal was to influence public opinion.

From the history of the settlement of Armenians in the Caucasus it is known that in the 19th century, as a result of the Russo-Persian war, the Russian Empire annexed several Azerbaijani khanates under the Treaty of Gulistan (The Treaty of Gulistan), the following Azerbaijani khanates passed to Russia: Karabakh, Ganja, Shirvan, Sheki, Derbent and others), and several other Azerbaijani khanates (Tabriz and others) went to Iran under the Gulistan and Turkmenchay peace treaties. There was an agreement to resettle thousands of Armenians from Persia and Ottoman Anatolia to the territory of the Russian Empire. Russia's policy pursued the goal of placing as much non-Muslim population as possible between Russia and Ottoman Turkey. And in 1828–1831, about 57,000 Armenians were resettled from Persia to what were then called "Aderbidzhan" lands, under the leadership of the Armenian Lazarev, and they were settled in the houses of Azerbaijanis who were forcibly evicted by representatives of the Russian Empire.

At that time, Armenian settlers began to be hired by more affluent Azerbaijanis for any work, and the hospitable Azerbaijani people, with understanding, allowed them to earn money, helped them with clothing and food, and they even received their surnames from the occupation or from the master whom they served. For example, Mirzayan – the one who serves Mirza (an Azerbaijani name), and from that time they acquired nicknames that gradually became their surnames: Azerbaijani surnames with the ending "-yan", which in Azerbaijani meant "the one who does" ("ne eliyen"). But when they had already settled in, a psychological struggle began through disinformation, carried out by representatives of the Russian Empire, who set the Armenian population against the Azerbaijani population in order to create divisions in society by instilling in them a sense of superiority over Azerbaijanis. That is, a method of manipulating information through false rumors was used to achieve certain goals.

During the collapse of the USSR, Armenian politicians, thanks to Russian weapons, managed to launch the Karabakh war, expelling a million inhabitants of the Azerbaijani population. For 30 years all these lands were kept by Armenian occupiers in a plundered state and, in parallel, they constantly spread false information throughout the world as if they were the most ancient people and that it all belonged to them. But the Azerbaijani people did not resign themselves to such injustice and, thanks to the wise policies of President Heydar Aliyev and, after his death, Ilham Aliyev, all these years attempts were made to return these lands by peaceful negotiations; but when the Azerbaijani people became convinced that the information war was continuing, they had to win back their lands from the Armenian occupiers by military means. In the national character of the Azerbaijani people there is such a trait – to try to resolve everything in a good way, but if they are not understood, then they show their strength. At present, infrastructure is being restored anew, houses are being built so that Azerbaijani refugees can return and live where their ancestors lived, on the returned primordial Azerbaijani lands.

Although at present Armenian false informers, who have been imbued with ideas about the greatness of their people, continue to wage information warfare on the Internet, spreading untrue information and disinformation, the Azerbaijani people are confident that sooner or later the truth will come to light.

Information wars in the modern world replace real wars, and therefore in the future information will play an even greater role. Under conditions of globalization, when many things in the world are interconnected, it is impossible to move toward total confrontation (Forno, Baklarz, 1999).

Under the Soviet regime, too, as it became clear after historical documents were opened in the archives, there was a great deal of false propaganda. For example, in Soviet times the image of Lenin was equated with that of the kindest person. But as it turned out, thanks to the archives, his telegrams were read in which the “great leader” Lenin ordered Baku to be burned in 1920 if the government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (which existed from 1918 to 1920) did not surrender, and therefore the 11th Red Army of the Russian Bolsheviks invaded and Soviet power was established by force. At the same time, leaflets were distributed containing texts urging the population to support the Bolsheviks who would help the poor. This was a method of spreading false information in order to create a certain public opinion in their own interests. The USSR was far from the first state to use propaganda subversion.

Information wars are often connected with wars between different religions. Usually, religious conflicts lead to the undermining of the value foundations of human existence. Today, anyone can participate in these information wars from their own home. Therefore, new concepts, new rules, new ethics, new laws, and a rethinking of freedom of speech are needed. People are gradually ceasing to trust the media, and in many countries people trust journalists less and less. Against the backdrop of a crisis of ethical values, people clearly see that the media increasingly highlight problems one-sidedly. Politicians have long tried to persuade people with facts and lies that resemble facts (Forno, Baklarz, 1999).

Democracy suffers from the abuse of freedom of speech, but people’s well-being suffers even more from it. When new media appeared, the entire system of values and relationships began to change, just as it did with the emergence of radio and television. At first everyone is happy about the appearance of a new source of information, and then it falls into the hands of aggressors.

One of the methods of manipulation is the use of SEO techniques (search engine optimization), which make use of keywords. Manipulators can also use spam or create fake links in order to artificially raise the ranking of their site. Advertising also plays a significant role, and can be used to promote their content (Gao, Li, Clarke, 2008).

To cope with the challenges of information wars, it is necessary to develop and improve mechanisms for protection against information attacks. It is also important to raise public awareness about methods of manipulating information so that people can distinguish disinformation from truth. It is also necessary to restrict propaganda resources so that public opinion is based on reliable data. Such measures will make it possible to ensure political and social stability in the modern world. At the same time, if one has reliable information, it is better to know which rumors false informers are spreading around the world – as the saying goes, forewarned is forearmed (Forno, Baklarz, 1999).

Falsifiers of historical facts try to distort historical events in their own interests. The history of any country is very important for state integrity, and therefore, knowing the true history of their state, people can properly build their future. For example, the Armenian people were imposed with an invented history of their nation initially by Tsarist Russia when they were resettled to the Caucasus in order to create a Christian buffer between Muslim countries. Later, having adopted this idea as the national idea of the Armenian people, they put at the forefront the history of the “Armenian genocide”, which allegedly took place on the territory of Ottoman Turkey, although, as archival documents prove, everything was the other way around. Books about the ancient origin of the Armenian people were published and distributed to every representative of this nation. Therefore, many of them came to believe these fantasies – that they were the first to appear on Earth and so on. The entire Armenian people were indoctrinated with the idea that they were a long-suffering nation that supposedly had to create their state “from sea to sea”. This idea, which provided completely falsified “facts” of history, gradually began to infect all representatives of this nationality living around the world.

A large number of interested parties are engaged in falsification in order to implement their plans. In reality, any people has the right to its own history of formation, to the reliability of events of its history, and only by knowing the true history of its people can it have a future. But when the information

war of the attacking side penetrates all areas of the cultural life of another people, in addition to the desire to seize foreign lands, a deliberate crime is being committed. For example, Armenian composers appropriate the authorial compositions of Azerbaijani composers, and many culinary recipes of national Azerbaijani cuisine are advertised as their own. The point is that the concentration of Armenian false reports about the history of Azerbaijan is growing, and this is no longer just some popular topics that are occasionally discussed – it is a continuous pumping that takes on politicized forms.

The falsification of history is not a phenomenon that exists by itself, but a weapon of new-type wars, which is also called a “mental war”, the meaning of which is to change the mental foundation of society. In order to win the mental war against Armenian fantasists of history, it is necessary to talk about the national values of one’s own culture and history.

The development of information and communication networks has increased the speed of information transmission. In fact, the information space often confuses people. And for the effective fight against fakes, it is necessary simply to raise the level of historical education through educational programs, because sometimes citizens themselves do not know the history of their Motherland and therefore, having read fakes, fall into delusion. To increase the effectiveness of information work with the population, it would be useful to develop theoretical principles that reveal the essence of falsification of history as an instrument of mental war (Military concept for NATO strategic communications, 2010).

In waging information warfare, opponents also use the method of neuro-linguistic programming – that is, synchronization and mutual adjustment of the bodily rhythms of the speaker to those of the person listening to the information. Intimidating information is also applied against the adversary, for example, statements that nothing will work out for them, that their situation is hopeless. In some cases, “zombification” is used – that is, psychological subjugation. In addition, there are such types of information-psychological weapons as energy-informational psychological weapons.

Television plays a major role in information warfare, creating the illusion of the dissemination of truthful knowledge, but in fact often fulfilling the orders of people interested in disinformation. Television makes it possible to feel involved in what is happening on the screen, and therefore trust in what is being said arises. The Internet occupies a special place in mass awareness, covering a worldwide audience where it is possible to plausibly depict real events in one’s own way. Not only broad audiences are used but also means of virtual reality.

One of the tools of information warfare is an instrumental approach to history: facts that did or did not occur in the past are used to justify actions in the present. Usually, in turning-point moments of society, interest in its history is renewed. A significant influence on the formation of the historical consciousness of society is exerted by such a method as the falsification of history. Any historical event is a link in a causal chain that stretches from the past through the present into the future. But the history of a given country is not always presented truthfully. It is necessary to distinguish real events from falsified ones, which are later reflected in public consciousness.

In the modern world, under conditions of the development of the information society, we observe the strengthening of information that does not correspond to the natural character of the Armenian community. The continuous falsification of historical facts is a serious problem that exacerbates relations between the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Articles and comments are published on the Internet in which fragments of works are taken out of context and paraphrased, leading to the incitement of hatred between peoples.

The falsification of history is an instrument of real politics – that is, events and facts occurring in the life of society are distorted. Falsification of history is used as a tool of influence on the scholarly community.

At present, information wars are becoming increasingly complex. New methods and instruments of information wars appear in the modern world. These methods include fakes – false or unreliable news that most often has a sensational character in order to evoke emotional reactions among people. Usually,

false information can be used to achieve political and economic goals and may also be presented in the form of forged documents. Another method of information wars is cyberattacks, which disrupt the functioning of computer systems and can create a serious threat to national security (Nye, 1990).

Mainly, manipulation of information and cyberattacks are used to influence public opinion. Disinformation is used to deceive recipients of information, which creates conditions for the emergence of conflicts. To cope with the challenges of information wars, it is necessary to create public opinion that is based on reliable data.

The falsification of history represents a great threat to modernity; therefore, a well-considered state policy toward falsifiers of history is needed. A policy of appeasing the aggressor sooner or later turns against its initiators. It is in our interest not to give grounds for new disputes on a historical basis, but, on the contrary, to initiate meetings of historians, international military-historical seminars, conferences, and to make them public, even though truth is born in disputes. A special thematic historical TV channel or a historical program broadcasting across the entire post-Soviet space could be very useful here. At the same time, Azerbaijani scholars should firmly adhere to historical accuracy so that any inaccuracies cannot be used by our ideological opponents. Under conditions of information warfare, it is necessary to be able to articulate an objective position that can form a truthful history of our country.

Information warfare in the 21st century is acquiring a more total character. The information sphere is also becoming an arena of interstate confrontation, and therefore it can threaten national security. At present, ideological-informational war also includes propaganda, which, by substituting historical facts, manipulates people's consciousness. For example, all of Facebook is teeming with pseudo-history about the so-called "Great Armenia". The history of Armenia is being falsified, and these fictitious narratives are accompanied by emphasis on the supposed long-suffering and special character of the Armenian people, who allegedly are unique. But no matter how much Armenian pseudo-historians and politicians praise themselves, sometimes all their information reaches the point of absurdity, since they resort to fantasies.

Information, by its nature, has two sides of the same coin – it can be both a blessing and a means of destruction. Journalism plays a major role in the information sphere, as a "fourth estate" called upon to deliver information with quality. It is also worth noting the fact that the struggle of ideologies in the world never stops (Military concept for NATO strategic communications, 2010).

Usually, wars are started in order to seize the natural resources of the places where they exist. As a result of war, certain damage is inflicted even on the victorious state, whereas in an information war there is no physical front in action. But as a result of a successful information war, the side engaged in false information expects to deceitfully win over the public opinion of other countries, so that, with the support of other states of the world, it can defeat the country that possesses rich natural resources. A clear example of an information war against Azerbaijan is the constant statements and stories about the "antiquity of the Armenian people", about the "Armenian genocide", which in essence did not take place, and so on. In the Internet space, beginning with a market seller who, giving an interview, presents, for example, Georgian churchkhela as an Armenian product, or a cook who wants to convince everyone that the Azerbaijani dish dolma is supposedly Armenian. Armenian pseudo-historians and political scientists try to convince everyone that they supposedly had a state "from sea to sea".

To misinform the peoples of the world about their "chosenness", Armenian disinformers also make use of religion – that is, relying on Christianity, they want to attract public opinion to their side. For this purpose, they write everywhere that they were the first to adopt Christianity, whereas Christianity was first adopted on the territory of Caucasian Albania and the first churches were built there, but they appropriated them, since the Albanian population, after the Arab conquest, was gradually forced to move from Zoroastrianism and Christianity to Islam. Taking advantage of the fact that in Europe and America the Christian religion is practiced, and in order to command respect and attract others to their

side, Armenian bloggers and politicians suggest that they are almost the “fathers” of the Christian Church. At present, they have set themselves the goal of building a monument to Jesus of the largest size in the world so that everyone comes and worships this prophet, which is clearly the use of religious tactics for political purposes.

Conclusions. Many people are religious, and in the language of religion believers perceive and formulate social processes for themselves. In reality, religion is used by politics as a means of maintaining power; therefore, religious ideas are effectively used by politicians.

Information warfare comes in two forms: one is information-technical, and the other is information-psychological. The main objects of influence of information-technical warfare are radio, television, and the Internet. The objects of influence of information-psychological warfare are, above all, the human psyche and the system of forming public opinion.

References:

1. Boisot, M.H. (1998). *Knowledge Assets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. The Treaty of Gulistan. URL: <https://mfa.gov.az/files/shares/Treaty%20of%20Gulistan.pdf>. (accessed: 07.11.2025).
3. Gao, F., Li, M., Clarke, S. (2008). Knowledge, Management, and Knowledge Management in Business Operations. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(2), 3-17.
4. Forno, R., Baklarz, R. (1999). *The Art of Information Warfare: Insight into the Knowledge Warrior Philosophy*. NY.: Universal Publishers.
5. (2010) Military concept for NATO strategic communications. URL: <https://info.publicintelligence.net/NATO-STRATCOM-Concept.pdf> (accessed: 24.01.2025).
6. Nye J. (1990). *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. New York: Basic Books. 307 p.