

The StratCom-Security Nexus

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Context

- ▶ Current information environment
 - ▶ Technological revolution of media - Digital revolution 2.0
 - ▶ Social media, Artificial Intelligence, *Democratisation of information*
 - ▶ Decreased journalistic standards
 - ▶ Decreased media literacy, coupled with overwhelming access to a wide array of media
- ▶ Democratic regimes need wide public support for strategic projects
- ▶ Hybrid warfare/increased tensions b/w states (and non-state actors) - renewed focus on propaganda/StratCom

What is Strategic Communication?

- ▶ Infusing strategy in communication
- ▶ NATO: The coordinated and appropriate use of NATO communications activities and capabilities - Public Diplomacy, Public Affairs (PA), Military Public Affairs, Information Operations (Info Ops), and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), as appropriate - in support of Alliance policies, operations and activities, and in order to advance NATO's aims. (PO(2009)0141, 2009)
 - ▶ 2017 - new document - effects of attitudes
- ▶ EU (?): elements of public diplomacy and 'spin', media relations, advertising, recruitment and training and, most notably, high levels of situational awareness (detect and deter). In operational terms, it entails both a defensive (react and respond) and an offensive dimension (probe and push). (EUISS)
- ▶ Propaganda as an instrument of StratCom
 - ▶ 4D's: dismiss, distort, distract, dismay

What is Security?

- ▶ Objective & subjective security
- ▶ National security - preservation of national interests and core values
- ▶ European / Atlantic security - the combined national security of MS?
- ▶ Copenhagen school: Political, Military, Economic, Societal, Environmental
 - ▶ Energy security? Cyber security?

Documents

- ▶ **EUGS** - The security of our Union - strategic communications
- ▶ **Wales Communiqué** - enhancing StratCom & welcoming NATO StratCom CoE
- ▶ **Warsaw Communiqué** - improved StratCom + additional efforts -> Georgia
- ▶ **EU-NATO Cooperation** - StratCom
- ▶ **Russian NSS**: The intensifying confrontation in the global information arena caused by some countries' aspiration to utilize informational and communication technologies to achieve their geopolitical objectives, including by manipulating public awareness and falsifying history, is exerting an increasing influence on the nature of the international situation.
- ▶ **US NSS**: countering Moscow's deceptive propaganda
- ▶ **National Defence Strategy of Romania**: countering extremist propaganda; asymmetric & hybrid activities; hostile information activities

“
Hostile propaganda against the EU [...] with the goal of distorting truths, provoking doubt, dividing Member States, engineering a strategic split between [EU & US] and paralysing the decisionmaking process, **discrediting the EU institutions and transatlantic partnerships, which play a recognised role in the European security and economic architecture**, in the eyes and minds of EU citizens and of citizens of neighbouring countries, and undermining and eroding the European narrative based on democratic values, human rights and the rule of law; recalls that one of the most important tools used is **incitement of fear and uncertainty in EU citizens**, as well as presenting hostile state and non-state actors as much stronger than they are in reality.”

European Parliament Resolution, 2016 (P8_TA(2016)0441)

Practice

- ▶ Weaponisation of information - media as force multiplier
- ▶ Cyber security (hacking/impersonation) - StratCom (propaganda) - eroding societal resilience/democratic foundation - i.e. Clinton email hack, @mihaelapana2
- ▶ Trolling & Robotrolling
 - ▶ Two in three Twitter users who write in Russian about the NATO presence in Eastern Europe are robotic or 'bot' accounts. (NATO StratCom CoE, 2017)
- ▶ Investment in ads (i.e. Brexit) & Kremlin-led publications (Sputnik, RT - Catalan vote)
- ▶ Fake news: US Nuclear Arms from TUR to RO; RO arms dealers; Lisa case; US support for ISIS;
- ▶ Radicalisation & recruitment;
- ▶ Errors (lack of strategy/coherence of communication processes)
- ▶ NATO StratCom CoE, EU StratCom Task Force (EUvsDisinformation), RO MFA Department on StratCom.

“ The day has come, where we recognise that the word, the camera, the photograph, the internet and information in general have become yet another type of weapon, yet another expression of the Armed Forces. This weapon may be used positively as well as negatively. It is a weapon which has been part of events in our country in different years and in various ways, in defeats as well as in victories. ”

Sergei Shoigu, 2015

Conclusion

- ▶ If we are under attack, one cannot focus on development (distraction)
- ▶ We need to build **cognitive resilience**
 - ▶ the ability to withstand pressure from various ideas spread, for instance, through disinformation
- ▶ However, we need to be cautious and not make communication we dislike the scapegoat for all our failures. Disinformation is NOT the root cause of public disenfranchisement
- ▶ Development can only occur with consent of population on strategic subjects
 - ▶ StratCom helps to better communicate own aims
 - ▶ StratCom helps to deter and counter information aggressions that distort public attention and diminish consent
- ▶ We need to become ourselves better communicators
- ▶ **Policy Communication** is a skill as important as policy development related skills
- ▶ We must also use StratCom to enhance the **security awareness & security culture**