

The Psychological and Diplomatic Role of Mass Media

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ABSTRACT: In contrast to the primary concepts, relationships and communication between people is not limited to visual communication. For over two hundred years the achievements of the media have become a reality, which is completely covered human society and has led to the development of relations in a very large scale. The media via delivering information formed a new culture. The new amazing culture in developing countries that have the same position with countries possessing information technology puts the country under the threat of cultural attacks. This factor causes a confrontation in the cultural, social, cultural and ethnic identity. In addition to the study of psychological and diplomatic operations in the media article, also were given their academic distinction and media diplomacy has been investigated as a means of psychological operations. The purpose of diplomacy in the media psychological operations is to form the enmity and hatred against State and Government, to put the country under the threat of political, cultural and psychological pressures, to create sympathy and interest of provided states to active states. Three methods of struggle against the media diplomacy, serving with the enemy's position are offered: 1. Strengthen the capacity of information and news; 2. Strengthen the capacity of advocacy; 3. Use of methods of anti-advocacy.

Keywords: Psychological, Diplomatic Role, Mass Media

INTRODUCTION

Unlike it seems at first sight, relations between people are not restricted with visual-graphical-obvious ones only. More than 200 years have passed since mass media achievement has become a reality that completely environs human society and helps relations develop very quickly. Delivering information and news, the mass media have formed a new culture. In less developed countries new inspiring culture is the same with that of countries which have advanced information technologies. In other words, they undergo cultural "attacks". This factor causes confrontations for cultural, social and ethnic identification. Media diplomacy in psychological operations refers to formation of hatred and envy against definite state, government or authorities by another state or government (Shirazi, 1998). It includes political, cultural and psychological pressure, as well as rousing interest and sympathy towards definite other states. There are three methods of struggle against hostile media diplomacy:

Strengthening information and news delivering systems;

Broadening propaganda possibilities;

Using anti-propaganda means.

In the modern world development of foreign policy mostly depends on the sphere of influence formed by media (Sabilan, 2001). With development of communication technologies and solution of problems arisen from vast distances a new world appeared with different values, criteria and characteristics in comparison to the past. Nowadays, international relations are not regulated by mutual influences of governments as it was before. Today, together with governments, social opinion (that is to say, way of thinking of people) of a definite state has a huge importance in definition of relations between states. Today, social opinion is taken into consideration in programs to be implemented related international relations. So, today states, opinions, information and communication technologies regulate international relations – unlike in the past when governments did it.

Psychological operations are a complex of non-military, political, economical and other means for influencing upon another state, its nation's believes and behaviours.

Media Diplomacy

In the general sense, media is described as using agencies for development of foreign policy. The American scholar Rama Prasad explains media diplomacy as the role of agencies in international diplomatic relations. Terms as “newspaper diplomacy”, “radio-television” diplomacy, “satellite antenna diplomacy” and “internet diplomacy” are also used for explaining media diplomacy (Bakhtavar, 2001).

There are two types of media diplomacy for implementation of foreign policy of any state

By means of management of official diplomatic organizations;

In the first method states either constitute diplomatic agencies, or authorize existing means for operating in the direction of their foreign policies. Constitution of radio channels as VOA and BBC belongs to the first method. The second method includes censorship on news related foreign policy, restriction of journalist activities that enables states to realize their goals. Being the founder of the process for directing media for state policy, The USA President Wilson formed a committee named Creel in order to create connection between the Departments of Defense and Foreign Affairs and mass media during the I World War. Of Course, media diplomacy reached its culmination after the II World War. However, date of formation of this diplomacy is before the I World War. This method requires that government work out a program for relationship and cooperation with media representatives. Otherwise, state policy will undergo a failure (Sabilan, 2005).

The second method is based on adaptation of media to the foreign policy of the state they belong. In this method, though agencies do not receive special missions from state, based on professional maturity and responsibility, they work in the direction of macro policy of their systems. Not depending on states or governments, they have a larger circle of influence.

Mass media can perform a diplomatic role according spectra regulated from plus to minus as below:

Media diplomacy in psychological operations

Diplomacy is characterized as techniques of solution of international relations through management of foreign policy, regulation of international relations and compromises. Though in many cases diplomacy is considered one of the means of implementation of foreign policy, it is necessary to use it for political, cultural and even military influences. For instance, diplomacy was used more than ever during the II World War. Definition of boundaries of national interests, seeking ways for ending the War, integration into union various political unions, implementation methods of economical sanctions, definition of security boundaries, attaining privileges, definition of circles of influence, promoting, reproving, threatening or rewarding – all these were specific characteristics of the II World War period (Gavam, 2000).

Diplomacy has visible and invisible sides just as an iceberg. The official and open side of diplomacy includes statements of official organs, information given by state TV-s and publishing houses. All these are very small sides of diplomacy. The invisible side is the biggest. Psychological operations serve namely this side. Media diplomacy has a more important role for psychological operations due to its dual role between different hidden diplomatic means. In other words, media diplomacy has two essential elements (Ilyas, 2002):

- Diplomacy considered as part of political-practical pressure;
- Media considered as the most important propaganda machine in psychological operations.

Media diplomacy in psychological operations of international status refers to formation of hatred and envy against definite state, government or authorities by another state or government. It includes political, cultural and psychological pressure, as well as rousing interest or sympathy towards definite other states.

For achieving these goals the most effective media diplomacy means are short wave radio channels (For example: The US Radio, The Sabah Radio). Advantage of short wave radio channels is that all citizens can use these radios. There are only few states where short wave radio is prohibited. Besides, usage of such radio translation is possible in all cities and settlements – from those with only several thousand residents up to those where millions live (Bagdikian, 1987).

The second means are satellite TV channels as VOA Persian. Taking into consideration that today people tend to use TV channels more than radio channels, we can assume that constitution of special TV channels for media diplomacy and supporting existing TV channels and programs can accelerate achievement of the goal set by authorities.

The third means are internet. For realization of their goals, subjects of any psychological operation constitute political or news sites related the target state.

As a result, using these sites, highly educated and intelligent people from the target nation help the subjects to realize their goals, as they undergo their invisible professional influence (Elitzur, 1986).

In media diplomacy authorities of any state are a more delicate goal than ordinary citizens, because, they are more informed in comparison to others and rarely undergo usual influence methods. So, psychological operation subjects have to take several measures and complex tactics. One of them is spreading false or misrepresented information. In case of believing this information, the government digresses from reality and implements programs far from logic. Another method is sending authorities e-mails with dual peculiarity. First, threatening and enticing e-mails are sent. It creates hesitation in the person chosen as target. Later, suspicion towards his junior workers is created. As a result, persons in the government lose their confidence in each other and effect of their organized work decreases (McCombs, 1981).

Another method is based on usage of international media organs. In this way, false or misrepresented news are spread all over the world related the intended state. As a result, the target government spends enormous energy to eliminate suspicions spread at the global level.

Means of media diplomacy in psychological operations and methods of struggle against them

Media means are considered the most important factors in diplomatic activities. In other words, in official diplomacy of any state every person in the authorities, diplomats, state agencies work for realization of goals set by the government they are part of. However, in media diplomacy governments may covertly use adherent media organs to win the sympathy of their targets.

When media diplomacy overworks for winning the sympathy of the global community and enters the sphere of psychological operations, naturally, goals change and media diplomacy begins to create revolting imaginations regarding the source state, the target state and its hostile position at the global level. The operation subject explains its activities inside the state, while at the global level wins other states' consent and support regarding the target state. Media means play an important role for achieving this goal (McCombs, 1981).

Methods of struggle against media diplomacy in psychological operations

It is obvious from the explained, that having strong media means and technologies and using effective programming methods, any state can enjoy much more achievements in comparison to those deprived of the two important tools. Then a question may arise: "Are the states with no media means equal to other states' media power condemned to defeat in psychological operations?" The answer is negative, provided that the target state enters this process and actively struggles against its opponents. There are three methods of conducting this struggle:

Strengthening the information and news system of the target state

One of the targets of media diplomacy in psychological operations can be a state. In this case, subjects of psychological operation try to reveal the information vulnerabilities and disadvantages of the target state and to base their media diplomacy on these vulnerable points. So, definition of the strategy directly depends on the situation of the target state and no strategy can be suitable for all situations.

For instance, we can pay attention to the media diplomacy the USA implemented during the psychological operation against Iraq. There were three media means in this operation:

Short wave radios;

Using internet and supporting anti-Saddam sites;

Satellite antenna TV channels.

Two nuances draw attention while analyzing the three means: a) Information vacuum in Iraq; b) Technical backwardness.

The USA knew well, that internal political news in Iraq are not broadcasted by the state radio and TV means and Iraqi citizens use other media organs, radios, satellite TV-s and internet to receive such information. Besides, there were no show and entertainment programs on Iraqi TV-s which did not attract people at all. So, within the psychological operations special attention was paid to financial means to be invested for development of internet means regarding Iraq (McCombs, 1981).

In most of the Islamic countries technical backwardness explained with lack of comprehensive programming in the sphere of internet has enabled the internet to become a more effective tool of the USA and the West. So, they can use internet with higher effectiveness to realize their goals (Soltanifar, 2002). However, the problem can easily be solved using several simple and logical strategies:

Political parties and groups should be given access to some TV channels to broadcast their programs. Only by this way, ideological leaders and elite representatives of the society can avoid the compulsion to use foreign media means.

To form a comprehensive system of information and communication network through implementation of the parameters mentioned below;

Creation of search portals with specialized facilities;

Liken all organizational internet sites to each other;
Creation of internet sites for various layers of the society (from the illiterate up to the elite);
Preparation of electron translation programs for founding mutual relations with other states;
Using communication systems for higher internet speed;
Recruiting all state organs for electronization of all documents and papers people need.

Strengthening the propaganda system of the target state

Strategic propaganda program refers to a long-term and large-size program realized in the global and national level. This program defines the tasks and targets of mass propaganda means. This macro programming enables small-size programming measures at lower levels and creates good conditions for all layers of the society to operate based on reciprocal cooperation. For this, the parameters below should be taken into account (McCombs, 1981):

Clarification of the program macro goals for programmers;
Definition of a motion trajectory for achieving the goal;
Supplying the programs with facilities and tools;
Promotion of professionals and specialists;
Flexibilities of the program for corresponding reactions to the opponent's steps;
Using cybernetics and connection systems to evolve and improve the program;
Centralization of all facilities in the direction of realization of the target and avoiding sparseness.

Using anti-propaganda methods

Anti-propaganda refers to a sort of special propaganda conducted for denying the enemy's propaganda and using the same propaganda against the same enemy. It has two strategies:

Propaganda conducted behavior shown by the enemy against the target state;

Anti-propaganda facilities the target state can use.

Taking in consideration that propaganda includes usage of misrepresented, exaggerated, false and etc. information, exposure and denouncement of the false information spread by the enemy regarding the target state can decrease the effectiveness of the propaganda. It is an anti-propaganda based on the enemy's behavior. For example, when the USA claimed it had occupied Baghdad, Minister of Information of Saddam – Saed Al-Sahaf spoke in front of cameras, showing Baghdad behind him and with it exposing the American lie (Hindell, 1995).

Together with involving internal facilities and technologies in anti-psychological operation, it is highly important that the state use media and other facilities of neighbor states. Global mass media organs always declare their neutrality. Therefore it is possible to spread one's ideology and principles using them (through pressing on them with high professionalism and vigilance, of course). It will enable the state to overcome hostile media diplomacy. Certainly, it is possible when the mentioned media organs are available and they intend to show their professionalism.

During the Gulf War 2003 it was proved that using media organs of neighboring countries was crucial. Saddam Hussein invited media representatives from all over the world to broadcast the war (General Diplomacy of the USA and the Ways of Encounter with it, 2002). Altogether, 2700 journalists were sent to Iraq who videoed and broadcasted dead bodies of citizens, children, women and teenagers killed during the military operations, exposing with it the fact that the USA and Britain did not fight against the Iraqi army. So, it is necessary to take into consideration that every single media organ is very important for anti-propaganda activities.

CONCLUSION

Mass media organs play an important role for implementing the state policy in society, too. Namely mass media is one of the necessary tools that create and control the relation between any state and its civil society, conduct enlightening, educational activities and coordinate for creation of a democratic structure.

Mass media organs in Azerbaijan keep developing and the state itself is interested in such development, because these organs play a definite informative role for conducting the state policy in all spheres. From this viewpoint, the state is highly interested that mass media organs in Azerbaijan develop and gain a transparent work process. At the same time, spread of freedom of thought, valuable offers, objective evaluation of qualitative work, detection of defects serve for development of the state. Briefly, coordinating between the state and its citizens, mass media organs play an important role for establishment of democracy and the people's power in the society.

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