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THE EVOLUTION OF THE MEDIA OPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURENT SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Abstract:	*The theoretical conceptualization of the media operation, extremely little discussed by specialists in the military and/or media is an original approach, based on the use of comparative research methods of certain military operations that are relevant to achieving the proposed goal.*
	The identification of the principles for the media operation, practically the conception approach, is the cornerstone that leads to the identification and argumentation, through mixed ways, including progressive, comparative, dialectical and chronological ways of the structures and activities specific to this new type of operation and the factors that determine the transformation of the media operation into media war.
Keywords:	**Media operation; information operation; psychological information; media war; security environment**
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The analysis from the theoretical point view of the media operation is based on the study of two types of operations specific to contemporaneity, namely the information operation and the psychological operation. The use of new technologies directly influences future conflicts, the approach of the actors on the international relations scene being an indirect one, in view of the fact that they will no longer be able to withstand expensive military campaigns, with destructive effects.

Informational operations

The war informational dimension, invisible but ubiquitous, enshrines information operations, INFO OPS (information operation), as a force multiplier, with a supporting role for commanders and forces to achieve the proposed objectives; "information operations involve the integrated use of

information/research, psychological operations, deception, electronic warfare and physical destruction, in order to influence, degrade or destroy capabilities command and control of the opponent, while protecting their own and allied command and control against similar operations"[1]. The definition of INFO OPS (information operations) is: "information operations, are synchronized and coordinated actions, planned and carried out in order to obtain the desired effects on the will, power of understanding and capabilities/means of the opponent, potential opponent or other entities The National Command Authority, in support of meeting the commander's objectives, by affecting their information and information-based processes, simultaneously with the use of their own information and with the protection and strengthening of their own information-based systems"[2]. Information operations are synchronized with two related areas, which include activities carried out separately, involved in the coordination process given the direct or indirect impact on the will and power to understand targets[3]. One of these areas is civil-military cooperation, and information/public relations.

From the perspective of the analysis of the conceptualization the media operation, through the view of the information operation, we are interested in the second field, namely information/public relations. According to the before mentioned doctrine, this field refers to obtaining the public understanding and support for the military institution through a timely, correct and complete public information, as well as the fluidization of the communication within the military organization. From our point of view, these objectives are dependent on the way the activity of the military organization is presented in the media. Both the information activity and the public relations activity, with the afferent effects due to the reflection in the media message, are needed to be distinct from the informational operations, especially in crisis and war situations. We consider that this aspect is mandatory in order to avoid manipulation through media.

Psychological operations

The second operation considered by us to be essential for the analysis and conceptualization of the media operation, is the psychological operation, PHYOPS. According to the Doctrine of Psychological Operations, S.M.G.-F.O.P. "Psychological operations are all measures, programs and activities designed to change or change the views, attitudes and behavior of enemy, allied or neutral target groups in order to achieve the planned objectives"[4]. The main objectives of the psychological operations are weakening the will to fight the enemy and potential hostile target groups, strengthening the feelings and beliefs of allied

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[1] S.M.G.-66, *Doctrina operaţiilor informaţionale SMG-FOP 3.15 (0303)*, Bucureşti, 2017, p. 20
[2] *Ibidem*
[3] Nicoleta Annemarie Munteanu, *Operaţia mass-media. Complementaritate a operaţiei militare moderne*, TechnoMedia, Sibiu, 2019, p. 46
[4] SMG/FOP-3.16, *Doctrina Operaţiilor Psihologice*, Bucureşti, 2007, p.9

target groups and gaining support and cooperation from the neutral and undecided. From a tactical point of view, we find obvious similarities between psychological operations and media operations, because the tactical team of psychological operations consists of soldiers who, in addition to being well versed in the using equipment, must have real communication skills and networking, because during the conduct of area studies, and target studies, the activity of gathering information is crucial. The collected information is the basis for the making process of audio-video, radio products, which are adapted to the area and to the target, considering the objective and purpose at strategic, operational and tactical levels. Registered products are processed, analyzed and disseminated to targets, then verified according to the effectiveness criteria. Just as, media level, the goal is to transmit the media message to a heterogeneous/target audience and at the level of the psychological operation the goal is to convey the information to a target audience.

We consider that one of the differences is the greater degree of personalization of the message according to the target audience in psychological operations, compared to media operations. Just as psychological operations have become real weapons of the present, effective and to be feared; also media operations tend to fall more and more into these characteristics.

Principles of media operation

Media operation represents the type of media activity carried out to ensure consistent, timely, accurate and efficient public information, organized from the highest level and carried out at the optimum lower level, while maintaining a proactive approach and a quick response[1]. The purpose of the media operation is to support commanders in achieving the proposed operational objectives by promoting understanding and gaining public support for military operations while ensuring the security of the operation[2]. Media operations have gained significant importance in ensuring success in the information age. They ensure the possibility to monitor and facilitate the understanding for the public, to explain the operational situation in a certain eventual context, as well as to communicate the perspective/vision/mission of the army clearly and without other filters. They allow decision-makers to analyze the way in which international and domestic audiences perceive a conflict and even to influence the discussion about a certain operation within the limits of legality and morality.

The media operations aim to transmit and communicate their own themes and messages to the target audience categories, through the mass media[3]. They are complementary to the actions or to the political, diplomatic, military activities carried out by the state at national and international level in support of military

[1] Mircea Dan, *Managementul influenţării sociale în conflictele moderne,* Topform, Bucureşti, 2009, p. 146

[2] *Joint Operation Planning*, *2011*, p. 32, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp5_0.pdf, (29.09.2021)

[3] Ioan Drăgan, *Paradigme ale comunicării de masă,* Şansa, Bucureşti, 1996, pp. 201-204

operations, by commanders and troops for the conduct of military actions. The media operation is carried out in accordance with a set of general principles that can guarantee success or diminish the effects of failure. In the book "Management of social influence in modern conflicts"[1], Dan Mircea consider (opinion that we acquire, but to which we add certain aspects) that the media operation must respect five basic principles: the principle of respecting the truth, the principle of credibility, the principle of observance of security measures, the principle of opportunity, the principle of planning[2].

The principle of observing the truth refers to the content of the information flows used in media operations, which will always be based on truthful data. Checking the accuracy of information before using it in the communication process is crucial.

The principle of credibility represents the correlation between the credibility of media operations structures and trust in the military system. A low level of trust in the military institutions generates distrust in its ability to successfully fulfill its assigned missions. The fastest way to destroy credibility is to use untrue information. Another risk to credibility may be the communication of different and contradictory messages to different audiences.

The principle of compliance with security measures implies that in disseminating information, commanders and officers of information and public relations must maintain balance between the imperative of ensuring transparency to the press/public opinion and maintaining the security of operations in progress or in preparation.

The principle of opportunity shows that opportunity is co-substantial with the speed of reaction and/or the primacy in disseminating information. In the current conflicts, the public can be exposed to the information conveyed by the media within a few hours or even minutes from the occurrence of the events, it can witness the development of some actions through live broadcasts. It is imperative that media operations integrate their own perspective of explaining and interpreting events into the regional/global information flow. Missing the opportunity to communicate one's own information and messages in the news transmitted by the media during military operations produces negative effects on the successful accomplishment of the mission.

The principle of planning shows that media operations must be fully integrated into the operational planning process from the outset. Media operations specialists were co-opted into the Joint Operations Planning Group. The capabilities of media operations are deployed in the theater, as a rule, with the precursor detachment. The planning of media operations is done centrally, the decentralized execution constantly monitoring and evaluating the effects produced.

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[1] Mircea Dan, *Op. cit.*, p. 149
[2] Nicoleta Annemarie Munteanu, *Op. cit.*, p. 50

We believe that these five principles can be and must be joined by four more: continuity, winning and maintaining the initiative, avoiding surprise and the principle of complementarity with military actions.

The principle of continuity defines the permanent side of military goals and objectives. The operation of the media intervenes both in the operational continuity, in the states of peace, crisis or war within which various types of military activities are carried out, and in the continuity of actions, by the possibility of prolonging the action of forces and means without restrictions on time season and field, but also in the disturbing conditions generated by some specialized means of the opponent.

The principle of gaining and maintaining the initiative involves the media operation through activities of media coverage that will help slow down the enemy by providing truncated information, in order to gain time to prepare operations. The information disseminated by the media can contribute to channeling the enemy in areas favorable to his attack, in order to gain the initiative.

The principle of avoiding surprise, as opposed to the principle of winning the initiative, presupposes the development of media actions that prevent the preponderance of reactive actions and allow the own commands and forces to carry out predominantly proactive actions.

The principle of complementarity with military actions is considered within the practice and theory of armed struggle one of the principles by which the balance of victory in battle can tilt decisively in favor of their own troops. The media operation can become complementary to military actions, having the purpose to provide information from the opposing camp, necessary to their own troops, both to avoid surprise and to surprise the opponent. The effects of the media operation activity are not only material, but especially moral, representing the ability to mislead the opponent, managing unfavorable situations that occur unexpectedly and stimulating the initiative. as in the case of psychological operation, media operatiob can be classified into two categories: offensive media operations and defensive media operations.

Offensive media operations

Using the psychological operations attributes, we consider that offensive media operations are planned and executed in order to:

• inform the target audience about the missions, purpose, combat capabilities of their own troops, through media messages that emphasize the superiority of their own forces;

• increase the number of media messages that would maximize the effects of the activities in order to mask the actions carried out by their own forces;

• the transmission of media messages that build and consolidate some false perceptions of the public opinion related to the enemy public about the evolution of the situation, in order to create contradictions for the enemy control systems;

• undermine through media messages, the confidence of the forces and the population of the opposing camp in terms of effectiveness of the actions of its

own politico-military leadership, at the same time as creating suspicions about the quality and capacity of military leaders.

Defensive media operations

This type of operation is designed for the following purposes:
• counteracting enemy propaganda, through specific media products and media messages;
• discrediting the means of communication aimed at attacking or accusing one's own military actions;
• gaining and maintaining the support of international public opinion for its own actions;
• media influence, intrinsically and psychologically, of the enemy in order to accept the legitimacy of their own military actions;
• building a media strategy, based on documentation and analysis, for military commanders that is useful for protection against enemy propaganda;

We appreciate especially important, from the perspective of media operations, both offensive and defensive, the collaboration with the public relations departments of the military structure. We consider that the military operations are becoming an increasing part of military activity, regardless of the level at which it takes place. Military decision-makers, as in the case of information and psychological operations, when INFO OPS and PHYOPS planners are engaged in the operational planning process, must also take into account the mass communication effects specific to the media operation. Media planners believe that they need to be involved in the operational planning process, right from the start. Their priorities are: planning media operations to support the commander's intention and objectives, the purpose set, and the integration of media operations into the military operation.

We consider that media operations, such as information operations, are materialized through the following three main activities, which determine the characteristics of the media message:
• influential media messages - have as main purpose influencing the will of the public opinion established as a target public, by transmitting in accordance with well-established themes, in the form of a strategy, cloud media messages with both verbal and nonverbal specifics. This type of message has the following purposes: to support one's own military actions, to negatively affect the opponent's actions, to encourage unfavorable attitudes towards the enemy, among the neutral ones. Media operations must be synchronized and coordinated with information operations, both under the authority of the commander, with the specific aim of creating a synergy of effects and eliminating possible contradictions that would produce undesirable effects;
• media messages against enemy leadership and command are made in order to create effects on the flow of information specific to decision makers, insisting on undermining the enemy's ability to make decisions, to transmit decisions and, in particular, to put them into practice.

• protective media messages focus on preserving certain information that could be critical to the success of one's actions.

The intrinsic link between the media operation, the informational operation and the psychological operation creates the favorable framework for coordination and cooperation to avoid or diminish unintended political, psychological, physical, media, or informational side effects. We believe that media operations are complementary to military operations, which is why the INFO OPS framework should include them, and within the Information Operations Coordination Group, the media operation should be an important component.

For the military environment in general and for the Romanian Army in particular, building a favorable image through information and public relations activities, from our point of view, is no longer enough, but specific elements must be added to the media operation. The introduction of the media operation in the operational planning process is a necessary condition for increasing the degree of success of a military mission, but, at the same time, for the image of the military organization by type of peace.

We consider that the object of the media operation - the influence of public opinion, through the effects produced, must also be found within the military body, and decision makers must be prepared to support the coverage by media messages of all military issues, which do not contradict information that could affect national security. We believe that this is the limit that the media must assume to respect. The conduct of current military operations, their success, will depend to a large extent on how military strategists will choose to manage the communication effects specific to the media operation.

From media operation to media war

The transition from media operation to the media war represents the transition from the correctness and morality of the press, to the transmission of distorted information with negative effects on the civilian population. The ways in which the media can turn into a weapon that can strike are multiple, appealing to the intelligence, the power of creativity and expression of the journalist, the editorial force of media companies, and media networks in general. The media operation can become a media war in two situations. On the one hand, when there is a confrontation between the media of each of the conflicting camps, in order to impose their opinion on the national and international public, they impose their own version of the causes, development and consequences of the conflict. On the other hand, the media can be the interface for war; "fiercely and rightly independent, the media will resist all attempts to manage their activity, except when military co-operation proves the only realistic means of access or information. Few media agencies can claim to be fully impartial. Some will be selective in their representation of the truth for their own ends and those of the party they have elected to support; others may have a particular line they wish to promote, such as increased international involvement for humanitarian reasons (...)

despite the apparent moral ascendancy (...) the secondary effects of the media must be carefully considered"[1].

The information age determines major changes in the organization and conduct of modern military operations. Military organizations are forced to purchase new technologies in order to gain an informational advantage. Part of the information society, media networks influence the organization and conduct of modern military operations, as an essential component of the national and international security environment. The information resource, a major element, both for the media and for the military body, has certain characteristics of manifestation within the relationship between the two organizations.

We considered that the specific elements of the informational spectrum, respectively time, information, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom must be personalized in the process of organizing and conducting modern military operations. Applied knowledge of these elements contributes significantly to the efficient use and management of military information in order to ensure security. We believe that the transformation of military intelligence must be able to predict the impact of new technologies, including those used by media networks.

The information society, through the existence of global communications and the unrestricted circulation of information, has put pressure on the planning of military actions; this includes monitoring military action, also including through the media. The informational dimension of military operations requires new values of decision, and control, through the intervention of elements such as blocking, modifying or diverting military information, by creating an atmosphere of trust, as well as information on the handling of troops and civilians, elements managed by media networks.

From our point of view, an important allocation of resources for the military intelligence system is a very important aspect, because the planning and management of modern military operations depend on the quality of information and cannot be the principle of minimum resource consumption accepted, only optimal consumption is acceptable. Joint Warfare Publication defines the media operation as "that activity developed to ensure the timely provision of accurate information to the public, through the implementation of public relations policies in the public operational environment, while maintaining operational security"[2].

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[1] Joint Warfare Publication 3-50, *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations, 2004,* p. 15, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/ attachment_data/file/437446/20130402-jwp3_50_ed2_pso-Archived.pdf, (13.10.2021)
[2] The Joint Doctrine and Concept Centre, (2001), *Media Operations, Join Warfare Publication, 3-45,* Swindon, p. 1, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/ government/ uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/979962/archivedoctrine_uk_media_ops_jdp_ 3_45_1_.pdf, (26.09.2021)

The media operation is a concrete form of ongoing war[1], although the media is not actually conventional tool within the war, only the bearers of the truth, or should be. The media operation, from our point of view, is a key component of any military operation and requires the committed involvement of commanders and commanding officers. Specialist staff dealing with media issues should be informed about the principles of the media operation and should be trained to ensure their success.

Media operations and information operations as a whole must have a clear vision, and appropriate operational plans, in order to generate certain synergies. However, the types of operations specific to the new type of war, especially the media operation, must be treated separately, in order to avoid the false impression that the media can be manipulated or used for misinformation purposes[2]. We consider that these represent risks for the transformation of the media operation into a media war.

The differences between media war and mediated war

Our analysis is based on the necessary difference between media war and mediated war. From our point of view, the mediated war is the essence of the media operation, which means that the goal is to reveal to the public information about the war, using specific means of mass communication: print, radio, television, news agencies, and Internet. The reality shows us that, throughout history, the relationship between the press and the military environment, the mediated war is an ideal, because there have always been propaganda confrontations through the media channels triggered by the conflicting camps. We believe that mediated war is one of the most dangerous weapons within unconventional threats.

According to Călin Hentea, the media war is "the confrontation between the media belonging to camps in armed conflict, in order to impose both their own opinion and the international one, their own version on the causes, development and consequences of the war"[3]. The same author gives another definition of media war, but broadly speaking: "media war contains the full spectrum of confrontations, carried out exclusively within the media of each of the parties to the conflict, as well as those of the various media in terms of regarding the war in question, in order to impose their own opinions"[4].

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[1] Mircea Mureșan, Lucian Stăncilă, Doru Enache, *Tendințe în evoluția teoriei și practicii războiului,* Editura UNAP, București, 2006, p. 55

[2] The Joint Doctrine and Concept Centre, (2001), *Media Operations, Join Warfare Publication, 3-45,* Swindon, p. 1, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/ government/ uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/979962/archivedoctrine_uk_media_ops_jdp_ 3_45_1_.pdf, (26.09.2021)

[3] Călin Hentea, *150 de ani de război mediatic. Armata și presa în timp de război,* Nemira, București, 2000, p. 3

[4] *Ibidem,* p. 24

Media warfare is included in the forms of future wars, such as geophysical warfare, information warfare, psychological warfare, economic warfare, cosmic warfare, cultural warfare, and genetic warfare. Some authors[1] consider the media war to be the main means of waging psychological warfare, but we consider it to be an independent war, just like the media operation. Although the basic principles of media warfare have an important psychological component - strengthening the moral of one's own forces, discouraging the adversary, gaining the support of the population - there are certain characteristics that personalize media warfare. The media participates in PsyOps, inside the process of manipulation and misinformation of public opinion and in the decision-making process. All aspects are presented through the media, from economic to military, from social to individual. "The media is power. A lie can be turned into truth and vice versa, because the public is not able to verify the receiver, so the perception is of the one who transmits the message. This is the great weapon of the conflict, because the media can often go to war even without soldiers, in the fight with the entities they face"[2].

Like any form of war, mediated war has two forms of manifestation: offensive and defensive. Before aggression, the target is chosen and studied to get to know it better. This includes various studies on the psychology and mentality of the target group, culture and civilization, the means of defense available in such cases. Based on these studies, the strengths and weaknesses of the group are founded. According to them and to pursue the goal, the plan is to seek to weaken strengths and exploit vulnerabilities. The fighting methods are adapted to the specific weapons of this type of confrontation: information, words and images. The tactics used in this type of media confrontation are given by a certain topic of the language and style of presenting information in the media, the use of symbols with hidden meanings, unverified data and information provided by certain organizations.

This type of aggression aims to influence the destruction of the systems of mass communication channels, referring to the media with all components: the written press, radio, television, news agencies and the Internet. The media war has certain means of achieving its goals. These are: public relations, lobby groups, limiting access to information, censorship, misinformation, information poisoning, propaganda, and manipulation. These are different ways of influencing the masses and often have common elements that make them intersect.

Media influences directly connected with media war

The process of identifying and analyzing the factors that determine the transformation of the media operation into media warfare was based on finding the risks induced by the media networks regarding the security sphere. We found that

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[1] Gheorghe Văduva, *Principii ale războiului şi luptei armate. Realităţi şi tendinţe*, Editura UNAP, Bucureşti, 2003, pp. 74-77
[2] Mircea Mureşan, Lucian Stăncilă, Doru Enache, *Op. cit.*, p. 57

in the information age it is undeniable the vulnerability of security through media networks.

Media visibility, an attribute of media networks, is both a benefit and a risk to the image, credibility and legitimacy of an entity, thus creating a certain type of fragility[1]. The new and distinct type of fragility is composed of four categories of elements that are generated by media visibility, of which we mention the leakage of information, which interests us in the context of our approach, especially that hiding or banning certain information can be interpreted by the media. The press does its duty to ensure the public access to information held by the military environment, as long as national security interests are not affected. The media plays an important role in exposing those who manipulate, hide, release information; but at the same time, the media tends to exaggerate and manipulate. For this reason, we believe that media actions must be characterized with the highest possible degree of objectivity, as should those working in this field. Freedom, in general, and freedom of the press, in particular, is, as we have seen, a temptation that may cause some to go beyond the limits of its proper purpose. Freedom of the press, sometimes understood as the right to write anything and about everyone, can lead to immoral topics, going as far as pornography and also to the publication of materials (articles, comments) in which some people are sprayed with mud, in an unscrupulous way and using indecent or vulgar language[2].

From our point of view, *the globalization of mass communication* can have negative effects on the state of security. The press has the opportunity to know the vulnerabilities of a system and is in a position to juggle them. Knowing the vulnerabilities of a system requires first of all a very good knowledge of that system. One of the purposes is to be present with "strong topics" in front of the public. We believe that the main risk to which security institutions are exposed in relation to the media is the desire of the press to find out "something else" than what is "in sight". Vulnerabilities within a security organization give the media the opportunity to use them and present them to the general public as negative aspects. Vulnerabilities induced by media networks in the field of security can be observed both in peacetime and in times of crisis or conflict. All the more so in the latter situation, the dissemination of erroneous information by the press, the presentation, therefore, of a truncated reality, can affect the way in which a security organization is perceived. An eloquent example of this is the war in Kosovo, where European media activity has sparked international media inflammation.

The desire of the press to obtain information from inside security organizations is supported by *technological developments in the field of mass media*. This, among other things, allows real-time transmission of information. The advancement of computer science that brought about the military revolution is the same that has come to influence all the functions of mass communication and to

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[1] John Thompson, *Media şi modernitatea. O teorie socială a mass-media*, Antet, Bucureşti, 2000, p. 136

[2] Corneliu Turianu, Doru Pavel, *Calomnia prin presă,* Şansa, Bucureşti, 1996, p. 14

influence the extent of electronic data collection. The pioneering example, eloquent in this regard, is the 1991 Gulf War, which was the first major conflict broadcast live by major television networks. The media have their own satellites for video broadcasting. The public tends to accept the images transmitted by the media as undeniable evidence.

In terms of media, *the speed of information and the deterioration of the quality* of information due to the acceleration of events, as well as the way of dealing with them are important characteristics of the activity of media networks, in times of crisis. Included in the general strategy of the state, communication becomes a form of action right from the beginning of some force operations, showing the will of the transmitter to act. At the same time, it is possible that the press will be the first to reach an event that involves the presence of institutions with activities in the field of security. In this case, the press is ready at any time to immortalize both successes and failures, whether objective or not, in order to determine the transformation of a simple media message into the first stage of a conflict. We are tempted to say that the vulnerabilities that media networks can induce to security are based on the "guilt" of the press, in view of the defective exercise of the journalist profession. The statement is not entirely true. There are cases in which, due to the lack of transparency of some institutions operating in the field of security, a defective image was created, which determined the press to act by force.

We consider it a risk to approach security issues by *journalists who do not specialize in this field[1]*. Given that in the media the image prevails, it must be understood that media organizations are interested in instant images that become the reality of the day. Be it security issues, the context is very important and must be presented in the press by specialized journalists. Or, in matters related to security, the context is particularly important and must be presented in the press by specialized journalists. We believe that, for democracy, the lack of power of the press is a risk, not the power of the press. The decrease in the power of the press leads to the unbalancing of the entire free system in a country, because the basis of democracy is the belief that well-informed citizens can govern themselves, led by reason[2].

At the same time, we believe that in the national, regional and global security equation, media organizations can participate in its strengthening or degeneration. Moreover, during crises and conflicts, media organizations will be divided into three distinct categories - own, adversary and neutral - according to their own logic and policies, in accordance with their place. As tools of political, economic or other forces that are in internal competition, media organizations can make national security vulnerable without having set out to do so and without recognizing it.

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[1] Nicoleta Annemarie Munteanu, *Componenta mediatică a conflictelor militare*, Editura TechnoMedia, Sibiu, 2018, pp. 218-220

[2] Al Gore, *Asaltul asupra naţiunii,* Rao Books, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 32

The evolution of the media in recent decades has shown us that not only the conflicting camps are interested in using mass communication, in order to achieve their goals, or to turn the media operation into a media war. Even the media networks are interested because, more than ever, war makes all the money, increasing the audience.

We consider this to be an economic factor, but there are other aspects that contribute to the transformation of the media operation into a media war, such as ideological, political, social or cultural identity. A NATO spokesman during Operation Allied Forces in 1999 acknowledged that "for leaders, winning the press campaign is as important as winning the military campaign; the two are inseparable and cannot win without each other"[1]. The arguments we put forward come to support what Alvin Toffler said in the early 1990ˢ about the "battlefield gone"[2]. Indeed, the future war does not need a classic battlefield to take place and have an effect, and the media war needs the least of this classic space to fight, but the effects that are generated can be on an extremely large scale, as if the whole earth is a battlefield, given the possibility of the media message capturing every corner of the world.

Conclusions

We consider that the media's interest in military operations is, in most cases, intense and inevitable. Even if they may be denied access to military bases, ships or aircraft, the media cannot be ignored or excluded from the operational environment. The way the media perceives a situation or event is different from the way it is perceived in the military environment. Most of the media are involved in a fierce commercial competition, in order to win over the public, through fast, all-encompassing media messages, but most of the time without the existence of a background for understanding the military environment.

Our research showed that, apart from a small group of journalists specializing in national security and defense, the understanding of the armed forces of the media is limited and lacking in depth, giving rise to issues that are reflected in the presentation of media products.

The structures and activities specific to the media operation can only be effective in terms of gaining and maintaining credibility with the public. Even if there is an obvious synergy between the functioning of the media, the exploitation of information and the psychological functioning, we consider it imperative to distinguish one from the other, in order to avoid the impression of manipulation, deception or use of the media as a means of misinformation, to avoid transforming the functioning of the media into a media war.

The media war often has a nation as a target, a state and this leads to a large-scale confrontation, with repercussions worldwide; the attacker is, in turn,

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[1] Mihai Floca, *Relațiile publice-multiplicator de forță al organizației militare*, "Observatorul Militar", No. 30, 2003, p.13
[2] Alvin Toffler, Heidi Toffler, *Război și antirăzboi,* Antet, București, 1995, p. 67

most often another state. This type of confrontation does not appear in any military strategy or doctrine. Such a statement should automatically acknowledge military involvement in the media, which would call into question the freedom and independence of the press. It takes advantage of the presumption of objectivity of the media, elements that significantly increase the effectiveness of this type of confrontation.

Media institutions are used to convey different types of messages. False, clear information, partially true information, and the presentation of information in a context that distorts reality, to which are added other specific manipulation techniques. All these elements characterize the media war and lead us to the idea that, in fact, the media war represents the reality during the relationship between the military environment and the press, contradictory to the ideal of media war.

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