

Fan Wenjin 

Shanghai Institute of Global Governance and Regional Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, China, Shanghai
e-mail: 729548732@qq.com

RESEARCH ON RUSSIA-AMERICA GAME: TAKING INFORMATION WARFARE AS AN EXAMPLE

In recent years, the soft power contest between the United States and Russia has intensified. Russia is actively developing the news media. During events such as the Syrian war and the U.S. election, Russia has gradually broken the monopoly of the United States and Western countries through mass media and other communication tools. The United States continues to have an advantage in global discursive power, exerting significant influence on world public opinion. The Western countries use modern technologies in the dissemination of information in order to achieve information hegemony. On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a special military operation, which led to a sharp escalation of the situation in Ukraine, and continues to influence the international community. This special operation was the first important military conflict in the era of the mobile Internet that has realized the “integration of time and space”. The United States and other Western countries are taking part in the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict, with the exception of direct military action. America and other Western countries are third parties in the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict, but they do not directly participate in hostilities. Currently there is a tough information war with Russia. Since there were initially structural contradictions between Russia and America, and the military factor strengthened them, this conflict is called a new “world war” in the information field. Research on the motivation and characteristics of Russia-America information warfare in this conflict is conducive to a deep understanding of the nature of Russia-Ukraine conflict, the fundamentals of Russia-America game, as well as the direction of Russia-America relationship.

Key words: superpower game, geopolitics, Russia-America relationship, information warfare.

Фань Вэньцзинь

Шанхай халықаралық зерттеулер университеті жанындағы Шанхай жаһандық басқару және аймақтық зерттеулер институты, Қытай, Шанхай қ.
e-mail: 729548732@qq.com

Ресей-Америка ойынын зерттеу: ақпараттық соғыс мысалында

Соңғы жылдары АҚШ пен Ресей арасындағы жұмсақ күш үшін күрес күшейе түсті. Ресей бұқаралық ақпарат құралдарын қарқынды түрде дамытуда. Сириядағы соғыс және АҚШ сайлауы секілді оқиғалар кезінде Ресей АҚШ пен Батыс елдерінің БАҚ және басқа коммуникация құралдары арқылы ақпарат ағындарына деген монополиясын біртіндеп бұза алды. Соған қарамастан АҚШ бастаған батыс елдері соңғы коммуникациялық мүмкіндіктер бойынша басымдығын сақтап келеді де ақпараттық кеңістікті өз мүдделері мен стандарттарына сәйкес манипуляциялай отырып, белсенді түрде пайдалануда. Америка Құрама Штаттары әлемдік қоғамдық пікірге айтарлықтай ықпал ете отырып, жаһандық дискурсті күште артықшылыққа ие болуды жалғастыруда. Батыс елдері ақпараттық үстемдікке жету үшін ақпарат таратуда заманауи технологияларды пайдаланады. Ресейдің 2022 жылдың 24 ақпанында басталған арнайы әскери операциясы Украинадағы жағдайдың күрт шиеленісуіне әкеліп соғып, халықаралық қауымдастыққа әлі де әсер етуде. Бұл арнайы операция мобильді интернет дәуіріндегі «уақыт пен кеңістіктің интеграциясын» жүзеге асыруға бағытталған алғашқы ірі әскери қақтығыс болды. АҚШ пен басқа да Батыс елдері – Ресей-Украина әскери қақтығысында сыртқы тарап, әскери қимылдарға тікелей қатыспайды. Қазір Ресеймен қиян-кескі ақпараттық соғыс жүріп жатыр. Ресей мен Америка арасында бастапқыда құрылымдық қарама-қайшылықтар болғандықтан және әскери фактор оларды ақпараттық салада күшейткендіктен, жалғасып жатқан қақтығысты жаңа «дүниежүзілік соғыс» деп атайды. Осы қақтығыстағы ресейлік-американдық ақпараттық соғыстың себептері мен сипаттамаларын зерттеу ресей-украиндық қақтығыстың табиғатын, ресей-американ саяси ойынының негіздерін, сондай-ақ ресей-американдық қатынастары бағытын терең түсінуге ықпал етеді.

Түйін сөздер: алпауыт державалар ойыны, геосаясат, ресей-американ қарым-қатынасы, ақпараттық соғыс.

Фань Вэньцзинь

Шанхайский институт глобального управления и региональных исследований,
Шанхайский университет международных исследований, Китай, г. Шанхай
e-mail: 729548732@qq.com

Исследование Российско-Американской «игры» на примере информационной войны

В последние годы борьба за мягкую силу между Соединенными Штатами и Россией усилилась. Россия активно развивает средства массовой информации. Во время таких событий, как война в Сирии и выборы в США, Россия постепенно нарушила монопольное право США и западных стран на информационные потоки через СМИ и с помощью других коммуникационных инструментов. Западные страны во главе с США, тем не менее остаются лидерами по новейшим коммуникационным возможностям, активно используют их, манипулируя информационным пространством в соответствии со своими интересами и стандартами. США по-прежнему имеют преимущества в глобальной дискурсивной силе, оказывая существенное влияние на мировое общественное мнение. Западные страны используют современные технологии в распространении информации с целью достижения информационной гегемонии. Начавшаяся 24 февраля 2022 года специальная военная операция России привела к резкому обострению ситуации на Украине, продолжает оказывать влияние на международное сообщество. Эта спецоперация стала первым важным военным конфликтом в эпоху мобильного Интернета, реализовавшим «интеграцию времени и пространства». США и другие страны Запада являются сторонними участниками российско-украинского военного конфликта, но они не принимают прямого участия в военных действиях. В настоящее время развёрнута ожесточенная информационная война с Россией. Поскольку между Россией и Америкой изначально существуют структурные противоречия, а военный фактор усилил их, этот конфликт называют новой «мировой войной» в информационном поле. Исследование мотивации и особенностей российско-американской информационной войны в этом конфликте способствует глубокому пониманию природы российско-украинского конфликта, основ российско-американской политической игры, а также направленности российско-американских отношений.

Ключевые слова: игра сверхдержав, геополитика, российско-американские отношения, информационная война.

Introduction

Currently, the study of the Russia-America relationship has become an urgent task, because the final interruption of the bilateral dialogue relationship will undermine the entire international stability and security system. During the Cold War, the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, as the “giants” of geopolitics, attempted to achieve global dominance. To achieve this, both sides pursue long-term geopolitics and geostrategic goals through a “hardline” approach. Over time, this confrontation has gradually shifted from hard power to soft power, which is mainly ideology competition. In other words, Russia and the United States are moving towards information warfare.

In the context of military operations between Russia and Ukraine, the conflict between the Western world and Russia has intensified, and the confrontation is taking on more severe and aggressive forms. In recent years, the soft power contest between Russia and the United States has been on the rise. In events such as the entry of Crimea into Russia, the US general election, and the new crown epi-

dem, Russia used official agencies and mass media to break through the weak propaganda structure, thereby breaking the monopoly of communication in American and Western countries. However, Western countries headed by the United States still control the operational order of the information space and have absolute advantages in global discourse power and information technology. In fact, Russia and the United States only conduct information warfare in a few stages, and then go into a latent state.

Through the events in Ukraine, a qualitative change took place in the Russia-America relationship. At this point, the Russia-America information warfare has entered its most intense new phase. The special military operation Russia took in Ukraine on 2022 was the first important military conflict in the era of mobile Internet that has realized the “integration of time and space”. Therefore, the research on Russia-America information warfare has practical significance. With the theme of information warfare in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, this research studies Russia-America structural contradiction in depth.

Modern information warfare refers to information space, including foreign territory, with the

cultural space and sphere of consciousness of the “enemy” as the object of attack. The other party didn’t even realize that he had become the target of attack or control from the outside world for a long time. All this ensures the remarkable effectiveness of the influence method and the minimization of losses to the “aggressors”, thus allowing them to maintain a peaceful and civilized state (Popova, Fedorinov: 17).

In the process of globalization, the nature of conflicts between countries is still increasing sharply, and competition and confrontation at various levels such as politics, military affairs, economy, diplomacy, security, science and culture are further intensified.

The purpose of this article is to consider the motivation and characteristics of the Russian-American information war in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the Russian-American political game, as well as the prospects for bilateral relations.

Main methods

In the process of research, the authors used a discursive, systematic, comparative analysis, as well as a descriptive approach. These methods help to reveal the official position of countries in relation to each other and how they play out in international processes. In general, the methodological orientation of the study is based on the most important works on international topics by representatives of the realist school of thought.

Discourse manipulation and stage communication in international communication is a theoretical perspective and research framework. In the field of international communication, the importance of discourse manipulation and stage communication is constantly increasing, especially in the context of the military Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

Literature and source Review

Academic research on the Ukrainian crisis is mainly carried out from the perspective of international politics. Numerous studies have analyzed the international political factors. For example, some studies have pointed out that the Ukrainian crisis is not only a crisis between various forces that occurred during a sensitive period of international power transfer. Complex and profound international conflicts are at the same time a major factor that has affected the reconstruction of the global order and the reshaping of the geopolitical pattern in the

Eurasian region since the 21st century. There are also studies that point out that the occurrence and development of the new round of Ukrainian crisis is not an accidental event, but the result of the combination of these factors is essentially a strategy between Russia and the US-dominated West around the struggle for Ukraine. A small number of studies have focused on the state of internal governance in Ukraine. For example, some research suggests that extreme nationalism and radical democracy ideology is the two main causes of Ukraine’s internal and external difficulties (Yiping, Chen and Yijia, Guan, 2022:6). Relevant research provides international and domestic political perspectives for understanding Ukraine issues.

Results and discussion

Sources of Russia-America contradiction

The Russia-America relationship has always been an international hotspot that has received widespread attention. After World War II, the expansion of US power provided an objective basis for the establishment of world hegemony after the war. As early as 1934, Roosevelt instructed Lester Davis to write “Roosevelt’s World Blueprint”, which stipulated the international strategy that the United States should implement after the war. The United States can neither retreat into isolationism nor be content with the traditional balance of power policy of defining certain spheres of influence for itself. What it promotes is not a cosmopolitanism with the United States as the world hegemon (Yuan Ming, 2007). However, the US’s cosmopolitan strategy clashed sharply with the Soviet Union’s foreign strategy.

As the main force in the European Anti-Fascist War, the Soviet Union made significant contributions in World War II. After World War II, the Soviet Union emerged as a military and political giant in Eurasia. In order to consolidate the fruits of victory and ensure the priority security of the socialist countries, Stalin actively promoted and expanded the power and influence of the Soviet Union. In the postwar period, the United States sought to establish unshakable leadership, while the Soviet Union pursued an unassailable sphere of influence.

These two strategic objectives are in direct conflict. Each side becomes a huge obstacle to the other’s goal. In addition, inherent conflicts in ideology and social systems made the contradictions and differences between the United States and the Soviet Union more acute. Then, the East-West Cold War, centered on the struggle for world hegemony

between the United States and the Soviet Union, lasted for nearly half a century. During this period, there were ups-downs and changes in the situation on both sides (Liu Debin, 2018).

The US-Soviet Cold War, which lasted for more than 40 years, came to an end with the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Finally, after the Cold War, the international strategic pattern dominated by the United States was formed. Post-war international relations opened a new page (Lianqing, etc., 2006). The end of the Cold War marked the emergence of a new and complex world. Although the United States is constantly adjusting its global strategy, its core ideas are still consistent with those during the Cold War, namely maintaining and consolidating the leadership of the United States and shaping the world according to American values. With the growth of American power, the hegemony of its foreign policy has become more obvious, and its attempt to establish a “unipolar world” dominated by the United States has become obvious. Russia, as the “successor country” of the Soviet Union, did not accept the transformation according to the Western plan.

Based on the development of the Russia-America relationship over the past 30 years, Russia and the United States have always been in a state of “open rivalry and veiled strife”. Although the relationship has eased, there are constant contradictions. Previously, former U.S. President Donald Trump had repeatedly stated that he would take measures to realize normal relations and cooperative development between the U.S. and Russia. He sought to resolve differences through dialogue and intended to build a friendlier relationship between the two countries. Trump praised Putin as an “great leader” and “excellent competitor” who is able to run the country with a strong grip. However, the “US National Security Strategy Report” released by the White House in 2017 clearly positioned Russia as an adversary, and it will impose continuous sanctions and escalated military confrontation. This contradictory policy towards Russia not only shows the conflict between Trump’s subjective wishes and realistic sanctions, but also reflects the deep-rooted Russia-America structural contradiction (Kefan, Cheng, 2007:101).

The Russia-America relationship is heavily influenced by the “American Creed”. The United States mainly holds the following attitudes towards Russia. They worry that the United States will have a nuclear war with Russia. Russia’s geopolitics ambition is to strip America of its leadership in the world. Russia’s particular geopolitics claim to

be an alliance with China to lead Central Asia and penetrate Latin America. Russia is trying to play a special role in the Middle East. Russia attempts to drive a wedge between the US and Europe and split NATO Atlantic Alliance. Russia claims to play a special ideology role in the world, and believes that the messianism in “Russian thought” is superior to Western liberalism. Russia’s authoritarian dictatorship persecutes dissent and opposition. Russia has problems like corruption and high crime rates (Kefan, 2020: 99-100).

Thus, the United States has always regarded preventing and containing Russia’s resurgence as an important part of its global political and security policies. To fully contain Russia’s development, the United States seeks to minimize Russia’s traditional spheres of influence, geopolitics space, and military space (Qingcai, Haibin, 2013: 23-24). Huang Dengxue refers to the authoritative opinion of the famous specialist Xiao He from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: “the White House adopted some of the ideas put forward by think tanks in the National Security Strategy Guidelines for the Transition Period” released in March 2021 (Dengxue, Peipeng, 2021: 140). China and Russia are two countries that pose a threat to the United States, but the essence and nature of the threats on each side are different. Among them, Russia is scornfully called to be “a disturbing role on the international stage”. In other words, the United States believes that the threat from Russia may be urgent but not serious, which does not require huge costs to win over.

Under the guidance of this idea, the United States and NATO under its leadership have “extremely strong principles” for Russia in the Ukraine issue. They publicly refused to make written guarantees on issues such as not allowing Ukraine to join NATO, and continued to publicly release relevant military intelligence. In the end, Russia was pushed to a disadvantage. Since Biden came to power, the United States has shown a series of unprecedented tough postures towards Russia. For example, the White House listed Russia as one of the new global threats in the Transitional National Security Strategy Guidelines. The United States has imposed a series of new sanctions on Russia, including the expulsion of diplomats and military exercises, on the grounds of Russia’s “interference in the US election” and cyber-attacks on US companies and government websites (Dengxue, Peipeng, 2021: 143).

The new version of the US National Security Strategy in 2022 claims that efforts should be made to restrain “dangerous Russia”. These actions have

heightened the tension and confrontation in the Russia-America relationship. Biden declared Russia to be an aggressive vengeful power for the United States. The days of the US moving closer to Russia are over. The United States will repair the rift in the European Atlantic alliance during the Trump era and unite the entire West to deal with the threat of Russia. In recent years, the means of application in the Russia-America contradiction have gradually become more technological and informatized. Within the framework of Russia-America modern conflict, the main “battlefield” can be seen as the global information environment. The United States uses its advanced science and technology and information media at home and abroad to damage Russia’s image, and maintains sanctions and tensions against Russia through information warfare. In the context of deteriorating relations, the United States and its European allies launched a comprehensive information warfare against Russia in order to further contain Russia (Press conference, 2018).

On the Russian side, Putin’s policy is to seek balance. From the point of view of Russian researchers, under Putin’s policy, Russia issued stronger warnings against actions that alienate and provoke Russia. Cooperation has always been the dominant mode in the pursuit of Russia’s interests and identity as a “European” state. For Putin, restoring Russia as a influential world power is of paramount importance, which is also the view of the vast majority of Russian citizens and politicians. Putin is determined to emphasize Russia’s global role so that everyone can hear “the roar of the Russian bear”. Russia’s political purpose is to continue to seek to reduce the unilateral power of the United States on a global scale and to minimize Russia’s isolation. At the same time, the world believes that Russia can become the “center” of the world to compete with Western countries (Andryushina, 2016: 165-168).

In addition, the more important political goals of the Putin government are economic recovery, international stability and strategic independence, which means that Russia needs to actively participate in the development of globalization and cooperate and compete with the United States in various fields. With the development of science and technology, Russia has discovered the key to the development of the Russia-America strategic relationship, that is, a new confrontation mode with high-tech means as the main means. Russia already has a comprehensive understanding of the United States’ careful arrangements for “information warfare” (Tsvetkova,

Ilyichev, 2017: 1-6). In order to ensure the security of the information and communication infrastructure of the Russian Federation, Russia is prepared to counter large-scale information campaigns.

Chinese experts draw attention to the following important circumstance. In cyberspace a state’s ability to maintain sovereignty is determined by its technological capability. Lang Ping of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, argues that it is because of this that the US holds absolute dominance in relation to cyberspace’s “key terrain”, including “data center, network service providers, submarine cables, international standards-setting bodies, the basic input-output system, supply chain, internet labor force and technological innovation”. According to Shaolei Feng, domination of the internet by the few had led to an “unfair allocation of network resources, abuse of network technical advantages, and the militarization of cyberspace” (Shaolei, 2022:80).

The Chinese side believes that continuing US dominance over the internet is a destabilizing force. The Chinese government has delivered 2014 messages about internet sovereignty to both international and domestic audiences. Despite confirming its commitment to working with the rest of the international community “to create a peaceful, secure, open and cooperative cyber space”. Beijing has given every indication that it regards acts of US cyber-aggression as signaling the onset of a new internet-based, as cold war (Dynon, 2014). Russian analysts focus on a number of Ukrainian President Zelensky’s statements long before of the operation in 2022. In particular, about the need to build nuclear weapons and Ukraine’s integration into NATO. It has become the Kremlin’s last “beyond patience”. Ukraine’s political stance and its fanatical Russo-phobic political line represent the greatest and most dangerous geopolitics challenge facing Russia earlier (Galayda, Antonova, 2022:23).

It can be found that the entire Western relationship led by Russia and the United States has gradually deteriorated after Biden took office. As for containing the “dangerous Russia”, the United States uses the long-standing Ukraine issue to suppress and sanction Russia from the military security and economic fields (Pang Dapeng, 2022:72). Therefore, the essence of the Russia-Ukraine conflict lies in the intensification and escalation of the Russia-America structural contradiction, which really focuses on the geopolitics competition on the territory of Ukraine.

Information warfare as the main means of Russia-America game

The United States is the first country to propose information warfare, which can be traced back to the 1970s. At that time, no relevant theory of information warfare was proposed. Until the early 1990s, the United States officially launched research on information warfare theory. Webster's College Dictionary defines information warfare as "information campaign undertaken by a political entity, such as a state, to curtail or destroy another political entity, i.e., between rivals". In today's society, information warfare has increasingly become the focus of national security strategy and military strategy in the information age, which will be highly valued in future strategic adjustments. As Alvin Toffler once aptly said, "Person who owns the information owns the world". Information warfare becomes especially important when every nation is trying to gain leadership.

Under these circumstances, China has taken a series of decisive measures to ensure cyber security. Thus, in 2013, Beijing stated that the PRC will take an increasingly uncompromising stance in relation to its control of the Chinese internet domain; it will enforce ever tougher compliance from tech corporates wishing to access the China market; and it will push for broadly defined acts of cyber aggression to be outlawed by UN international convention in order to ultimately neutralize the technological dominance of the US in cyberspace (Dybon, 2014).

Information warfare has proven to be extremely powerful in international conflicts. In recent years, events such as the Syrian War, Crimea's entry into Russia, the U.S. election, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict have proved that countries use information and public opinion extensively to achieve their strategic and tactical goals. On February 24, 2022, Russia recognized Donetsk and Lugansk and launched special military operations, causing the situation in Ukraine to take a turn for the worse. The reasons and significance of this Russia-Ukraine conflict have gone far beyond the transition of the time after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the inter-state relations between Ukraine and Russia.

In fact, America and Western countries did not remain aloof from participating in the conflict; they are actively involved in the information war. Western media reports are still the main source of news for the international community. The United States has formed an international network in a short period of time through the construction of the image of Ukraine and Russia, the shaping of various Ukrainian hero images, and the construction of a

discourse alliance against Russia (Zhen Hua, 2023: 65-67). The basic system for manipulating Russian public opinion and discourse has been established. The American media has made full use of modern technologies.

The focus of U.S. national intelligence efforts in 2020 will continue to be information intervention against Russia. More specifically, demonizing Russia as an "evil empire" is a priority for the U.S. Congress, National Intelligence Council, and Pentagon intelligence agencies. In fact, the United States' propaganda channels and information suppression methods against Russia have the characteristics of one-way, asymmetry, and low confrontation. After the Ukrainian crisis in 2013, the United States broke the low-confrontational feature and joined forces with EU countries to carry out a comprehensive suppression of Russia's information field. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russian propaganda channels were almost completely blocked. In this regard, Russia launched a strong counterattack, which broke the one-way suppression of the United States.

In the conflict scene of this crisis, the identity of the United States is dual. It not only plays the role of the leader of the public opinion war against Russia, but also acts as the teacher who uses the Ukraine crisis to suppress competitors. In Western public opinion propaganda, China and Russia are either regarded as threats, either seen as responsible stakeholders in the global system, or accused of lacking international obligations (Dengxue&Peipeng, 2021:140). In Russia developed new methods of assessing the information space to ensure national security, organized joint activities of federal executive authorities in the information space, and proposed appropriate regulatory framework. Russia shut down the access to Facebook and Twitter, Radio Liberty's Russian-language news broadcasts, the independent Russian news service Meduza (designated by Russian authorities as "foreign proxy media"), and prominent independent media sites "Echo Moscow" and "Dozhd" (Helmus and Radin, 2022). Press Secretary of the President of Russia Dmitry Peskov expressed the need for criminal penalties for dissemination of false information about the behavior of the Russian Armed Forces in information warfare. To this end, Russia passed laws criminalizing the spread of "fake news," with a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

In this information warfare, Russia has taken public censorship action against the social network Twitter for the first time, which is considered to be a strong response to restrictions and blockades of

Russian news organizations in American and Western countries (Liu Xianzhong, 2022:149). Measures such as official restrictions and media blackouts carried out by both sides have largely curbed the transmission of information from the other side. Especially in the context of the outbreak of conflicts, the unilateral shaping of the international agenda not only affects the authenticity of the incident itself, but also induces international public opinion, leading to more complex international relations.

Contents of information warfare in Russia-America game

Information warfare changes the way information campaigns are organized, making information a tool of persuasion and manipulation in conflict and competition. With the development of information technology, as well as the intensification of superpower games and global geopolitics, information warfare is becoming more and more common. American and Western countries are already fully engaged in the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 in addition to direct military action, especially in the information field. Due to the clear and decisive goals of all parties, a comprehensive information warfare is unfolding around the Ukraine issue, which is characterized by diversity, complexity and uncertainty.

Next, we define the following, the most important areas. Information warfare has prominent public opinion competition. When international crises and conflicts occur, it is the ultimate goal of the information game to manipulate public opinion to transform the political agenda into the agenda of the international community. To this end, Russia and American and Western countries carry out different narrative agendas around this conflict, aiming to control public opinion and compete for discourse power. In this way, one party can force the other party into a dilemma of public opinion and seek public opinion support for its own actions. In this Russia-Ukraine conflict, the contention and game between Russia and American and Western countries for the control of information space and public opinion as the dominant agenda setting is particularly fierce.

Russia is simultaneously conducting military preparations and public opinion offensives. Through propaganda, military operations are veiled to gain understanding among the Russian population and the international community. To this end, the Russian media carried out massive publicity. First, Putin described Ukraine as a “neo-Nazi” in the 2014 Ukraine crisis and the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict. In this special military operation, Russia’s stated

purpose is to “maintain the neutrality of Ukraine through demilitarizing and denazification. It can be seen from this that Russia believes that this is a dispute that can be resolved by a “lightning” special military operation, not a war (Xu Hua, 2022: 50-51). Second, Russia believes that the United States has not considered the security demands of Russia and Eastern Ukraine. The Russian narrative points to the operation being instigated by Western powers. In response, Russia launched pre-emptive self-defense actions, rather than playing a third-rate role in the global terrorism system collectively created by the West.

The goal of Western countries headed by the United States is to eliminate the current government headed by Putin by launching a coup in Russia, so as to achieve absolute control over the world and Western elites. In the information game, Russia made high-profile publicity and widely disseminated the threat of NATO, which aroused the vigilance and condemnation of the international community. In fact, Russia’s use of the Internet and the media to speak for itself has not changed the objective threat or improved its own situation. However, this has profound implications in the context of “confrontations in the information and psychological spheres” and “threats to political and social stability”. Russia hopes to influence the social and political elites of the opponent through public opinion, make them disappointed with the existing “neo-Nazi” political system and democratic system, and reduce the anti-war sentiment of the domestic people.

In their scramble for control of public opinion, US and Western countries have used the media to track discussion of the “language” of conflict in agenda setting. The Western media has set the terminology of this conflict from the beginning and agreed to construct this image of Ukraine into the positioning of its behavior. Unlike the Russian media, the Western media sees Russia as an “invader” and Ukraine as a “defender”. Dominated by the selective public opinion framework of American and Western countries, the Ukrainian military is portrayed as a humanitarian hero against foreign aggression. In general, in the dissemination of information, the deliberate nature of the actions of one party to the conflict was emphasized and attributed to Russia, while the actions of Ukraine were seen as a “justifiable” response.

According to the content of the report, the tone of the reports on Russia by American and Western countries media is almost as follows: “Russian fighting forces are constantly being pushed back.” “Ukrainians engaged in active resistance.” “Russian

forces launched a direct attack on residential areas". Anti-Russian sentiment was exacerbated to a certain extent by the attitude of the media in American and Western countries towards the Ukrainian public, which created greater obstacles to Russian actions. According Professor Wang Xiaofeng, an important form of the information game is "to deny and belittle the opponent's combat capabilities, and exaggerate one's own combat results, thereby exerting a psychological influence on the opponent's decision makers" (Wu&Wang, 2018:254). Information campaign does not necessarily control public opinion, but does have an impact. In the era of globalization and integration, the perception of other countries by other participants in international relations is one of the country's main interests and strategic tasks (Kazun, Pashahin, 2021: 80-82).

Creating and presenting a positive image is very important for every country as it relates to the country's interaction and engagement with other members of the international community. However, from an ideological point of view, according to Yu Feng, the extreme right forces in Europe and the United States are not only recruiting members through traditional organizational methods, but are also begin to use media platforms to form subcultural organizations to spread extreme-right ideas (Yu Feng, 2022:160). Therefore, the media in Russia and American and Western countries will actively shape the political agenda, convey their own positions, and compete fiercely for the control of public opinion and the right to speak internationally. Through agenda setting, images of itself and its adversaries in the national interest can be shaped to alter its military operations and foreign policy.

Second, information warfare uses fragmented information about "humanitarianism" to drive emotions and emotions. Western countries are good at using "democratic" and "humanitarian" as excuses to cover up their true purpose. In recent decades, humanitarian intervention has become an integral part of international relations. Through the reporting agenda and reporting framework set by the predetermined role, Western media incorporates personal subjective opinions and evaluation standards in reporting news to create a pseudo-environment. Due to the professionalism and secrecy, people are often not aware of this and regard the virtual environment as an objective environment. That is to say, although the pseudo-environment created by Western media is not a real environment, it will have a real impact on people's attitudes and behaviors (Wei, 2018.). Western countries use moral issues to their advan-

tage in the information game, blame Russia in the context of the growing food crisis. In the final statement of the G7 foreign minister meeting, Russia was blamed for unilateral actions that undermine Ukraine's agricultural potential and worsen global food security. So, Western countries accused Russia of using refugees to put pressure on the Ukrainian government and forcibly deporting refugees to the West on the issue of refugees. Through uncensored reports by the media, Russia was blamed for the humanitarian disaster caused. For instance, "fathers and daughters were separated on the battlefield". "A large number of refugees flowed". "Civilians' houses were bombed". By ignoring facts and role predestinations, Western media elevates geopolitics conflicts to the level of ideology.

The American media, with many propaganda methods, always attached importance to the development of soft power and hard power of public opinion propaganda, and made good use of propaganda strategies, including deceptive propaganda and inductive propaganda (Xu Hua, 2022:56). On the Russian side, despite the US preemption, Western agenda-setting can be cracked. After the conflict broke out, the focus of the information game was on the battlefield. Russia took the lead and almost dominated the release of battlefield information in the early days. As the war continues, Russia is also actively competing with Ukraine and Western countries led by the United States for the initiative in the information field.

Regarding the food crisis, in the face of the continuous new crown epidemic and frequent natural disasters, Russia not only meets domestic demand, but also solves the problem of crop export quotas. By expanding food exports, Russia helps the international community cope with the food crisis. According to RFE/RL, Russian President Vladimir Putin notified UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that the Russian Federation provides free fertilizers to developing countries. Regarding the accusations made by American and Western countries against Russia for the refugee issue, Russia pointed out that the refugee issue is a tool used by American and Western countries to put pressure on the Russian government (RFE/RL).

Russia provides humanitarian aid and supplies to people in Ukraine, and organizes humanitarian corridors and the evacuation of civilians from settlements. The details disclosed by the Russian Ministry of Defense include documents on the urgent destruction of particularly dangerous pathogens such as plague, tularemia, cholera and other deadly dis-

eases, which not only attracted widespread attention from the international community (Popova, Fedorinov, 2018: 16).

In the highly developed information age, the international community is facing more and more pressure from public opinion. The victims of the Russia-Ukraine conflict far exceeded the country concerned, which had a major impact on the international community. Russia used the “laboratory storm” to unite international forces that wish for peaceful development. Occupying the commanding heights of public opinion in the international community becomes an important means of safeguarding national interests and dismantling Western sanctions. However, the use of online media by Russia and American and Western countries to transmit fragmented information on moral issues can lead to distorted news media, confusion about the truth in the international community, polarization and confrontation, and instability in international relations.

Third, the information warfare between Russia and the United States has evolved from “mutual fighting” to “mutual blocking”. Both sides of the game have strengthened the management, control and even blockade of official and unofficial media in order to block its transmission channels. Compared with the communication capabilities during the Color Revolution and the Russia-Georgia War, Russia demonstrated rapid and effective information dissemination during the Ukrainian crisis in 2013, which to a certain extent influenced the agenda setting of Ukraine and Western countries in media reports. Although the United States has advantages in the field of information propaganda, it does not have overwhelming influence. Russia’s preemption broke the Western media’s monopoly on the global news agenda, thus largely eliminating the West’s right to speak on the Ukraine issue. In the end, Russia achieved Crimea’s entry into Russia with a “blitzkrieg”. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022, American and Western countries have learned from the experience and lessons of information propaganda in the Ukraine crisis in 2013, have always paid close attention to the Russian media, and used various means to suppress Russia’s information strategy. In the early stage of the conflict, American and Western countries warmed up public opinion through domestic and foreign communication, and sanctioned relevant media organizations, thereby curbing the voice channels of Russian media.

In recent years, Russia has become more and more discourse power in the fields of information propaganda and public opinion guidance. Russia’s

information capabilities during the Ukraine crisis in 2013 alarmed the United States. American and Western countries use various means to decipher and suppress Russia’s information strategic means and transmission channels. In fact, the media in American and Western countries manipulated social media. On the one hand, they publish a lot of news that is not good for Russia. On the other hand, they restrict the Russian media’s voice at the official level. Let us present a typical approach to the problem of ending a war in the information “game” of the conflicting parties. Western media regularly write about this. One such opinion by Todd C. Helmus and Andrew Radin in the Western edition of United Press International: “Keeping Russians Informed About Ukraine Could Help End This War. Light will win over darkness.” President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine spoke these words in his stirring address to the United Nations, and U.S. President Joe Biden cited these same remarks during his State of the Union address in emphasizing U.S. support for Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin is shielding his people from what is actually happening in Ukraine, and the West’s rationale for inflicting damaging sanctions. (Helmus & Radin, 2022).

Conclusion

Based on the development history of Russia and the United States and the changes in bilateral relations, the structural contradiction between Russia and America cannot be resolved in a short period of time, and will continue for a long period of time. The “restart” of the relationship between the two countries depends on the United States’ tolerance Russia with great power and the adjustment of the US global strategy.

Currently, Russia’s relations with America and Western countries are at a historically low point. The mistrust and conflict between the two sides will reach a peak in the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022. Moreover, this uncertain relationship poses greater threats and challenges to the international community. Russia-Ukraine conflict is an all-round superpower game, including hard power competition based on military and economic strength, and soft power competition represented by “information warfare”.

Under the current communication pattern, the United States uses its communication advantages to formulate game rules in line with its own interests and standards, thereby gaining a dominant position and initiative in international relations. In terms of

tactics, the American and Western countries gained certain advantages. In terms of overall strategy, the information game has complications.

Western news media are no longer neutral institutions, and their credibility in international public opinion has been destroyed. At the beginning, Russia lost in the entire field of public opinion. The situation in Russia-Ukraine and the international community is complicated as the fighting advances and actively shapes the agenda. There are still many uncertainties for both sides of the game to achieve their strategic goals stably.

As a pivotal country in the region, Ukraine not only affects the evolution of US-Russia relations and the establishment of the Eurasian regional order, but also has a bearing on the security and stability of the entire European region (Shuangmei, Yang 2022: 62).

The comprehensive escalation of the Ukrainian crisis in 2022 is not only the first event in the mobile Internet era. Important international conflicts have also opened up a new model and new battlefield for the United States to manipulate public opinion against other countries. The U.S. media closely cooperates with the U.S. government by manipulating the image of Ukraine and Russia in the crisis.

The media makes full use of the “scenario plus media” mode of communication. Through the scene design of the identity of the weak in Ukraine, the introduction of the role of the scene to support the weak, and the use of the all-media scene narrative mode combined with the pluralistic social subjects of Ukraine (Xuanhao, Shi. 2023:65-66).

The information game under the Russia-Ukraine conflict made the international community more confused about the truth, and intensified the strategic mutual suspicion. With sharp major power relations, the international political, economic and

geopolitical pattern will have a major impact in the future (Jiemian, Yang. 2022: 60).

In the field of information, most countries in the world have participated in this conflict, forming the principle of “no support is opposition”. Therefore, the Russia-Ukraine conflict can be considered a “world war” in the field of information. Whatever the outcome of Russia-Ukraine conflict, the endless information warfare between Russia and the United States will continue.

Studying the U.S. public opinion war against Russia in the Russia-Ukraine war will help to enhance China’s confidence in dealing with the U.S. public opinion war in many ways and better safeguard China’s national security and national interests.

The influence of the information game as soft power is to use the power of the media to set an international agenda in line with the interests of the country, so as to give the government’s political behavior a “reasonable, just, and legal” meaning, and to gain the understanding and support of public opinion at home and abroad.

In global competition, mass-media and strong public opinion has become an important guarantee. In view of the structural and long-term characteristics of the game between Russia and American and Western countries, the information game between the two sides will continue to increase. According to Zhen Hua, the study of the US’s discourse manipulation and scene dissemination of Russia’s public opinion war in this crisis will help to learn from the experience of the US media in using new communication technologies for international communication. This crisis will help to improve the confidence in responding to the public opinion war on China-related issues, and better safeguard national security and national interests (Zhen Hua, 2023:83).

References

Andryushina Ye.V. (2016) *Sovremennaya rossiyskaya vneshnyaya politika v usloviyakh mezhdunarodnykh krizisov* // Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 21. Upravleniye (gosudarstvo i obshchestvo) [Современная российская внешняя политика в условиях международных кризисов // Вестник Москов. университета. Серия 21. Управление (государство и общество)]. –№ 1. С.165-189 (in Russian)

Dengxue, Huang and Peipeng, Liu (2021) ‘Xīn yī lún wūkèlán wéijī bèihòu de dàguó zhànlüè bóyì jí qiánjǐng. Dāngdài shìjiè shèhuì zhūyì wèntí’ [The strategic game and prospect of major powers behind the new round of Ukraine crisis // Issues of contemporary world socialism] – N 4, pp. 139-153 (in Chinese)

Dynon, Nicholas (2014) *The winds of net-war: China warns of US arms race in cyberspace* // Diplo’s Blog, Published on 24 June 2014 [https://www.diplomacy.edu/blog/winds-net-war-china-warns-us-arms-race-cyberspace/]

Galayda Ye.YU., Antonova V.V. *Rol’ leksiki v formirovanii stereotipov v tekstakh telenovostey na primere osveshcheniya ukrainskogo konflikt* [Военно-политический конфликт 2022 года. Меняя правила игры] // Svobodnaya mysl’. – № 1 (91). С. 20-26 URL: [https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/rol-leksiki-v-formirovanii-stereotipov-v-tekstah-telenovostey-na-primere-osveshcheniya-ukrainskogo-konflikt] (date of access: 10.01.2023) (in Russian)

- Gong, Chenzhuo (2014). Social Media and China's Public Diplomacy: A Path to the Future. Conference Paper, Fudan University. The Operating Mechanism of US Social Media Diplomacy. URL: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265397582>
- Helmus, Todd C. and Radin, Andrew (2022). Keeping Russians Informed About Ukraine Could Help End This War. Commentary // United Press International, March 14, 2022. URL: [\[https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/03/keeping-russians-informed-about-ukraine-could-help.html\]](https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/03/keeping-russians-informed-about-ukraine-could-help.html)
- Jiemian, Yang (2022) 'Yángjiémiàn. Wūkèlán wéijī xià de shìjiè zhìxù biànjú hé fāzhǎn zhōng guójiā de shìmìng dāndāng// "guójiè wèntì yánjiū" [Changes in the World Order under the Ukrainian Crisis and the Responsibilities of Developing Countries // International Studies Issue]. N 4, pp.58-78.
- Kazun A.D., Pashakhin S.V. (2021) «Чужие выборы»: новости соседнего государства о выборах президента РФ в 2018 г. // «Чужие выборы»: новости соседнего государства о выборах президента РФ в 2018 г. // Экономическая социология. – № 1. – С. 71-89.
- Kefan, Cheng (2020). The Trump Administration's Contradictory Policy towards Russia // China International Studies. No.80, January/February, pp. 99-103. URL: [\[https://www.ciis.org.cn/gjwtyj/ywqk/\]](https://www.ciis.org.cn/gjwtyj/ywqk/) /ciis.org.cn/ (in Chinese)
- Lianqing, Fang; Bingyuan, Liu; Wang Jinzhi (2006). 'Fāngliánqīng//wángbīngyuán//liújīnzhí. Guójiè guānxì shǐ (zhàn hòu juǎn shàngxià cè)' [History of International Relations (Chinese Edition)]. – Peking University Press, 8th Edition. – 146 p. (in Chinese)
- Liu Debin (2018) 'Guójiè guānxì shǐ (dì èr bǎn) liúdébīn zhǔbiān' [History of International Relations. Monograph]. – Higher Education Press, 3rd Edition, 346 p. (in Chinese)
- Liu Xianzhong (2022) 'Liúxiǎnzhōng. Lìshǐ yǔ rèntóng suǐpiàn huà: Wūkèlán guójiā jiànshè de kùn jìng yǔ jìng jiàn // [J]. Tōngyī zhànxiàn xué yánjiū' [Fragmentation of History and Identity: The Dilemma and Mirror of Ukrainian National Construction] // Journal of United Front Science (Research). –N 5, pp. 147-157.
- Pang Dapeng (2022). 'Pángdà péng. Wūkèlán wéijī fānying de èluósī yǔ xīfāng guānxì de jiégòu xíng kùn jìng' [The Structural Dilemma of Russia-Western Relations Reflected by the Ukraine Crisis] // Contemporary World. –N 2. – 65-76 (in Chinese)
- Popova S.V., Fedorin V.Ye. (2018) 'Tseli i posledstviya informatsionnoy voyny // Vozdushno-kosmicheskiye sily. Teoriya i praktika' [Цели и последствия информационной войны // Воздушно-космические силы. Теория и практика]. 2018. – № 6 – С.15-20. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/tseli-i-posledstviya-informatsionnoy-voyny> (date of access: 09.07.2022) (in Russian)
- Press-konferentsiya po itogam peregovorov prezidentov Rossii i SSHA. Khel'sinki, 16 iyulya 2018 goda. Tekstovaya versiya [Пресс-конференция по итогам переговоров президентов России и США. Хельсинки, 16 июля 2018 года. Текстовая версия // Website prezidenta Rossii. Razdel «Novosti, Vystupleniya i stenogrammy»]. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58017> (date of access: 24.07.2022) (in Russian)
- The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged. – New York, 2005. – 408 p.
- RFE/RL (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty), July 14, 2023. URL: [\[https://www.rferl.org/a/erdogan-putin-russia-ukraine-grain-deal-extended/32503797.html\]](https://www.rferl.org/a/erdogan-putin-russia-ukraine-grain-deal-extended/32503797.html)
- Shaolei, Feng (2023) 'Féngshàoléi. Guójiè zhìxù zhuǎnxíng shìyè xià de wūkèlán wéijī – jīyú yǎnjìn guòchéng, shēncéng jiégòu, jiějué fāng'àn de fēnxī' [The Ukrainian crisis from the perspective of international order transformation – Based on the analysis of evolution process, deep structure and solution] // People's Forum "Academic Frontiers". – N 2, pp. 84-98
- Shuangmei, Yang (2022) US Ukraine Policy: Strategic Goals and Prospects // International Relations Studies. – 2022. – N 2, p.62
- Tsvetkova N.A., Il'ichev I.I. (2017) 'Informatsionnyye operatsii ministerstva oborony SSHA: strategiya i funktsii i planirovaniye' [Информационные операции министерства обороны США: стратегия и функции и планирование] // Общество: политика, экономика, право. – № 5. – С.1-6. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/informatsionnyye-operatsii-ministerstva-oborony-ssha-strategiya-funktsii-i-planirovanie> (date of access: 02.03.2023) (in Russian)
- Qingcai, Liu; Haibin, Wang (2013) 'Wánghǎibīn èluósī zhōng měi rì pínghéng zhànlüè yánjiū' [Russia-America Strategic Confrontation and its Impact on China] // Modern International Relations [J]. – N 3. – pp. 105-118 (in Chinese)
- Xu Hua. America-Russia War in Ukrainian Crisis: Evolution, Scenarios and Mirrors // Journal of Russian Studies. – 2022. – N 4, pp. 48-57 (in Chinese)
- Xuanhao, Shi (2023) 'Shīxuānháo. Huàyǔ cāokòng yǔ chǎngjǐng chuánbò: Wūkèlán wéijī zhōng měiguó zhǔliú méití duì é yúlùn zhàn// èluósī dōng'ōu zhōng yà yánjiū' [Discourse Manipulation and Scene Communication: American Mainstream Media's Public Opinion War Against Russia in the Ukrainian Crisis] // Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian Studies, Issue 3, pp. 65-83 (in Chinese)
- Wei, L. (2018, May 23) 'xin shi dai: ji ji tui dong zhong guo gong gong wai jiao mai shang xin tai jie' [New era: actively promoting China's public diplomacy to a new level]. Retrieved 31 December 2018, from China Social Sciences Network website: http://www.cssn.cn/zxz/201805/t20180523_4285851.shtml
- Wu, D. & Wang, J. J. (2018). Country image in public diplomacy: from messages to relationships. In D. Ingenhoff, C. White, A. Buhmann, & S. Kioussis (Eds.), Bridging disciplinary perspectives of country image reputation, brand, and identity. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 244–262
- Yiping, Chen and Yijia, Guan (2022) 'Chényípíng, guānyíjiā. Xīn shídài àiguó tōngyī zhànxiàn de duìwài huàyǔ jiàngòu: Luóji yǔ lùjìng' [The Construction of External Discourse of the Patriotic United Front in the New Era: Logic and Path] // [J]. United Front Studies. Research. – N 5, pp. 1-9 (in Chinese)
- Yuan, Ming (2007). An Assignment for the New Century: International Relations Studies in China (Ed. Revised Edition), Beijing: Peking University Press, 266 p. (in Chinese)

Yu Feng (2022) ‘Yú fèng.21 Shìjì yīlái de ōuměi jí yòu shìlì: Lìshǐ sùyuán, fāzhǎn qūxiàng yǔ yǐngxiǎng jìng jiàn’ [Ultra-right forces in Europe and America since the 21st century: A Mirror of History, Development Trend and Influence] // [J] Journal of United Front Science (Research). –N 5, pp. 158-172 (in Chinese)

Zhen Hua (2023) ‘Rèn huá. Huàyǔ cāokòng yǔ chǎngjǐng chuánbò: Wūkèlán wéijī zhōng měiguó zhǔliú méitǐ duì é yúlùn zhàn’ In: èluósī dōng’ōu zhōng yà yánjiū qī. (Zèrèn biānjí hú bǐng) [Discourse Manipulation and Scene Communication: American Mainstream Media’s Public Opinion War Against Russia in the Ukrainian Crisis // Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Research Period. (Editor-in-charge Hu Bing). – 2023. – Issue 3, pp.65-83] (in Chinese)