

**HOSTILE PROPAGANDA OF THE DIGITAL AGE AS
INFORMATION VIOLENCE: UKRAINIAN RESISTANCE
TO RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGGRESSION
IN THE GLOBAL CYBERSPACE**

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Abstract. The information war against Ukraine launched by the Russian Federation in 2014, which intensified significantly after Russia's full-scale military invasion on 24 February 2022, requires the search for effective means of countering information invasion, taking into account the specifics of modern international public communications that use digital technologies and take place within the global cyberspace. **The purpose** of this paper is to describe the main directions, tools and prospects of Ukraine's counteraction to Russia's information aggression against it in the dimension of international public communications in the context of digitalisation of global information and communication processes. The research **methodology** consists of a set of general scientific methods (logic, induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis) and a number of special methods: structural and functional analysis, typology, narrative, and generalisation. **Results.** Under the influence of revolutionary technological changes in information and communication, within the framework of the global cyberspace, which has created a qualitatively new space for interaction between governments, countries, and peoples, along with the formation of the “digital world” and “digital human,” radical changes have taken place in international public communications. Socio-cultural dynamics have become more complex. The specific worldview of the information society supports pluralism, which is the acceptance of the simultaneous coexistence

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of different points of view. The media and mass media in general (television, the Internet, mobile communication networks) significantly influence the opinions, beliefs, and worldview of the population, cause the digitalization of the individual, change the format of social relations, and determine the models of constructing individual and collective identities. There is a negative information impact on people associated with information violence. One of its manifestations is aggressive propaganda, which aims to change people's attitudes toward certain phenomena in a direction favorable to the generator of propaganda content. In the context of Ukraine's confrontation with Russian information aggression, which has targeted everything Ukrainian since 2014 – the government, state, society, culture and identity of Ukrainians – researchers state that long before the military invasion of Ukraine, Russian propagandists were processing the world community in order to present the picture in a light favorable to the aggressor country, to form a negative image of the Ukrainian state and to prevent allies from helping it. The Kremlin is trying to “pollute” the image of Ukraine in the West and generally make the information field in which Ukraine appears dirty. Among the effective measures to counter anti-Ukrainian propaganda, in addition to the relevant legislative and instrumental measures within the framework of government agencies, is public diplomacy in terms of cyber diplomacy aimed at establishing ties with the publics of the world and disseminating truthful information about the socio-cultural situation, political and public life of Ukraine. For this purpose, the necessary legal framework is in place and relevant changes are being made to Ukrainian legislation. Citizen/civil diplomacy is seen as an effective tool of cyber diplomacy in countering Russia's information aggression against Ukraine. Within its framework, Ukrainian scientists, politicians, journalists, students and the public in general will contribute to the promotion of Ukrainian interests in the world by preparing and publishing content on media platforms and social networks that debunks anti-Ukrainian propaganda narratives and thus influence the positive image of the Ukrainian state. **Practical implications** of the work lies in the possibility of using its results in the context of developing a strategy for Ukraine's resistance to hostile information influences in cyberspace. **Value/originality.** For the first time in the scientific literature, the author actualises the need to develop a strategy for Ukraine's counteraction to hostile information influences in the

dimension of international public communications and presents the author's vision of the main directions, tools and prospects of Ukrainian resistance to destructive Russian anti-Ukrainian propaganda as information violence.

1. Introduction

In 2014, the Russian Federation launched an intervention in eastern and southern Ukraine and simultaneously unleashed an information war against our country in the global information space. The purpose of this information invasion is to change the minds of the public in other countries, in addition to Ukrainians, in the direction desired by the interventionist. This war has intensified tremendously since the beginning of Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Disinformation, information manipulation, fakes, aggressive anti-Ukrainian propaganda narratives aimed at discrediting everything Ukrainian – the government, the state, and the socio-cultural field in general – have become manifestations of the information invasion. To this end, the Russian leadership has used considerable financial resources to support pro-Kremlin media. In particular, in 2021 alone, about USD 1 billion was allocated to pro-government Russian media outlets [40]. The technical conditions that have contributed to and continue to facilitate the deployment of Russian information aggression against Ukraine are the latest digital technologies and the availability of a global information space that has undergone radical changes in recent decades thanks to these technologies – the global cyberspace. Information activities hostile to Ukraine are connected with the aggressor's desire to ideologically prepare the world community for a full-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine and to justify the allegedly expedient from the Russian point of view change of the Ukrainian political power by force by the willful decision of the Kremlin political leadership [20, p. 51-53]. The media and mass communication media in general, thanks to the ability to disseminate information in huge volumes across continents and international regions almost instantly, have gained the ability to influence the world political agenda and communication processes on a global scale [50, p. 65]. Ukraine should counteract information aggression with special attention to the processes of digitalisation in the dimension of international public communications and the functioning of the world cyberspace as the newest space of contacts between peoples and countries in general, as it is

now used for intensive intergovernmental communications and interaction with the world community [2].

2. Information influences of the digital age: hostile propaganda as information violence

The new industrial revolution, or Industry 4.0, has given impetus to fundamental changes in the social, economic and communication spheres. Against the backdrop of phenomenally rapid development with a huge impact on the entire technological and social infrastructure, minimal involvement of material resources and minimal changes in the environment, the inevitability of fundamental social changes is evident. They are related to the concepts of ‘information (digital) society’, ‘digital civilisation’, ‘digital world’, ‘information (digital) age’. At the same time, digital technologies are entering the Sancta Sanctorum – the sphere that makes a human being a rational human being, and distinguishes human society from any other biological community. For the first time in history, progress in information communications has become the defining trend of the new reality, turning into the core of economic and social life. Digitalisation has become a megatrend in all spheres of social life around the world. A virtual world of computer interfaces – ‘cyberspace’ – has emerged. According to researchers, the logic of technosphere development and the resulting ‘digital revolution’ have affected the ontological foundations of civilisation. However, it is not only the fact of the emergence of a new information and communication field that has radically changed the usual infrastructure of social life that is critical. Information is becoming the most valuable asset, endowed with a certain subjective content, turning into knowledge – the basis of development and a resource for the realisation of human intellectual abilities. These fundamental changes are taking place in real time, creating unprecedented opportunities and new challenges that humanity has never faced before. The mass media have become the most important instruments of politics, performing the functions of managing and controlling society, creating a political order and ways of exercising power. All related communications are rapidly moving into the virtual space. The uncontrolled development of the Internet and social networks is leading to the emergence of horizontally structured communities, as opposed to the vertical pyramidal structures of the past. The tremendous speed of development of innovative technologies requires

the inclusion of new phenomena and processes in the legal framework and description of this in terms of ethics and morality. An equally important problem caused by the super-fast pace of technological development is the problem of cybersecurity, both in the technological and socio-cultural and informational formats. Improvement of communication components and formation of a system of effective information and communication technologies require the creation of a high-quality communication space necessary for the implementation of strategic development programmes [14, p. 23-33; 15, p. 9-21; 43, p. 90; 60, p. 6; 61, p. 31].

However, the flip side of the ease and simplicity of achieving a new model of communication is the lack of cultural and existential experience of using the means that provide new opportunities for existence in the context of global networks and information flows and at the same time cause society to lose its previously established social rules. The contradictory realities of the digital space determine the trends in the formation of a digital person. In the cognitive sphere, there is an increase in the value of the speed of perception and processing of information, often to the detriment of the depth of perception. The need to train the RAM, which can be transferred to devices, is decreasing. Mobile communication devices acquire the features of a 'mental organ' brought out into the open. There is a loss of interest in fundamental knowledge of the basics. People are satisfied with superficial knowledge of problems, ignoring experience and critical thinking. A special type of visual and figurative 'clip' thinking is formed, where the brightness and accessibility of the content is valued above its depth. The possibility of obtaining an almost unlimited amount of information in a relatively short period of time and the virtualisation of interpersonal contacts are valued. On the one hand, this facilitates communication, and on the other hand, it creates the illusion of accessibility and ease of relationships. Gadgets are turning into an element of the subconscious, an individual external carrier of the collective unconscious. Various types and methods of communication have been transferred to the online sphere [44, p. 22-23; 14, p. 23-33; 15, p. 9-21; 41, p. 51].

The world, at both the global and local levels, is facing a complexity of socio-cultural dynamics and unprecedented bifurcations. In the context of globalisation, specific cultures, being subjected to changes, begin not only to actively counteract but also to reflect, seeking to maintain their

identity. For their part, local cultural peculiarities, represented, among other things, in personal, local networks, influence the nature of reflection of the society that produces global virtual networks. New socio-cultural realities bring existential uncertainty and risks. Modern people have to live without stable guidelines, long-term factors of order, and universally recognised authorities. There is a growing awareness that the new cultural realities are no longer unambiguously ‘good’ or ‘hostile’; they are ambivalent, as they carry not only obvious benefits but also sometimes hidden dangers and vice versa.

At the same time, the emerging digital space plays a crucial role in the new information picture of the world, when information acts as an engine of social and technological progress and becomes an objective characteristic of material systems and their interaction. From a postmodern perspective, a person lost in countless streams of information and communications does not have a specific system of values and ideas about rights, duties and responsibility for actions, and therefore loses all meaning. The specific worldview of the information society is characterised by pluralism, i.e. the acceptance of the simultaneous coexistence of different points of view. Today, there are practically no places left untouched by the information field. The development of television, the Internet, and mobile communication networks is becoming a factor that indicates the entry of information culture into the lives of the majority of the population and the digitalisation of the individual under the influence of technological progress. If earlier, special efforts were required to go beyond the established models of identification, the use of modern electronic gadgets makes it extremely easy to choose a role model. New digital technologies that penetrate established formats of social relations have provided almost unlimited possibilities in choosing ways to construct one's own identity. In the information space, there are trends towards the transformation of the representation of the individual in its virtual form, which fulfils the task of necessary adaptation in the changing information flows of the global digital space.

The term ‘digital person’ was first used in 2001 by the American writer Mark Prensky to describe people born after the digital revolution who live surrounded by computers, video games, players, video cameras, mobile phones (smartphones), networks, etc. and who are used to receiving information through digital channels, and all of the above becomes an

integral part of their lives. According to Prensky, people born at the end of the last century are different from everyone else. He came to this conclusion after observing schoolchildren and students of the 2000s. They live surrounded by computers, video games, music players, video cameras, mobile phones and the Internet – and all of these become an integral part of their lives. Prensky proposed to call such people ‘digital natives’ – native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet. In 2008, Gary Small and Gigi for them the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet. In 2008, Gary Small and Gigi Wargan published the book ‘The Brain Online. The Human Brain in the Age of the Internet’, in which, covering the topic of the transformation of the human brain under the influence of the change of epochs, they also mentioned “digital natives”. Prensky called people born before this period ‘digital immigrants’. According to Prensky's theory, no matter how hard they try, the ‘immigrants’ retain a kind of ‘accent’ – a kind of ‘echo of the past’, attempts to combine the latest capabilities with the old ones (for example, when a person confirms receipt of an email by phone or, instead of editing the text on a computer, prints it out and corrects it by hand). In 2007, American entrepreneurs Josh Spear and Aaron Dignan coined the term Born Digital, which later evolved into Digital Generation. In 2007, Gartner had already developed a set of technologies for the digital person and demonstrated a number of trends in the development of digital technologies at the IT Expo (Emerging Trends) Symposium in Barcelona.

A digital person is, first and foremost, a person of new moral values who immerses himself in the virtual reality of simulations and increasingly perceives the world as a digital gaming environment, realising its conditionality, controllability of its parameters and the possibility of leaving it. The instantaneous overcoming of distances by means of supernova telecommunications and ultrafast vehicles enables organisations and individuals to spend time together without direct spatial convergence, which includes them in plastic multi-spatial structures that smoothly transform into active and constantly updated networks of interaction. The contradictory realities of the formation of digital space are reflected in all spheres of society and individuals' life and determine the trends of the formation of a digital person. The global nature of these processes exacerbates not only the technical and communication aspects of the development of the information

society, but also raises a wide range of complex worldview issues and socio-cultural problems caused by the very fact of the formation of a digital person [14, p. 23-33; 15, p. 9-21; 43, p. 59-61].

The digital revolution has created a number of problems, such as the growing digital divide – ‘a fundamental aspect of social inequality in the information age’ – a decrease in the need for offline communication and interpersonal interaction, and threats to the security and privacy of personal data. The digital divide is a complex and dynamic phenomenon based on social stratification, which manifests itself in unequal access to and use of the Internet. In the encyclopaedic dictionary-reference book ‘Modern Political Vocabulary’, Mykola Buchyn defines: ‘The digital divide is a phenomenon that characterises asymmetry in access to information sources for different subjects. The digital divide has national (different opportunities for access to information technology in different social strata within the same society) and global (differentiation of different countries or even entire regions of the world in terms of the ability to use information technology) dimensions.’ Current research on digital inequality includes such levels of analysis as physical, financial, political and cognitive access, access to meaningful information, inequality in digital skills and motivation, differences in digital resource use practices and their impact on life chances. Studies have revealed the impact of age and education level on digital skills inequality and demonstrated the mechanisms of its formation in the learning process. It is the use of digital technologies in social relations that generates inequality, as inclusion in digital networks is essential for people's ability to participate in economic, political, social and cultural life. Consequently, different rates of development and levels of digital use generate new forms of poverty and exclusion, and reproduce existing inequalities and social divisions. Since digital inequality can increase the degree of social inequality and limit the participation of some people in society, the concept of ‘digital exclusion’ is being developed.

Given the global trends of increasing cases of privacy breaches and cyberattacks, as well as military operations in Ukraine, the issue of cybersecurity and cyberhygiene is of particular importance. In this regard, the digital society places new demands on the competencies of a modern person. In the face of constant turbulence, it is no longer possible to learn once and for all, it is necessary to constantly increase knowledge, be able to

find non-standard solutions, be prepared for risks and make instant decisions in a multitasking environment. A key personality trait is the non-linearity of thinking and perception of time (future in the past, past in the future), skills in working with different platforms, formats and large flows of information, and the ability to isolate the necessary, which gives rise to the multichannel nature of information assimilation and transmission. All these requirements for skills and competences create the basis for the development of increased individual responsibility (especially through the transparency of all digital processes), the desire to learn new language features, the development of cognitive abilities, the development of remote communication skills, critical thinking and digital literacy. In this regard, a new attitude to the human being is being developed today, with the individual coming to the fore again, a person of individualised solutions, rather than a person of mass labour, as it was before [33; 60, p. 13-14, 19-20].

At the same time, the digital age, with its previously unknown speed and large volumes of information dissemination, and the availability of the latter, affects the processes of human identification, forcing people to comprehend such facets of social life that are associated not only with the sacred collective-group or existential-individual, but also with the mass-communication, determined by social and communication processes on a global, universal scale. A person is identified through his or her involvement in a particular sphere of information, virtual and social spaces. Self-representation of an individual on the Internet is carried out through a nickname, avatar, or page on a social network, due to the freedom of their design and attractiveness to users. The irreversible process of transforming a modern person into *Homo digitalis* is actively continuing: gadgets have become a commonplace in modern life, the number of mobile operators is increasing, the range of mobile services and functionalities of phones with Internet resources is expanding, and the 'digitisation' of our lives continues. Reality shows that a modern existentially active person in a digital society spends a significant part of his or her time in a virtual environment. Virtual reality is a computer-generated three-dimensional model of reality that creates the effect of a person's presence in it, allows interaction with objects presented in it, including new ways of interaction: changing the shape of an object, free movement between micro and macro levels of space, movement of space itself, etc. Thanks to virtual reality, the primordial human desire

to create alternative worlds, which has remained unrealised for so long, has been 'materialised' without compromising the real world in the computer industry. With regard to computers, virtual reality is inextricably linked to graphic technologies, which, through feedback-enabled human-computer interaction, give the effect of being present in an artificial world that is different from the real one. A person is immersed in this world and begins to consider it more real than reality itself, and most importantly, more attractive to a person, where he or she can create not only 'reality' but also himself or herself in this reality. Virtual reality attracts people with its freedom, informality, ease of access, lack of need to establish real social relations, brightness and attractiveness of the media form, and a variety of opportunities. The electronic existence of a modern person is gradually becoming attributive, significant in terms of worldview, social and even sense of life. At the same time, it may not be focused on the search for meaning and significance, but rather it is aimed at liberation from meanings, imperatives, and paradigms in the spirit of postmodernism, focusing on multiplicity, play, individualism, and constant choice. In this regard, digital society makes it possible to accelerate the processes associated with human activity, sometimes bringing them to their maximum (love and friendship, creativity, enrichment, consumption of various goods, etc.). Digital existence is qualitatively changing the way we used to live, and for the new generation, life without virtual reality seems impossible. The old man spent many years studying, striving to have a family, accumulate wealth, fulfil his duty in work or defence, and perhaps even become famous.

According to researchers, the impact of mass communication in modern conditions on the human personality, its self-understanding, is often a manifestation of information violence, mainly through the manipulation of public consciousness in a certain direction. In network communication, primarily due to the influence of media on people, this leaves an imprint on the worldview, changes in social practices and the way individuals act. One of the most common technologies of mass communication influence in modern conditions, which aims to change the human consciousness, is propaganda. In international communications, it is carried out by all actors in global political processes, using propaganda to one degree or another to ensure their own political goals and interests. In particular, widely used soft power technologies, which are legitimised in international relations

and are considered quite suitable for promoting a country's interests in the world, often contain elements of propaganda, spreading information about their country, its culture, attractive tourist or other characteristics among the public of other states. As a rule, such manifestations of propaganda influence do not carry a negative semantic load, while their impact on the public consciousness of a foreign country in order to influence its government in the desired direction is not concealed by the propaganda content generator. Such influence may involve little or no information violence. Instead, in cases where information influence in such a context aims to radically change the addressee's mindset, his/her perceptions of a certain phenomenon and to level his/her assessments in the direction desired by the addressee, then propaganda influence should be considered as information violence rather than as a proposal for voluntary acceptance/rejection of the proposed information, including propaganda content.

In fact, the term 'propaganda' is broadly understood as the dissemination of certain information (true, half-true, false) in order to influence people's opinions in order to obtain the 'necessary' mass reaction (opinions) about a certain event, person, state, etc. The term 'propaganda' was first used by the Roman Pontifical Curia in the early seventeenth century. and referred to tools (methods) of influencing the masses, although, according to scholars, the emergence of the phenomenon of propaganda should be attributed to ancient times (in particular, in ancient China or Rome, propaganda was given considerable attention in the strategies of confrontation), Nowadays, this term is broadly interpreted as the dissemination of certain information (true, half-true, false) in order to influence people's opinions in order to obtain the 'necessary' mass reaction (opinions) about a certain event, person, state, etc. Modern Western researchers emphasise the differences between modern propaganda and that of previous eras, saying that today it is characterised by an increased audience and a more complex structure of messages, and is a mass persuasion with a strong interactive component. Some Western scholars even separate propaganda from communication, since propaganda, they say, does not take into account the interests of the information consumer. Instead, Ukrainian scholars (G. Pocheptsov, O. Boyko, N. Zrazhevskia, K. Kevorkian, O. Yarmak, E. Magda, A. Blyznyuk, D. Pavlov and others), based on the relevant experience of their Western colleagues, interpret propaganda as a targeted and politically motivated influence on society,

which to some extent determines the modern development of mankind. In this context, it is emphasised that etymologically, the word 'propaganda' means the dissemination of certain information among ordinary, uneducated people, pagans (derived from the Latin words pro – for, in favour of and paganus – pagan, commoner, paganus – pagan, villager, simple, unlearned, whence propagatio – spreading, expanding the boundaries) and defines it as a phenomenon rooted in culture that manifests itself in various symbolic behaviours, products of human creativity and socio-political objects: The use of language, speech acts, texts, paintings, images, architectural monuments, films, music, rituals, ceremonies, pickets, demonstrations, celebrations. In any case, propaganda operates within the framework of communication relations and is a sovereign form of public communication. Propaganda becomes political when it influences the redistribution of power potentials in society, determining who, why and how effectively decisions are made in the state, given that political propaganda is a process of systematic and purposeful effective influence on the consciousness and behaviour of the masses in order to gain, retain and exercise power by attracting a sufficient number of supporters and neutralising opponents [22, p. 73; 68, p. 94-96].

According to researchers, the effectiveness of propaganda is due to the periodic experience of a common collective experience, the formation of conditioned reflexes in communicators, and indirect influence through the deep penetration of propaganda into the foundations of human life – myths, symbols, rituals. This creates a semantic context that reflects a certain model of the world, sets basic norms and values, selection criteria, and direction of action. In this way, propaganda undoubtedly affects human identification and reveals its affinity with such mass-communication phenomena as mythologies, because the means of myth at all times – from antiquity to the present – have generated and broadcast socially significant meanings, which contributed to the mastery of reality, helped/helped people to assimilate, experience collective experience, determine their place in social and practical phenomena, and comprehend themselves and the world around them.

Each modern state in the information space forms and protects its own semantic context through mythology and rituals, symbolic models of national unity of society around a system of significant values and meanings. Otherwise, the existing gaps are filled with other people's myths, symbols,

and meanings, which leads to the formation of an imposed identity and the loss of independence by society, first in the information space and then in the civilizational space. In view of this, one of the important tasks in the dimension of a country's social existence is for its inhabitants, its cultural, artistic, political elite, etc., to develop their own socially significant myths in the context of their own nation-building. These myths should be broadcast, among other things, through positive propaganda content both inside and outside the country. At the same time, one of the most important tasks in terms of information security should be to counteract hostile information influences that destroy the country's socio-cultural tradition and are aimed at changing the mass consciousness of its population, as such influences result in changes in its identity [67, p. 94-95; 72, p. 45-47].

Propaganda as a phenomenon belongs to those large-scale information technologies of social influence on the masses in order to disorient and disinform the enemy by disseminating selected facts, views and arguments or rumors; destabilizing the situation in which the enemy is; introducing hostile, harmful ideas and views into the public and individual consciousness to form the public opinion necessary for the propagandist. Propaganda is aimed at changing public opinion and mass consciousness regarding ideological phenomena. For this purpose, propagandists deliberately resort to myth-making and disseminate inaccurate or unverified facts.

O. Kholokh distinguishes two main models of propaganda: 1) vertical subject-object structure, when information is disseminated according to an elementary scheme of communication from the communicator (sender) to the recipients (addressee) – this is monologue, in political terms – authoritarian propaganda, which does not provide for a feedback mechanism; 2) subject-subject horizontal structure, which is an interactive mass communication with feedback and where the subjects are communicators and communicators, and the influence is gentle and almost imperceptible. The effectiveness of modern propaganda as a type of mass communication aimed not only at disseminating certain information but also at shaping public opinion to approve and support certain ideas, according to this scholar, is due to the periodic experience of a common collective experience, the formation of conditioned reflexes in communicators, and indirect influence through the deep penetration of propaganda into the foundations of human life – myths, symbols, rituals. This creates

a semantic context that reflects a certain model of the world, sets basic norms and values, selection criteria and direction of action. In view of this, the author summarizes that one of the main tasks of every modern state is to form and protect its own semantic context through mythology and rituals, symbolic models of national unity of society around a system of significant values and meanings in the information space. Otherwise, the existing gaps in society are filled with other people's myths, symbols and meanings, which leads to the formation of an imposed identity and loss of independence, first in the information space, and then in the civilizational space [67, p. 94-97]. The specialists point out that the process of propaganda is quite long and usually has more global goals than manipulations, and requires much more training and means, which is why not everyone can afford to exercise such influence. A vivid example of this is Russian propaganda, which is aimed at creating a negative image of Ukraine and the attitude of the population of Russia, the United States, the European Union and other countries and organizations that, in the opinion of the Russian ruling elite, are the main threats and obstacles to the development of the Russian Federation.

The phenomenon of information violence is defined as a targeted non-violent influence on the mental sphere associated with information manipulation, which violates the information freedom of the target and may cause harm to his or her life or health [73, p. 27-29]. Researchers have formulated the following basic theses about propaganda that is aggressive and can be considered as information violence:

1) the language of hybrid warfare and the socio-semiotic constructs created with its help widely use verbal aggression as a tool for the struggle for dominance, one of the manifestations of which is the use of hate speech and the expression of a negative attitude towards an individual or a group of people, in which modern media techniques play a significant role, becoming a powerful tool in the hands of political demagogues;

2) propaganda as a component of information technologies of social influence on the masses aims to disorient and disinform the population of the enemy country by disseminating selected facts, views, arguments, rumors, destabilizing the situation, introducing hostile, harmful ideas and views into the public and individual consciousness in order to form the public opinion necessary for the translator;

3) propaganda is aimed at changing the mass consciousness primarily in relation to ideological phenomena, for which propagandists deliberately resort to myth-making and disseminate inaccurate or unverified facts.

Widely used soft power technologies, which are legitimized in international relations and are considered quite suitable for promoting the country's interests in the world, often contain elements of propaganda, spreading information about their country, its culture, attractive tourist or other characteristics among the public of other states. As a rule, such manifestations of propaganda influence do not carry a negative semantic load, and their influence on the public consciousness of a foreign country in order to influence its government in the desired direction is not concealed by the generator of propaganda content. Such influence may involve a small degree of information violence or no violence at all. Instead, in cases where information influence in such a context aims to radically change the addressee's train of thought, his/her perceptions of a certain phenomenon and level his/her assessments in the direction desired by the addressee, then propaganda influence should be considered as information violence rather than as a proposal for voluntary acceptance/rejection of the proposed information, including propaganda, content. Enemy propaganda is a component of information warfare – a phenomenon that arose with the emergence of human communication and conflicts [19, p. 35]. However, the term “information warfare” came into widespread use in the 1960s. It was first used by Canadian political scientist M. McClure and American politician A. Dulles. In particular, the latter, in his book “Secret Surrender”, covering the separate negotiations between the United States and Great Britain, on the one hand, and Reichsführer Himmler, on the other, called the intelligence and sabotage actions to undermine the enemy's rear as information warfare. In modern conditions, thanks to the relevant revolutionary technological innovations, information warfare has become a phenomenon that requires in-depth study, taking into account the multi-paradigm nature of this phenomenon (experts distinguish the relevant systemic, psychological, geopolitical, conflictological paradigms) [51, p. 77-78].

According to the generally accepted definition, such warfare is a complex, large-scale use of destructive force against information assets and systems, against computers and networks that support critical infrastructures (energy, communications, financial, transportation) and

involves the use of various forms and methods aimed at manipulating and controlling information to achieve military, political or social goals by both military forces and non-state actors to change opinions, distort facts and influence public opinion.

American scientist M. Libitsky identified seven forms of information warfare: command and control; intelligence-based; psychological; economic and information; electronic warfare; hacking; cyber. In this context, psychological warfare refers to the strategic use of psychological and information methods to influence people's behavior, thoughts, and emotions. In particular, the use of disinformation and manipulation to change the general public's opinion or mood in a certain direction, which is actually information warfare in the narrow sense of the term [34].

Many of the goals of information warfare are achieved by spreading false or distorted information to create chaos, undermine trust in the government, or provoke conflicts between nations by means of disinformation, disorientation, introducing harmful thoughts into the public consciousness, intimidating the population or opponents, creating the basis for loyalty to the aggressor, etc. With the development of social media, information warfare has spread to online platforms and involves the creation and operation of fake accounts, false narratives, and the ingraining of divisive content in the minds of the public in order to manipulate public opinion and provoke discord between different groups of people. The factors of successful information influence include the speed and accessibility of information, constant rapid change of news, the use of emotional influence, social networks and algorithms; and the spread of disinformation and fakes. The latter, due to the wide access to information and the possibility of their dissemination through social networks, jeopardizes the truthfulness and reliability of information, thus undermining trust in the media, government, opinion leaders, political and public activists [27, p. 73].

As H. Pocheptsov emphasizes, despite the fact that information does not shoot or explode, it can be very dangerous. In the virtual space, information weapons cause destruction and irreparable consequences and are closely related to the semantic warfare that takes place in the cognitive space. Both – information and semantic warfare – are designed to change the behavior of the enemy/opponent, using tools that program this behavior, significantly reduce the field of choice for action, and shape the

information agenda for decades. The goal is to change people's beliefs and knowledge, which leads to the leveling of the rules by which facts are understood, and, accordingly, to new consequences. An example is the information activities of the Russian authorities during the Chechen wars, when the “fighters for the freedom of Ichkeria” of the first war became “mujahideen” in the second war. Thus, the researcher points out, a different version of the semantic matrix was introduced into the information space, based on the model of the world that was in the minds of the recipients of the message. This “pulled” the rest of the components of the matrix, increasing the effectiveness of the impact on the target audience [47].

No less aggressive in its imperial rhetoric is the concept of the “Russian world,” which has a clear propaganda character and has been actively circulating in the publicist and academic publications of the aggressor country since the 1990s. The set of ideologemes tied to this concept indicates, among other things, the ambitions of the Russian elite in competing with modern world civilizational models, the desire to ideologically enslave sovereign countries neighboring Russia (and not only), countries and the method of a new “gathering of lands” under the auspices of Moscow's imperial rulers in order to restore the colonial policy of expansion in the Eurasian space – a means of forming a new, “Russo-Mir” identity in countries with diasporas of Russians or Russian-speaking citizens. During the 2000s, which were marked by revenge in the context of the USSR's defeat in the Cold War and became a time of developing strategies for Russian hybrid wars to regain control of the Kremlin over the post-Soviet space, Russia actively developed an aggressive strategy to protect its compatriots in other countries. At the same time, open military intervention to protect them was not ruled out, as enshrined in key foreign policy documents. In fact, the “Russian world” has become an instrument of Russian geopolitical expansion, which levels the modern legal foundations of national state-building in sovereign post-Soviet countries. At the same time, the historical roots of the Russian world are usually outlined by the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in creating the myth of the Russian world as a synthesizer of peoples in the Christian community “all and in all is Christ” or the formation of Russian diasporas in countries around the world. For example, O. Prokhanov, whose professional activity is far from that of a professional historian and who, as a writer, is endowed with a vivid artistic imagination, has seen the

Russian world in the “multinational Kyivan-Novgorodian Rus” and claims that the Russian world is identical to Pax Romana and Pax Americana, placing in the same row such “diverse” phenomena as the Philothean myth of Moscow as the Third Rome and “dreams”: Russian, Chinese, American [24, p. 37; 32, p. 11; 63, p. 83-85; 69, p. 13-17].

Usually, the modern concept of the “Russian world” is associated with an international transcontinental society that allegedly exists in the world, united by the common Russian language and culture. Researchers also point out that the “Russian world” is seen as a means of pressure and manifestations of Russia's soft power, or it is used to describe a civilizational, socio-cultural, and supranational space that encompasses all Russian-speaking people who have spiritual and mental signs of Russianness and are concerned about the fate of Russia and the preservation and development of the Russian cultural space. Therefore, the “Russian world” is a transboundary supra-ethnic socio-cultural community characterized by flexibility and dynamism of adaptation to global changes, uniting, on the basis of voluntary participation, all people who are interested in and share the values of Russian culture and are not indifferent to the fate of Russia, regardless of their country of origin, residence, religion or native language, in order to preserve and transmit the values of Russian culture by means of forming an adequate image of Russia on the world stage” [7, p. 84; 23, p. 106-116; 26, p. 339-362].

However, in our opinion, one fundamental point is rather controversial in these statements: how the idea of the Russian world as a synthesizer of peoples in the community “all and in all is Christ”, supported by the Orthodox Church a hundred years ago, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, can become a catalytic force for the processes of socio-cultural integration of different traditions of peoples (most of them non-Christian), parents, and communities. Only on the basis of a common Russian-speaking cultural environment can it become a catalytic force for the processes of socio-cultural integration of peoples with different traditions (most of them non-Christian), whose homeland is a huge part of Eurasia (these are the territories that Russian propagandists and pseudo-scholars call “historical Russia”). It is clear that today language or confessional factors cannot play a powerful integrative role. Instead, such a role can be played by a social factor that has historical roots and whose existence has long been undeniable. It is this factor that can point

to the historical matrix of the modern concept of the “Russian world.” And although it is impossible to comprehend all the fantasies of the fathers of this newest construct, the actualization of this historical matrix will serve to debunk the pseudo-historical and propagandistic essence of the modern concept of the “Russian world” as an artificial one and as a component of an information special operation within the framework of a hybrid war against the sovereign republics of the post-Soviet space.

Such a historical matrix emerged as a result of the implementation of a reform project during the “long” nineteenth century as part of the active expansion of the Russian Empire on the Eurasian continent, including within its borders a vast territory that contemporaries boldly called “one sixth of the earth's landmass” at the end of the nineteenth century. It is this space that the latest Russian pseudo-scientists, political scientists, and publicists call “historical Russia.” Instead, more than a hundred years ago, the imperial discourse of the time used another name for the country: “Russian Colossus.” In addition to a backward type of economy, it pointed to chronic problems: a state budget deficit, inefficient fiscal practices, and the urgent need for administrative order in a country that was ethnically and socio-culturally diverse (in some Asian regions, local farmers were at the stage of decaying primitive relations) and in which farmers were the main producers of goods, accounting for 9/10 of the imperial society. To unify the social and administrative aspects of such a country with the then weak level of communication was a super-task for the imperial elite, which it sought to solve for almost a century – from the 1760s to the early 1860s – by finding adequate tools [70, p. 86-91].

During the administrative reforms implemented under Catherine II and Paul I, there were first attempts to use the social experience of traditional rural communities – Great Russian communities / Russian world – to modernize fiscal administration, based on the principles of self-government, the primacy of the interests of the collective over the interests of the individual (“the power of peace”), spontaneous socialist guidelines, and provided for the equalizing distribution of land and tax burden within the rural community). It was this concept that reformers used as the basis for a new concept of rural governance based on self-government. A number of administrative reforms put Rus'-Mir self-government at the service of the state. For example, mutual responsibility for duties (one of the most

extreme forms of collectivism), including taxation, was incorporated into new legitimate self-governing technologies of rural societies in all regions in order to introduce collective responsibility of communities for their obligations to the state and to establish control over the economic activities of peasants. The latter were officially called rural inhabitants in imperial legal acts where the so-called “public administration of the village” was introduced. In other regions, the historical names of rural residents were used. At the same time, there was a general tendency to artificially construct the social category of peasants where they did not exist (this is what happened in 1864 in the Polish provinces, for example), and a strategy of further fomenting the status of rural inhabitants on a pan-imperial scale. This required considerable resources – bureaucratic, political and legal, etc. – as well as the creation of a powerful relevant infrastructure, which in the end proved to be beyond the power of imperial reformers. But the most problematic issue in this context was the issue of land provision, because only under this condition could the rural population, as well as the nobility, having the right to own land, fulfill all obligations to the state (the clergy and urban residents did not have this right until 1911, when the agrarian policy underwent significant changes as a result of Stolypin's reforms) [72, p. 96-145, 363].

The impetus for accelerating managerial innovations in the agrarian segment was given by the relevant modern self-governing technologies widespread in Britain and Germany at that time, as well as the theory of the free community developed by Western European thought (emphasizing the natural and inalienable right of the local community to take care of its own affairs), as well as the ideas of A. de Tocqueville on the immanence of democratic self-governing practices in traditional communities and L. von Stein on the administrative modernization of countries through the development of a just social organization and the implementation of the policy of state socialism – the Austrian reformer saw this as a means of involving their residents, elected by the communities themselves on the basis of property, in the management of localities. However, according to Russian reformers, these innovations should not have been fully transferred to Russia because of its socio-cultural peculiarities. The Slavophiles, who were sympathetic to the country's ruling elite, demanded respect for the rights of their country's free communities, calling for its renewal to be

based on the self-organization of the Russian world (a separate impetus for this was given by the high praise of egalitarian secular practices by the Westphalian baron A. von Hacksthausen, and the external context was the fear of social upheavals similar to those of the late 1840s in Western Europe). This solidarized the imperial modernizers in their attitude to the “indigenous historical foundations of national life” and the “product of a thousand years of history” – the Russian world. Noting its self-organization, it was emphasized that the state is a “large community,” and the distribution of land in rural communities by “traction” (labor) could prevent the proletarianization of the countryside. The reformers also “realized” the connection between the mundane and Russia's “global mission” of social renewal of the world's countries through the widespread establishment of “communities/communes” (of course, according to the patterns of the Russian world) in order to build a new social order – “state socialism.” In addition, the introduction of rural self-government throughout the country based on the model of the Russian world was influenced by the tasks of imperial expansion. For example, the strategic goals of “paving the way” to India required solving the issues of organizing the main commodity producer, which also had to provide the army with everything it needed and physically man it [71, p. 171-172; 72, p. 113-119].

It was also important that the application of the practices of the Russian world relieved the officials and the imperial treasury of a considerable burden: rural communities themselves had to maintain their own governance, provide social self-help, and so on. The “reformist genius” turned these new communities into “the most powerful institutions of the government,” taking over traditional Great Russian practices and imposing them on rural residents of other non-Russian regions after the anti-imperial uprising of 1863 in the Polish provinces was put down. Looking for ways to consolidate the country and overcome the separatist sentiments of local elites, modernizing the governance of these regions for the needs of the empire, and comprehending the project of a “great Russian nation,” the reformers began legislative and administrative unification of the country. With this in mind, the non-Russian peoples had to be “re-educated” in the spirit of the “Russian nation.” Against the background of separatism of regional nobles and the weakness of the bourgeoisie, Russian world practices integrated into village governance at the level of counties and

provinces became a kind of class-based fasteners of a vast space and a significant tool for empire-building, replacing property-based principles of local government with traditional ones and neutralizing the proportion of modernization measures. This was facilitated by the government's organization of intensive resettlement of peasants from European to Asian regions, as well as the Russification and glorification of indigenous peoples. The merger of migrant communities with autochthonous communities in order to redistribute local land in favor of migrants became a common phenomenon. Publicists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries called the new rural communities artificially created according to the patterns of the Russian world “a recreation of the Russian world on the outskirts.” The colonizing policy of the authorities and their gross interference with the self-government of rural communities led to their large-scale resistance in the early twentieth century, which in the scientific literature is called the peasant revolution. During the revolts, these communities self-organized 9/10 of the country and significantly contributed to its fatal outcome. At the same time, the newly constructed rural self-government with its dominance of collectivism, suppressing the individual peasant and promoting total lawlessness in the countryside, paved the way for Russian fascism [71, p. 124-125; 72, p. 143-146, 330-358].

In view of the above, the modern concept of the “Russian world” is a simulacrum and a tool of information manipulation and propaganda, in fact, a fake, because the historical matrix of the “Russian world” is associated with the spread of traditional self-governing practices of the Great Russian provinces in the Russian Empire in the “long” nineteenth century. Scientific research on the role of the Russian world in the unification (“bonding”) processes over the vast expanse of this state proves that the social role it played was not that of a synthesizer of peoples and a unifier of lands: the Russian world contributed to the destruction of the country, turning from an instrument of empire-building and colonization of the enslaved peoples of Eurasia into the graveyard of this state and the cradle of Russian fascism. The concept of “historical Russia” is also a fake, which in general does not indicate a unified socio-cultural statehood, but rather a kind of Eurasian colonialism – this is how foreign researchers qualify the imperial administrative policy in non-Russian-speaking regions during the “long nineteenth” century [27, p. 411-442; 39, p. 41; 57, p. 86-10; 66].

3. Russian information invasion in international public communications:

“pollution” of the information field with anti-Ukrainian propaganda

Within the global paradigm of the XXI century – the “century of communicative space” – communication is seen as a system of linking relations between individuals, individuals and society, individuals and institutions, society and the state, individuals and states, etc. Public communications, as a form of social communications implemented in the public sphere, is a system of interaction between political and non-political actors in the context of increased citizen participation in the political process, as well as the entire set of mechanisms, methods, ways, and means of communication between different participants in the relevant process. By enabling citizens to participate in solving state issues regardless of their location, public communications form socially significant goals through socio-political discourse, promote effective interaction in society between different audiences, and provide an opportunity to solve the following tasks: expanding the audience that actually participates in a particular dialogue almost indefinitely; adapting the content of the organization to the needs and interests of the audience; establishing absolute contact with the audience to solve any problems of the subject. In the context of public communication, an interactive form of relations between the state and the citizen is realized with the possibility of broad control of state activities by civil society institutions. In the global, in particular, European, space, public communications is a strategic resource that has a multilevel character (supranational, national, regional, local) and three manifestations: culture, politics, and technology. The main means (tools) of public communications are Internet sites, e-mail, mobile communication, etc. that provide citizens with the opportunity to participate in solving issues of public life regardless of their location [10; 17, p. 5; 18; 52, p. 5].

In the last decades of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, public communications on a global scale were influenced by the scientific and technological revolution and the emergence of new communication technologies that formed a fundamentally new space of human existence – cyberspace. It is extraterritorial and practically devoid of geographical restrictions. As Dubov D. points out, in the global dimension, cyberspace is an information space and at the same time a communication

environment created by an organized set of information processes based on the common principles and rules of information, telecommunication and information and telecommunication systems and their management [16, p. 15-16, 51, 61]. Piddubna, L. emphasizes that cyberspace is one of the main factors of the socio-cultural environment, a special environment, which is connected with all spheres of public life – economic, social, political, and spiritual. It is the emergence of cyberspace that has contributed to the formation of the global information space, the emergence of a “network society” (M. Castells), the basis of which is the generation, processing, transmission and updating of the social information field. In cyberspace, human life takes place in two parallel environments: the environment of social reality and its copy – the virtual world formed with the help of technical and technological means. This allows a person to simultaneously act as a consumer, receiver, recipient of social information and its autonomous subject. As a result, fundamental changes are taking place in the minds of millions of people, qualitatively new forms of communication are emerging, and there is a redistribution of value orientations in the choice of self-realization opportunities for different social groups. Cyberspace is actively interfering with the structures of power, contributing to the formation of e-government, virtualization of political life, and the “network” logic [46, p. 204-206].

In July 2000, the signing by the presidents of the eight leading industrialized countries (G-8) of the “Charter of the Global Information Society” (the “Okinawa Charter”) testified to the recognition of the transition to a new stage of society's development due to the impact of information and communication technologies on social processes. At the same time, it was recognized that global informatization has become the basis for a fundamentally new environment of confrontation between adversarial states – cyberspace. This new cyber dimension of international relations poses enormous challenges to the policy of deterrence, since the quality of information, its availability, against the background of the use of modern information technologies, cause profound changes in the policies of states, and have a significant impact on the nature and system of public administration. States involved in global information processes should pay special attention to cybersecurity issues. This problem is a priority because of its connection with the security aspects of politics, economy, electronic

services, energy, transportation and other key areas of society. At the same time, there are no principles for the existence and use of cyberspace. In particular, the use of information technology for military purposes is not regulated by international law. This turns cyberspace into one of the most powerful challenges to sustainable development and requires close attention of governments and the world community to threats to global development of a political and socio-cultural nature. At the same time, a person, society, and the state are both objects of cyberspace and its subjects [16, p. 51-61; 36, p. 793-795].

As Matvienko V., Petushkova G. point out, the main problems in cyberspace are related to the human factor. They are mostly geopolitical. The challenges of cyberspace are about the success of negotiations and political debates on the management of this environment. One of the main problems of cybersecurity in this area is not about how to prevent intrusions, but about the political motivation of individuals and organizations to take responsibility for regulating the components of cybersecurity, as well as how these entities can limit and hold accountable for the malicious activities of an actor in international relations. International law cannot be applied to cyberspace in full and without constant amendments due to the rapid pace of development of information and communication technologies. Currently, the international community has 11 non-binding norms of responsible state behavior from a group of UN governmental experts. Most states have their own concepts and strategic plans, which in practice contradict the norms, as they are non-binding. There are inconsistencies at the international and national levels. Classical concepts of international relations, such as neutrality or arms control, do not make sense in cyberspace in their traditional form [37, p. 697].

Researchers emphasize that, given that globalization processes erase the boundaries of national identity, the cyberization of the information space is a fundamentally new phenomenon where information is formed, transformed, transmitted, used, and stored, which affects individual and social consciousness, information infrastructure, and information itself. This leads to the formation of prerequisites for the creation, development, and dissemination of information weapons [1; 59, p. 74-75]. It should be added that its target can be the identity of societies within individual countries, regions, and even the global one.

As Pronoza, I. points out, this is greatly influenced by modern media and mass communication, which have become the most powerful element of the mechanism of purposeful construction of political orders, a means of building the necessary connections and relations with the public [50, p. 67].

The information provided by the media is never neutral; it represents the attempts of the ruling elites to create an image of reality that they need and “justifies” their practical policies, “packaged” in stereotypical points of view that are beneficial to the authorities and bring to the fore only a part of what is really happening. To summarize, Danilian O., Dzieban O. emphasize that within the global information environment, information warfare technologies are used, hybrid attacks in the information plane are carried out through traditional media (television, press, radio) and through social online networks [11, p. 21].

As Marushchak A. points out, social media regulation is currently at an early stage and varies depending on the national approaches of different countries [38, p. 83-86].

Instead, while democratic states constitutionally guarantee citizens access to information and freedom of speech, which ensures free and fair participation of citizens in political and other social processes [38, p. 83-86], in authoritarian countries, with the help of media technologies and the use of epistemic means of manipulating public opinion, the opposite is happening – the achievements of the information age with its digitalization of communication processes are used to manipulate people's consciousness in order to promote First of all, this applies to the Russian Federation. Hybridizing soft power and propaganda, Russian soft power is a continuation of Russian propaganda and a means of implementing aggressive expansionist policies. At the same time, the aggressor country turns the values of Western liberalism inside out, attacking it with its own means [31, p. 85-86].

In general, Russia's approach to information confrontation is a global strategy that includes both cyber strikes and information operations against most democratic actors in the world. Its goals are to restore Russian dominance in the post-Soviet/imperial sphere of influence; reduce the influence of Western democratic values, institutions and systems in order to create a polycentric model of the world; and expand Russia's political, economic and military hegemony around the world to strengthen its status

as a great power [74, p. 31]. Danilian O., Dzieban O. point out that the tasks of information weapons used by Russia are becoming a means of mobilizing supporters and expanding spheres of influence in the international arena. At the same time, an important function of information weapons is to create a virtual “picture of the world,” an illusory, parallel reality with a transformed system of values, beliefs, attitudes, and ways of behavior. The objects of influence are the mass consciousness of not only the population of the Russian Federation, but also the population of other countries, including Ukraine [11, p. 19-21].

The U.S. government has accused Russian citizens and shut down more than 30 Internet domains of a planned campaign to influence the U.S. election. For Ukraine, another component is much more interesting in this context – the Russian operation to manipulate German, French, Italian and British politicians, businessmen, journalists and other influential people. The 277-page FBI dossier describes in detail Russia's plans to win the “hearts and minds” of Europeans. A sharp increase in such activities was noted after February 24, 2022. A separate surge was recorded on the eve of the European Parliament elections held in June this year. The goal of the Kremlin's campaign in Europe is to sow division, discredit the United States and undermine support for Ukraine, “to elicit rational (e.g., ‘really, why should we help Ukraine?’) and emotional (“Americans are scum“) reactions from the audience,” according to documents obtained by the FBI. The investigation uncovered a network of Russian-linked websites posing as Western publications, such as “cloned” Internet portals with slightly modified web addresses that disseminated manipulated content and disinformation. The domains contained fakes of Reuters, Der Spiegel, Bild, Le Monde, Le Parisien, Welt, FAZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Delfi and others. The content is created using internal discontent in EU countries. Most often, these campaigns took advantage of existing conflicts that were fomented to escalate tensions, increase discontent, and exacerbate the debate. Sometimes they used true information with one “fake” element added to it, and sometimes facts were simply distorted, taken out of context, or outright lies were spread [6].

Today, in the context of Ukraine's confrontation with Russian information aggression, which has targeted everything Ukrainian since 2014 – the government, state, society, culture and identity of Ukrainians – it should

be noted that long before the military invasion of Ukraine began, Russian propagandists were processing the world community in order to present the picture in a light favorable to the aggressor country and find allies for it [20, p. 51-53]. Spreading the ideas of Slavic unity and the “Russian world” around the world, the aggressor country uses systems of organizational, propaganda, psychological, and informational influence. The main goals are to discredit the political leadership and command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, provoking distrust in them; forming an opinion about the spread of racism and ethnic intolerance in Ukraine; convincing the international community of systematic violations of the ceasefire by the Ukrainian authorities and the covert build-up of forces and means of the Armed Forces of Ukraine along the demarcation line in order to resume active hostilities; creating a negative image of the defense forces by accusing Ukrainian servicemen of committing crimes, etc. [13, p. 190-195; 30, p. 33-37]. Vashchenko N. uproots a number of the main Russian narratives hostile to Ukraine: 1) “Ukraine is an unfortunate shadow of Russia”; 2) “Ukraine is an artificial project of the West” (“Ukraine was invented by the Poles and Austrians”, “the Ukrainian language was created artificially”, “Ukraine took away other people’s lands”); 3) “Crimea, Donbas and southeastern Ukraine are Russia”; 4) “The USSR was a powerful empire, Stalin was a hero”; 5) “All Ukrainian nationalists were fascists”; 6) “Ukraine has forgotten about the victory over Nazism” [65, p. 189-191].

The researchers emphasize that in order to undermine Ukraine’s international authority, create a negative image of Ukraine and prevent large-scale military, economic, and financial assistance from European countries and the United States, Russia artificially creates a negative image of Ukrainians as “neo-Nazis” and “Banderites,” provides diametrically opposite coverage of war crimes by the Russian army, and raises doubts about national values and the foundations of the Ukrainian state. The methods of such activities include spreading fake news, disinformation, manipulation of the information space, manipulation of historical memory, in particular, regarding the historical heritage and origin of Ukraine, the use of linguistic methods and tools, such as labeling “fascist,” “Nazi,” “Ukrainian Nazi,” and “neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv,” which unpack the historical memory of terror related to the crimes committed by the Nazi regime in Germany. At the same time, Russia fully uses the resources of the media space to aggressively

influence the consciousness and subconsciousness of addressees (target audience), including the public of the world [11, p. 17-19; 23, p. 106-116; 54, p. 188-189].

Similar narratives, for example, are being spread by Russia in Israel's information space [55]. Plohiy S. [56] and Pomerantsev R. [41] point out that the Kremlin is trying to pollute the image of Ukraine in the West and generally make the information field in which Ukraine appears dirty. These researchers emphasize that this information war of the Kremlin is a war not only against Ukraine, but also against the whole of Europe. As O. Polyakov points out, in today's realities, there is a significant information presence of the Russian Federation in the media space of states not only in the EU, but also in the United States and other countries. Provocation of aggravation of contradictions, information and financial support of conflicts in the territories of Western democracies became possible due to the use of the Russian army of fake accounts, Kremlin bots and the unpreparedness of civilized countries for information warfare in social networks [49, p. 139].

4. Ukraine's counteraction to Russian information aggression in global cyberspace: key areas, tools, and urgent tasks

In addition to justifying its aggressive military actions against the Ukrainian people to the international community, Russia systematically and permanently uses media propaganda to destabilize the socio-political situation and strengthen anti-Ukrainian rhetoric [28, p. 124-125]. O. Polyakov believes that during the legal regime of martial law, illegal (destructive) content on the Internet and social networks primarily includes propaganda information materials containing calls for the overthrow of the constitutional order and encroachment on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, incitement to national or religious hatred, manifestations of xenophobia, justification of Russian military aggression against Ukraine, glorification of its participants, etc. This category also includes propaganda materials and posts calling for the occupation of Ukraine on social media. This necessitates the development of an organizational and legal framework for countering Russian propaganda, disinformation, fakes, and destructive content. In Ukraine, it is primarily the responsibility of state institutions and law enforcement agencies to counteract the large-scale influence of Russian bot farms and troll factories. First of all, by creating a single center

for countering Russian propaganda on social media, which should combine the activities of government and civil society organizations. The next step is to widely inform social media users about information “hygiene” and explain the methodology for detecting and identifying Russian trolls. It would also be advisable to create a unified record of identified “creambots” and special programs and applications that would help identify “trolls” among users. Active cooperation with the management of social networks themselves in terms of countering trolls will help to block them quickly. Active counter-propaganda at the state level remains one of the most important tools in the fight against Russia's illegal and criminal activities on social media. In such circumstances, the relevance of legal regulation of the content of destructive information in textual information sources is growing. However, domestic legislation lacks a systematic list of criteria on the basis of which it is possible to define destructive information content. The researcher recommends that clear criteria for understanding and interpreting illegal (disruptive) content should be defined at the legislative level with the possibility of updating them; a register should be created by category of disruptive content; the system of monitoring social networks should be improved using the capabilities of artificial intelligence systems and algorithms; and a single basic list of requirements and rules for blocking disruptive content should be developed. In order to create such a list, it is proposed to introduce the concept of a “destructive indicator” or “indicator of destructive orientation” into domestic legislation – a criterion by which the presence of illegal semantics in textual information is searched for, and the identification of which is the basis for classifying information as destructive [49, p. 140].

In addition, scientists believe that the Russian terrorist attack on the infrastructure of the mind requires extraordinary methods. Journalism methods are not enough in this context – it cannot do it alone. In the same vein, Danilian, & Dzieban, agree that traditional methods of combating information attacks in social media do not give the desired results [11, p. 17-18]. Khorishko, L. and Rudneva, A. & Malyovana, Yu. are convinced that the military-political realities of today make it important for the Ukrainian leadership to find additional resources to increase the state's capabilities in its activities in the international arena. In terms of Ukraine's information policy in the international format, the urgent task

is to develop mechanisms to counter disinformation by the aggressor country based on the fundamental constitutional principle of freedom of speech, taking into account the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international legal documents [29, p. 60-62; 38, p. 84-87]. In view of this, according to Rudneva, A. & Malyovana, Yu., it is advisable to use public diplomacy tools, such as the organization of special events, agenda setting, dialogue with the target audience, etc. [54, p. 187-190].

Since the nineteenth century, the term “public diplomacy” has been used to mean open activities and specific official efforts aimed at influencing foreign public opinion in order to achieve diplomatic goals. The modern interpretation of this concept, which refers to a type of diplomatic activity, was laid down 60 years ago by American scholars J. Nye and E. Gullion. They defined public diplomacy as an instrument of soft power in international communications. Complementing classical diplomatic activities with new methods and including the societies of the countries that communicate with each other in diplomatic dialogue/political dialogue, public diplomacy promotes a positive image of the state based on the principles of human rights, tolerance, intercultural communication, which are necessary for overall sustainable institutional development and the search for ways to prevent and peacefully resolve conflicts and wars. During the last third of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the nature of public diplomacy changed. The main reason for this is primarily the growing influence of the public and the strengthening of interpersonal contacts. At the same time, an important characteristic of public diplomacy is the way in which it communicates between the government and the public of other countries to form an understanding of national ideas, values, institutions, culture, national goals and policies, which involves actions in the field of information, education, and culture to influence foreign governments through the citizens of a particular country. An important task of such interaction is the need to influence, inform and activate the public to support national interests in the implementation of foreign policy [5, p. 15; 67, p. 19-21].

Given these opinions expressed by scholars, as well as trends in the cyberization of the global information space, it seems logical for Ukraine to use cyber diplomacy tools in its public diplomatic format to counter Russian

information aggression. The political, legal and organizational conditions for this include, first of all, the presence in the legislation of Ukraine of the concept of “cyberspace”, which means an environment (virtual space) that provides opportunities for communication and/or implementation of social relations, formed as a result of the functioning of compatible (connected) communication systems and electronic communications using the Internet and/or other global data networks [34]. In addition, the necessary legal framework is created by the Information Security Strategy (2021) [21], Cybersecurity Strategy of Ukraine: Secure Cyberspace is the Key to Successful Development of the Country (2021) [9] and Public Diplomacy Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for 2021-2025 (2021) [53]. On this basis, in order to respond to the challenges of the digital age in a timely and high-quality manner in 2023. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has begun to develop Ukraine's Cyber Diplomacy Strategy. A cyber diplomacy unit has been set up within the Ministry, the network infrastructure is being actively developed, training has begun, and a system of measures has been taken to digitalize processes related to the daily activities of the diplomatic service [12]. Under cyber diplomacy, the leaders of this ministry understand international cooperation on issues related to cyberspace, including the safe and responsible use of new digital tools and technologies, such as artificial intelligence, robotics, quantum computing, state policy, Internet development, etc. [3].

An important next step was the development of draft amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On the Diplomatic Service,” which would vest this service with the authority to promote and protect national interests in cyberspace – cyber diplomacy. The lawmakers propose to consider cyber diplomacy as a set of actions and strategies aimed at promoting and protecting national interests and realizing Ukraine's foreign policy goals in cyberspace in the field of international relations, as well as the rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens and legal entities abroad, taking into account current needs [60; 64].

Equally important in the context of the organizational and legal framework for the development of Ukraine's cyber diplomacy is the support provided by its allies. In particular, back in 2017, a bilateral cyber dialogue was launched between the United States and Ukraine, which provides a basis for further joint efforts to counter disinformation. Within its framework, the United States is making efforts to improve Ukraine's ability to respond to

Russian disinformation and propaganda activities in cyberspace, including through social media and other media [38, p. 84-87].

However, despite everything, it should be noted that today in the scientific field and media space of Ukraine there is no intensive discussion of the use of cyber diplomacy tools in countering Russian information aggression. As Barrinha, A. & Renard, T. point out, in order to neutralize the consequences of information warfare, the victim of aggression must use the same technologies and methods of information warfare as the aggressor, but for its own purposes. Today, this primarily involves actions in the media space and the use of social media resources. However, even a superficial analysis of the prospects for the implementation of such tasks can show that the resources of Ukraine's state structures will never be enough to repel the information attacks of the aggressor country in the information space in the segment of international communications. And the reason is not the lack of human resources from among the employees of state institutions [4, p. 355-357]. In our opinion, the main reason for the impossibility of using the traditional tools of public diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs institutionalized in Ukraine in solving the problems of countering Russian information aggression through cyber diplomacy is the scale of the tasks, as they involve the development of Ukraine's communication with the world community in the context of individual countries, debunking fakes, historical myths, and disinformation messages imposed on the world community by Russia regarding Ukraine. Supporting the above statements of Plohiy, S. [56] and Pomerantsev, R. [41] about the insufficiency of journalism resources in this regard, we consider it appropriate to draw attention to the resources of public diplomacy as a type of public diplomacy and a tool of cyber diplomacy in its public diplomatic format.

Depending on the subject of public diplomacy, American scholars distinguish two main types of public diplomacy: 1) activities carried out by the state, under its leadership or at public expense within the framework of the state's foreign policy to realize the national interest – public diplomacy; 2) activities carried out by various individuals and legal entities, civil society institutions independently of the state in the interests of the state, society or all of humanity (citizen diplomacy). In both directions, the goal is to establish permanent contacts between civil society institutions of different countries, develop international networks and participate in their activities

under conditions of weakening state control and creating an atmosphere of trust and equality. In the United States, in particular, according to the concept of citizen/civil diplomacy, every citizen has the right or even the duty to help the state implement its foreign policy. The subjects of such diplomacy can be students, teachers, scientists, athletes, business representatives, etc. – in this way, public interests are lobbied for [67, p. 22-24]. Sukhorolska, I. identifies the main five features of public diplomacy at the current stage of its evolution as openness and democracy; moving away from superficiality; increasing the role of values; turning into an equal game between different participants; dynamism and unpredictability. It is a complex interaction in a network of many multilevel actors, when civil society groups in different countries can act as initiators, active participants and partners of their states, as well as target audiences for programs of foreign governments, corporations and organizations [58, p. 107].

In addition, Article 17 of the Constitution of Ukraine (1996) states that the protection of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, ensuring its economic and information security are the most important functions of the state, the business of the entire Ukrainian people [8].

Based on these provisions, citizen/civil diplomacy can become a full-fledged tool of cyber diplomacy in countering Russia's information aggression against Ukraine. It seems that Ukrainian scientists, politicians, journalists, students and the public in general, by preparing and publishing content on media platforms and social networks that debunks fake, disinformation and propaganda narratives of an anti-Ukrainian nature, will help promote Ukrainian interests in the world and thus influence the positive image of the Ukrainian state. Of course, the language barrier may become a problem in the communication dimension, since it is advisable to speak to the public of another country in its language. One of the effective measures in this regard could be the organization of multichannel media platforms (websites), which will host information materials of relevant content, educational content, compiled by reputable scholars, politicians, and intellectuals, which will be available to foreign audiences in their languages. In general, the field for creative activity of the Ukrainian public in this regard is wide. It should also be emphasized that such activities will also strengthen the identity of communication participants from Ukraine, since a person's awareness of being a member of a

community that defends its information sovereignty and debunks false narratives about their country is a powerful factor of individual and collective self-identification.

5. Conclusions

Under the influence of revolutionary technological changes in information and communication, within the framework of the global cyberspace, which has created a qualitatively new space for interaction between governments, countries, and peoples, along with the formation of the “digital world” and “digital human,” radical changes have taken place in international public communications. Socio-cultural dynamics have become more complex. The specific worldview of the information society supports pluralism, which is the acceptance of the simultaneous coexistence of different points of view. The media and mass media in general (television, the Internet, mobile communication networks) are becoming factors that significantly influence the thoughts, beliefs, and worldview of the population, cause the digitalization of the individual, change the format of social relations, and determine the models of constructing individual and collective identities. In this context, there is a negative information impact on people associated with information violence. One of its manifestations is aggressive propaganda, which aims to change people's attitudes towards certain phenomena in a direction favorable to the generator of propaganda content. Such propaganda is often a component of information wars, in which the authorities of states as actors of international communications try to direct the public opinion of their own and other countries to accept certain ideas, political programs, expansionist strategies, etc. Semantic wars within information wars use hostile propaganda to program people's behavior, reducing the field of choice for action and shaping the information agenda for decades in order to change people's beliefs, knowledge, and level the rules by which facts are understood.

In the context of Ukraine's confrontation with Russian information aggression, which has targeted everything Ukrainian since 2014 – the government, state, society, culture and identity of Ukrainians – experts state that long before the military invasion of Ukraine began, Russian propagandists were processing the international community in order to present the picture in a light favorable to the aggressor country, to form

a negative image of the Ukrainian state and to prevent allies from helping it. The methods of such activities include spreading fakes, disinformation, manipulation in the information space, manipulation of historical memory, use of linguistic techniques and tools (labeling “fascist”, “Nazi”, “Ukrainian Nazi”, “neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv”) that unpack the historical memory of terror in the past of the Nazi regime in Germany. At the same time, the aggressor country makes full use of media resources to aggressively influence the consciousness and subconsciousness of the addressees (target audience), including the public of the world. The Kremlin is trying to “pollute” the image of Ukraine in the West and generally make the information field in which Ukraine appears dirty.

Among the effective measures to counter anti-Ukrainian propaganda, in addition to the relevant legislative and instrumental measures within the framework of government agencies, is public diplomacy in terms of cyber diplomacy aimed at establishing ties with the publics of the world and disseminating truthful information about the socio-cultural situation, political and public life of Ukraine. The necessary legal framework exists for this. Ukrainian legislation has recently been amended accordingly. Citizen/civil diplomacy is considered an effective tool of cyber diplomacy in countering Russia's information aggression against Ukraine. Within its framework, Ukrainian scientists, politicians, journalists, students and the public in general will contribute to the promotion of Ukrainian interests in the world by preparing and publishing content on media platforms and social networks that debunks anti-Ukrainian propaganda narratives and thus influence the positive image of the Ukrainian state. In addition, such activities will also strengthen the identity of communication participants from Ukraine, as a person's perception of himself or herself as a member of a community that defends its information sovereignty and debunks false narratives about his or her country is a powerful factor in individual and collective self-identification.

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