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Consciousness as a battlefield – the evolution of cognitive warfare in the global security system (cognitive operations – a tool of geopolitical dominance): prospects for organising a cognitive combat system in Ukraine

Oleksandr Syrskyi
Candidate of Military Sciences
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine
03168, Povitrianykh Syl avenue, 6, Kyiv, Ukraine
e-mail: sirsk_os@ukr.net
ORCID: 0000-0001-6396-7559

Oleh Semenenko
Honoured Figure of Science and Technology of Ukraine
Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor
Deputy Commandant of the Central Research Institute
of the Armed Forces of Ukraine for Scientific Work
The Central Research Institute of the Armed Forces of Ukraine
03049, Povitrianykh Syl avenue, 28 B, Kyiv, Ukraine
e-mail: aosemenenko@ukr.net
ORCID: 0000-0001-6477-3414

Oleksandr Kin
PhD in Technical Sciences, Associate Professor
Hennadii Udovenko Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine
under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
01001, Velyka Zhytomyrska Street, Kyiv, Ukraine
e-mail: cubalibre1972@ukr.net
ORCID: 0009-0001-2196-7515

Vitalii Nashchubskyi
Commander of the 92nd separate assault brigade
named after the Kosh Ataman Ivan Sirko
63505, Horishnogo St., 142, Chuguev, Kharkiv region, Ukraine
e-mail: xcii.mgm@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0006-1362-6549

“Le buone leggi nascono dalle buone armi.” –
“Good laws are born from good weapons.”
Niccolò Machiavelli

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"The highest art of war is not to fight and win in all battles, but to undermine the enemy's resistance without fighting."
Sun Tzu "The Art of War"

"World order exists to the extent that people believe in it."
"Deterrence works through imagination, not through the use of force."
Henry Kissinger

Abstract. The current stage of development of international security is characterised by a profound transformation of the forms and methods of confrontation, within which intangible factors of influence are becoming increasingly important. Under these conditions, the consciousness of a person and society as a whole becomes a key object of targeted military-political actions, and the struggle for control over thinking, ideas and values goes beyond traditional ideas about war. This necessitates an urgent need for a scientific understanding of the evolution of cognitive warfare and its place in the global security system, taking into account modern challenges and realities of the military-political situation. Therefore, the main goal of the article is a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of cognitive warfare as an independent dimension of the modern confrontation in the global security system, revealing the role of cognitive operations as an instrument of geopolitical dominance, as well as substantiating the need to form a holistic strategic vision of organising cognitive warfare at the state level, taking into account the experience of the russian-Ukrainian war and growing global threats. The main results of the article are that it: analyses scientific, military-theoretical and political sources of awareness of the decisive role of consciousness in war; the main terms and concepts in the modern understanding of cognitive warfare are formulated; an approach to the formation of a general indicator of the effectiveness of cognitive influence (integral indicator of consciousness possession) is proposed and a scale for its evaluation is determined; views on the creation of special Cognitive Influence Forces (CIF) within the Armed Forces of Ukraine are determined. The materials of the article may be useful to state authorities and the security and defense sector, military and political leadership, scientists and analytical centers working in the fields of military science, philosophy of war, international relations, security studies, education, for the training of specialists in the field of strategic communications, information security and public administration, civil society and the media.

Keywords: struggle for consciousness, military-political situation, military conflicts, globalism, hybrid war, information war, information security, cognitive operations, cognitive influence, international politics, international coalitions, defence capability, russian-Ukrainian war, national security, criteria of defence adequacy, technological advantages, consciousness, consciousness of the nation, stability of the state.

Introduction

The relevance of studying cognitive influence on individuals and nations is driven by the rapid evolution of the forms and methods of armed confrontation in the modern world, within which human consciousness, as well as national consciousness as a whole, is increasingly transforming into an independent battlespace that directly affects the resilience of states, the behaviour of societies and the outcomes of military political confrontations [1]–[35].

A comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of cognitive warfare at the global level emerged following the illegal occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the outbreak of war in eastern Ukraine in 2014, when information psychological and cognitive influence became a key instrument in the preparation and conduct of military aggression. At the same time, the peak awareness of the decisive role of cognitive confrontation occurred at the onset of the full scale

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invasion of Ukraine by the russian federation in 2022, which clearly demonstrated the capacity of cognitive operations to shape not only the course of combat operations but also the resilience of states, societies and international coalitions [1]–[19].

Today, amid the expansion of the geographical scope of military conflicts and crises, the struggle for the consciousness of individuals and nations has acquired global characteristics. It is no longer confined to individual regional wars or bilateral confrontations but increasingly encompasses global consciousness as a whole. In effect, a global cognitive environment has emerged in which all key actors of international politics operate, as current conditions have effectively removed constraints on the use of cognitive influence tools by leading states, in the absence of clear limitations and effective deterrence mechanisms. A distinctive feature of cognitive warfare is that influencing even 30 to 40 percent of a target audience, along with shaping 20 to 30 percent of individuals who remain undecided or wavering, may already be considered a strategic victory over the consciousness of a nation. Under such conditions, it is not only influence over the adversary's audience that is decisive but also the assurance of cognitive resilience within one's own society, as this constitutes the foundation of effective cognitive confrontation. Vulnerability of internal consciousness automatically reduces a state's defence capability regardless of its military or economic strength.

It is therefore no coincidence that leading global actors such as the United States, russia and China view human consciousness as a strategic resource and systematically invest significant portions of their national potential, estimated at 5 to 10 percent of GDP, into shaping, maintaining and transforming both their own national consciousness and that of other nations. In this context, the absence of a well formed national consciousness effectively precludes the existence of a state, as statehood is fundamentally grounded in the conscious willingness of a nation to possess, sustain and defend its own country.

At the same time, cognitive influence, while not new in its essence, has today evolved into one of the most effective and essential forms of strategic weaponry. A state's lag in both internal and external domains of cognitive warfare significantly complicates armed confrontation in the event of its escalation, since achieving dominance over the adversary's consciousness or gaining control over the consciousness of its key audience often creates the conditions for attaining strategic objectives without complete military defeat or total occupation of territory [20]–[21], [28], [34]. Strategic miscalculations in cognitive warfare pose a particular danger, as their consequences may be irreversible. Ill considered or situational actions in the domain of cognitive influence can trigger cascading global processes, erode international norms and rules, and effectively legitimise similar actions by other states [28], [32]. A telling example in this regard is the russian federation, which, while concentrating its main efforts on the Ukrainian direction, simultaneously lost the capacity for effective cognitive response to other regional and global developments, including Syria, the Middle East and Latin America, thereby demonstrating the limitations of even major powers in the event of strategic miscalculations. In this context, the study of the evolution of cognitive warfare within the system of global security is of critical importance, as it enables an understanding of consciousness as a key battlespace of present and future confrontation and supports the development of scientifically grounded approaches to the strategic planning of cognitive influence under conditions of increasing instability in the world order.

At the present stage of the development of the military and security environment, Ukraine recognises the critical importance of the struggle for consciousness as one of the key domains of confrontation in a new generation of warfare. The practical experience of countering russian aggression since 2014, and especially under conditions of the full scale invasion since 2022, has demonstrated the decisive influence of cognitive operations on societal resilience, the level of national mobilisation and international support for the state. At the same time, this awareness has not yet been transformed into a coherent strategic vision for the organisation and conduct of cognitive warfare.

At present, Ukraine lacks systematic and conceptually formalised approaches to the

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development of cognitive confrontation, both with the russian federation and with other potential sources of threat. This applies to both the external dimension, aimed at influencing international audiences and the adversary's human resources, and the internal dimension, which must ensure the cognitive resilience of the nation and protection against destructive influence. The fragmentation of approaches, the absence of a unified planning centre and the lack of long term forecasting significantly reduce the effectiveness of state efforts in this domain. The current situation creates objective preconditions for immediate response and proactive strategic anticipation of cognitive influence activities targeting both national consciousness and the perceptions and behavioural patterns of the adversary's personnel. The implementation of such an approach requires not only regulatory and methodological support but also the establishment of specialised military formations and civil military institutions capable of professionally planning, coordinating and conducting cognitive warfare.

The presence of such structures would enable the systematic organisation of cognitive confrontation, timely identification of threats and their mitigation or substantial reduction in the short and medium term, thereby creating a strategic advantage without the use of excessive military force. Under these conditions, the struggle for consciousness emerges not as a supporting element but as an independent instrument for ensuring national security and state resilience.

Thus, the primary objective of this article is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of cognitive warfare as an independent dimension of modern confrontation within the global security system, to reveal the role of cognitive operations as an instrument of geopolitical dominance and to substantiate the necessity of forming an integrated strategic vision for organising cognitive warfare at the state level, taking into account the experience of the russian Ukrainian war and the growing global threats.

Materials and Methods

According to the analysis of scientific, military theoretical and political sources, the recognition of the decisive role of consciousness in warfare emerged long before the appearance of modern terms such as "cognitive operations" or "information warfare" [1]–[35]. In different historical periods, this idea was expressed through concepts of morale, fighting spirit, political will, legitimacy, identity and control over mass perceptions.

Early historical sources emphasised that consciousness is a prerequisite for victory. The earliest works focusing on the targeting of the adversary's consciousness are represented by the writings of Sun Tzu. In The Art of War (5th century BC), the principle was first clearly articulated that "the supreme art is to subdue the enemy without fighting". This provision effectively constitutes the first systematic concept of struggle for consciousness, where deception, demoralisation, undermining trust in leadership and the imposition of false perceptions are regarded as primary instruments of warfare.

The further development of this idea can be observed in the works of Carl von Clausewitz, who in On War defines war as the continuation of policy by other means. In his approach, the consciousness of the nation and political will form the foundation of a state's capacity to wage war. Clausewitz explicitly notes that defeat begins not with the destruction of the army but with the loss of the will to resist.

The twentieth century shaped the understanding that mass consciousness is an object of systematic influence. Sources from the first half of the twentieth century demonstrate the transition from an intuitive understanding of the importance of consciousness to its institutionalised application. The works of Harold Lasswell, particularly his studies of propaganda during the First World War, laid the scientific foundations for analysing influence on mass consciousness as a tool for mobilisation, demobilisation and the justification of violence.

In parallel, Edward Bernays, drawing on Freud's psychoanalytic theory, viewed the manipulation of consciousness as a normal element of both democratic and wartime processes. His

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work clearly introduced the idea that control over public perceptions enables the management of behaviour without direct coercion.

The Second World War and the Cold War, as reflected in the works of Western and Soviet authors, ultimately consolidated the perception of consciousness as a strategic resource. Concepts such as psychological operations, political warfare and ideological confrontation became integral components of national security doctrines [28]–[33].

By the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, the terms national identity narratives and soft power became firmly established. In the works of Joseph Nye, the concept of soft power shifted the focus from direct coercion to the attractiveness of values culture and models of the future. In this context, the consciousness of a nation is viewed not only as an object of protection but also as an instrument of influence on others [22].

Philosophical approaches of Michel Foucault and representatives of post structuralism complemented military political analysis by interpreting power as the ability to shape discourses norms and “truth”. This became the theoretical foundation for the modern understanding of the struggle for consciousness as a struggle for the right to define reality.

russia has not remained aside from this domain, as its intellectual tradition considers consciousness a field for domination over both its own population and others. A distinct group of sources is formed by russian military theoretical works, particularly those associated with the so called Gerasimov doctrine [28]–[29]. In these works, the consciousness of the adversary is directly defined as the primary target of influence, while the boundary between war and peace is effectively erased. These authors view cognitive and informational operations as a means of paralysing a nation without formally declaring war. These sources make it clear that the russian Ukrainian war is not an anomaly but the implementation of a long term strategy aimed at destroying Ukrainian identity and replacing historical memory.

Ukrainian academic sources clearly define how painful the experience of identity loss has been for Ukraine and emphasise the necessity of restoring national consciousness. Ukrainian research, particularly after 2014, has focused on national resilience information security and cognitive threats. In the works of Ukrainian military scholars philosophers and sociologists, national consciousness is regarded as an integral factor of state defence capability. These studies emphasise that historical defeats of Ukraine were largely linked not to a lack of resources but to the degradation of national consciousness prolonged existence within чужий semantic frameworks and the absence of a systematic policy for protecting identity [1]–[10], [30].

Analysis of theoretical research allows for the formation of a historical description of key terms such as consciousness national consciousness and struggle for consciousness. In classical understanding within philosophy and psychology, consciousness was defined as the ability of an individual to perceive reality and oneself within it, as seen in the works of Descartes and Kant. In military political sources of the twentieth and twenty first centuries, consciousness is interpreted more broadly as a set of perceptions beliefs emotions and readiness to act that can be subject to deliberate influence, as reflected in the works of Lasswell and Foucault. In turn, the concept of national consciousness is formed at the intersection of sociology political theory and security studies. In modern sources, it denotes collective identity historical memory a system of values and visions of the future that determine societal behaviour under crisis conditions.

In early sources, the concept of struggle for consciousness was not formally defined but existed implicitly in the works of Sun Tzu and Carl von Clausewitz [21], [20]. In contemporary research, it is defined as a purposeful activity by states or non state actors aimed at changing undermining or protecting the system of perceptions and decisions of another nation. Unlike earlier interpretations, today the struggle for consciousness is recognised not as a supporting element but as an independent domain of confrontation.

The results of the literature review indicate that the struggle for consciousness has historically

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evolved from an intuitive instrument of warfare into a central element of national and global security. The war of russia against Ukraine has become a concentrated example of this evolution, where the outcome of confrontation is determined not only on the battlefield but within the cognitive domain.

For Ukraine, this analysis confirms that the future security of the state depends not only on the ability to defend its own consciousness but also on the capacity to act proactively in shaping narratives identity and meaning both domestically and globally.

Results and Discussions

As the transformation of the nature of armed conflicts and the growing role of non material security factors become a central object of confrontation, the consciousness of individuals and nations is increasingly emerging as the ultimate outcome of conflict. This situation necessitates a clear terminological distinction between concepts describing processes of cognitive influence, cognitive confrontation and their place within the global security system. In this regard, Table 1 presents the key terms and concepts reflecting the contemporary understanding of cognitive warfare, taking into account the current military political environment and the experience of recent armed conflicts.

Classically, the idea is interpreted in such a way that undermining the cognitive unity plans or will of the adversary may at times be more valuable than the direct application of force.

The conditions of the full scale war of russia against Ukraine demonstrate that modern armed confrontation extends far beyond the traditional physical battlefield. Alongside the use of military force, increasing importance is attached to systematic and targeted influence on the consciousness of individuals society and the nation as a whole, which necessitates a scientific rethinking of the relevant conceptual and categorical framework. In the twenty first century, consciousness itself is becoming both a key object and a resource of war, while the struggle for its formation is emerging as one of the decisive factors of a state’s strategic resilience.

The terms and concepts presented in Table 1 reflect the modern understanding of cognitive warfare as a systemic phenomenon that integrates informational psychological cultural value based and meaning centred dimensions of confrontation.

Some of these are refined interpretations of already established categories such as consciousness informational influence and psychological operations, yet under contemporary conditions they require expanded interpretation in light of the globalisation of the information space the development of digital technologies social media and artificial intelligence. Other terms are relatively new to the national academic and security discourse but in practice describe processes that are already actively employed by the adversary within the framework of hybrid and cognitive aggression against Ukraine.

The relevance of the proposed terminological framework is driven by the fact that russia is waging not only a war for territory against Ukraine but also a war for meaning identity and historical memory, seeking to dismantle national consciousness demoralise society undermine trust in state institutions and deprive Ukrainians of confidence in their future. Under such conditions, the absence of a clear scientifically grounded understanding of such phenomena as the cognitive front cognitive resilience cognitive sovereignty and cognitive dominance significantly limits the state’s ability to build an effective system of counteraction.

The growing importance of understanding human and national consciousness as a strategic resource and the last line of state security cannot be overstated. Even under conditions of military losses and economic exhaustion, the preservation of societal cognitive resilience determines a state’s ability to sustain resistance, conduct mobilisation, maintain international coalitions, and ultimately achieve long term victory. For this reason, such concepts as cognitive mobilisation, cognitive demoralisation, and the war for societal thinking possess not only theoretical but also direct practical significance for the national security and defence system of Ukraine.

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Table 1. Key Terms and Concepts in the Contemporary Understanding of Cognitive Warfare

Term / Concept	Contemporary Interpretation
Consciousness	The ability of an individual to perceive oneself and the surrounding world, form representations of reality, evaluate events, make decisions and bear responsibility for them. In the twenty first century, consciousness is shaped not only by rational thinking but also by a system of values, emotional responses, historical memory and the influence of the information environment, media and targeted cognitive operations.
National Consciousness	The collective perception of a community about itself, its origin, values, history, enemies and allies, acceptable limits of compromise and the image of a desired future. It includes national identity, language, culture, historical memory and the willingness to defend the state. A nation without a сформована consciousness is vulnerable to cognitive subjugation.
Struggle for National Consciousness	A systemic confrontation for the right to shape, transform or preserve a nation's perceptions about itself and the world. It is implemented through informational and media influence, historical narratives, education, culture and manipulation of fear, hatred or guilt. In modern wars, this struggle often determines a society's readiness to resist or capitulate.
Cognitive Warfare	A form of strategic confrontation aimed at altering thinking, perception, values and behaviour of individuals, groups and nations in order to achieve political, military or geopolitical objectives without necessarily applying direct military force.
Cognitive Warfare in the Global Security System	A globalised dimension of confrontation in which cognitive operations are used as a tool to influence international stability, alliances, state institutions and global public opinion, extending beyond individual regional conflicts.
Cognitive Operations	Purposeful, planned actions carried out by state or non state actors aimed at shaping, distorting or destroying the perceptions, beliefs and behavioural models of a target audience. They may be conducted in both peacetime and wartime.
Cognitive Influence	The process of influencing the thinking, emotions and behaviour of an individual or community through information, symbols, images, narratives, language and social practices in order to achieve a predetermined outcome.
Human Consciousness as a Strategic Resource	The aggregate intellectual, value based and motivational potential of a population that determines a state's capacity for resistance, mobilisation and recovery. In contemporary conditions, it is considered alongside economic, military and technological resources.
Consciousness as a Battlefield	A concept according to which human thinking, perceptions and values become objects of targeted military political influence, and the outcome of confrontation is determined not only in the physical domain but also in the mental domain.
Cognitive Dominance	A state in which one side is able to impose its own interpretation of reality, norms of behaviour and frameworks of thinking on another side, limiting its ability to make independent decisions and resist.
Cognitive Front	The totality of directions, channels and instruments of conducting cognitive warfare through which influence is exerted on the consciousness of the population, elites, military personnel and the international community.
Global Cognitive Front of Confrontation	The global level of cognitive competition in which leading states compete for control over global narratives, values and models of human development.
Cognitive Superiority	The ability of a state or coalition to more effectively shape its own and the adversary's consciousness, maintain resilience to external influence and employ cognitive tools to achieve strategic objectives.
Cognitive Transformation of Modern Warfare	The process of changing the nature of warfare in which not only armed actions but also the struggle for thinking, beliefs and the moral resilience of societies become decisive.
Cognitive Confrontation	The set of offensive and defensive actions in the domain of consciousness aimed at protecting one's own cognitive sphere and disrupting that of the adversary.
War for Societal Thinking	A form of warfare in which the object is the collective perceptions, values and decisions of social groups and nations, and the outcome is determined by the ability to control meanings and interpretations of events.
Consciousness as the Last Line of State Security	A conceptual proposition according to which the preservation of national consciousness and cognitive resilience of society is a decisive condition for the survival of the state in hybrid and cognitive wars.
Cognitive Resilience	The ability of a society to resist manipulation and maintain value coherence and integrity.
Cognitive Security	The state of protection of the consciousness of individuals, society and the state from destructive influence.
Cognitive Mobilisation	The process of forming a society's readiness for prolonged confrontation.
Cognitive Demoralisation	The deliberate undermining of belief in victory, the state or the meaning of resistance.
Cognitive Sovereignty	The ability of a state to independently shape its own informational and semantic space.

Equally important is the global dimension of cognitive warfare. Today, Ukraine is positioned at the centre of the global cognitive front, where competition unfolds over international support, interpretation of the causes and consequences of war, the construction of images of the aggressor and the victim, and the future architecture of global security. In this context, the development of a national scientific approach to cognitive warfare is essential not only for protecting national interests but also

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for achieving cognitive superiority in a broader geopolitical dimension.

Thus, the systematisation, clarification, and introduction into scientific discourse of the terms presented in Table 1 constitute an objective necessity shaped by the nature of modern warfare, Ukraine's experience in countering hybrid aggression, and the need to establish a coherent theoretical and methodological foundation for state policy in the field of cognitive security. At present, Ukraine must not only respond to cognitive threats but also proactively develop its own school of thought in this domain, transforming wartime experience into a source of strategic advantage.

In modern warfare, the struggle for consciousness becomes decisive, as it determines whether societies are willing to continue or abandon war, support or resist political decisions, mobilise or become demoralised. Unlike classical military metrics, cognitive outcomes are probabilistic and mass in nature; therefore, they are assessed through the proportion of audiences exhibiting specific attitudes.

1. Adversary Audience:

25–30% anti war sentiment represents a critical threshold at which internal narrative conflict emerges, the legitimacy of war is undermined, and pressure on political leadership increases. This group may remain passive but contributes to the spread of doubt, demoralisation of the majority, and erosion of support for war.

20–40% neutral attitude toward war. In cognitive warfare, neutrality signifies a latent defeat for the aggressor, as it reduces mobilisation potential, lowers willingness to endure losses, and weakens support for coercive measures.

Combined effect (45–70%) indicates a loss of cognitive dominance by the adversary, even in the absence of mass protests.

2. Ukrainian Audience:

Over 40% resilient consciousness constitutes the core of national resilience. This segment resists demoralisation, maintains trust in statehood, and accepts prolonged hardship as necessary. It represents the minimum threshold required for sustained resistance and effective governance.

20–30% active support for the war of liberation forms the mobilisation core. This group generates military, volunteer, and informational capacity, shapes the moral climate, and produces meaning and examples for society. Without it, resilience risks degrading into passive survival.

Key Supporting Cognitive Indicators:

Over 40% informational losses of the adversary indicate declining propaganda effectiveness, loss of trust in official narratives, and fragmentation of informational cohesion;

Over 80% transparency of decision making (own side) is a critical condition for preventing internal cognitive disruption, countering disinformation, and maintaining public trust even under crisis conditions.

The overall effectiveness of cognitive influence during cognitive operations is measured as an integral indicator of control over audience consciousness.

This indicator consists of two interconnected subsystems:

Consciousness of one's own nation (resilience + mobilisation);

Consciousness of the adversary nation (demoralisation + neutralisation).

The overall indicator of cognitive influence effectiveness (i.e., the formation of consciousness) can be represented as an additive convolution with weighting coefficients of its main components:

$$E(t) = f(W_1, W_2) = \alpha \cdot W_1 + \beta \cdot W_2, \quad (1)$$

where α_1, α_2 – weighting coefficients of the effectiveness indicators of cognitive influence (formation of consciousness) for the own nation (W_1) and the adversary nation (W_2), $\alpha + \beta = 1$ (recommended values $\alpha = 0,6$, $\beta = 0,4$).

The formation of the indicator of the consciousness of one's own nation can be expressed as:

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$$W_1 = \lambda_1 \cdot S + \lambda_2 \cdot M + \lambda_3 \cdot T\,, \quad (2)$$

where $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \lambda_3$ – weighting coefficients of the respective indicators: S – cognitive resilience (the proportion of the population that does not succumb to panic, preserves values and trust in the state); M – cognitive mobilisation (the proportion of citizens ready for active participation in the struggle); T – trust and transparency (the level of trust in governmental decisions and their perception as legitimate and necessary); recommended weights $\lambda_1 = 0,4,\ \lambda_2 = 35,\ \lambda_3 = 0,25$.

The formation of the indicator of the adversary's national consciousness can be expressed as:

$$W_1 = \mu_1 \cdot S + \mu_2 \cdot M + \mu_3 \cdot T\,, \quad (3)$$

where μ_1, μ_2, μ_3 – weighting coefficients: D – cognitive demoralisation (the proportion of the adversary population that has lost belief in the purpose of the war); N – neutralisation of war support (the proportion of the population holding neutral or passive positions); I – informational losses (the level of loss of trust in official propaganda and information sources); recommended weights: $\mu_1 = 0,25,\ \mu_2 = 40,\ \mu_3 = 0,35$.

The general evaluation scale for the integral indicator of cognitive influence effectiveness is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation Scale of the Integral Indicator of Cognitive Influence Effectiveness (Control over Consciousness)

Value of the Integral Indicator	Value of the Integral Indicator
< 0,4	Cognitive vulnerability of the state
0,4 – 0,6	Parity in cognitive confrontation
0,6 – 0,8	Cognitive superiority
>0,8	Cognitive dominance

The proposed system of indicators enables a quantitative assessment of the struggle for consciousness, facilitates the integration of the cognitive dimension into the system of military strategic analysis, and allows a transition from an intuitive understanding of cognitive warfare to a manageable and measurable process.

In the context of the ongoing transformation of military and political confrontations, the cognitive dimension is increasingly emerging as an independent domain of geopolitical competition. Cognitive operations are no longer merely auxiliary tools of informational influence; they have evolved into a system forming mechanism for achieving strategic advantage, as they target not only the information environment but also the deliberate transformation of consciousness, thinking patterns, and behavioural models of individuals, social groups, and entire nations. By influencing perceptions of reality, value systems, identity, and decision-making logic, cognitive operations enable states to shape favourable environments for the pursuit of geopolitical interests, impose advantageous interpretations of events, and undermine the adversary's capacity for organised resistance even before or without large scale military engagement.

Therefore, cognitive operations should be regarded as an instrument of geopolitical dominance, capable of controlling the dynamics, duration, intensity, and outcomes of conflicts. By shaping collective perceptions regarding legitimacy, justice, fear, losses, and future prospects, the actor conducting cognitive influence gains the ability to indirectly control political and military decision making of the opponent through altering their internal logic of threat perception and opportunity assessment. In this sense, the struggle for control over consciousness becomes no less important than the struggle for territory or resources.

The war of the russian federation against Ukraine represents a demonstrative case of the evolution of cognitive confrontation within a large scale geopolitical conflict. The application of

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cognitive operations by the aggressor has been systemic and long term, encompassing efforts to delegitimise Ukrainian statehood, erode national identity, impose distorted historical narratives, construct the image of the "artificiality" of the Ukrainian nation, and promote the inevitability of external control. Following the onset of open armed aggression, cognitive pressure intensified further, manifesting in attempts to demoralise the population and armed forces, discredit political leadership, manipulate narratives of losses, war fatigue, and the perceived futility of resistance, as well as influence international perceptions of the conflict in order to reduce support for Ukraine.

At the same time, Ukraine's experience demonstrates that effective counteraction in the cognitive domain can serve as a source of asymmetric advantage even under conditions of limited resources. The consolidation of national identity, clear articulation of value orientations, strategic communications, symbolic actions, and leadership discourse have contributed to the formation of a high level of societal resilience and the preservation of the will to resist during a prolonged war. This confirms that cognitive resilience of society is a critical element of military and national security, and its erosion or strengthening directly affects the course and outcomes of armed confrontation.

Against the backdrop of increasing global hybrid threats, the proliferation of digital technologies, and the use of artificial intelligence to manipulate informational and cognitive processes, the formation of a comprehensive strategic vision for organising cognitive warfare at the state level becomes particularly relevant. Fragmented measures in the field of information policy or psychological protection are no longer sufficient to ensure an adequate level of state resilience. What is required is an integrated system, in which the cognitive dimension is organically embedded into the overall architecture of national security and defence, with clearly defined functions, authorities, and responsibilities among state institutions, the security and defence sector, as well as educational, cultural, and informational domains.

The development of such a strategic vision presupposes a combination of defensive and offensive approaches in cognitive confrontation, reliance on scientifically grounded methodology, interdisciplinary research, and systematic forecasting. Without this, the state remains vulnerable to long term cognitive attacks capable of gradually eroding national identity, critical thinking, and societal cohesion even in the absence of active hostilities.

Within this framework, cognitive operations should be considered as a complex of interconnected types of influence. One of the fundamental categories includes operations aimed at changing or destroying identity, targeting perceptions of belonging, historical memory, and value orientations. These are achieved through the substitution of narratives, discrediting of symbols and national heroes, and the imposition of alternative models of self identification. Closely related are operations aimed at shaping perceptions of reality, the purpose of which is to construct a worldview favourable to the influencing actor by manipulating causal relationships, normalising aggression, or distorting the assessment of risks and threats.

A significant role is played by operations designed to undermine the will to resist, targeting the demoralisation of the population, military personnel, and political leadership through the cultivation of fear, fatigue, hopelessness, and the perception of the inevitability of defeat. In parallel, operations are conducted to influence decision making processes, targeting the cognitive mechanisms of strategic and operational thinking of elites, implemented through information overload, the imposition of false dilemmas, or inducement toward erroneous or untimely decisions. A separate category consists of long-term cognitive erosion operations, designed for strategic and intergenerational impact. These are implemented through educational, cultural, and media channels and gradually transform value orientations and the level of critical thinking within society.

In summary, in the context of modern warfare and global confrontation, cognitive operations are becoming a key factor in achieving geopolitical advantage. The war of the russian federation against Ukraine convincingly demonstrates that the outcome of confrontation is determined not only by material resources or military power, but also by the state of societal consciousness, the level of

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resilience, and the ability to withstand external cognitive pressure. Accordingly, the formation of a comprehensive, systematic, and institutionally embedded state policy in the field of cognitive warfare is not optional, but an objective necessity for ensuring national security, strategic resilience, and long-term competitiveness of the state.

Therefore, it is necessary to outline перспективи (prospects) for Ukraine in creating an effective system of cognitive confrontation under the conditions of the ongoing war.

Modern wars are increasingly conducted within the information and cognitive domain, encompassing the shaping of public decision making, undermining the adversary's morale, demoralisation, disruption of logistics through deception, and the construction of strategic narratives. All these effects produce tangible operational and strategic outcomes. Given that the adversary (the russian federation) actively employs informational tools in combination with cyber and electronic warfare, Ukraine requires a centralised, highly professional, and ethically grounded institutional mechanism capable of both strategic response and proactive influence.

Therefore, under current conditions, it is necessary to consider the establishment within the Armed Forces of Ukraine of a specialised branch or force, for example, the Cognitive Influence Forces (CIF). However, such a structure must be developed in a deliberate and balanced manner: not as "another headquarters," but as an interagency, operationally capable, and long-term oriented force component with a clearly defined mandate, legal constraints, and accountability mechanisms.

Reference: Cognitive influence refers to targeted actions (communication, informational, technological, and organisational) aimed at shaping perceptions, representations, evaluations, decision-making, and behaviour of specific audiences through воздействие on cognitive processes (attention, memory, judgment, and risk assessment). The key distinction lies in the focus not merely on "messages," but on the modification of decision-making mechanisms: (Perception → Interpretation → Action). This concept encompasses: traditional psychological operations; information manipulation; algorithmic pressure (social media, recommendation systems); bot networks and automated amplification; deepfake technologies and AI-driven manipulation; attacks on decision-making processes at individual and institutional levels.

Information-psychological influence and information-psychological operations (IPO and PSYOP) traditionally focus on the delivery of specific messages, the formation of narratives, and the influence on emotions and morale (i.e. "what to say" and "to whom"). Such an approach is widely described in russian and Soviet doctrines as "information-psychological pressure (influence)".

Cognitive influence and cognitive warfare are considered more broadly, namely how information, technologies (algorithms, bots, deepfakes), infrastructure, and organisational actions alter the very process of perception and decision-making within target systems, specifically individuals, groups, and institutions. This includes, but is not limited to, information-psychological measures.

Cognitive influence is broader and more conceptual, whereas information-psychological influence represents a practical subset of instruments used to achieve cognitive effects.

Let us consider examples of foreign experience in establishing and organising processes of cognitive influence on internal and external audiences within the framework of cognitive operations as instruments of geopolitical dominance across various territorial scales (from a specific region to the global level as a whole).

The United States has long developed psychological operations (PSYOP), information operations (IO), and Civil Affairs forces capable of planning and executing tactical, operational, and strategic influence campaigns (for example, USACAPOC and Information Operations units – the United States Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command). Their primary tasks include conducting cognitive and information influence in conflict zones, supporting combatant command through the provision of analysis and influence tools, organising civil-military cooperation, and assisting in stabilisation operations following combat activities. In essence, USACAPOC represents an American analogue of structures that could, within the Armed Forces of Ukraine, be responsible for integrating cognitive influence and CIMIC functions.

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The United Kingdom has established the UK Strategic Command and the concept of "information advantage", which integrates specialised capabilities to achieve informational superiority (a strategic command that unifies covert and integrated capabilities).

In 2015–2016, the PLA Strategic Support Force was established by China as an integrated structure encompassing space, cyber, electronic warfare, and psychological/information operations, designed to generate synergy across capabilities.

In 2017, russia created "information operations forces" and cyber forces within the Ministry of Defence, forming a system that incorporates the MoD, GRU, FSB, private networks, troll farms, media outlets, and other instruments. This represents more of a "hybrid ecosystem" than a single unit.

Leading states integrate cyber capabilities, electronic warfare, psychology, and strategic communications into unified organisational structures or ensure their close coordination at the strategic level.

The "Cognitive Influence Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine" as a distinct branch of service should possess a clear hierarchy, budget, personnel, and doctrine; however, this requires extensive legislative development and resources.

Such a structure should function as a joint component within the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine or Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (Joint Cognitive Operations Command) in order to ensure coordination among Land, Air, Cyber, Special Operations Forces, Air Assault Forces, and civilian agencies.

It is advisable to begin as a separate interagency joint force, with the prospect of evolving into a distinct branch of service as tasks and authorities expand. This approach would provide flexibility, rapid integration, and a sound legal foundation.

Figure 1 presents a proposed prospective structure of the Cognitive Influence Forces Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, while the tasks and, in part, the functions of the main components of this system within the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are outlined below.

1) Command and Planning (HQ Cognitive Operations).

strategic planning over decades (meta-narratives, timelines, points of influence);

coordination with the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and civilian institutions (public security centres, the National Council on Television and Media).

2) Operational Units (Execution).

psychological operations units (PSYOP/IO teams) – production of messages and targeted delivery (media, social networks, field campaigns);

cognitive-analytical groups – social and behavioural research, linguistic localisation, audience targeting;

cyber and electronic warfare (EW) integration – technical support of operations in cooperation with cyber units;

SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) – intelligence based on signal interception (radio, telephone, internet, satellite channels, adversary tactical communications systems); GEOINT (Geospatial Intelligence) – intelligence based on geospatial information (satellite and aerial imagery, maps, data from drones, sensors, GPS); HUMINT liaison (Human Intelligence) – human-source intelligence, i.e. acquisition of information from individuals: witnesses, informants, agents in the adversary's rear;

field influence teams – operations within the theatre (psychological pressure along the adversary's rear areas, engagement with the local population).

3) Research and Development Centre (Behavioral & Influence Lab).

experts in psychology, linguistics, sociology, and AI/ML for retargeting (application of machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence for automated and personalised delivery of messages or content to audiences that have previously interacted with specific services or materials), narrative analysis, message testing, and ethical assessment;

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data provenance and audit trail (records of actions, evidentiary base) to ensure legal and international protection of operations.

4) Strategic Communications and PR Coordination.

liaison with official channels (MoD press centre, government institutions), ensuring compliance with national legislation and principles of non-interference and avoidance of unintended influence on civilian populations.

5) Legal and Ethical Department.

comprehensive legal assessment of each campaign (domestic and international law), mechanisms for transparency and accountability.

6) Training, Education and Doctrine.

centre for training and certification of specialists (psychologists, data specialists, IO operators), development of doctrinal documents.

7) Coordination with Civil Institutions and Allies.

безперервна інтеграція з МВС, СБУ, МЗС, НБУ, медіарегуляторами та міжнародними партнерами (NATO StratCom, UK, US liaison).

The core personnel should be formed from specialists in the following fields: psychologists (social/clinical), linguists, anthropologists, sociologists; data scientists, AI engineers, user experience researchers (UX/UX researchers); information support officers, PSYOP operators; journalists, speechwriters, crisis communicators; cyber engineers, electronics specialists; legal experts and ethical auditors.

The initial phase of establishing the Cognitive Influence Forces Command (rapid deployment) creation within the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine of a separate “Cognitive Operations Centre” with interagency authority. This enables operational coordination without a lengthy legislative process.

Subsequently, within 0.5–1 year, it should be transformed into a “Cognitive Influence Forces Command” with several regional groups.

Further, within 1–2 years, it should be formalised as a distinct branch of service with dedicated state funding, personnel, and standards.

The Cognitive Influence Forces Command must be closely subordinated to and coordinated with the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The Security Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Information Policy, as well as the Centre for Countering Disinformation, should maintain coordination capabilities within the civilian domain, alongside a clear division of responsibilities (the Ministry of Defence should focus on military missions, while civilian agencies should be responsible for organising the national information environment for the population).

The Cognitive Influence Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are designed to achieve informational and psychological advantage over the adversary through systematic influence on their consciousness, motivation, and behaviour, as well as to enhance the resilience of Ukrainian society under conditions of war.

The main areas of activity of the Cognitive Influence Forces in the Armed Forces of Ukraine can be defined as follows:

Influence on the adversary: shaping a critical attitude toward aggression and reducing support for military actions among enemy military personnel and civilians; weakening the moral and psychological potential of the enemy and disrupting decision-making processes; countering hostile propaganda, disinformation, and cognitive manipulations.

Protection and support of the Ukrainian audience: increasing the population’s resilience to informational attacks and psychological pressure; ensuring transparency of decisions and communications regarding defence and state actions; preventing loss of informational advantage and supporting the moral and psychological condition of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the civilian

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population.

Analytical and research activities: utilisation of modern technologies (artificial intelligence, analytics, modelling) to forecast adversary reactions; supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine command in decision-making based on integrated intelligence and analytical data; developing innovative cognitive influence methods in accordance with international law and NATO standards.

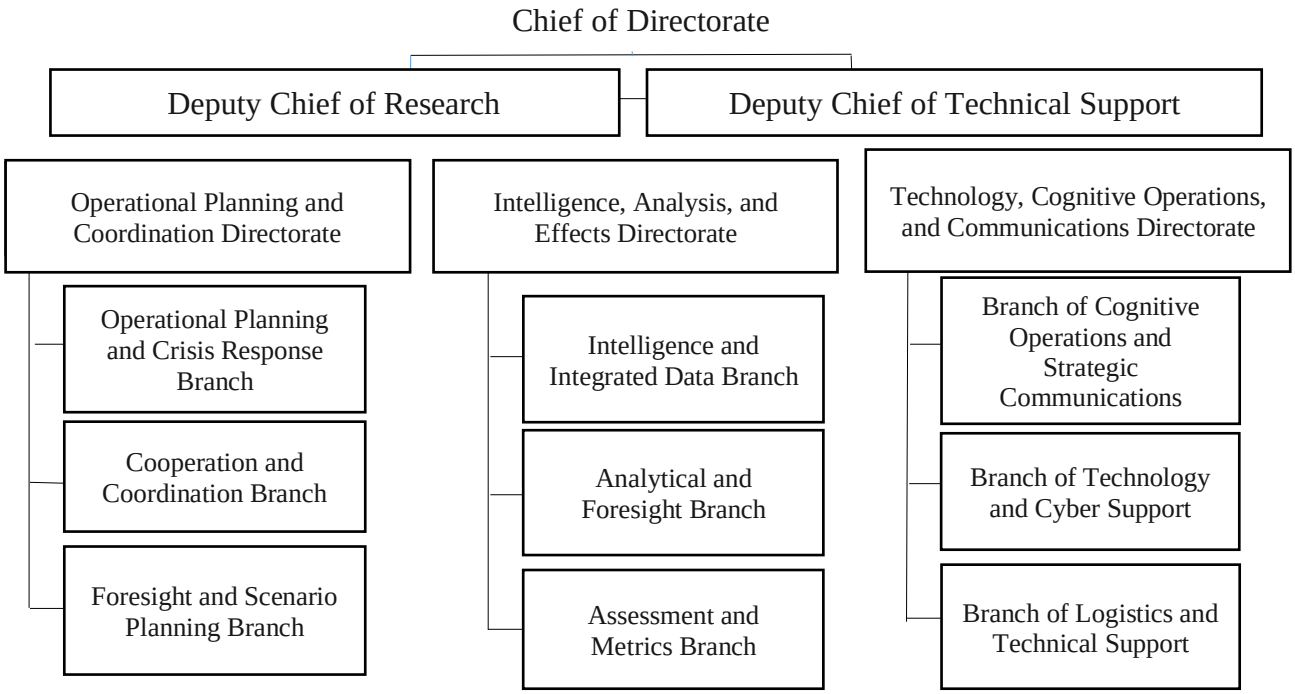


Figure 1. Draft Prospective Structure of the Cognitive Influence Forces Command of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

The key effect is the creation of systemic and controlled influence on the consciousness and behaviour of both the adversary and the population, enhancing the effectiveness of national defence and contributing to the accelerated conclusion of hostilities under conditions favourable to Ukraine.

The primary goal of establishing the Cognitive Influence Forces is to ensure that the Armed Forces of Ukraine are capable of planning, coordinating, and executing informational-cognitive operations to increase operational and strategic advantage, protect national interests, and reduce the combat effectiveness of the adversary through legitimate, ethical, and lawful influence measures.

The main task of the Cognitive Influence Forces is the formation and execution of targeted, ethically vetted, and evidence-based cognitive campaigns to achieve operational and strategic outcomes in support of Ukraine's combat and national objectives, and to ensure the informational resilience of own forces and the civilian population.

Key tasks and functions of the Cognitive Influence Forces (practical cases):

Strategic development of narratives integrated into the overall military strategy, i.e., formation of long-term strategic messages aligned with military and political objectives;

Psychological operations (PSYOP), planning and conducting campaigns to demoralise the adversary, influence enemy command decisions, and undermine local support for opponents;

Operational informational support for troops through deployment of local influence teams, text, voice, and multimedia messaging for units at the front and in the rear;

Synchronisation with cyber and electronic warfare (EW) actions and coordination of technical means (cyber intrusions, DDOS, data leaks, EW) to enhance informational effects (i.e., integration of

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Information Operations (IO) + Cyber-Electromagnetic Activities (CEMA));

Control and protection of own informational environment through securing communication channels, discrediting adversary channels, and internal information oversight;

Analytics and targeting using SIGINT / GEOINT, OSINT, and behavioural data for precise audience selection and delivery channels.

Structure of the Cognitive Influence Forces Command with Task and Function Distribution

1. Operational Planning and Coordination Directorate – centralised planning and coordination of all cognitive operations, interaction with the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and interagency structures.

1.1 Operational Planning Branch – development of campaigns, preparation of plans and scenarios.

1.2 Cooperation and Coordination Branch – interaction with other branches of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, interagency structures, and partners.

1.3 Crisis Response Branch – operational management during unforeseen events and rapid adjustment of plans.

2. Intelligence, Analysis, and Effects Directorate – collection and analysis of data, creation of intelligence products for cognitive influence, assessment of campaign effectiveness.

2.1 Intelligence and Integrated Data Branch – HUMINT, SIGINT, GEOINT, OSINT, and analysis of acquired sources.

2.2 Analytical and Foresight Branch – development of models, forecasts, and recommendations for effect planning.

2.3 Assessment and Metrics Branch – analysis of campaign outcomes, KPIs, and evaluation of side effects.

3. Technology, Cognitive Operations, and Communications Directorate – operational execution, technical support, strategic communications, cyber and algorithmic influence.

3.1 Branch of Cognitive Operations and Strategic Communications – planning and execution of campaigns, creation of narratives and counter-narratives.

3.2 Branch of Technology and Cyber Support – operation of AI/analytical platforms, cyber defence, and electronic warfare.

3.3 Branch of Logistics and Technical Support – deployment of infrastructure, technical support for field operations, ensuring platform functionality.

Risks, Ethical, and Legal Considerations in Establishing the Cognitive Influence Forces Command

Internal constraints are dictated by the fact that Ukrainian legislation and international law do not permit operations that would violate the rights of domestic or foreign citizens or cause harm to civilians.

Reputational risks arise from the possibility that operations may enter the public domain without proper justification, potentially undermining trust in the state. Mechanisms for audit and provenance (action logs, evidentiary base) are required.

Adversary countermeasures demonstrate the need to prepare scenarios for indirect responses and informational “backfires.”

Technical risks stem from reliance on private platforms and tools, necessitating separate agreements and policies.

Key elements include planning (strategic doctrine over decades), operational PSYOP/IO units, R&D (behavioural sciences + AI), cyber / EW integration, legal support, and coordination with civilian institutions.

russia’s war against Ukraine is characterised not only by physical combat on the battlefield but also by active use of informational, psychological, and cognitive influence tools. Experience from the war and analysis of contemporary international operations indicate that an advantage in the cognitive

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domain often determines success or failure in military campaigns.

The establishment of a Cognitive Influence Forces Command within the Armed Forces of Ukraine will allow for systematic planning and implementation of influence on the consciousness and behaviour of the adversary to reduce their moral and organisational resilience, enhance the resilience of the Ukrainian population and own military personnel against informational and psychological pressure, and utilise modern analytical and technological tools, including artificial intelligence and integrated information systems, for rapid and evidence-based decision-making. It will also ensure that the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are compliant with international standards and NATO practices in the field of cognitive and informational influence.

Thus, the creation of the Cognitive Influence Forces Command represents a strategically necessary step to enhance Ukraine's defensive potential, ensure informational advantage, effectively counter aggression, and facilitate the integration of the Armed Forces of Ukraine into a modern combat operations paradigm, where success depends not only on physical but also on cognitive superiority over the adversary.

Conclusion

As a result of the conducted research, it has been established that in the 21st century, consciousness has become an independent domain of warfare, and the struggle for it is a key factor in shaping the national resilience of a state. Contemporary armed conflicts are increasingly less resolved exclusively by military force and are increasingly dependent on the parties' ability to influence the perceptions, values, and behaviour of societies. Historical analysis has shown that influence over the consciousness of nations has been used in wars and political confrontations for centuries; however, it is precisely in the 20th–21st centuries that it has acquired a systemic, institutionalised character. Totalitarian regimes demonstrated the possibility of transforming mass consciousness into an instrument of mobilisation, legitimisation of violence, and prolonged retention of power. russia's war against Ukraine is a demonstrative example of modern cognitive confrontation, in which the targeting of consciousness is considered by the aggressor as an equivalent or even priority alternative to conventional military action. In this context, the struggle for consciousness has become a central element of the strategy to undermine Ukrainian statehood. At the same time, it has been established that Ukraine has achieved significant progress in strengthening the consciousness of its own nation, which has become one of the key factors in its resilience, capacity for prolonged resistance, and international support. The formation of a clear national identity, the reassessment of historical memory, and the consolidation of society around the values of freedom and dignity have significantly reduced the effectiveness of adversarial cognitive influence.

It has been proven that the cessation of active hostilities will not signify the end of the war; on the contrary, it will open a new phase of the struggle for consciousness both within Ukraine and in the international and adversary informational-cognitive domain. The outcome of this phase will have long-term consequences for national and global security.

Today, modern warfare has entered a phase in which the decisive factor is not the destruction of enemy forces, but the disruption of their will, motivation, and ability to make rational decisions, while simultaneously maintaining the resilience of one's own society. The cognitive war against Ukraine is being conducted systematically and without restraint by the Russian Federation. At the same time, the Armed Forces of Ukraine lack a single body that would plan, synchronise, and assess cognitive influence in combination with combat, cyber, and electromagnetic operations. росія's war against Ukraine has taken on a systemic character, in which the decisive role is played not only by the physical neutralisation of enemy forces and assets but also by targeted influence on their consciousness, motivation, decision-making capacity, and societal support for the war. The adversary consistently employs informational, psychological, cyber, and organisational tools within a unified cognitive framework, allowing them to achieve indirect strategic effects without large-scale use of military force.

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Currently, the Armed Forces of Ukraine possess separate capabilities in informational-psychological influence, strategic communications, and cyber- and electromagnetic warfare. However, there is no single body responsible for centralised planning, synchronisation, and assessment of cognitive effects in combination with combat operations and inter-agency measures. This reduces the overall effectiveness of existing resources and creates a strategic asymmetry in favour of the adversary.

International experience (USA, United Kingdom, PRC, russia) demonstrates that leading states integrate cognitive, informational, cyber, and electromagnetic influence within specialised commands or combined strategic-level structures. In these conditions, initiating a similar process within the Armed Forces of Ukraine is advisable, taking into account national legislation, international law, and NATO standards.

Therefore, the existing strategic gap in this domain can be initially closed by a decision of the Commander-in-Chief through the phased establishment of the Cognitive Influence Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The foundational decision (starting mechanism) for addressing the identified issues is the creation, within the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, of a: Cognitive Operations Centre of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (COC AFU) (a temporary, joint-service, inter-agency structure with potential for transformation). This military management body is intended not as a new headquarters but as an operational-analytical centre, subordinated to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine via the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

russia’s war against Ukraine has a complex character and is conducted simultaneously across physical, informational, cyber, and cognitive dimensions. Combat practice demonstrates that the adversary deliberately influences not only Ukrainian forces and population but also its own audience, shaping a distorted perception of reality, support for aggression, and readiness for prolonged war. Therefore, the struggle for consciousness and decision-making processes become among the key factors of strategic state resilience.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine possess certain elements of informational-psychological influence, strategic communications, cyber- and electromagnetic warfare, as well as scientific capabilities within the military science system. However, a unified system is absent, one that would combine practical planning and execution of cognitive operations with targeted scientific support, effect-assessment methodology, and forecasting of cognitive influence outcomes at various levels of command.

International experience demonstrates that leading states combine operational structures for cognitive and informational influence with robust research centres, which provide evidence-based, long-term, and adaptive support for such operations. In these conditions, it is essential to simultaneously launch both operational and scientific components in establishing the cognitive influence system within the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The objective is to create a controlled, scientifically substantiated, and manageable cognitive influence system within the Armed Forces of Ukraine, capable of:

systematically influencing the consciousness, motivation, and behaviour of enemy military personnel and civilian populations;

enhancing the cognitive resilience of the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Ukrainian society;

providing the Ukrainian Armed Forces command with evidence-based recommendations for managing behaviour, morale, and decision-making processes;

laying the foundation for rapid scaling of this domain to the level of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the state as a whole.

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to implement two interrelated directions:

Operational – through the establishment of the Cognitive Operations Centre within the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine;

Research – through the formation of a specialised research unit within the Central Research Institute of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

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The implementation of these measures constitutes a direct instrument of strategic influence, aimed at enhancing combat effectiveness without additional losses, as well as controlling the informational-cognitive domain in compliance with NATO practices concerning the establishment of strategic-level legacy.

The simultaneous creation of operational (Cognitive Operations Centre of the Armed Forces of Ukraine) and scientific-research (specialised department within the Central Research Institute of the Armed Forces of Ukraine) components will establish a systemic, scientifically substantiated foundation for the formation of the Cognitive Influence Forces. This approach will ensure effective use of cognitive tools in combat conditions, reduce risks, provide long-term resilience of the system, and create conditions for rapid scaling to the Ministry of Defence and national level.

Initiating the formation of the cognitive influence system in the Armed Forces of Ukraine through the creation of the Cognitive Operations Centre is justified, timely, and necessary. Implementation of this proposal will increase the effectiveness of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, strengthen indirect influence on the adversary, maintain the resilience of own forces and society, and create the groundwork for the further development of modern forms of armed struggle.

Promising directions for further scientific research in this area include:

development of a national model for the protection of consciousness as an integral part of Ukraine's national security system;

study of cognitive operations in the post-conflict period and their impact on the stability of peace agreements;

analysis of the role of education, culture, and historical policy in shaping a resilient national consciousness;

examination of mechanisms for influencing the consciousness of societies in authoritarian and totalitarian states under conditions of informational isolation;

creation of methodologies for assessing societal cognitive resilience and detecting early signs of its compromise;

comparative analysis of the struggle for consciousness in contemporary conflicts involving aggressor states and democratic societies.

The practical significance of the article's materials lies in the fact that the main research results may be necessary or useful for:

state authorities and the security and defence sector in formulating strategies for national, informational, and cognitive security;

military and political leadership to understand the modern nature of warfare and post-conflict threats;

scholars and analytical centres in the fields of military science, the philosophy of war, international relations, and security studies;

educational institutions for preparing specialists in strategic communications, information security, and public administration;

civil society and media as an analytical basis for countering disinformation and manipulation.

Overall, the article can serve as a scientific-analytical foundation for developing long-term policies to strengthen the national consciousness of Ukraine as one of the key factors of its security, resilience, and future development in the context of the transforming global order.

Conflict of Interest

One of the article authors is the Head of editorial team. For avoiding the conflict of interests the editorial process was made by the Deputy of the Head of editorial team Oleksandr Deinega.

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Свідомість як поле бою – еволюція когнітивної війни у системі глобальної безпеки (когнітивні операції – інструмент геополітичного домінування): перспективи організації системи когнітивної боротьби в Україні

Олександр Сирський
кандидат військових наук
Головнокомандувач Збройних Сил України
03168, проспект Повітряних Сил, 6, Київ, Україна
e-mail: sirsk_os@ukr.net
ORCID: 0000-0001-6396-7559

Олег Семененко
заслужений діяч науки і техніки України
доктор військових наук, професор
заступник начальника Центрального науково-дослідного інституту
Збройних Сил України з наукової роботи
Центральний науково-дослідний інститут Збройних Сил України
03049, проспект Повітряних Сил, 28 Б, Київ, Україна
e-mail: aosemenenko@ukr.net
ORCID: 0000-0001-6477-3414

Олександр Кінь
кандидат технічних наук, доцент
Дипломатична академія України імені Геннадія Удовенка
при Міністерстві закордонних справ
01001, вул. Велика Житомирська, 2, Київ, Україна
e-mail: cubalibre1972@ukr.net
ORCID: 0009-0001-2196-7515

Віталій Нащубський
командир 92 окремої штурмової бригади
імені кошового отамана Івана Сірка
63505, вул. Горішного, 142, Чугуїв, Харківська обл., Україна
e-mail: xcii.mgm@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0006-1362-6549

“Le buone leggi nascono dalle buone armi.” –
“Добрі закони народжуються з доброї зброї.”
Нікколо ді Бернардо де’ Макіавеллі (Niccolò Machiavelli)

“Найвище мистецтво війни – не в битві й перемозі в усіх сутичках, а в тому, щоб підірвати опір ворога без бою.”
Сунь Дзи “Мистецтво війни”

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“Світовий порядок існує настільки, наскільки люди в нього вірять.”
“Стримування працює через уявлення, а не через застосування сили.”
Генрі Кіссінджер

Анотація. Сучасний етап розвитку міжнародної безпеки характеризується глибокою трансформацією форм і способів протиборства, у межах яких дедалі більшого значення набувають нематеріальні чинники впливу. За цих умов свідомість людини та суспільства загалом стає ключовим об’єктом цілеспрямованих воєнно-політичних дій, а боротьба за контроль над мисленням, уявленнями та цінностями виходить за межі традиційних уявлень про війну. Це зумовлює нагальну потребу наукового осмислення еволюції когнітивної війни та її місця у системі глобальної безпеки з урахуванням сучасних викликів і реалій воєнно-політичної обстановки. Отже, головною метою статті є комплексне осмислення еволюції когнітивної війни як самостійного виміру сучасного протиборства у системі глобальної безпеки, розкриття ролі когнітивних операцій як інструменту геополітичного домінування, а також обґрунтування необхідності формування цілісного стратегічного бачення організації когнітивної боротьби на державному рівні з урахуванням досвіду російсько-української війни та зростаючих глобальних загроз. Основними результатами статті є те, що в ній: проведено аналіз наукових, військово-теоретичних і політичних джерел усвідомлення вирішальної ролі свідомості у війні; сформовані основні терміни та поняття у сучасному розумінні когнітивної війни; запропоновано підхід до формування загального показника ефективності когнітивного впливу (інтегральний показник володіння свідомістю) та визначено шкалу його оцінювання; визначено погляди щодо створення у складі Збройних Сил України спеціальних Сил когнітивного впливу (Cognitive Influence Forces). Матеріали статті можуть бути корисними органам державної влади та сектору безпеки і оборони, військовому та політичному керівництву, науковцям і аналітичним центрам, що працюють у галузях воєнної науки, філософії війни, міжнародних відносин, безпекових студій, освіти, для підготовки фахівців у сфері стратегічних комунікацій, інформаційної безпеки та державного управління, громадянського суспільства та медіа.

Ключові слова: боротьба за свідомість, воєнно-політична обстановка, воєнні конфлікти, глобалізм, гібридна війна, інформаційна війна, інформаційна безпека, когнітивні операції, когнітивний вплив, міжнародна політика, міжнародні коаліції, обороноздатність, російсько-українська війна, національна безпека, критерії оборонної достатності, технологічні переваги, свідомість, свідомість нації, стійкість держави.