Indirect Action and Soft Power Strategies in Geopolitical Conflicts. (Part 2)

Returning to the use of the Western technologies for “color revolutions” in the post-Soviet space and the Middle East, we see that they are implemented in the following sequence:

- In the first phase, the country’s socio-political and economic systems are destabilized by creating a large-scale systemic crisis and putting it into a state of “manageable chaos,” which makes the country’s political regime vulnerable to external influence. The main goal of the aggressor state’s destabilizing actions is the formation of a “center of influence” in the form of opposition forces that build up the resistance to the ruling regime to the point of an armed conflict. To do this, the aggressor state finds supporters within the ruling elite of the “enemy” country that will transform its political system.

- In the second phase of “manageable chaos,” an attractor structure is established in the form of opposition center of sociopolitical influence with the task of taking over the country by changing the political regime.

- In the third phase, a process is initiated to form new public administration and security service institutions under the aegis of international organizations.

The indirect action strategy for waging geopolitical struggle is superior to the direct action strategies for the following reasons:

- It enables the aggressor to minimize the cost of transforming a victim country’s political system without using military force while maintaining an optimal risk/reward balance.

- It makes it possible to control damages to the enemy country’s economic structure and minimize its human and environmental resource losses for later exploitation by the aggressor.

The color revolutions that took place in the post-Soviet space and the Middle East grew out of the theory of “manageable chaos” (or, as it is also called, the theory of “controllable instability”) that was developed in the United States by Gene Sharp and Steven Mann (author of the monograph “Chaos Theory and Strategic Thought”). It served as the basis for developing the soft power strategy technology, which is based on the following principles:1

- Consolidation of all political forces opposing the existing legitimate government;

- Destruction of the confidence a country’s rulers have in their ability to stabilize the situation and in the loyalty of their security services;
- Destabilization of a country by sparking protest moods cultivated at various levels in its society for the purpose of undermining the existing political regime’s legitimacy;
- Initiation of regime change by challenging the outcome of elections (often even before the final vote count) and organizing acts of civil disobedience.

In virtually all countries caught in the chaos of mass riots, “spontaneous” flash mobs were organized by disseminating messages about rallies and protests through social networks and email, as well as by mobile telephones. Therefore, the color revolutions that occurred in recent years in the post-Soviet space and the Middle East should be classified not as revolutions, but as chaos-inspired rebellions.

The social structures that Western political strategists formed in the social networks create large numbers of protesters at the following levels:
- At the information level, opposition forces focus people’s attention on existing problems, accompanied by a heightened reaction to shortcomings in public life and populist proposals for resolving them;
- At the mental level, people become convinced that they can “no longer live under the current regime,” and that “life has become intolerable;”
- At the social level, ethnic, social, religious and regional groups are energized to adopt radical methods for resolving social problems.

Analysis of applications of the indirect action and soft power strategies have enabled us to formulate the following ways of countering them:
1. A strategy of vigilance and alertness to covert and potential, internal and external threats by making people aware of the modern political and psychological technologies for destroying a nation’s state and religio-cultural identity.
2. A strategy for ensuring the stability of state and social institutions and public awareness of attempts by foreign and domestic forces to distort and transform a country’s sociopolitical system.
3. A strategy to counter information technologies that destroy statehood through the widespread and timely dissemination of accurate information about a country’s condition, its ability to set its own rules and defend its own interpretation of events in the global information space.
4. A strategy for keeping the optimism that the public, the bureaucracy and the security services feel about society the needed level by forming a national idea and a national ideology, and through successes in defending the country’s statehood and national interests.

The need to solve these problems makes the development of a national security doctrine an urgent matter for countries that the United States and its allies have their sights on, and that doctrine must identify the threats and challenges as they emerge. As the new world order is being formed, the center of gravity of the struggle on the international stage is moving to the information-communications space, which is placing demands on state institutions and society as a whole to identify negative trends as the domestic and international situation develops so that they can be neutralized in a timely fashion.
