

# INTRODUCTION

Within the current international order, there are four instruments and sources of national state power: public diplomacy, information, the military, and the economy. Information has become the main weapon and the media an open battlefield. Operations of influence, public diplomacy, and strategic communication represent “soft power” that is more lethal than military force.

Joseph Nye (1990) defined “soft power” as having the “capability of attaining what one wants through attractiveness rather than force or money”. This theory brought him to the position of president of the National Intelligence Council (1993-1994.) and U.S. Assistant Minister of Defense for International Security Affairs (1994-1995.)

Countries that during the 1990s developed the doctrines of information warfare, provided the necessary infrastructure for conducting information warfare, adopted national information strategies, and subordinated and coordinated the activities of their state, military, non-governmental and economic activities to

these strategies, dominate and rule the world today.

The U.S. Department of Defense published in 2000 the “Joint Vision 2020” document, in which the establishment of “full-spectrum information domination” was announced.

Public diplomacy, public relations, and psychological operations occupied leading roles in the information operations aimed at this “full spectrum domination”. Public diplomacy legalized the use of “soft power” (information, media, public relations agencies, and non-governmental organizations, polling agencies, exchanges of experts, and so forth) in order to influence the public views and opinions in foreign countries which oppose the national goals and interests of these countries. The goal of public diplomacy was to “seduce” these foreign publics and politicians into behaving and making decisions to their own disadvantage.

With the development of ICT technologies and digitalization of the global information space, a new international information order with still undefined rules was established. However, it is obvious that in the global information sphere, a division between domestic and foreign publics is impossible to maintain, and as a result, the influence exerted on the domestic public has returned like a boomerang to those who through public diplomacy sought to shape public opinion in foreign countries.

American policies have been burdened for many years now by the influence of foreign powers on the domestic public. American intelligence agents state that “Russia, China, and Iran will try to influence election results in the United States”;

Trump claimed that “China will do all it can to ensure I lose the elections”, and the Senate that “a Senate investigation has confirmed Russian meddling in the American elections” (2020).

These media headlines are only an indication of the possible threats to the American public from foreign information influences. Meanwhile, the globalization of the information space has affected all world superpowers, the European Union, and other states equally through its sophisticated information attacks and clashes in the media.

In the 1990s, Croatia was unable to fight, diplomatically or militarily, for its independence and sovereignty without freeing the media and information space from the disinformation and falsifications that prevented its entry into the international order. On the political and diplomatic level, one of the most serious charges was that Croats were a fascist and genocidal nation. The stigma that in Jasenovac (1941-1945) from 700,000 to more than a million people (Serbs, Jews, Roma, and others) were killed had held Croatia in a subservient position in the former Yugoslavia. And this was the international justification used for the Great-Serbian policies of aggression against Croatia: “President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, accused Croatia of trying to renew a ‘policy of genocide’ that he said it had pursued during World War II “(Hague, September 8, 1991).

Historian Franjo Tudjman, in his “Wastelands of Historical Reality”, exposed the falsifications regarding the number of Jasenovac victims. The book was banned for many years from publication in the former Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, a few months before the fall of the

Berlin Wall, a promotion of “Wastelands of Historical Reality” was to have been held. But it never was. The formation of the Croatian Democratic Union intervened, also held under the threat of prohibition. These two overlapping events (June 1989) are rife with symbolism: the establishment of a program for an independent and sovereign Croatian state was possible only when a public deconstruction of the genocidal myth about the Croatian nation had begun. These black legends had deprived Croats of their right to national freedom, legends on account of which Croats had paid a high price for the right to their own state.<sup>1</sup>

Julienne Basic’s text, “Wastelands of Political Correctness” (Vjesnik, 1997) presents the fate of “Wastelands of Historical Reality” and dissects the thorny path to the deconstruction of the Jasenovac myth. This deconstruction and the recognition of Croatia are two sides of the same process. As long as Yugoslavia was a recognized member of the international order, it would not have been possible, or “politically correct”, to call into question the Jasenovac myth. Thirty years after the fall of Yugoslavia, proponents of Great-Serbian politics remain vocal, albeit isolated, guardians of the politically

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<sup>1</sup> “Wastelands of Historical Reality” was subjected to rejection, falsification, negation, and degradation from those who had supported the Communist order and justified Great-Serbian hegemony and aggression against Croatia. It is significant that “Wastelands of Historical Reality” had already had four re-printings prior to Croatia’s international recognition. After international recognition, the book was translated into English, German, Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Chinese, and Hungarian.

correct myth of the genocidal character of the Croatian nation.

Communist ideology, with its falsifications and myths, was an instrument used to maintain Croatia in subservience in the former Yugoslavia. But Croatia was from its very inception also subjected to pressure from public diplomacy.

It is well known that numerous non-governmental organizations and media established in the 1990s were engaged by foreign sponsors to change the government, in order to impose strategic goals in Croatia against Croatia's will. The promotor of the "Open Society", multimillionaire George Soros, saw Croatia as part of a free trade zone in the Western Balkans which would have a single currency and customs union. An opponent of the recognition of Croatia, Soros financed non-government organizations and media in Croatia and promised them a blank check in 1990 for the destruction of the HDZ government.

In 2020, the American public condemned attempts of foreign meddling in their presidential elections. Twenty years earlier, American policies had openly and directly influenced the results of parliamentary elections in Croatia. The manner in which American public diplomacy organized resistance and the goals it promoted in Croatia are outlined in the Report on the National Endowment for Democracy, September 1999.) A report was prepared for the Croatian Parliamentary Committee on domestic policy and national security.

It is clear from the report that members of the IRI, USAID, and American Embassy had planned

their support for the opposition not only up until the parliamentary elections, but for four months during the post-election period. The program included the forming of coalitions and their activities; shaping messages and strategies for party campaigns; assistance and consultations during pre-election campaigns and in the post-election period; organizing youth political parties with the goal of greater participation by the young in elections, and so forth. The program was not available to all parliamentary parties, but only to the coalition of opposition parties headed by reform Communists.

There are several reasons, after more than two decades, for publishing these two documents, *Wasteland of Political Correctness*, and *Report on the National Endowment for Democracy*. First, to remind us that the abuse of „soft power“ endangers the fate and freedom of not only individuals but entire nations; second, to point out that foreign intervention and manipulation in the parliamentary elections of democratic countries is unacceptable; and third, that information in the global sphere is a weapon, and that the entire world has become a battlefield upon which both small and large countries are threatened.

In the twenty-first century, geopolitical tensions and conflicts between the largest global states, the United States, China, and Russia, take place and are resolved within information and cyber domains. Defining the rules for the use of information as a weapon and controlling behavior in the cyber domain will play a crucial role in thoroughly reshaping overall international relations, reconstructing the existing international order and establishing new ones. Rules involving misuse of information are literally

non-existent (especially on social networks) and barely exist in cyberspace. Information space and cyberspace do not exist in a vacuum, they are not empty space, so it is necessary to adopt international rules of conduct - in the interest of peace and stability of the international order.