

POST-TRUTH IN MILITARY VERSION? A NEW NAME FOR AN OLD PRACTICE

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Abstract

In armed confrontations, post-truth proves to represent an adoption and modelling platform for the techniques and technologies based mainly on communication, aimed at deceiving the opponent and at diminishing / cancelling the kinetic effort dedicated to achieving various goals. The new approaches refer to the "mental capturing" of the employers and their "voluntary" engagement in the performance of tasks in a manner similar to that in judo where the opponent's energy is used in order to prolong one's own effort. The interpenetrations with other non-kinetic/kinetic techniques and technologies are exploited. They precede the actual confrontation, constituting a favourable fire preparation. The new typology of the "Fifth Column" built on emotions and feelings induced through communication makes us see the dual use of social networks that states are not prepared to deal with. We are forced to observe more than an enrichment of the panoply of propaganda and the arsenal of weapons dedicated to disinformation, witnessing the "establishment" of a new type of war – the cognitive one, a place where the post-truth platform operates by sliding controlled information. The post-truth platform also offers challenges to war or major social changes.

Keywords: *military confrontation, post-truth, social networks, dual usage, induced emotions, cognitive war.*

Like many other things in social life, post-truth ends up getting scientific treatments, after a long practice in many fields. Among these is of course the military field, or rather the field of armed confrontation.

Seeking to fool your opponent and make him vulnerable in the depths of feelings and convictions represents a dream – often an achievement – of commanders. This is why we find inscriptions like "The whole art of war is based on deception." (Tzu, 2017) Closer in time – we witnessed the armed confrontation in Iraq, where we saw "at work" how to put the opponent in a position of "studied inferiority."

The techniques "allocated" to obtaining the result are multiple. The substance of the problem

is the adoption of attitude, behaviour and especially communication that would draw the opponent into the trap of "overthrowing" the advance or maintaining a position that would allow the acquisition of "hierarchy" in submission. The important thing is to use psychological mechanisms by saving on kinetic means. This means not only saving resources, but also a "moral" ascendancy (even if this ascendancy is acquired in an immoral or downright amoral way).

It should be noted that the application of the "techniques and technologies" specific to the insertion or immersion of the adversary in post-truth is done prior to the kinetic confrontation. They constitute a real **fire preparation** into which the opposing forces are drawn. In fact, most violent confrontations are preceded by non-kinetic ones in which specific messages and means (including those of radio traffic disruption, communications, orientation, etc.) attack the opponent in various ways.

Some studies on post-truth mark the year 2016, also reported in Signs of Time. Journal of Christian Analysis and Opinion (Vlădescu, 2016). Also from here we find out that the introduction of the word in dictionaries dates back to 1992, but it became "relevant" following the usage in the reference year. The definition of "*post-truth: in relation to or indicating circumstances in which objective data has less influence in shaping public opinion than appeals to personal emotions and beliefs,*" (Vlădescu, 2016) covers realities of communication in an effects-based world. Aspects such as Effects-based warfare (Frunzeti, 2008) and the like have been talked about even before. The military practice forces us to see the manifestations "at work." Regarding the theoretics of the field, one

must note that "... The essence of post-truth culture is based on emotions, not facts." And the armed confrontation is not without emotions. It is the place where we can say that we have in front of us a tangle of techniques and technologies in order to distort the truth. We can highlight that action is taken to achieve the result of weakening the opponent and sparing one's own resources. Here we observe techniques of engaging the opponent in the performance of the task. These can draw similarities to martial arts – judo – where the opponent's energy is used and amplified, but the targeting is driven to another outcome. The use of the TikTok application is a multiplier of effect by engaging human sources in parallel alongside the electronic ones, with the selection of preferences, misleading, etc. The "preferred truth" is imposed, a mix in which the form follows the taste (habits, weaknesses, erroneous or unfounded beliefs) of the receiver, and the substance builds the slippage from the reality it distorts.

The last decades present various manifestations that force us to qualify them as new forms of war:

- Electronic warfare
- Information warfare
- psychological warfare
- hybrid warfare - "the hybrid warfare, which has disinformation and manipulation as its tools, can make classic military intervention useless" (Popa, 2026)
- cyber warfare
- **Cognitive warfare**

Manipulation techniques (because here we also find room for post-truth) have the purpose of modifying the behaviour of other people in the desired sense and they are the ones that play the role of the "soft artillery," which performs the "fire preparation" of the kinetic, diplomatic or economic offensive.

The "rack" or "panoply" dedicated to disinformation is large and in continuous "completion." The fake news of Type II R.M. propaganda is "aided" by a number of distortions of information and by the induction of feelings and constructs affected by false reasoning. Many of them are based on "slippages" from the process of logical thinking or on incorrect, incoherent premises, meant to confuse the

receiver and lead him mentally and sentimentally on a single corridor of a false postulated as irrefutable truth. The specific techniques make us think of the saying "Put the cart before the horse."

Among these one can speak about the already well-known fake news, alternative facts, fake science (anti-vaccines, anti-global warming, etc.), fake History, fake subjects on Facebook and their popularization engines, but also deepfake (Infocons, 2024). "Deepfake represents a digital manipulation of a video, audio or image recording, made with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) or other specialized programs." (DNSC, n.d.) These are intertwined with slogans that open the individual sensitivity to the "track" where they will receive information. In a "different kind of war" in Romania, we have seen the exhortation addressed to voters by some candidates to "vote according to their heart," that is, to do it on emotional and not rational bases.

Concern regarding the effects of the phenomenon is reflected in the approach to the issue at increasingly higher organizational levels. Therefore, "in its 2016 report on global risks, the World Economic Forum describes the phenomenon of disinformation as empowering and, at the same time, disempowering citizens: The individual feels empowered by the changes that take place in the technological field, changes that facilitate his access to information, communication and organization, but, at the same time, he feels increasingly excluded from the traditional and very important decision-making process." (Presamil, 2018)

Beyond the observation, we could study an "*informational reversal*" given by the provision to the person of technologies capable of analysis or even synthesis, but over which the "holder" does not have a cultural "control" that would make him understand and correctly discern the spider web of relationships in which he finds himself with reality and with the data made available through technology. Unfortunately, sometimes even technology providers do not master possible interpretations, cognitive biases and side effects, etc. From here to a use that produces something other than what is desired is nothing more than a ... Klik! (or touch!) It

should be noted that there is a continuous exchange of information in which the receiving user does not know and is not aware that he is always providing data: the number of people to whom he has sent the messages received, as well as messages designed on the basis of the framework or reference received, who are those people, the daily activities that complete his "profile," his "personal evolution" based on consulting electronic addresses or shopping in groups, and so on. (Changing the sim card on your phone does not exempt you from being the **same** information provider – the phone has a "chassis" series!).

The preliminary results are based on the appeal to emotions, on the promotion of "alternative facts" (lies built in addition to logic, which they invoke, etc.). Next, the subject of the "leitmotif" obstinately repeats. Things are supported by "echo chambers and filter bubbles" that only promote information based on induced prejudice and eliminate contrary ideas or perspectives.

The result means an ideological polarization, but without proposals regarding social and economic development, so that the so-called debate of a subject leads to belonging or not to the group that "rolls the ball" of the subject in public. All this occurs against the background of artificial promotion through digital technologies (bots and AI) alongside the "sinking" by undermining experts and/or official positions. Here a parallel can be drawn with the functioning of the depersonalized self under slogans and templates imposed in totalitarian societies. Only this time the participation was "voluntary" with computer support.

This is how we come to what the intelligence specialist said in 2019: *"In the post-truth era, everything is possible and credible, as long as an emotional connection can be established with the public, voters and ordinary citizens, who have vulnerabilities, predispositions, hopes, expectations and personal concerns."* (Vladu, I.O. (2019)

Today we have become addicted to artefacts that replace our own judgment!

The land was used, with attempts to lose tracks, in various places and situations, but

especially when it came to casting the vote. (Choice of commander/Contributors.ro)

This is where we have to admit the assertion of Daniel Jammer, CEO of Nation-E: "The most feared weapon of the 21st century is the digital one!" (Jucan, 2016)

Today, the notion that follows the functional front of realities that social logic encounters already consecrates cognitive warfare.

"The concept of cognitive warfare is relatively recent and has not had a clear definition. It is based more on analyses and observations on strategies of influencing and manipulating public opinion in order to use information and persuasion techniques by a military and/or militarized structure, in order to obtain political, social or military advantages. This model of warfare is unique in its execution and purpose, through the use of social and ideological threats in various media products and communications systems." (Topor & Botezatu, 2023) It is the place where the use of social media networks for the purpose of manipulative attacks beyond what we call cyber-attacks is observed. Here we do not speak about the spread of malicious software, which represents the goal, but the spread of **controlled information**. The quantities and sources of information are immense and are issued through bonnet tactics and fake social accounts that mimic normal interaction. Can we imagine a "battlefield" occupied by an "army" of civilians who do "military business" that we cannot destroy, but it is also very difficult for us to judge them according to the law of war?!

We notice here a dual use of social networks.

The field of gender manifestations is difficult to establish. Regarding the geographical area, there are a number of analyses that find involvements, especially in the conduct of electoral processes – as a place for the promotion of people who are "grateful" for the service provided by the campaign supporter. We learn that in the African approach the goal is to undermine "the image of Western countries as reliable political and military partners"; "to turn the neo-colonialism of France, the United Kingdom and the United States into an object of international controversy"; and "to disrupt the military logistics of AFRICOM," the U.S. military command for Africa. The final goal is clearly stated: "The

*company is currently working on a plan to reformat the African space, with the **creation of a belt of regimes friendly to the Russian Federation.***" (Ediția de Dimineață, 2026)

We find that "the manipulation and interference of foreign information is a fundamental part of Russian military activities. The aim is to create mistrust, provoke internal divisions and influence democratic decision-making. We have to fight. The best way to counter such malign activities remains the same: expose them, provide facts and truth, and support the independent press. These operations are carried out through the Russian diplomatic network and secret services, state-controlled media, social media channels, private companies and local proxies, used in an integrated manner to multiply and amplify each other." (Vulcan, 2025)

This also includes "Operation Doppelganger" (identity theft/alter-ego/fake profile), discovered by EU Disinfo Lab in September 2022, and is a FIMI tactic favoured by the Kremlin through which fake news is attributed to reputable media outlets or celebrities in order to infiltrate the Kremlin's propaganda by deceiving the public." (Where the "FIMI – Foreign Influence and Manipulation Interference" concept describes a global threat, with actors intentionally trying to manipulate facts and cause confusion, division, fear and hatred in order to achieve their military, political and economic goals. These actions undermine the credibility of democratic institutions and contribute to the polarisation of European societies in other corners of the world as well.") (Infodard, n.d.)

Links to conspiracy theories are obvious and may represent the subject of separate study. The method is one by which, using the mirage of feeling, one "breaks" from reason in order to harness the self to a slave-type production towards the designer of tools of disinformation and reformatting of a volitional nature of the person.

Here is a place where religions are subtly, treacherous, persuasively, without explanation. These could be the ultimate spring of discernment that is constantly worn out and difficult to perceive. At the same time, false themes

(especially processes of intentions) are introduced into the "market of concerns" in order to occupy the thinking of the dedicated "consumer." We are approaching the withdrawal of addiction from misinformation.

The war taking place in Ukraine makes us discover the passage from the interrogative to the affirmative of the title: "Beyond kinetics or from hard power to gentle power, to intelligent power and back?" (Rusu, 2021)

Counteracting is a matter of will. Institutional and individual will to get out of the sign of manipulation. Also noteworthy would be the proposal of Miguel Palamo who tells us that "*Disinformation is usually addressed through a posteriori solutions, which intervene after its appearance. This study proposes an a priori approach, with the aim of influencing the formation of disinformation narratives before they materialize. Examining the mechanisms that make disinformation persuasive for its recipients, this paper introduces the concept of "hypertruth" as a theoretical tool in order to analyse and understand the ideological and epistemological structure that enables the impact of disinformation.*" (Palomo, 2025) The conclusions formulated indicate the shaping of the individual's perceptions by "a pre-existing ideological background, inherent to individuals." (Palomo, 2025) It can be considered as a theoretical support for instructive-educational constructions dedicated to combating the phenomenon. And this is because leaving would imply an education that would lead to the acquisition of the critical spirit and the necessary discernment.

The exhortation to vote with the heart by abandoning reason makes us wonder whether or not this slogan denotes the transformation of politics into a continuation of war. We are apparently facing a new form of the "fifth column" in which a war based on induced emotions and feelings is practiced. Exacerbating various feelings and arguing with falsehoods can even lead to the triggering of military conflicts or major social changes.

Military art leaves the "traditional graphics" and goes up or down (!) towards the acquisition of results in a non-specific way. We have an unethical (military) increase in effects. Moreover, the number of victims of this type of war can no longer be determined.

However, the individual is in a continuous pendulum between the rational and the emotional. The important thing is awareness. (Cârlușea, 2025)

We can foresee that alongside the automation and the means of control that rely on artificial intelligence, a digital revolution could take place that will call into question everything we know about politics, forms of government, property and similar concepts related to social life, including religion. And all under the slogan of good intentions!

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