

Non-violent methods of political struggle as technologies of color revolutions (political essay)

Yuriy Nedzelsky ^{*A}; Vitaliy Kuksenko ^A

^{*Corresponding author:} Lecturer, e-mail: ynedzelski@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-7820-0561

^A Military-Diplomatic Academy named after Yevgeny Bereznyak, Kyiv, Ukraine

Received: December 01, 2020 | **Revised:** December 12, 2020 | **Accepted:** December 31, 2020

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4399765

Abstract

In modern geopolitical conditions, the political struggle for democratic values against the dictatorship acquires a new meaning because it is conducted by non-violent methods in the information space of the state with the involvement of new subjects of modern international relations. An analysis of the reasons that consolidate target audiences and direct their political energy to opposition actions against the government shows that they are based on historical, cultural and mental contradictions used by other forces to achieve their geopolitical interests in the region.

The traditional class contradictions that were the basis of the revolutions of the past have already receded into the background and lost their political relevance. Instead, in modern discourse, more and more revolutions are associated with “coups d'etat”, which are caused by the political technologies of color revolutions.

A necessary condition and component of modern political struggle is the information space in the state where such a revolution is taking place. The main form of political struggle is nonviolent methods.

Thus, the relevance of the article is due to the need to study the phenomenon of nonviolent struggle against the state in the context of globalization of modern international relations.

Key words: non-violent methods of political struggle, color revolution, hybrid war, globalization, modern subjects of international relations.

Introduction

The historical fact is that at the beginning of the new millennium there were a significant number of coups (color revolutions), which took place according to similar scenarios. Most of them were successful, i.e. the undemocratic government was removed from power, but the real beneficiaries of such revolutions were not renewed states with democratic values and freedoms, but other states and new subjects of international relations.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Analyzing important, from the point of view of national security, technologies that weaken state power, its legitimacy and authority, it is necessary to analyze the work of the famous American political scientist Gene Sharp “From

dictatorship to democracy” and to develop the conceptual principles for the state, directed to effectively counteracting of the methods of non-violent resistance of opposition forces that are harmful to the state itself. In this context, it should be noted that the problem of political struggle has its own history and multidimensionality; it has been studied by historians, experts in international law, sociologists, politicians and the military. Now, returning to the above-mentioned work of D. Sharp (Gene Sharp), which is rightly criticized by the Russian scientist Abbasov R.G. (he draws attention to the contradictions behind the dictatorship) and notes that this work does not contain scientific “know-how”, he only describes

the methods of ideological training and technology to overthrow the legitimate government in the state from the inside, by political opposition (Abbasov, R.G.).

At the same time, it is impossible not to pay tribute to the political technologies described by D. Sharp, in particular those aimed at overthrowing the dictatorship (power in the state) in the context of establishing a new world order and the struggle for resources. This is the opinion of the Russian scientist Tsaturyan S.A., who set out his views on this issue in his dissertation "Nonviolent resistance as a technology for changing the regime of US foreign policy (2000–2014)" (Tsaturyan, S. A.).

Recent publications about color revolutions show that the trigger for a popular uprising against their state is, in many cases, problems that are not directly related to the low social standards of living and the financial situation of the opposition forces. Moreover, the trigger is the problem of socially significant issues for certain segments of civil society, which are related to historical (modern territories of peoples in many cases have changed and radical forces require territorial revenge), cultural (language issue), issues of faith, traditions) and mental characteristics of citizens of different nationalities and religions are artificially exacerbated and provoked, "dispersed" through the media and mythologized in order to

encourage opposition forces to take decisive action against the dictatorial regime (state).

The axiology of the above-mentioned priorities, which "launch" the revolution at present, needs scientific understanding and refinement, because the religious, ethnic and class contradictions that exist in the state (we are talking about the existing stratification of society in the state) cannot be ignored by opposition forces before, during and after the coup.

The purpose of the article is to find out how the state can counteract opposition forces that use technologies of non-violent overthrow of the state system against it and to develop conceptual bases for counteracting such forms of political struggle.

At the scientific and theoretical level, the aim of the article is to conceptually find out how the government can counter opposition forces that try to disrupt public order, destroy its economy and carry out a political coup with hybrid technologies to change the vector of its political and economic development.

The practical significance of the article is to develop conceptual democratic and legal approaches aimed to counteracting destructive political opposition forces that disrupt public order, exacerbate political crises in society and create conditions for the effective use of hybrid technologies of nonviolent struggle in the interests of other states.

Material and methods

The methodological bases of the study were modern scientific works which study the issue of political struggle by non-violent methods. In this context, it was possible to investigate the peculiarities of the use of technologies of political struggle to carry out color revolutions in

a non-violent way.

The use of historical and political analysis has allowed us to reasonably assume who is the customer and beneficiary of color revolutions.

With the help of content analysis, the forms and methods of color revolutions are identified.

Results and discussion

The struggle for democracy and historical values is in many cases essentially the same Trojan horse through which foreign structures fund opposition forces to fight the government of a dictatorial state. This approach is the most effective and cost-effective for political and public international and intergovernmental

foundations and trusts, which, under the guise of fighting for democracy, historical and cultural values, fund opposition movements, in particular investing in non-violent methods of struggle which can grow into violent.

First of all, this is due to the fact that color revolutions are not aimed at the driving forces

of the coup (students, military, workers, government officials and other categories of the population) to change their property or social status, gain political rights and freedoms. No, they are aimed at changing one political regime to another.

Secondly, according notes of experts, in all color revolutions a special role is given to religion and the church, which in recent decades have become one of the most important tools used to achieve political goals. This is evidenced by the events surrounding the Yugoslav conflict, during which ethnic and political conflicts led to an escalation of interfaith conflict. This is also typical of events in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Tajikistan and other countries. In this context, it should be noted that the cultural factor works and in the opposite direction. As an example, in the conditions of the need to create an atmosphere of trust and prevent the escalation of any contradictions between members of different faiths (during the election process in Iraq in 2005) most campaign and propaganda materials of a democratic nature were developed together by coalition troops and experts in ethnography and culture (cultural advisers).

The peculiarity and significance of the culturological factor (by which the author means historically conditioned cultural differences between ethnic groups and nationalities living compactly in one territory) of color revolutions is that due to special technologies and manipulations, existing differences between different ethnic groups can be reformatted in contradictions, which will later become the content of the color revolution (*exempli gratia*). This scenario of the color revolution is quite simplistic, but it reveals the political significance of the use of cultural factors at the global level.

Given the fact that at the beginning of the new millennium there were a large number of coups (color revolutions), which developed according to the same scenario, including through methods of nonviolent struggle, it can be argued that now there is an effective political technology to overthrow the state at the global level. In other words, in the interests of individual forces and not necessarily opposition

political parties of the state, they can be financial institutions, public organizations, transnational companies and even criminal elements, which have special technologies and resources to achieve their geopolitical interests can effectively, for a short period of time, to implement a humane and democratic coup (color revolution).

In this context, it should be noted that the interpretation of such concepts as “revolution” and “coup d'etat” has undergone significant changes. This view is shared by domestic and foreign scholars, who argue that the modern definition of “revolution” differs significantly from the interpretation that was inherent in this concept in the mid-twentieth century (then the revolution was perceived as a form of popular, anti-state protest, and now as a technology of production of political reality). Katunin Y.A. in this regard, notes: “Revolution” has lost its traditional features, and becoming a technology, the implementation of which left only the name. The time has come for manipulative “technological revolutions” in the world, in which the media and IT technologies play a special role.

Based on the study of color revolutions, it can be noted that before and during the coup, the main goal of the opposition forces was to overthrow one government and bring another to power through political, financial and informational support from outside the state. To implement such a political scenario in the country of the upcoming “coup d'etat”, an appropriate information space is created in advance, which identifies the main problems in the country and ways to solve them. The imaginary future political reality formed in this way in the information space, which is attractive for the majority of citizens of the countries, forms motives of behavior of the corresponding target audiences who will report on the use of protests. Under such conditions, a certain target audience will associate the interests of the revolution as their own. To strengthen the political effect in each target audience, the opposition is trying to create its own political cell, the activities of which will be covered in local and regional media.

The formation of a new information space for the coup with the help of local media is characterized by the fact that the actions of the opposition are covered on the positive side, even by non-opposition media. The explanation for this is that the owners of such media have assets in foreign financial institutions outside their country. Therefore, realizing the threat posed by the fact that the above-mentioned financial assets may fall under sanctions and be frozen, the editorial policy of non-opposition media becomes quite cautious towards opposition political forces. Heavy artillery of the information space in the country of the forthcoming coup is given to new media, which are created in advance, on the eve of political confrontation.

In the context of the escalation of the political crisis and the new information space, under various slogans about a happy future, opposition forces tend to gain political weight, and their ideas gain popularity. Subsequently, the opposition's efforts were aimed at removing dictators from power and re-election to parliament, and new law enforcement agencies and financial institutions were formed. In many cases, the incapacity of state power at a certain stage of the political crisis determines the permissiveness of opposition forces. The terror of democracy begins, which is characterized (at best) by expropriation, lustration and redistribution of spheres of influence between the new and old elites, both internal and external.

At the final stage of the struggle against the dictatorship by non-violent methods, a narrative about the sacredness and historical significance of the victory is formed. Subsequently, the state receives funding – loans from international financial institutions, which are interested in maintaining and increasing the network of its creditors globally.

Considering the tools of the struggle of opposition forces in the context of non-violent methods of struggle, it should be noted that ad hoc non-violence is the same weapon as any other means by which opposition forces try to destroy the state. The main difference is only in the so-called humanization of the use of such

technology of nonviolence, but according to the author it is not quite so, because as the experience of color revolutions shows, opposition forces were not limited to nonviolence, in many cases used weapons, terrorist attacks, provocations and external interventions.

Analyzing the current from the point of view of national security hybrid technologies that are in the arsenal of opposition political parties, movements and NGOs, we can predict that in the context of political crisis they (technologies) will be used to discredit pro-government political parties, government and higher authorities' power in general. These and other actions can be carried out by opposition forces both within the legal field of the state (rally, peaceful demonstration) and outside it (acts of public disobedience, seizure of state authorities, etc.). The choice of forms and methods of political struggle of opposition political forces in countries with transition democracies is a set of mutually agreed measures aimed at achieving the goal of the subjects of the political process. As a rule, crises in countries with transition democracies, during which coup attempts took place, developed (had a vector of development) from the "legal field" to the "use of the situation by other forces". This is due to the fact that countries that are interested in regime change (not necessarily neighboring) will always try to create favorable conditions for the opposition political forces of another country, including a political crisis that will be used to realize their geopolitical interests. In this sense, it should be emphasized that the political ambitions and actions of opposition forces can be constructive (finding a compromise between the government and the opposition), or vice versa – destructive (overthrow of the state by foreign special services with the help of opposition forces). If the latter scenario is applied, it is likely that the state will lose some of its territories (separatism) or begin to lose its independence gradually, becoming dependent on other states, international financial organizations and multinational companies.

Modern actors in international relations – international financial organizations,

multinational companies, political parties, NGOs and even criminal elements – have a sufficient arsenal of technologies (from diplomacy to special services and military invasion) that can be used to achieve those or other political or economic interests at the global level.

The first feature of the above-mentioned subjects of international relations is that they direct their efforts (political, economic, informational and military) against those states that pose a threat to their national interests and are weaker from an economic point of view.

The second feature is that the new subjects of the international space usually act in a coalition on the principle of “all for one”. In this sense, they are not competitors, because at the stage of the coup their goal is common – access to natural resources (at the level of transnational corporations, national business and government). In particular, it is a question of access of new subjects of international relations to oil environments of other countries which capture is a strategic priority both for the state and for business (in some cases achievement of such strategic interests can be realized only by armed forces of the coalition of the states or nongovernmental military formations (private military companies and insurgents) supported by the armed forces and governments of other states.

Analyzing the color revolutions of the Arab Spring, it can be noted that with external support of opposition forces in the middle of the state and favorable historical situation, opposition forces develop and use a democratic anti-government narrative that “spreads” to the target audience the need to overthrow the current political regime of the state itself. It is worth to say that attempts at “coup d'etat” and the overthrow of the political regime are causing a civil war that destroys the state and “rejects” its economy for many years. Thus, in order to slow down the scientific, technological and economic development of states, modern subjects of international relations can effectively use the political technologies of color revolutions. However, during the color

revolution, in the event of a conflict of interest between the new actors in international relations, the state may cease to exist and become a testing ground for new weapons. Thus, civil war and the intervention of coalitions of other countries may be concomitant results of the struggle against dictatorship.

Hybrid methods of war, in particular economic sanctions, trade embargoes and diplomatic pressure, create conditions for the deterioration of the economic situation in the country of the forthcoming “coup d'etat” can also be attributed to non-violent methods of struggle (international level). Their peculiarity is that the governments of countries that apply economic sanctions in many cases act from the position of the need to harm another state, even if such a policy will negatively affect the economy of their own country. The answer to the question in whose interests the policy of such states is implemented will become clear when we study this question purposefully, in the context of the formation of a new world order. At the same time, the imposition of economic sanctions and other restrictions imposed by one state or a coalition of states against the sanctions of others does not always achieve the expected effect that was declared at the time of their adoption.

The asymmetry of nonviolent forms and methods of struggle in a political crisis in the country is exacerbated by the synergy of opposition political forces that receive financial, legal and informational assistance through NGOs (ethnic, religious and cultural) in the specially prepared by media information space.

At the regional level, the sphere of geopolitical interests of modern subjects of international relations besides to the natural resources of another state may be, first, the technologies owned by the state at a particular time (aircraft, space technology, nuclear energy, etc.); secondly, the territory (geographical location of important infrastructure objects); third, the banking system of the state, its information and cultural space.

Conclusions

Control over external financial flows and their distribution in the state among public organizations should be under constant monitoring of special state executive bodies.

Monitoring of the state information space should be carried out by the competent authorities online.

Consolidation of society on the basis of a national narrative should become the basis of civic consciousness.

All the contradictions of historical, mental and cultural nature, between citizens living in one state, are a set of risks and threats that can be used by other actors in modern international relations to create a crisis and destroy the foundations of statehood. In this sense, the state's explanatory work on the risks and threats that exist in today's globalized world must be the cornerstone of consolidating the nation.

The development of a broad narrative and ideological and patriotic education of citizens

will also contribute to the state's resistance to hybrid threats.

Prospects for further research. A perspective area for further political research is the analysis of the relationship between various non-governmental organizations and international organizations, trust, funds and grants that financed opposition forces during the color revolutions.

An analysis of the main changes in public debt indicators before and after the color revolution, as well as an analysis of the state of the economy, industry and the financial system of the entire country will make it possible to establish substantive connections between the main subjects of political processes of the new world order.

The research results obtained in this way will help to reduce political tensions and establish peace in the regions.

References

Abbasov, R.G. Gene Sharp: Political plagiarism or a classic of color revolutions. Available from: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/dzhin-sharp-politologicheskii-plagiat-ili-klasyka-tsvetnyh-revolutsiy/viewer>.

Gene Sharp From dictatorship to democracy. Available from: http://files.kob.su/books/sharp_ot_diktaturyi_k_demokratii.pdf.

Katunin, Yu. A. "Color revolutions": methodology and methods of organization.

Available from: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/tsvetnye-revolutsii-metodologiya-i-metody-organizatsii/viewer>

Tsaturyan, S. A. Nonviolent resistance as a technology of regime change in US foreign policy (2004–2014). Available from: <http://dissovet.rudn.ru/web-local/prep/rj/dis/download.php?file=d5189550f99296561a854e8c85bd875315812>