



Psychological Warfare, NGO « Organizational Weapons », Regime Change

Attacking National Leaders Through ‘Psychological Pincers’

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Today's geopolitical struggles entail widespread use of psychological warfare against national elites, even from allied countries. This survey examines psychological techniques, including the use of informal NGO channels, which have been dubbed “organizational weapons.”

Psychological attacks attempt to take the target into veritable “pincers.” They are effective because the target, in the form of a national government, is subjected to pressure from both legitimate and “shadowy” actors, attacking from both above and below.

In order to carry out a pincer attack, the attacker must satisfy five conditions:

1. Establish a psychological pressure environment.

It entails two sets of activities. The first is establishing the pressure from above, in the form of planting “agents of influence” into the government and into associated organizations dealing with analysis and information dissemination, and pressure from below by creating a range of legal and shadowy societal and organization organizations to influence public opinion, organize mass protests, and coordinate anti-government activities.

2. Implementing the “pressure from below” scenario.

The objective is to provoke mass displeasure with the government through the formation of public opinion by emphasizing government’s failures, including imagined ones. This information campaign then leads to protests, civil disobedience, and other measures to provoke the government into suppressing the demonstrations through the use of violence, which in turn will persuade many individuals to demand the government’s resignation. The goal is to place the government into a stressful situation in which it has to make snap decisions in order to stabilize the political situation and to lessen the psychological assault.

3. Organizing “pressure from above”

This includes using agents of influence to lobby the government to adopt certain decisions. The lobbying accomplishes two things:

The target government leaders are flooded with false information on the unfolding events, with such information coming from trusted and close sources including even relatives and good friends.

It impresses upon government members the unavoidability of adopting proposed measures.

4. Making the political decision.

Given growing pressure from above and below, the government falls under a psychological sense of emergency, in which it feels it has to make hasty decisions. If the decision does not satisfy the organizers, they step up the level of pressure. Once the government makes the expected decision, the organizers move to the next step.

5. Removing the pressure. Once the decision satisfies the organizers, its widespread and enthusiastic acceptance is organized. The situation returns to normal as the level of organizing activity drops off.

The pincer mechanism works on many levels. It assumes the use of internal and external political forces to exert pressure. It can work on three levels at once—international, internal elite, and regional elite.

The psychological pressure's effectiveness depends on several factors:

- Actual social conditions, including mass expectations;
- The population's specific psychological factors which are being manipulated;
- The level of cohesion and professionalism displayed by the "from below" pressure team exerting pressure on the region's population.

The three-level pressure system includes the following:

a) The official international relations, including the totality of bi- and multi-lateral contacts which the state's foreign policy organizations maintain, and which can be used to pressure the country's highest officials responsible for national security and the military, through diplomatic notes, official statements, etc.

b) The "transnational geopolitical pluralism system", consisting of:

- The global specialized network of international foundations, banks, and humanitarian organizations which provide an appearance of pluralism. This initiates psychological pressure.
- Multi-national corporations which have offices in most countries.
- Transnational NGOs and unofficial political entities, such as the Trilateral Commission.
- International organized crime and terrorism.
- Interpersonal relations among senior government officials, or the so-called "social network of world elites."

c) The global public opinion-forming system, including:

- International media and news agencies;
- National media and news services aimed at foreign audiences;
- The Internet.

This system can offer moral support to the protesters and separatists and also pressure national leaders by helping form a corresponding international public opinion.

The internal elite groups exerting psychological pressure include:

- Members of the ruling elite;
- The political anti-elite consisting of people who want to join the elite and change the country's political, financial, legal policies;
- The political sub-elite, or secondary groups within the elite who are not happy with their status and want to move up.

External forces are far more effective at interfering in domestic politics under conditions of globalization. Terms such as "economics without borders" or "freedom of the press" assumes not only complete freedom for legitimate economic and media actors, but also for shadowy entities which can render financial and moral support of the anti-elites and sub-elites in their confrontation against the ruling elites.

The media play a key role in ensuring the "pincer". They are used to magnify the political pressure on the leaders and to provide psychological support for the protesters.

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