

PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

IGOR DOBAEV. "COLOR REVOLUTIONS" IN GEOPOLITICAL
TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

*Keywords: agents of influence; coups
d'état; ideologies; non-governmental
organizations; network wars; color revolutions.*

Igor Dobaev,
DSc(Philosophy), Professor,
Expert of Russian Academy of Sciences,
Director of Center of Regional Studies,
Institute of Sociology and Religion,
Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don,
e-mail: ipdobaev@sfedu.ru
© I. Dobaev 2023

Citation: Dobaev I. "Color Revolutions" in Geopolitical
Transformations in the Post-Soviet Space // Russia and
the Moslem World, 2023, № 1 (319), P. 29–38.
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.02

Abstract. The article reveals the nature and content of the "color revolutions", which are a special case of the so-called "network wars". It is shown that "colored" agitations are based on the foundation of internal conflict-causing factors (political, socio-economic, demographic-migration and ethno-confessional). However, they would not have been possible without external influence and diverse feeding,

while the main external manipulator of the "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet space is the "consolidated West" led by the United States. "Color" deviations pose a real threat to the national security of countries in the post-Soviet space, and therefore need further detailed reflection and effective counteraction.

In 1996, the work of American authors J. Arkilla and D. Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Network," was published, which suggested a new approach to changes in the military sphere caused by the information revolution. The researchers went by the coordinate system "cyber war – psychological war – network war." The chosen term for the new phenomenon – "network war" – emphasized the influence of the information revolution on organization and management in conflicts, on the development of network forms of organizations, doctrines and strategies. Later, this approach was developed in their other works. Other researchers, in particular M. Castels, also addressed to the topic of "network war." Today, this approach has become dominant in the US military-political and scientific community; and organizational and managerial aspects came to the fore, postponing technical ones.

On the basis of the exploratory work of these authors, the American military developed a new concept of warfare (emerging theory of war). This is the Office of Force Transformation under Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski. Subsequently, it was actively introduced into the practice of US warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, tested for training exercises and simulators. The developers of this theory were convinced that in the near future this theory, if it does not replace the traditional theory of war, will significantly and irreversibly change it qualitatively. The new concept of war meant to be the so-called "Network war."¹

The theory of network wars claims that modern conflicts are deployed in 4 fringe areas of human structure: in physical, information, cognitive (reasonable) and social. Each of them has

important individual weight, but the decisive effect in network wars is achieved by the synergy (unidirectional action of various forces) of all these elements.

The physical field is a traditional area of warfare in which physical forces collide in time and space. This area includes combat zones (sea, land, air, outer space), fighting units (platforms) and physical carriers of communication networks. This aspect can be best measured, and previously served as the main one in determining the strength of the army and its ability to conduct warfare. In the information era, this does not become so obvious, and it's necessary to consider the physical aspect as a certain marginal effect of network technologies, the bulk of which are located in other areas, but which project their effects onto the physical area.

An information field is an area where information is created, processed, and distributed. This area covers information transmission systems, base sensors (measuring elements), information processing models, etc. This is the predominant environment of the era of network wars, which turned into an independent category – the “information sphere” along with physical environments, acquiring the major – if not central – importance. The information area in the era of network wars connects all levels of warfare and is a priority. Advantages or disadvantages in the accumulation, transmission, processing and protection of information in this case gradually become critical.

The cognitive field is the consciousness of the fighter. Particularly it is the space where the so-called “Effects-based operations, EBO” are conducted. All major wars and battles are deployed and won in this area. It is in the cognitive area such phenomena as “commander intention,” doctrine, tactics, technique and procedures are located. Network-centric wars pay great attention to this factor, although the processes taking place in this area are much more difficult to measure than in the field of physical one. Sometimes their value and effectiveness are much more important.

The social field is an area of people interaction. Historical, cultural, religious values, psychological attitudes, ethnic characteristics prevail here. In the social space, relations between people are established, natural hierarchies are built in groups – leaders, the led, etc., group relations systems are created. The social field is a context of network warfare that should be taken into account in the most thorough way.

The central task of conducting “network wars” is to carry out the above-mentioned “Effects-based operations, EBO. EBOs are defined as a set of actions aimed at enemies, neutrals and even allies under conditions of peace, crisis and war”².

However, the use of the concept of network wars by the Americans in warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq turned out to be effective only at the first, contactless stage of these campaigns. Furthermore, it required significant material resources. In this regard, especially after the death of Cebrowski its practical application was abandoned.

However, the theoretical and practical developments of network wars turned out to be in demand in the organization and conduct of the so-called “color revolutions.” This term was first used in 2004 when the author of this work wrote the article “The Role and Place of “Color Revolutions” in Geopolitical Transformations in Southern Russia,” which was published in 2005 in the collection of the Center for System and Regional Studies and Forecasting of Rostov State University (now the Center for Regional Studies of SFU)³. We understand “*color revolution*” as a pro-Western, and more often a pro-American coup, carried out in a particular country in the interests of the West (US) using the tools of network warfare⁴.

It should be emphasized that “color revolutions” are not started from nothing. For their successful implementation in a particular country, it is necessary to have a complex of internal conflict factors: political, socio-economic, demographic-migration, ethno-confessional. These deviations are actively fueled from outside. It can be argued that the main subject of

“color revolutions,” or better to say “color overthrows,” is an “external player” based on Western and pro-Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs) already created within a country. The external player in all known “color revolutions” even in the role of the observer himself influenced the ongoing transformations and organized wide public and diplomatic support for the coupists. He directly or indirectly participated both in power neutralizing (forcing to abandon active opposition) and in stimulating and organizing opposition actions. In short, he largely determined both the methods and the directions of transformation. Moreover, consistently considering such “revolutionary” changes in the post-Soviet space as a rotating change of ruling groups, it turns out that each of them next became, as a rule, increasingly dependent on the West – the United States, the EU or NATO.

However, there is no doubt that the reason for the overwhelming number of major socio-political conflicts in the modern world is geopolitical in nature, while their specific content is formed from the outer interethnic, confessional, political, socio-economic and other contradictions. The sudden aggravation of the conflict, the radicalization of opponents, the choice of unusually aggressive methods of its “resolution,” the protracted nature of the confrontation, are unmistakable signs of external, subjective intervention of the “third force.” With regard to the post-Soviet space and wider – the Black Sea-Caspian region, such a “third force” is, as a rule, the transatlantic community – the United States and its satellites, pursuing their geopolitical interests in the region⁵.

Among the foreign structures, and many of them who actively worked and continue to work in the post-Soviet space, there are organizations that differ in influence, ideology, sources of funding and degree of relations with governments. Some NGOs declare themselves absolutely private, such as the Open Society Institute of American billionaire George Soros. Others (for example, World Vision), being private organizations, receive

funding from the state. There are also structures under political parties: in the US it is the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, in Germany – the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (existing under the Liberal Democratic Party), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Christian Democratic Union) and the Heinrich Bell Foundation (associated with the Green Party). There are also organizations which declared objective is to implement socio-economic development programs in foreign countries, for example, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) or the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), etc.

These organizations finance most diverse programs declaring the protection of women's rights, support for small businesses, strengthening civil society with its main idea of "human rights," AIDS prevention, environmental protection, training of journalists or judges, education reform, etc. However, all their initiatives are united by a single goal: they are designed to promote the implementation of the so-called Western "values" and "principles of democracy." In such projects, the condition for obtaining funding is the readiness of the country, certain groups of the population to "democratize" on Western models.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the newly formed states began to adhere to the principle of diversification in foreign policy, focusing on various countries and blocs of states, including Western ones. This approach, of course, made it easier for the collective West to implement its structures in the post-Soviet space and create numerous (hundreds and even sometimes thousands) Western and pro-Western NGOs in the new sovereign states. These organizations finance a wide variety of programs aimed at a certain "liberalization" of the population of these countries. However, all their undertakings are united by a single goal: they are designed to promote the implementation of the so-called "Principles of democracy." In such projects, the country's readiness for "democratization" becomes a condition for obtaining funding, and their goal is to reformat human

consciousness. This approach bears fruit in the form of the implementation of coups d'état during the implementation of "color revolutions" in a particular country.

Many pro-Western network structures operating in the post-Soviet space together are a complex, multidimensional, total network. It should be emphasized that almost all these networks are deployed, first of all, in the intellectual segment of societies, covering the field of education, including higher one; scientific and creative structures. A separate and important area of activity of such NGOs in the deployment of networks is considered to be youth, work with which is carried out in schools, secondary and higher educational institutions, as well as outside these institutions, by forming various youth structures and organizations.

Definitely, structures financially dependent on the West are used by their organizers and sponsors for the following main purposes: reception of confidential information under the guise of scientific, cultural and other contacts, influencing the flow of information in the interests of the United States and its allies, selecting and subsequent training of specific persons, including as a tool for organizing and conducting "color putches."

In the West, both scientifically and pragmatically, technologies for carrying out "color coups" have been thoroughly developed, primarily by using "soft power" as quite effective and relatively cheap. First of all, here the work of the American author Gene Sharp "From dictatorship to democracy. Strategy and Tactics of Liberation" published in 1993 should be mentioned. However, it's important that this work was written back in 1988, in anticipation of the first and unsuccessful "color coup" for the Americans, which they planned to carry out in Burma (Myanmar). Nevertheless, using "soft power," they further achieved success in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), Armenia (2018). There were also failures: in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus. The failures of the "colored" are specific to countries where the so-called "democratic" norms

have been introduced least of all, and the ruling regime harshly suppresses the speeches of the non-systemic opposition, and vice versa.

If the “soft” forms do not work, the initiators of the “colored” are ready to use “tough” means of fighting. An example is the so-called “revolution of dignity,” which was carried out in Ukraine in the winter of 2014, as well as the January events of 2022 in Kazakhstan, accompanied by pogroms and victims. The mentioned “revolution of dignity,” in contrast to the previous “color” coups, can be called the “multi-color revolution,” since its participants were carriers of “multi-color” ideological views. Representatives of student youth, scientific and creative intelligentsia came out under orange and even rainbow banners, radicals from among the Crimean Tatars – under blue⁶, Ukrainian nationalists – Bandera – under black and red, etc. There is no doubt that such interaction of carriers of different ideologies became possible as a result of a single puppeteer for all of them – a consolidated West. As noted above, in January 2021, an attempt to conduct a “multi-color revolution” was made in Kazakhstan, but it was unsuccessful in connection with the decisive actions of the CSTO member countries.

Doubtless, the “color” methods of struggle in “soft,” “hard” and “mixed” forms, carried out by the United States and its NATO allies, with the pretext of “democratization” and “liberalization” of many countries of the world, including in Russia and the post-Soviet space, using foreign and local NGOs, pose a threat to the national security of these states and peoples. In this regard, they need comprehension, detailed study, the choice of forms, methods and means for the most effective counteraction to inspirators of “color” perturbations.

A serious experience for understanding the essence and stages of the deployment of “multi-colored” networks was the riots inspired by the West in January 2022 in Kazakhstan. It is quite obvious that the ruling regime remained in power only due to the military assistance of the CSTO. Behind the protests in

Kazakh regions, especially Alma-Ata, there were the same forces and behind attempted coups in other post-Soviet states, including the Russian Federation. It seems that the successful experience of other countries is useful for study and application. Of particular interest is the practice of countering “colored” in Belarus, where in 2020 the authorities independently, without external power support, managed to suppress the growing rebellion, ensuring not only their own security, but also the safety of their partners in integration structures.

As the Belarusian experience has shown, the policy chosen by the leadership of this republic to mop up the country of Western “influence agents” (“foreign agents”) is the only correct one. Having refused to flirt with foreign NGOs, in recent years all organizations financed from abroad have been practically liquidated in Belarus. At the same time, all the so-called “independent” media were closed, and some of them, like a number of telegram channels, were recognized as extremist. After the Kazakh events, the struggle with the remnants of these elements was only intensified.

However, in Belarus, attention is also drawn to opposition to those “colored” forces, which, following the example of Ukraine (2013–2014) and Kazakhstan (2022), can use not only “soft” but also “hard” force. This was confirmed by the creation of a joint Russian-Belarusian group of forces on the territory of the state allied for Russia, joint exercises to improve the coordination of units and increase combat training. Naturally, such actions were spurred by the actions of the collective West, waging a proxy war against Russia, using the territory of Ukraine and its resources.

The experience of some post-Soviet states shows that where the power vertical is strengthened, “anti-color” legislation is improved, Western and pro-Western NGOs are liquidated, “agents of influence” is mopped up, the possibility of external inspiration of “color” insinuations is sharply reduced there (an example is Azerbaijan and present Belarus). On the contrary,

where a reckless policy of “multi-vector” is pursued, such states become defenseless against “colored” (for example, Ukraine, Armenia, a number of Central Asian states). As for Russia, since the mid-2000s, consistent work has been underway to counter external influence and reduce the potential of internal conflictogenic factors, which are the fuel on which destructive external forces parasitize, with their allegedly private “funds,” NGOs and “agents of influence.”⁷ In particular, laws have been adopted on such NGOs, “agents of influence,” etc. In particular, laws have been adopted on such NGOs, “agents of influence,” etc. However, it seems that this work needs further strengthening and improvement.

References

1. Dugin A.G. Social studies for citizens of the new Russia. M.: “Eurasian Movement,” 2007. P. 395–402.
2. Dobaev I.P. Geopolitics and geopolitical processes in the Black Sea-Caspian region. Rostov n/Don: Foundation for Science and Education. P. 85–94.
3. Dobaev I.P. Role and place of “color revolutions” in geopolitical transformations in the South of Russia // Eurasian project: Caucasian vector. Rostov n/Don: Publishing House of SKNC VSh, 2005.
4. Dobaev I.P. Mechanisms and technologies for the implementation of “color revolutions” by the West in the post-Soviet space//State and municipal administration. SCAGS scientific notes. 2008. № 2. P. 128–141.
5. Dobaev I.P., Cherevkov O.S. Network wars in the Black Sea-Caspian region: threats to the national security of Russia//Humanitarian of the South of Russia. 2015. № 4. P. 182–199.
6. Anisimova NA, Dobaev I.P. Network structures of terrorists in the North Caucasus. Moscow; Rostov n/Don: Social and humanitarian knowledge, 2016. P. 186.
7. Dobaev I.P. Network structures of the “orange” in the Southern Federal District: threats to the national and regional security of Russia // Orange networks: from Belgrade to Bishkek. Spb.: Aletheia, 2008. P. 190–199.

Received: 18.01.2023.

Accepted for publication: 07.02.2023.