Methodology for Evaluation of Soft War

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims in determining criteria for evaluating and analyzing Soft War. According to definition of this method about war, target addition and subtraction, cost and achievement, the method has been presented as the most reliable method. In this regard, determining level of aggression has been considered for purpose of evaluating desires and groups under aggression, identification of instruments and using them have been considered for purpose of determining costs and finally, field studies on ideas, behaviors and performance of target group have been proposed for purpose of estimating achievement.

Keywords: Soft War, evaluation, target, cost, achievement

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, one of the most important issues about war is comprehensive and accurate evaluation of its outcome and destiny. Lack of considering the basic issue may cause ambiguity and misdirection of both wings of war about their status and conditions. In addition, this can prevent them to have proper planning for continuing their victory or compensating their failure.

This issue in regard with Soft War is so important because of its complicated and artificial nature. In this kind of war, aggressors won’t seek for expanding their governance dominance and affairs like this, so that its effects and appearances can be evaluated statistically. Goals and plans of this war are not tangible, so that one can estimate rate of achieving them. They would not be also occurred in certain period, so that victor and defeated wings can be determined at the end of war. Hence, the present study has investigated evaluation criteria for Soft War.

Problem statement:

War is a coercive measure that is taken for purpose of forcing enemy to accept desires and requests of aggressors [1]. Although war is one of the most wonderful social phenomena, the clearest creator of the history and the most important form of social life evolutions, a few researchers have considered visual study of features and operational aspects of this subject.

In addition, although Polemology [2] has been responsible for studying forms, reasons, outcomes...
and performances of war as a social phenomenon (Botul, 1989: 1), it has proposed no certain method for evaluation of victory and defeat in it till now (website of Sacred Defeat Sciences (stability) for Iran-Iraq War, victory or defeat, ref date: Sep 16, 2013).

An issue that makes concept of victory and defeat more complicated and conflicting is associated with different criteria applied in this field. According to some of the mentioned criteria, one can consider one wing defeated and according to other criterion, one can announce same party as victor of the battlefield. In some cases, one can even consider both wings as victor parties. Some criteria such as time, target, instruments, cost and achievement can typically form a part of victory in war.

Moreover, wars in different levels can be evaluated differently. Wars can be evaluated in field form and defeat and victory can be evaluated as evaluation criterion in operational level [3]. In addition, one can consider strategic levels [4] as evaluation criterion and can consider defeat and victory also in major form [5].

The complexity and ambiguity increases and needs more care and concentration due to invisibility of aggressors and their targets and plans, expansion of battlefield, evolutional and time-oriented nature of it, and finally its non-physical and software-based nature.

**Main body:**

There are many different methods to determine evaluation criteria for victory and defeat in Soft War; although it seems that the most reliable and exact method is using definition of the method about war. This is because; it is clear that evaluation of phenomena through identifying their nature reduces probability of error to a significant range.

Accordingly, it could be mentioned that due to presented definitions for Soft War (ability of affecting others in order to achieve desirable outcomes through attraction) [6], the most comprehensive and suitable evaluation criterion is level of achieving targets and desires, which can be achieved through addition and subtraction of target, cost and achievements.

As it can be found from the mentioned definition, designers and executors of Soft War want to impose their soft dominance on target group through consuming lowest cost. Hence, one can evaluate this war through identifying desires of aggressors and target group, estimation of applied costs and estimation of changes in aggressor group adjusted with determine goals.

In order to determine desires of aggressors and identify target group, one should determine level of aggression. It could be mentioned that soft power is formed of 3 strategic, intermediate and tactical levels (Hosseini, 2006). Strategic level, which is the highest level of encountering, is resulted from strategic culture of a country and is also related to level of leaders and experts in a country. The main objective in this level is effectiveness on perceptions and identification of competitor experts and leaders and also effect on their will and intention (power of strength) (power and Soft War, from theory to practice, Moradi Hojjatollah, concepts and dimensions of soft threat in security studies, Naeini Ali Mohammad).

Intermediate level is focused on public element of national power of country, which is resulted from national culture. In fact, the level plays role of supporter for targets and performance of strategic level. The level can also give legitimacy to decisions of experts and leaders and can also affect their will. Goals of Soft War in this level include foreclosing intention and motivation of people and making concurrent populations apathetic and changing them into opponent populations and also forming civil disobedience through making gap between two strategic and intermediate levels. Success in this level can cause 5 crises including political, legitimacy, influence, cooperation, distribution and identity for invaded country (ibid).

In tactical level, which is the lowest level for encountering soft power, armed forces of invaded country would be aggressed. The main aim in this level is foreclosing intention and spirits of resistance in fighters of rival front.

After determining evaluation level, it is turn to estimate costs, which in this level applied instruments and consumed costs in this regard, should be determined. This is absolutely depended on invaded and target group. This means that Soft War in strategic level would be followed basically using instruments such as sanction and allurement. In intermediate level, applied instruments include media, electronic technologies and mass communication devices. In tactical level, threat and intimidation instruments would be tried. For example, if the aggression is conducted using sanction and allurement instruments, consumed budget, collectable earnings that are settled for this purpose to the treasury and also side costs such as decreasing international credit, etc. should be calculated in this regard. However, this kind of war would be formed usually using various instruments and non-evaluable instruments. This can cause some problems with cost estimation.

By the next stage, gained achievements from aggression should be evaluated. In this regard, investigation of performance and behaviors of target population and type of their reaction against relevant issues, especially kind of view to aggressor group, can be useful. This should be followed through field studies on selected statistical population from target population. However, considering questions that can depict desired changes can be best way to achieve the objective.
Finally, one can estimate rate of achievement to target through considering applied instruments or paid costs, so that obtained result from this war can be also gained. It should be also mentioned that because of goals and applied instruments and methods in this kind of war, qualitative outcomes can’t be achieved and defeat and victory in this war can be usually determined based on percentage of victory. Hence, evaluations would gain also relative aspect.

REFERENCES

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3. Tactic or approach in political dictionary means arrangement, combination and structures that facilitate performing or manner of implementing goals, tasks and or certain processes. (Agha Bakhshi Ali and Afshari zadeh Minoo, Dictionary of Political Sciences, pub. Chapar, p.660)
4. Strategy in terms of political sciences means method or general policy applied for achieving certain goals. (ibid)

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