

The Informational Instrument of Power

Definition: the use of various media to collect, control and disseminate information that influences the activities of international players and people (Jordan, p.239). [This is not information power, which is a result of possessing knowledge that others need or want.]

I. A state or an organization can try to control this instrument of power or try to heavily influence its use. North Korea, China, and Russia are examples of states who try to control the instrument domestically.

II. Yet in the era of social media and the World Wide Web, it is difficult for a state or an organization to easily control this instrument.

A. Social media can be used by people and organizations to involve others from within their country or around the world in their cause.

B. Access to the web allows individuals to gather information and interact with others much more easily than in the past.

C. Both social media and the web have greatly increased the sources of information and contact, far beyond the traditional sources of print, radio, and television.

III. Another aspect of the informational instrument of power goes beyond the ability to acquire and communicate information in real time. This aspect involves the computing power to analyze this information quickly and the control systems to pass this analysis to multiple users simultaneously.

IV. Although cyberwar has several targets, one is the disruption of information flow. Due to states' reliance on communications networks via the World Wide Web (from National Security briefings to the NASDAQ), and the threats to those systems, cyberwar has become a critical frontier in national security.