

# Contemporary Issues in International Relations



# Contemporary Issues in International Relations:

## *Problems of the International Community*

Edited by

Mehmet Emin Erendor  
and Mehmet Fatih Öztarsu

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Problems of the International Community

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	vii
Social Media and Perception Management .....	1
Mehmet Emin ERENDOR	
The Cyberespionage Activities of States: International System and Security .....	21
Ali Burak DARICILI	
A New Problem Area in International Security: Investigation of Cyber Attacks .....	38
Soner ÇELİK	
The Transformation of “New” Terrorism into the Most Important Threat to International Security .....	65
Selim KURT	
Legal Framework for Fighting Cybercrime and Criminal Activities on Social Networks: The Example of Former Yugoslavia .....	90
Vida VILIC	
Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant of Armenia: Safety Concerns, Environmental and Military Risks .....	131
Mehmet Fatih ÖZTARSU	
An “In Between-Continent” for a Global Power: The Pivotal Importance of Eurasia to Decode Russia’s Actions in the XXI Century .....	156
Tiago Ferreira LOPES	
Continuity or Transformation? The Trans-Caucasus Policy of the Russian Federation in the Putin Period (2000-2018) .....	180
Murat JANE	

Citizenship and Redefinition of Political Rights: Towards A Global Reverse-Democratization?.....	221
A. Aslıhan ÇELENK	
Turkey in the Future of European Union Security.....	237
Erol KALKAN	
Are Democracies Prone to Financial Crises?: Analyzing the Effects of Democratic Norms on the 2008 Mortgage and Euro Crises.....	251
Murat ÜLGÜL	
Racism in the Destabilizing World: Is American Racism Resurging? ...	272
Yusuf ÇINAR, Gülşah KÖPRÜLÜ and Serdar ÇUKUR	
The World in Transition: Between Modernism and Post-Modernism....	290
Vahit GÜNTAY	
The Rise of Global Inequality and Populism: An Analyse of State, Society and Economics Tenet.....	309
Uğur Yasin ASAL	
The Advantages of Sanctions Against Iran for the Countries of the Region .....	327
Yeşim DEMİR	
The 4th Industrial Revolution: International Relations and Policy—Case of South Korea and China.....	356
Prosper Ndiershey FUNWIE	
Generating Soft Power through Education: How South Korea Approaches Central Asia with its Education Diplomacy .....	377
Eriks VARPAHOVSKIS	
Contributors.....	416

## PREFACE

The ever-changing structure of international relations (IR) and the change of the policies of the actors in the international system cause many deficiencies in the IR literature. This situation leads to the loss of the validity and creates necessities of the IR studies because this is not a static field. Due to this reason, a big gap occurs in time and this discipline requires new analyses of the most current developments in the world. On the other hand, risks and uncertainties associated with the post-Cold War threats have led to the emergence of new concepts in the IR literature. This situation demonstrated the importance of the security policies of both states and international organizations while the international structure was changing.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, September 11 terrorist attacks, the protests and political crises in the Middle East and African countries, which started in 2010 and called the Arab Spring dramatically affected the international politics differently than in the Cold War period. Additionally, terrorism's spreading global threat shook the international system in which IR discipline faced a new era. Furthermore, the inability of international organizations to play an effective role in these crises and the increasing number of human rights violations both on regional and global basis led to questioning the structure of international organizations.

The regional and global crises have also displayed weaknesses in the IR discipline and led to the requirement for a new study in the literature. Both the abovementioned recent events and the newly emerging threats, risks, and uncertainties need to be clarified and reviewed in detail. The main purpose of this book is to eliminate these deficiencies and to create a new perspective on the literature.

This book has been written to complete the missing points in IR literature. We can say that this is an essential source for everyone, especially students, academics and followers of the IR.

There is an increasing interest in international events nowadays, both students and other people want to learn something and see all developments from a new perspective. The lack of such information from credible sources motivates students to follow and interpret the agenda from the newspaper.

Naturally, this situation prevents their academic and analytical abilities. Additionally, the current problems in international relations are included in the curriculum of almost every university in the International Relations course. Relying on newspaper articles or columns negatively affect the world of science and make all people interpret events like journalists. With the publication of this book, we attempted to prevent this situation and to contribute to the views of people. In this context, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who participated in the preparation process of our book.

**Mehmet Emin ERENDOR**  
**Mehmet Fatih ÖZTARSU**



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT

MEHMET EMIN ERENDOR<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

As technology and its facilities develop, people integrate them into their lives. These technological innovations make both people's lives and the work of states easier. As a result, all of our lives depend on technological innovations in the realms of communication, travelling, food, washing etc., but social media has changed the structure of technology in terms of communication, and has created a global revolution. Using social media, people can share their ideas quickly with their followers and communicate with other people all over the world, and additionally, during the last decade, social media has also helped to shape the world's events, such as the Arab Spring, which was started at the end of 2010.

Although social media has been used for communication and sharing photos and videos by ordinary people, it has also been used by terrorists and hackers for deception and perception management operations. As can be seen in the last decades with the emergence of the Syrian wars and conflicts, the international community has faced new types of terrorist organisations such as PYD and ISIS. These new terrorist organisations seem to be more dangerous because they use social media to recruit new members, spread their messages, gather intelligence, and so on. PYD used social media, particularly Twitter, to show Turkey as a terror-supporting country during the Siege of Kobani. As well as this, a video was released by ISIS on 23 December 2016 in which a group of people, alleged to have been Turkish soldiers, were burned alive. Before the killing of these people, Turkey was threatened with terrorist attacks if it did not change its foreign policy towards ISIS. The main goals of social media use by terrorists are to

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<sup>1</sup> Asst. Prof. Dr., Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University, merendor@atu.edu.tr

influence the public's psychology in order to create fear, change their ideas about the terrorist organizations, and to put pressure on governments.

The main aim of this article is to analyse how terrorists and terror organizations use social media for their aims, and some examples of their social media use will be used as case studies to explain perception management operations.

## 2. Social Media

With the development of technology, people have gained new opportunities. One of the most important developments is that people have the opportunity to communicate quickly. In addition to communication, technological advances have also made people's lives easier in the areas of production, consumption and other fields. These developments have facilitated human life, but at the same time have changed their traditionalized living standards. For example, people are now receiving the news from the internet, not from newspapers, television or radio. These traditional media services are still also used by some people, but this interest is not the same as it was before the technological innovations that led to today's internet.

With the internet being more integrated into people's lives, computers and smartphones have started to act as a part of people's bodies, in a sense. While the internet offers new opportunities to people, the emergence and spread of social media accounts have led to people having a continuous online life.

The first known social media account was created in 1997, on a platform called Six Degrees (Hendricks, 2013). After the creation of this social media platform, new social media platforms have been created, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and so on. Although there are many different approaches and much research on the topic of social media, it does not have any common definition because it is continually evolving (McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase, 2017; p. 14). Therefore, social media has many different definitions.

Correa and et al. define the concept as something that *“provides a mechanism for the audience to connect, communicate, and interact with each other and their mutual friends through instant messaging or social networking sites”* (2010; pp. 247-248). This definition shows that social media is used by people to connect, communicate and interact with others (McCay-Peet and Quan-Haase, 2017; p. 16). Kaplan and Haenlein define the term as, *“Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that*



January 2019's digital media statistics are shown in Figure 1 in detail. When Figure 1 is examined, it is clear that the world population is around 7.7 billion, the number of internet users is nearly 4.5 billion, and the number of social media users is 3.5 billion. In particular, the widespread use of smartphones, which is one of the opportunities brought by technology, is also a great opportunity to use social media accounts. Within this framework, the number of people connected to their social media accounts from their smartphones is stated to be more than 3 billion.

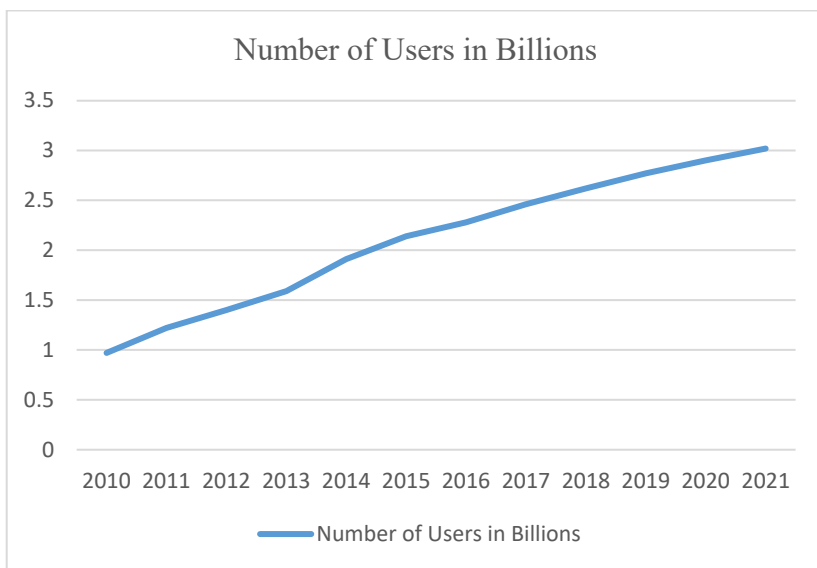


Figure 2: Statista (2019), *Number of Social Network Users Worldwide from 2010 to 2021*, Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-world-wide-social-network-users/> (Accessed at: 10/07/2019)

As is clear in Figure 2, the number of social media users increased rapidly between 2010 and 2018. This number is expected to increase further by 2021. Facebook is one of the most important social media platforms in terms of the number of users. Figure 3, which is below, shows the number of users of different social media platforms. According to January 2019's statistics, the number of Facebook members is 2.271 billion, followed by YouTube at 1.900 billion, and WhatsApp at 1.5 billion people (Digital 2019: Global Internet Use Accelerates). Although Twitter has 326 million members according to the latest statistics (Digital 2019: Global Internet Use

Accelerates), it has a structure that can be used very effectively by people, and has an impact on international politics through hashtags.

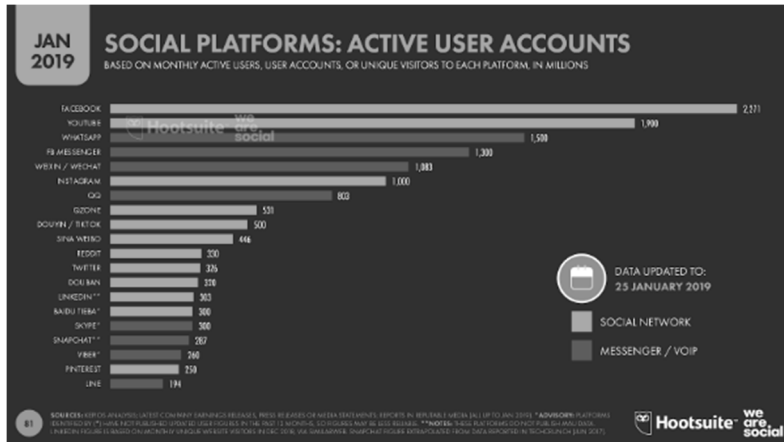


Figure 3: “Digital 2019: Global Internet Use Accelerates”, Available at: <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2019/01/digital-2019-global-internet-use-accelerates> (Accessed at: 10/07/2019)

It is important to ask this question: *Why do people pay more attention to social media?* There are different components to this question, but it is very easy to answer. Firstly, traditional media has a control mechanism, and therefore the content of news or information must be checked for accuracy. While there is a possibility that ideas and thoughts can be censored or not spread through the traditional media, there is no such possibility in social media. At the moment, while there is no need for permission from anyone to share ideas and opinions, there is no obligation to pass the audit of a higher authority in social media. In this context, especially for the young generation – or in other words, the technological generation – communicating on the internet and actively using social media accounts enables the population of their users to increase (Erendor and Yildirim, 2019, p. 346). Secondly, traditional media often operate within a certain ideology. Thirdly, the flow of information in traditional media is not fast. Through online communication tools such as Twitter, Facebook, personal blogs, YouTube, e-mails, and other websites and social media accounts, people can share and interact, unlimited by time and location. Since there is no charge for sharing information over social media, usage of these technologies is rapidly increasing day by day. Through social media, people can write their own ideas, and discuss and exchange ideas with many people – both those they

know and those they do not. At the same time, this gives people the opportunity to meet like-minded people with compatible philosophies, and thus to form groups (Erendor and Yıldırım, 2019). Fourthly, traditional media may not include all the news, as it targets a specific audience. As a result, while people are in communication in written and visual media, they have to use their own identities clearly, while social media does not require this, and people can communicate more easily without revealing their own identities. In this context, social media differs from traditional media because it is both instantaneous and simultaneous and allows mutual information sharing (Erendor and Yıldırım, 2019).

Mayfield explains the characteristics of social media under five different headings:

1. *Participation: social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. It blurs the line between media and audience.*
2. *Openness: most social media services are open to feedback and participation. They encourage voting, comments and the sharing of information. There are rarely any barriers to accessing and making use of content – password-protected content is frowned on.*
3. *Conversation: whereas traditional media is about “broadcast” (content transmitted or distributed to an audience) social media is better seen as a two-way conversation.*
4. *Community: social media allows communities to form quickly and communicate effectively. Communities share common interests, such as a love of photography, a political issue or a favourite TV show.*
5. *Connectedness: Most kinds of social media thrive on their connectedness, making use of links to other sites, resources and people. (2008, p. 5)*

In a sense, these characteristic features allowed the spread of social media accounts. At the same time, the information in social media accounts is more likely to be disseminated than that in traditional media accounts, and suddenly people on one side of the world can be aware of an incident happening on the other. This situation can be stated as one of the conditions that increase the speed of using social media in the international community (Erendor and Yıldırım, 2019).

On the other hand, one of the important issues is the difficulty of verifying whether the news published in social media is correct or not. Considering that social media accounts are not only used by people within the framework of communication, and that those of terrorist organizations are also used within the framework of perception management, negative news to be shared from social media accounts may negatively affect the policies of

states. However, such perceptual news can be prevented by raising the awareness of social media users, and examining the sources of the news in a rational way (Erendor and Yıldırım, 2019).

### 3. Perception Management

According to Karabulut (2014), perception management represents concepts such as psychological warfare, social engineering, political engineering, propaganda, public diplomacy, perception and image management (p. 11). The main aim of perception management is to design or manage the current situation or the future. For example, Kissinger states that *“it is not so important that something is real; but it is very important that it is perceived as real”* (Suffagah, 2018). If there is no reality, but you perceived the information as real, then the perception management reaches its aim.

It is important to explain the concepts of perception and perception management. The Cambridge Dictionary defines the concept of perception as; *“a belief or opinion, often held by many people and based on how things seem”* (Cambridge Dictionary). Menteşe and İli (2016) define the concept as *“the transmission of the objective world into the subjective world through senses, that is, taking us to the reality”* (p. 375). The important thing here is how the idea looks and people feel.

Perception management is defined by the US Department of Defense as; *“Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviours and official actions favourable to the originator’s objectives. In various ways, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations”* (2001; p. 411). The main purpose of perception management is to realize the desired purpose or action by directing the thoughts, ideas and emotions of the person directing the masses. Therefore, the referring person can use any tool for his own purpose. According to Saydam (2007), *“perception management emerges as a concept originating from the United States and a method used for the adoption of American political decisions in the country and around the world”* (p. 28). According to Brunner (2013), perception management comprises planned operations intending to influence people’s emotions, motives, objectives, and their ideas, and the authorities’ intent to shape the environment with manipulation (p. 10).

Perception management can also be described as an effort to create an image because the party who wants to create this perception wishes to define the ways in which her own image or her own views, thoughts, life or other things are perceived by another person. The main goal here is to manage perceptions, influence minds and put pressure on those who govern. For this reason, perception management is also seen as a psychological pressure factor. These psychological operations can be seen in the definition given by the US Department of Defense.

Siegel explains the special points of perception management as;

- To receive and build public opinion support at home and abroad to maintain legitimacy
- To declare their actions in order to build trust against the enemy or third parties and explain the result of these actions
- Affecting the behaviours, ideas, and opinions in accordance with the purpose (2005; pp. 118-119).

There are many different examples of the use of perception management. For example, the US used this tactic in the Iraq War in 2003. Bush explained that Iraq supported terrorists and that they were the behind the 9/11 attacks (Aydinyan, 2015; Kapoor, 2009). In addition, Bush claimed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and that these would be controlled by terrorists (Kapoor, 2009). After expressing this opinion, he received public support.

Also, Hollywood is one of the most important parts of the USA's perception management operations. According to Menteşe and İli (2016), the American film industry has spent too much money on attempts to change the ideas and behaviours of the people (p. 377). For example, the Superman films, Armageddon, and other similar movies show us that America is a big power and that it protects the world from all threats and dangers.

To sum up, perception management is even important during peacetime, because every state would like to influence other societies without war and fear. Perception management gives this opportunity to states.

#### **4. Social Media and Perception Management**

With the development of technology, the tactics by which perception management is applied have begun to change. Perception management by traditional methods, especially media, film, newspapers, and magazines, has changed with the spread of the internet and especially the use of social media



accounts. Freedom, comfort, confidence and encouragement previously given to people through films have now become widespread through social media. In a sense, this situation has caused the difference between reality and artificiality to decrease further. According to Öksüz, interpreted from Walter Lippman, technological innovations and social media shrink the gap between perception and reality in the modern world and this causes complexity in social, political and economic life. The words and images presented to the masses create a kind of virtual reality and are effective in developing behaviour as desired. (Öksüz, 2013).

Nowadays, social media is an important communication tool and it cannot be replaced by other, more traditional media tools. As Brunner states, these technological developments have an important role in communication technologies such as media, and people know that they can access to any single story immediately via the internet (Brunner, 2013; p. 25).

This situation has also created a new battlespace, because technology will be used to attack critical infrastructure, influence people via the internet, shape perceptions, manage operations and so on (Kuehl, 2002; p. 4). Menteşe and İli (2016) state that this has created a decrease in the effects of military and economic power over the shape of societies' behaviours (p. 377). According to Collins, information is the longer-lasting element of power (Collins, 1999). This is a very important explanation of the power of information, because now anyone can affect a whole society with words. As Menteşe and İli state, a 140-character tweet is enough to put people on the street (2016; p. 378). There are many events spread via Twitter, such as the Arab Spring and Gezi Park Protests in Turkey.

The most important point to be mentioned here is whether or not the information shared on social media is correct. Manipulation and deception or false information can accelerate perception management in social media.

Erbischloe analyses offensive social media warfare tactics in his work. According to him, the effectiveness of the tactics to be used depends on whether people can access or use their social media accounts (2017; p. 10). Deception and trolling are the most important tactics of perception management. Sun Tzu explains the importance of deception as; "*All warfare is based on deception*" (Tzu, 1963). Tsikerdekis and Zeadally state that people use deception with benign or hostile intent when connected to anyone (2014; p. 2).

**Table 1: Offensive Social Media Warfare**

<b>Deception:</b> False promises and invalid information.
<b>Confusion:</b> Creating and perpetuating uncertainty.
<b>Dividedness:</b> Instigating hatred and suspicion.
<b>Exposure:</b> Unauthorized release of information
<b>Trolling:</b> Post opposing messages to existing posts.
<b>Relationship building:</b> Establishing cooperative efforts with likeminded people or organizations.
<b>Nullify opponents:</b> Efforts to discredit opponents.
<b>Blended threats:</b> Combined activities to accomplish offensive objectives.

**Source:** Erbschloe, M. (2017), *Social Media Warfare: Equal Weapons for All*, Boca Raton: CRC Press, p. 10

Deception can be defined as using invalid or false information to persuade opponents (Erbschloe, 2017; p. 10). It is generally used as propaganda to create confusion or uncertainty in individuals or groups (Erbschloe, 2019; p. 2).

Trolling is another important part of perception management. Erbschloe explains trolling as; “*the process of having troops respond to social media posts by commenting on existing posts in an attempt by individuals or in the name of organizations to influence, deceive, or recruit and indoctrinate*” (2017; p. 11). Sometimes, people deliberately seek out a person’s historical posts in order to share them in the current day, and this sometimes creates a difficult situation for the target.

Social media platforms provide an opportunity to make deception and trolling easier. These tactics are also used by terrorist organizations. In the next section, the reasons why terrorist organizations use social media will be explained, and some examples of perception management will be given.

## 5. Terrorists and Social Media

It is important to mention here that this topic is too broad to cover all of it, and therefore only a little information will be given about terrorism and their use of social media in this section. The purpose of this section is to give some examples of terrorists' use of social media as perception management.

Given the significance of the threat, it is perhaps surprising that there is no common definition of terrorism. States and organisations use their own definitions. The international community attempted to define the concept of terrorism in the International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism (Walter, 2004; p. 34; Young, 2006; p. 53). According to the Convention;

*“Any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act”*  
(International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism).

The international community has tried to adopt a common definition, but it has been invalidated in terms of the application of this definition by countries in their national laws.

With the developments in technology and information technology, cyberspace has become a tool for terrorists to attack states and international organizations (e.g. information warfare and cybercrime). The new face of terrorism is dangerous because it does not have any limits, due to its use of cyberspace. Also, there is no need for any of the usual bloody actions that terrorists have used historically (e.g. bombing, kidnapping and weapons). According to Hawks, “[t]hey can send viruses to computer systems [of] critical importance and paralyze the military, political and economic resources of one country, or even a continent” (Hawks, 2011; p. 1)

Also, social media is also used by terrorist organizations for furthering their aims and therefore not all news or information shared on social media is true. There are many different typologies with which to analyse why terrorists use cyberspace and technology. One of them was prepared by the Council of Europe and can be seen below.

**Table 2: Cyber Incident Typology by the Council of Europe**

<b>A. Attacks via the Internet</b>	<b>B. Dissemination of Content</b>	<b>C. Use of the Internet for Other Purposes</b>
1. Attacks on Infrastructure a) Types - Large Scale Attacks - Hacking Attacks - Hybrid Attacks - Attacks Resulting in Physical Damage	1. Presentation of Terrorist Views	1. Individual Communication
2. Attacks on Human Life a) Attacks Using Control Systems b) Long-Term Developments	2. Propaganda and Threats	2. The Internet as a Planning and Support Instrument
	3. Recruitment and Training	
	4. Fundraising and Financing	

**Source:** The Council of Europe (2008), *Cyber terrorism: The Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing

As can be seen in the Cyber Incident Typology of the Council of Europe, terrorist activities in cyberspace are divided into three different categories. One of the most important parts of this typology for this research is the use of the internet for “other purposes” and propaganda and threats, because terrorists now use the internet and social media platforms more than before for undertaking their propaganda and individual communications. The internet and social media provide them with a very secret position, and they can thus do their promotion on these platforms.

According to Weimann, terrorist groups are using social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and internet forums to spread their messages, recruit members and gather intelligence (2015).

Terror groups are turning to social media because social media tools are cheap and accessible, facilitating the rapid and widespread of messages. The members of a terrorist organization cannot be followed in their transactions

on social media and this situation brings their privacy to the forefront. In addition, social media platforms allow terrorist groups to interact with their networks. While previously terrorist groups might broadcast their messages through intermediaries, social media platforms allow terrorist groups to deliver their messages directly to their target audiences and chat with them in real time (Okolie-Osemene and Okoh, 2015). Also, this helps them to use perception management operations on the internet (Zanini and Edwards, 2001).

ISIS is known for using social media platforms – predominantly Twitter – to spread its propaganda. Their Twitter activity is so extensive that in early 2016, the social media company closed 125,000 accounts linked to ISIS, and yet the organization still has a huge impact online (Ceron et al., 2019; p. 11; Alfifi et al., 2019; p. 62). According to Klausen (2015), ISIS uses Twitter as a drive communication platform (p.1) and sometime this platform has been used by ISIS to represent itself as stronger than it is.

Picture 1: ISIS Video of Beheading



Source: CBS News (2015), ISIS Releases Another Video of Beheading, available at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/isis-releases-another-video-of-beheading/> (Accessed at: 10/04/2019)

Additionally, ISIS has used social media accounts for perception management operations. The videos that ISIS has shared online on YouTube are publicly viewable and are broadcast as a threat message to government officials. Publishing executions online enables terrorist groups to lead and destroy the population that follows them, and make videos that are capable of instilling fear in the Western world. These videos typically have a high production

quality and often show the whole of a terrible incident, with the hostages speaking a few words before they are killed on camera.

ISIS's main purpose regarding its social media use is to use the speed of these platforms in disseminating news to its own advantage, by publishing threatening videos with beheading images. They used the social media platform YouTube as a technological channel to affect the ideas of governments (Shamieh and Szenes, 2015).

Turkey has launched operations against the terrorist organizations deployed to northern Syria on January 20, 2018. Turkey accepts PYD/YPG as a terrorist organization like the PKK, and considers these terrorist organizations to be a threat to its national integrity. Therefore, Turkey launched an operation against these terrorist organizations which was located in Northern Syria city of Afrin (SETA, 2018).

When Turkey started this operation, the members of these terrorist organizations and their sympathizers began perception management operations and deception over social media. They shared many posts on Twitter in order to gain support from other countries.

As can be seen in Picture 2, they shared deceptive photos to imply that Turkey killed civilians in Syria.

Picture 2: Operation Olive Branch



Source: Sabah (2018), Terör Örgütü PKK'nın Sosyal Medya Yalanları: 4 Fotoğraf 4 Gerçek, Available at: <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2018/01/22/teror-orgutu-pkknin-sosyal-medya-yalanlari-4-fotograf-4-gercek> (Accessed at: 10/05/2019)

There are many different deceptive posts available but it is difficult to share all the photos and videos here. But sometimes international organizations

provide these posts by terrorist organizations on their websites. These posts, shared without proving their accuracy, put states in a difficult situation, and causes the perceived reliability of the social media companies to decrease.

Picture 3: Another Deceptive Post



Source: BBC Turkish (2018), International Agencies: Turkey Attacked a Hospital, There Are Dead, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-43438435> (Accessed at: 05/05/2019)

In order to achieve their goals, terrorist organizations target large media outlets and try to make their voices heard. The main purpose of perception management is to make people believe something that is not there and to make the whole world learn this as fact.

The effective use of social media in the event of any conflict and the sharing of misleading and deceptive information is increasing, as can be seen today. Like the rapid spread of discourse in the Arab Spring through social media, the sympathizers of terrorist organizations are trying to use social media effectively for the rapid dissemination of their ideas.

In addition, these organizations use all kinds of tactics in order to be successful in perception management. As Sun Tzu says, they are building their own wars on deception. The main reason why social media is so effective in perception management is that users share and express ideas without confirming the accuracy of the information.

## **6. Conclusion**

Technological developments continue to affect human life both positively and negatively. In particular, the spread of the Internet and the innovations it has brought to facilitate human life, has, on the other hand, led to the emergence of new risks and threats. With the emergence of social media, the speed of communication has started to increase more. People have begun to be aware of incidents taking place on the other side of the world within seconds, and intervened if necessary. Likewise, the spread of the Arab Spring and the development of large protests have been thanks to social media.

The impact of social media has increased over the last decade as people began to use this platform more effectively. Unfortunately, the internet and social media platforms are not only used by well-intentioned people. As mentioned above, almost half of the world's population uses social media accounts. These platforms are also used by terrorist organizations and sympathizers of terrorist organizations. In a sense, this situation paved the way for terrorist organizations to distribute their own propaganda through social media.

While these organizations make their own propaganda, they often resort to perception management. In particular, these organizations aim to recruit members with misleading information and, simultaneously, engage in efforts to legalize their own activities through false and misleading news. While the accuracy of the news published by the traditional media is controlled by the editor, the absence of such an institution in social media affects the accuracy of the news, or in other words, the reliability of the posts shared. The fact that people believe every piece of information shared within the framework of their own beliefs – without researching a news story – also makes perception management successful. International broadcasters trying to provide the news as quickly as possible without investigating the accuracy of these stories therefore lose their credibility, due to the false nature of these posts.



Deception or trolling, which is one of the main parts of perception management, is being used increasingly effectively by terrorists and their sympathizers on social media. As stated above, the main purpose of perception management is to realize the desired purpose or action by directing the thoughts, ideas and emotions of the person directing the masses. Terror organizations have used the power of social media in this way, in particular in Operation Olive Branch in 2018. They shared false information and deceptive photos to influence the conscience of the international community.

As a result, while social media offers great blessings to people, it also changes the sense of righteousness. People do not realize that they are spreading an organization's propaganda when they share its deceptive information or photos.

Organizations are now attempting perception management by trying to affecting people's consciences, and believe that they can get the support of the international public in this way. Attention should be paid to the perception management operations performed in social media accounts and the accuracy of the posts shared should be investigated, in order not to be a part of this.

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# THE CYBERESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES OF STATES: INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND SECURITY

ALI BURAK DARICILI\*

## Introduction

Upon the Westphalia Agreement, signed in 1648, states carrying out regular and planned espionage activities against each other became a normal process, along with the nation state system, which was prevalent in Europe. Based on technological developments in this area, intelligence activities became much more sophisticated. Additionally, particularly since the 1990s, together with the demilitarisation and the commercialisation of the internet, network activities have become a significant function in both states' and ordinary people's daily lives. This process, of course, has led states to develop plans to use the aforementioned web-based technologies in their conventional espionage activities.

In this respect, especially by the end of the 1990s, a concept called cyberespionage was always on the agendas of nation states with regard to the planning and sustainability of intelligence activities. This new type of espionage activity has also started to shape the processes of security, economy and politics within the international system. As can be seen, web technologies have positively affected our daily lives remarkably, but also led to serious problems within the scope of the security and stability of nation states, and thus the international system.

As a conclusion, the cyberespionage activities of nation states, the backgrounds of these activities, their content, how they are maintained, which kind of counter measures are taken to minimise their impacts, and their impact on international security will be assessed in this study. Within

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\* Dr. Ali Burak Darıcılı, Faculty Member, Bursa Technical University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, International Relations Department, [ali.daricili@btu.edu.tr](mailto:ali.daricili@btu.edu.tr)

this assessment, some real cyberespionage cases reflected in open sources will be addressed and how these cyberespionage activities have impacted international systems and security will be analysed, together with theoretical discussions about cyberspace.

## **1. Impacts of Developments Occurring in Cyberspace, and Cyberespionage Activities on the International System**

The demilitarisation and generalisation of the internet, developments in communication opportunities and capabilities, diversity observed in daily and social life as a result of globalisation, and increase in malicious software spread on the web, together with technological innovations, has led to the discussion of new concepts defined as “cyberspace” and “cyberespionage”.

Although it is of great importance, there are no generally accepted definitions of cyberspace and cyberespionage in literature. In this respect, cyberspace can be defined as *“a collection of many software and hardware elements such as the internet, communication networks, military networks closed to the external world, energy line networks, mobile phones, software-based radios, electronic instruction systems, mobile phones, satellite systems, and unmanned air vehicle systems”* (Akyazi, 2013).

With regard to the definition of the concept of cyberespionage, remarks made in the Tallinn Manual, which came to the forefront of a conference organised by the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO/CCDCOE) in 2013, are very valid. The concept is defined by the Tallinn Manual (2013) as *“an act undertaken clandestinely or under false pretences that uses cyber capabilities to gather (or attempt to gather) information with the intention of communicating it to the opposing party”*.

After the end of the Cold War, and especially by the beginning of the 2000s, states began to develop cybersecurity strategies with the aim of protecting both their armies and intelligence units and their citizens against threats that might be posed by cyberspace. States need a sufficient capacity to counteract the threats posed by cyberespionage activities. They need to dominate web technologies and to take due and efficient measures against attacks in this field. This process has revealed important results within the scope of security in the international system.

In terms of military power and the capacities of states, it is obvious that cyberspace-based technological developments have changed the military