

YOU TUBE EFFECT AND ITS IMPACT ON GLOBAL POLITICS

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Abstract: *The world has been actively transformed, passing through different political, diplomatic and military formats. Configurations have been changing, but the main players remain in the field of geopolitics and global security issues. There are different opinions about the Internet and its impact on global politics. It is an undeniable fact that more than 20 years after the CNN effect became a subject for debate and analysis, YouTube also affects the political process in the world in ways that go beyond the ordinary video sharing.*

Keywords: You tube effect, hybrid warfare, geopolitics, international conflicts, global security, defense

The world has been actively transformed, passing through different political, diplomatic and military formats. Configurations have been changing, but the main players remain in the field of geopolitics and global security issues. It is not a secret that the political world today is about to be shaken fundamentally by the capabilities given to people to reach people all over the world via Internet. In appropriate circumstances media can have a powerful impact on the political processes in the world.

More than 20 years ago the global television phenomenon (CNN effect) managed to influence policy, foreign and domestic. The global media can still be used as relevant tools of foreign politics because they are able to influence foreign policy by shaping international and public opinion. The freedom of the Internet has made the wide public a party of policy discussions and decision making processes conducted by different officials and hidden from peoples' view. The high diplomatic discussions altogether have not been abolished. YouTube effect has created a global scene for such discussions to take

place.

YouTube effect today is even stronger because every person with a cell phone or another video recording device can become a news/information provider. People have been given the opportunity to share stories with the world without depending on the media. YouTube has given its users full power to present everything they want - from political video messages to just random comedy clips. YouTube has made a huge impact on a variety of different aspects ranging from the presidential election (for example The United States presidential election), global politics issues, security threats, etc. Thanks to the peer-to-peer platforms and video-sharing technology people all around the world can witness many hidden activities and see the results of some decisions taken by different country leaders and governments. What YouTube has given people is a wide video platform through which they can show the world the reality of situations that may not be broadcast on the news or may be intentionally hidden by the government. YouTube videos provide people with real-time information about

different issues that they may not have heard about and getting viewers to take action. Some videos reveal truths, others spread disinformation, propaganda, and even lies. Regardless of the content, they all are part of the YouTube effect. [1]

Modern Internet communications and media coverage of different events also influence the implementation of measures taken by the international community. Internet users increasingly take the role of a direct observer of the effectiveness of military operations and the impact of actions taken on civilians. Coercive measures and peace enforcement activities may receive broad public support when use of force is applied in a manner determined as tolerant of the majority of the population in the countries that have undertaken such measures. Various political situations and events around the globe became popular because of the usage of YouTube as a platform for spreading the truth. [2] Moreover, different events and political and security decisions became popular as a result of YouTube campaigns. In this regard a conclusion could be made that YouTube effect has a decisive role in international politics. The conventional diplomatic system that determined global political and diplomatic outcomes have been completely changed.

The “YouTube effect” is a term referring to the influence that a single video sharing web-site can have on global politics. Some observers perceive it as a phenomenon with a subsequent wide-ranging impact. In fact, many freely uploaded videos include posts by terrorists, governments, election participants, etc. [3]

The huge popularity of YouTube over the last years is undeniable. Just by reason of this fact some countries in the world prohibit the access to its videos. It is not going too far to say that because of the vast volume of videos uploaded to YouTube there is definitely opportunities for some abuses.

YouTube was used by some terrorist

organisations as a means to recruit and train followers via the Internet and to incite terrorist attacks around the world (“ Hamas”, “ Hezbollah”, “ Al Qaeda”, “ Islamic State”, etc). For example ISIS jihadi manual video tells fighters how to build a bomb with home materials. On the other hand, a special media production unit called Al Sahab created by Al Qaeda routinely posts its videos online, with the realistic expectation that they will be picked up by major media outlets and other web sites. [4] Innovations in media technology were also used by Hezbollah in order to film insurgent attacks for propaganda purposes.

Probably it is not an exaggeration to say that nowadays terrorist attacks have become media events and their aim is to draw the attention of the larger audience. These on-line activities threaten the global security. Modern technologies allow today’s terrorist groups to film, edit, and upload on-line their own attacks (roadside bombings, hostage takings, ambushes, rocket attacks, etc.) within minutes of staging them without depending on the approval of any traditional media. In fact, terrorists are now no longer dependent upon the professional media to communicate because the professional media have become dependent upon them. Some researchers describe such activities as modern war, hybrid warfare or “YouTube War”. [5] It is not possible for terrorists to wage successful conventional wars. In this regard, in the modern world the virtual space will become the main battlefield where victory will mean to conquer no territories, but influence people’s consciousness, their worldview, beliefs and values.

Some countries react to YouTube’s impact. An interesting example is the government of Iran that reduced connection speed several years ago in order to limit its citizens’ access to video streaming in YouTube. Measures like these will not stop the distribution of information in the global net. Another illustration of state reaction on

the YouTube effect is China's attempt to stop its citizens' access not only in order to limit the publication of country situation materials, but also to limit the impact of the world over the minds of the Chinese people. Similar efforts were nearly useless, given the presence of a specially developed software that provides access to YouTube despite the restrictions imposed by the government. China blocked access of internet users to YouTube, after some users shared photos of the protests in Tibet. In similar Chinese sites for video sharing such images have not appeared. [6] Something similar is happening in Turkey, where the popular video sharing site is prohibited at national level. Of course, this does not prevent people from reaching its contents by bypassing the ban.

After launching a Pakistan-specific version in the beginning of 2016 Pakistan unblocked the access to YouTube, more than three years after it was banned for posting the video "Innocence of Muslims". This video led to riots and political upheaval in several Muslim countries (Iran, Sudan, etc.).

Speaking about the YouTube effect we should underline that the authenticity of the presented materials is of particular concern especially when people have to distinguish facts from lies. This is important with a view to neutralize the negative aspects of the YouTube effect. It is

impossible to be achieved through government intervention because there are thousands of bloggers who are constantly on-line watching and checking the truth of the uploaded materials.

It should be mentioned that YouTube effect has its negative sides, as well. By presenting different view to world events it can easily provoke people to act against each other and also to create a conflict situation. Used as a tool by the wrong people in the wrong way it could cause a lot of damages.

It is not easy for one to define whether the YouTube effect is absolutely positive or negative. On one hand it constitutes a serious threat to global security, but on the other – global society can use its power to react quickly and respond effectively in cases of overt threats. The positive side seems to be more acceptable, probably because it has a favourable impact not only regionally but globally as well. YouTube effect provides people with information in real time which helps them to understand the current international environment and relations which are part of it in a better way. YouTube effect is much more political in its character. Its growing impact over the global policy still serves as an evidence for its great significance.

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