INTERNATIONAL POWER POLITICS IN THE INFORMATION AGE: CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY TO THE (NEO)REALIST VIEW ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Realism has been the dominant international relations theory for nearly seven decades focusing almost exclusively on power politics among states, but throughout these years the mankind has passed major technological, societal and economic transitions that also had their impact on the political sphere, including international politics. In public discourse these transitions are usually associated with the terms “information society” or “global information revolution”, whereas political scientists from their part started to use such concepts as “informational (or soft) power”, “information warfare”, or “information security”, referring to a qualitative change in the nature of these traditional variables in political analysis. This article focuses on power, the main variable in the (neo)realist perspective, thus revising the relevance of the theory itself in the context of the information revolution of the 21st century. Although national power resources and consequently international power politics have recently been transforming and taking new forms, mostly involving soft power instruments and the modernization of national economies and militaries, the fundamental (neo)realist assumptions about the competitive nature of international politics are still valid in the information age.

Keywords: international power politics, realism, international relations theory, global information revolution, information society, politics in the information age.
INTRODUCTION

Power, as one of the most important variables, if not the decisive one, in explaining social relations, was introduced to the studies of international politics through the writings of Hans Morgenthau and other pioneers of the realist school of international relations in the 30s and 40s of the 20th century. Throughout the following decades, however, the underlying realist (as well as subsequent neorealist and neoclassical realist) assumptions about international politics were constantly debated with strong empirical and theoretical arguments, such as the economic interdependence among states and the globalization of the market, the growing role and autonomy of international institutions and regimes restraining the presumably wild nature of states, or even the worldwide spread of democracy and empirically based theory of democratic peace. The most recent changes in the realm of social and political relations are often associated with the terms “information society” and “global information revolution”, although students of international relations are still relatively silent on what new trends these recent developments may bring to international politics. This article aims at investigating these trends, at least the most general ones, so the key assumptions of (neo)realism, as the dominant international relation paradigm bearing real-world implications, will be revisited in the light of the findings by the most prominent students of the information society (such as Frank Webster or Manuel Castells). Although the rise of the information society and the global information environment may challenge such important (neo)realist convictions as state-centrism and the inevitability of war, an observable empirical change in the nature of national power and international power politics – the keystone concepts in the (neo) realist discourse – would imply the greatest consequences on the future theory and practice of international relations.

THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL INFORMATION REVOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

In public and scientific discourse of today the 21st century is often referred to as “the Information Age”, as opposed to “the Industrial
Age”, whereas the transformation of the industrial society into the information society is usually perceived as a revolutionary change. According to an English sociologist Frank Webster, scholars of the information society tend to draw a distinction between the current social system and the historic ones due to some very outstanding quantitative evidence. He groups the most popular conceptions of information society into five different categories: technological, economic, occupational, spatial and cultural. In most cases the qualitative societal transformation is directly associated with a certain quantitative criterion – a wider application of information technologies, a greater part of GNP produced by the so-called “information industries”, an increasing demand for “information (i.e. white-collar) workers” in the labour market, or the unprecedented ability of computer networks to shrink the geographic space. Nonetheless, a more coherent definition of the information society cannot be coined due to the ambiguity of these quantitative criteria (it is very difficult to define an “information worker” or to draw a clear distinction between the information-based industries and other sectors of the economy); the information itself in most definitions is reduced to “bits and bites”, while its semantic content is usually ignored (i.e. information society theorists pay little attention whether the information circulating within the society makes any sense to its users, or can be applied practically). Therefore F. Webster tends to believe that, “quantitative measures – simply more information – cannot of themselves identify a break with previous [social] systems, while it is <...> possible to regard small but decisive qualitative changes as marking a system break”. However, in order to characterize the impact this information revolution has had on the realm of politics (especially international politics) it is worth considering both – the quantitative and the qualitative – attributes of information itself, as well as all the five above-mentioned dimensions of the societal change.

Of all the defining features of the information society the triviality of geographic space caused by the advancement in information technologies has captured the widest attention of political scientists around the world since it implies the most fundamental changes in
international politics. Indeed, modern information technology can eliminate any geographic distance or time lag in communication between any given individuals on the globe thus facilitating the emergence of a new horizontal form of social organization – a transnational social network. Such transnational networks are considered to be a new type of international political actors that potentially challenge the dominance of the hierarchical-bureaucratic actors – i.e. states – in international politics and compete with them for the loyalty of the citizens. According to a prominent information society theorist Manuel Castells of the University of California at Berkeley, users of a computer network (such as the Internet) join up with each other to form what he calls “virtual communities”, based on shared interests and values; the main advantage of such a community in comparison with a traditional political community (i.e., a state) is that the former helps to “transcend distance at low cost, <...> combines the fast dissemination of mass media with the pervasiveness of personal communication, and <...> allows multiple memberships in partial communities”\textsuperscript{5}. The researches of RAND Corporation analysts John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt have indicated that today the terrorist movements, transnational criminal organizations, and global political activist associations bear the most qualities of such networked actors in international politics\textsuperscript{6}. Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye on the other hand are not so pessimistic about the future role of the state as the worldwide information revolution unfolds: although a global computer network enables individuals from distant parts of the world to communicate real-time and without any intermediary agency, “rules will be necessary to govern cyberspace, not only for protecting lawful users from criminals but also for ensuring intellectual property rights. Rules require authority”\textsuperscript{7}, capable of enforcing them onto the whole community, whether a real or a virtual one. Similarly to F. Webster, R. Keohane and J. Nye give little importance to the increasing flow of information within and between the societies: “the quantity of information available in cyberspace means little by itself. The quality of information and distinctions between types of information are probably more important”\textsuperscript{8}. Considering the incentives for an actor to create
and disseminate information, three different types of information can be distinguished: (1) strategic (which is secret and benefits its owner only if nobody else possess it), (2) commercial (which is created and sold at a price), and (3) free information that actors are aiming for others to receive without any restrictions. The spread of the latter in fact depends on the rigour of governmental censorship, strategic – on the ability to encipher and protect it, and commercial – on the legal regulations, reserving property rights and ensuring fair financial transactions; therefore “politics will shape the information revolution as much as vice versa”\(^9\). Although the state is not the primary determinant of technological progress, a certain governmental intervention can either suppress this process or stimulate it and subordinate it to economic and political causes. Technological and spatial attributes of the information society do facilitate the development of transnational and subnational relations but these relations cannot completely ignore and have to conform to the preexisting political structure.

The last and possibly the most important consequence that the information revolution of the 21st century has had on international politics is the emergence of the global information sphere (or global information environment). The concept of public (information) sphere was pioneered by German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who defined it as “the sphere of private people come together as a public \(<...>\) against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour”\(^10\). According to J. Habermas, “the institutions of the [general] public, engaged in this rational-critical debate, were protected from interference by public authority by virtue of them being in the hands of private people”\(^11\) who earned their living by informing the parties of the debate and transmitting their message. However, “as soon as the press developed from a business of pure news reporting to one involving ideologies and viewpoints, \(<...>\) a new element – political in the broader sense – was joined to the economic one. \(<...>\) From mere institutions for the publication of news, the papers became also the carriers and leaders of public opinion, and instruments in the
arsenal of party politics. The newspaper’s publisher changed from being a merchant in news to being a dealer in public opinion. On the international system level these processes were followed by decolonization and the eventual collapse of the isolated communist block what has dramatically increased the number of democratic capitalist states in the system. Taking all this together now the government or subnational actors from one state can enter the public sphere and public debate of another by exploiting the democratic lack of censorship and the possibility to invest foreign capital in market-economy’s mass media business. The rise of modern information technologies, first and foremost computer-networking and satellite TV, enables states and other actors to disseminate information across national borders and manipulate foreign public opinion. Such evidence implies the emergence of a truly global information environment integrating the public information environments of most modern-day states and geocultural regions (maybe with the exception of several marginal regimes, such as North Korea). J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt calls this new realm of political games “the Noosphare” which encompasses both – the newly born cyberspace and the old-fashioned infosphere (i.e., TV, radio and written media, including the stockpiles of publicly accessible libraries). The relative importance of a particular segment of the global information environment (be it the cyber forums, the mass media, the academic discourse or the military information systems) depends on the type of information activity involved, whereas the environment itself serves as a mere battlefield of modern “information wars” between international actors.

INFORMATION WARFARE AS A NEW STRATEGY IN POWER POLITICS

Conflict and war, according to the (neo)realist understanding, is embedded in the anarchic structure of international political system and therefore is inevitable in international relations. With economy traditionally representing a major pillar of national power and “with war/defence being profoundly influenced by industry’s capacity”, what has been called the ‘industrialization of war’ was a central feature
of the 20th century. However, over the past generation we have seen the unravelling of industrial warfare to be replaced by what one might term ‘information warfare’15. “Information warfare” is a relatively new concept in political science discourse that first appeared in official policy documents and national strategies of states. Therefore it does not have a conventional meaning or a scientific definition, although one NATO rapporteur makes a useful distinction “between the use of information in warfare and the newer concept of information warfare, the first being recognised since ancient times and referring basically to tactical and strategic deception, war propaganda, and destruction of command and control systems. In the current conceptualization, information warfare extends far beyond the traditional battlefield, and its possible perpetrators and victims are by no means confined to the military”16. In the United States and Western Europe, however, almost till the end of last decade scholars associated information warfare with the so-called “Revolution in Military Affairs” (RMA), as modern information technologies were started to be applied in military operations. The Western scholarly literature abounds in researches on the contemporary RMA17 which is considered “in part an information revolution“ and „has its origins in the civilian world”18. Jeremy Shapiro distinguishes between three quite different but simultaneous phenomena attributed to the RMA – social, political and military (or military-technological) revolutions, each affecting the national military organization, strategy, and tactics in case of an international military conflict. The social revolution, as mentioned above, implies the emergence of the new “networked” actors in international politics that may potentially confront the states, forcing them to reorganize their national defence structures in accordance with the social transformations19; the political revolution in this case signifies the increasing importance of the global information environment in the implementation of any given security and defence policy, as much as the media puts an enormous pressure on the governments to start or end wars, or even choose different military tactics20; the military revolution for that matter could be defined by the development of precision-guided munitions and modern weaponry, as well as the
integration of information technologies in the military command- and-control systems. Although the IT-based revolution in military affairs, led by the U.S. military, implies the greatest impact on the hard power balance among states, according to Harvard professor Joseph Nye and U.S. Navy admiral William Owens, “the information age has revolutionized not only military affairs, but also the instruments of soft power and the opportunities to apply them.” Therefore the definition of information warfare, as a means to political ends (i.e. power maximization), should be more general and dissociated from the military context.

A rather loose but in fact proper definition of information warfare was proposed to NATO Parliamentary Assembly by NATO rapporteur Vernon J. Ehlers: information warfare, according to this definition, “is the offensive and defensive use of information and information systems to exploit, corrupt, or destroy an adversary’s information and information systems, while protecting one’s own”; such actions are usually conducted within the global information environment. Although this definition draws a certain distinction between “information” and “information systems” reflecting the two possible effects of information attacks on the target party – the psychological and the technological one, at least within the U.S. defence community the technological threats receive far more attention. Of all the forms of information warfare first proposed by National Defense University and RAND Corporation analyst Martin C. Libicki, and later included into the U.S. Doctrine for Information Operations, the so-called “cyber warfare” (or computer network attacks) has been the central theme of many academic publications. Meanwhile the first and possibly the only information warfare theorists, who understood that “technological and ideational aspects should be linked by strategic analysis”, were J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt. According to them, “narrow technical concern about cyber-terrorists who might take “the Net” down misses the strategic possibility that, politically, terrorists might prefer to leave the Net up, so as to spread their own soft-power message, or engage in deception or intelligence gathering.” In his latest writings m. Libicki also notes that cyber activity can involve both – hard and soft power
maximization, the latter of which he calls “a friendly conquest in cyberspace”. In such case the same basic goal of information warfare – to influence someone’s actions and decisions – can be achieved “not through disruption and distruction but through seduction leading to asymmetric dependence”; any given actor in international politics can create a global information system (e.g., the unique U.S. database of maps and geospatial data) “that persuades others to link up, join in, and follow along”. Although the soft power of a country rests primarily on the attractiveness of its cultural and political values that can (and usually do) spread to other countries without any significant governmental intervention, “with friendly conquest in cyberspace the seducer retains the [power] leverage precisely because the control over the seductive system is not relinquished”. Even in military affairs J. Nye and W. Owens suggest a particular transition from hard to soft power strategy: a country like the U.S., leading the RMA by all parameters, could share its superior battlespace knowledge, command-and-control systems, or data gathering and processing capabilities with its allies, so as to establish a certain form of asymmetric interdependence. According to these two scholars, “just as nuclear dominance was the key to coalition leadership in the old era, information dominance will be the key in the information age”. Thus it would be logical to conclude that the invasion of information technology into almost all areas of social life has indeed changed the conduct of international conflict, as well as introduced some alternative power strategies to defence and foreign policy-makers at the national level.

THE ONGOING TRANSFORMATION OF NATIONAL POWER RESOURCES

The broadest possible definition of information warfare implies that different forms and strategies of such warfare can support (and be supported by) both – hard and soft – sources of state’s power in international politics by penetrating the traditional elements of national power defined by the (neo)realist scholars – the economy, the military, or the ideational foundation of the state and its policies; and even by
creating some new ones, relevant only in the information age. The application of information technologies in military affairs, especially in command-and-control systems and intelligence gathering, certainly increases the effectiveness of military operations, but, in the words of David Rothkopf, the economy still remains the basis of military power: “in large scale or multi-front conflicts even the information dominant army will need the support that comes from a strong industrial base – even if the industries in question are less concerned with armor and rivets than they are with silicon and optical fiber”\(^{33}\). Jonathan Kirshner of Cornell University points out that the classical dilemma of choosing between national security and economic development is no less relevant to states in the information age: the highest possible economic growth as of today can only be achieved through technological innovations, but a vast dependence on modern information technologies makes the country more vulnerable to modern cyber threats\(^{34}\). In addition to this, the information technology has facilitated the globalization of the market undermining the state’s ability to wield certain instruments of economic power – namely foreign trade – which now can hardly be controlled or taxed due to the increasing number of electronic transactions in cyberspace\(^{35}\). Although the encroachment of the market on the traditional functions attributed to the state is beyond the scope of this article, leaving such vital areas of governmental regulation as defence industry and provision of public information in case of a national emergency to market forces complicates and will continue to complicate the consolidation of national power resources.

The above-mentioned psychological effects of public information may as well erode the sociopolitical integrity of the society, as one of the intangible but nonetheless important elements of national power, and eventually threaten the so-called “idea of the state”, defined by political scientist Barry Buzan\(^{36}\). In return the government of any given state can take countermeasures strengthening the national, ideological or cultural identity of the population, even though in the information age any governmental reasoning and appeal to the public is always followed by alternative narratives originated in other states.
or nonstate actors; therefore, in the words of J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt, the politics of the 21st century “may ultimately be about whose story wins”\(^{37}\). Because of the multitude of information sources in the global information environment, today the general public of any state and world population on the whole is facing “the paradox of plenty”, i.e. from many narratives that are often contradictory it simply has to choose its own “version of truth”. Under such circumstance, as R. Keohane and J. Nye have noted, not the information itself but the credibility of the transmitter becomes the key source of power\(^{38}\), which ensures a privileged position to a particular narrative in the global information environment. The government’s reputation of credibility not only helps to sustain the loyalty of the citizens and sociopolitical stability within the country, it also boosts the country’s soft power in international politics\(^{39}\). Even the traditional realist foreign policy is in large part supported by the exchange of promises between governments, and such political practice can only be continued if the governments preserve their international credibility; therefore in the future, according to R. Keohane and J. Nye, the political struggles will “focus less on control over the ability to transmit information than over the creation and destruction of credibility”\(^{40}\).

As J. Nye has accurately noted, the increasing involvement of nonstate actors in international power politics of 21st century was primarily conditioned by the change in the centralization of public information, which is currently affected by global computer networking and the emergence of global cyberspace wherein information can be disseminated by anyone at minimal cost. He presumes that historically the technology developments in the means of communication have greatly affected the political centralization of public information: telegraph and telephone had a decentralizing effect, whereas the creation of radio and television enabled the governments to monopolize the public discourse and outrival the locally-based press, which was the leading informer of the general public in Western countries up till the beginning of the 20th century\(^{41}\). At least at the dawn of film, radio, and television industries “their capital requirements seemed so gigantic and their publicist power so threatening that in some countries the
establishment of these media was <...> under government direction or under government control". Computers and the Internet are again decentralizing the dissemination of public information, and what is more, they have become the key to direct communication between subnational actors from different states. Although from the (neo)realist perspective nonstate actors do not play a substantive role in international politics, pursuing an autonomous communication strategy enables “firms, universities, foundations, churches, and other nongovernmental groups develop soft power of their own that may reinforce <...> official foreign policy goals“ of their states of origin. According to J. Nye, this is exactly why governments should not try to suppress this process, and instead should try to translate the “soft“ influence of their subnationals into the soft power of their states. All this leads to a conclusion that the information revolution of 21st century and the arrival of information warfare not only changed the way military, economic, and sociopolitical power is generated, it also highlighted the importance of soft power. Although in the race for soft power the states are forced to compete with nonstate actors, the soft power of the latters is not coupled with any hard power, thus the state is likely to prevail over nonstate actors at least as long as it retains the hard power monopoly.

TRADITIONAL (NEO)REALIST POWER POLITICS IN THE INFORMATION AGE

While information (or communication) security studies around the world have recently been submerged into the constructivist perspective of analysis (or in some cases, a certain synthesis of social constructivism and (neo)realism) with securitization theory becoming a useful methodological instrument, the notion of information warfare, according to Johan Eriksson and Giampiero Giacomello, was first introduced in strategic studies that traditionally have been informed by the (neo)realist thinking. As these two authors point out, “realists would likely consider information warfare as relevant, if defined as a new technological component in otherwise traditional interstate
conflict. Psychological warfare has been a central element in military thinking at least since Chinese strategist Sun Tzu wrote his famous ‘The Art of War’ some 2000 years ago. Electronic warfare, such as the electronic jamming of radio communication, has been an element of interstate conflict for a much shorter time (since the World War II), but is also a precursor of the more recent warfare in the digital age. All this means that realists associate information warfare first of all with the RMA and prefer a continuity rather than a dramatic change in the more general theoretical explanations of how international relations work. Analysts of a more liberal (or pluralist) stance J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt suggest that realpolitik oriented strategy and foreign policy conduct does not adequately meet the realities of the information age and should be complemented with certain instruments of “noopolitik”, as defined by them, including the exploitation of soft power resources. According to J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt, the well-known metaphor of (neo)realist international politics, where states are billiard balls hitting each other, should be rephrased, so as to “add balls for nonstate actors” and “show that what happens on the table depends on the dynamics of the table fabric as well as the interactions among the balls.” Metaphorically speaking, that fabric is changing in ways that make it – the fabric itself – a new and important factor in international politics. Describing this new milieu wherein international political actors interact, these analysts stress the increasing potentials of soft power, economic interdependence and informational interconnection among states, a more intense pressure placed on the governments of nation states by global civil society, international regimes and ethical norms, and the ever greatest difficulties of maintaining traditional (i.e., mostly secret) government-to-government diplomacy within the global information environment. In fact, it may seem as if the international politics of the 21st century assumes more qualities of the so-called “politics of complex interdependence” which, as an analytic ideal type, was introduced to international relations theory more than three decades ago by the founders of the neoliberal school to oppose the realist model of pure power politics. However, the changed “fabric of the table
surface”, metaphorically speaking, does not change the laws of physics when billiard balls interact; i.e. although states today find themselves within very different technological, economic and social conditions of international politics and have to adapt to these conditions, they are still inclined to conform to such systemic imperatives as national power maximization and the preservation of international balance of power. The pioneer of the neorealist theory in international relations Kenneth Waltz agrees that “big changes, for example, in the means of transportation, communication, and war fighting strongly affect how states and other agents interact. <...> In modern history, or perhaps in all of history, the introduction of nuclear weaponry was the greatest of such changes. Yet in the nuclear era international politics remained a self-help arena. Nuclear weapons [or in today’s case – information warfare instruments] decisively change how states provide for their own <...> security, but <...> have not altered the anarchic structure of international political system”49. Neorealists have previously been criticized for treating the level and the very existence of interaction between international political actors (even if those are states exclusively) as a constant rather than a variable, although from a historic perspective it was not always present in the international system (if it can still be called a “system” without or with a very weak interaction between the constituent units)50. But even the vast flows of free information and cultural products across national borders can hardly eliminate the fear of dangerous power concentration or desire for national pride that determine the behaviour of nation-states in an anarchic system; in fact, some hard-line realists even refer to certain balancing acts in the soft power politics among states51, although soft power is expected to moderate the structural confrontation between competing power-poles52. Nonstate actors from their part can indeed match the states in terms of soft power, which, according to Josef Joffe, is a truly valuable coin in day-to-day politics, but “let’s make no mistake about it: hard power – men and missles, guns and ships – still counts. It is the ultimate, because existential, currency of power”53, and at least for now the states are the only actors in international politics possessing this currency.
Since from the (neo)realist perspective “the most important events in international politics are explained by differences in the capabilities of states, not by economic forces operating across states”\textsuperscript{54}, or transnational flows of information and people, it is worth paying attention at the growing equality between the capabilities of large and small states in the information age. Minimal costs of transmitting information through modern media enables all the international actors to spread their narrative on equal terms, besides, more powerful and highly developed countries are more economically dependent on information technologies and thus more vulnerable. Some forms of information warfare (e.g., cyber and hacker attacks), especially considering their anonymity and trivial costs of employment, provide the small states with every opportunity of escalating asymmetrical conflicts with the large: “asymmetrical means of conflict suit the terrorist and the criminal as they suit the smaller state”\textsuperscript{55}. However, as R. Keohane and J. Nye claim, many aspects of the information revolution favour the already large and powerful; first, large states can enjoy certain economies of scale when creating and disseminating their cultural products and practices (films, theatre, TV, musical genres) thus accumulating considerable recources of soft power. Second, large and economically advanced countries were the first to develope and universally apply modern information technologies, therefore the worldwide IT sector is in large part based on their standards, that the rest of the countries are forced to embrace. For example, the English language in computer programming or American top-level Internet domain names (such as .com, .org, .gov, etc.) were globally accepted because of the U.S. lead in the developement of information technologies. Finally, large states have better chances and more R&D (Research and Developement) potentials to apply the modern technological achievements in military affairs\textsuperscript{56}, hence in terms of overall power they will always outrival the small.

Interestingly the information age has brought a few but noticeable power advantages to liberal democracies in their international struggle against authoritarian states, especially after the reputation of credibility in the global information environment was added to the list
of power resources as a source of soft power. R. Keohane and J. Nye suggest that state’s credibility in international politics has much to do with its internal political structure – democracies radiate way more credibility and attract more financial investments and human capital because of their openness to diverse ideas and the regulating role of civil society. However, according to J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt, traditional “realpolitik has a natural reaction to information revolution: it inclines strategists to prefer state control of informational stocks and flows, and to stress guardedness over openness when it comes to issues of sharing with others, unless there is a clear cost-benefit advantage to being open. This resembles realpolitik’s past mercantilist treatment of commerce.” An expert on globalization issues J. Kirshner nonetheless presumes that the pressures emerging from the global information environment and the global market of the 21st century ought to considerably shift the balance of power from non-democracies to the democratic states for years to come. This shift may be insufficient to materialize the most optimistic predictions of so-called “democratic peace” theorists, but it can at least imply a certain transition from hard to soft power strategies at the national level of foreign and security policy formation, as the strategy of attraction and “political marketing” is deeply rooted within the internal political culture of democratic states.

CONCLUSIONS

The (neo)realist paradigm of international realtions not only considers power to be the main currency in international politics, but also assumes the states to be the only actors that can wield it. However, the defining features of the information age facilitate the involvement of nonstate actors – especially transnational networks – that can also accumulate power in international politics. The emergence of global information environment enables states and nonstate actors to wield the so called soft power as long as they disseminate objective information and remain credible in the eyes of global audience. Nonetheless states, at least for now, retain the monopoly of hard power and therefore
are likely to remain the most important actors in international politics for the foreseeable future.

The global information revolution of the 21st century also had its impact on the conduct of war, which according to (neo)realists is a natural condition among self-interested states in an anarchic system. New instruments and forms of modern information warfare are granting some advantage to small states and have a leveling effect in terms of capabilities between the large and the small. Most of the realities of the information age, however, favour the already large and powerful countries, thus the main realist assumption about the relatively bigger role of great powers in international politics remains valid, and the U.S. lead in the contemporary RMA is the most confirming empirical evidence.

Finally, the global information revolution and the rise of soft power have not altered the anarchic structure of international political system, therefore the most fundamental (neo)realist claims of systemic imperatives are still correct. Fear of dangerous power concentration and desire for national honor still remain very strong determinants of state behaviour forcing them to maximize their national power resources and balance against rising foreign powers. Although the ways of maximizing economic and military power have changes irreversibly and soft power in some cases has risen to strategic level, the balancing tendencies are still observable, therefore (neo)realism, as a theory, retains its explanatory potentials at least until the very structure of the international system is transformed.

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2 Although there are some significant differences between classical realism, neo-realism and neoclassical (modified) realism, for the sake of simplicity and clarity only the most general and common features of this analytical tradition are considered in this article. On the differences between various modifications of the


Webster, op. cit., p. 21–23.


Keohane, Nye, 1998, op. cit., p. 84.


Habermas, op. cit. p., 188.

Habermas, op. cit. p., 182.


Webster, op. cit., p. 213.


The consequences of public information outpour on governmental decision-making is conventionally called “the CNN effect”, because the most evident manifestation of this phenomenon was witnessed during the Gulf War of 1991 and the U.S. led intervention in Somalia back in 1993, when CNN reports from the war zone influenced the strategic and tactical actions of the U.S. military.


The notion of “soft power” was introduced to international relations by one of the founders of the neoliberal paradigm Joseph S. Nye, formerly the dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He suggests that soft power is the power of attraction, as opposed to the power of coercion or inducement (military and economic power). According to J. Nye’s writings, soft power of a country rests primarily on such intangible resources as its culture (elitist and popular), values, domestic and foreign policies; it can be amassed through multilateral diplomacy within institutional framework, as well as by launching intense public diplomacy campaigns targeted at foreign audiences. The most detailed conceptualization of soft power can be found in: Nye, J. S. Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.


Ehlers, op. cit.


For example, see: Molander, R. C.; Wilson, P.; Mussington, B. D.; Mesic, R. Strategic Information Warfare Rising. Santa Monica: RAND, 1998; Rattray, G. J. Strategic Warfare in Cyberspace. Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 1993; Adams, J.

32 Nye, Owens, op. cit., p. 25–33.
35 Rothkopf, op. cit., p. 338.
36 Buzan B. People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations. Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983, p. 44–53. To be exact, Barry Buzan did not recognize any correlation between the state's internal sociopolitical integrity and its power in international politics, although both parameters are important as national security determinants.
42 Habermas, op. cit. p. 187.
44 A full-scale account of the information (or communication) security studies is provided by Lithuanian analyst Tomas Janeliūnas in: Janeliūnas, T. Komunikacinių saugumas [Communication Security]. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2007, p. 50–69.

51 For example, Josef Joffe distinguishes between three possible levels of balancing behaviour: psycho-cultural, politico-diplomatic, and military-strategic. Although currently other great powers cannot by any means match the U.S. military power, J. Joffe defines politico-diplomatic balancing as being of average intensity, and psycho-cultural – as very intense. In the latter case major countries try to stop the buildup of American soft power by legally restricting the introduction of the English language or American cultural products and symbols into their public life. See: Joffe, J. Who’s Afraid of Mr. Big? // *The National Interest*, Summer 2001, Issue 64, p. 43–52.

Other realists, like Stephen Walt and Robert Pape, have recently been promoting the concept of “soft balancing”, which involves nearly all possible balancing ways other than military buildups and alliance formation: “soft balancing measures do not directly challenge a unipolar leader’s military preponderance, but can delay, complicate, or increase the costs of using that extraordinary power. Nonmilitary tools, such as international institutions, <…> and strict interpretations of neutrality, can have a real, if indirect, effect on the military prospects of a unipolar leader”; see: Pape, R. Soft Balancing against the United States // *International Security*, 2005, vol. 30, No. 1, p. 17. See also: Walt, S. Taming American Power // *Foreign Affairs*, 2005, vol. 84, No. 5, p. 105–120.

52 Author of the soft power theory Joseph S. Nye provides this sort of system-level consideration: “Throughout history, weaker states have often joined together to balance and limit the power of a stronger state that threatens. But <…> sometimes the weak are attracted to jumping on the bandwagon led by a strong country, particularly <…> when the large country’s military power is accompanied by soft power” (see: Nye, 2004, op. cit. p. 25). Joseph Nye and Beijing University professor Wang Jisi also believe that “if China and the United States, for example, both become more attractive in each others’ eyes, the prospect of damaging conflicts [between these two states] will be reduced”, so “the rise of China’s soft power <…> can be a part of a positive sum relationship” with the U.S. (see: Nye, J. S.; Jisi, W. Hard Decisions on Soft Power // *Harvard International Review*, Summer 2009, vol. 31, No. 2, p. 22).


55 Rothkopf, op. cit., p. 348–349.


**SANTRAUKA**

**TARPTAUTINĖ GALIOS POLITIKA INFORMACIJOS AMŽIUJE:**

**XXI AMŽIAUS IŠŠŪKIAI (NEO)REALISTINIAM POŽIŪRIUI Į TARPTAUTINIUS SANTYKIUS**

Raktiniai žodžiai: tarptautinė galios politika, realizmas, tarptautinių santykių teorija, pasaulinė informacinė revoliucija, informacinė visuomenė, politika informacijos amžiuje.

Realizmo teorinė tradicija tarptautiniuose santykiuose vyrauja jau daugiau nei 70 metų, tačiau per šį laiką žmonija išgyveno nemažai esminių technologinių ir jų sąlygotų ekonominių bei socialinių transformacijų, akademiniėje literatūroje dažniausiai siejamų su „pasaulinės informacinės revoliucijos“ ir „informacinės visuomenės“ terminais. Politologai savo ruožtu ėmė domėtis, kaip ši revoliucija paveikė (ar gali ateityje paveikti) politinius procesus, tarp jų ir tarptautinę politiką. Jau XX a. pabaigoje pastarosios srities tyrimuose buvo pradėtos naudoti „informacinio karo“, „informacinio saugumo“ ar „minkštosios galios“, paremtos informacijos kontrole globalioje informacinėje erdvėje, sąvokos, tačiau šiame straipsnyje gilinamasi tik į galios, kaip pamatinio realistų tyrimų objekto, turinį ir jos transformaciją XXI a. Taip tikrinamas ir pačios (neo)realizmo teorijos relevantiškumas pasaulinės informacinės revoliucijos kontekste. nors valstybės galios resursai ir, atitinkamai, tarptautinė galios politika pastaraisiais metais sparčiai keičiasi ir įgauna naujų formų, visų pirma sietina su minkštosios galios įsitvirtinimu ir šiuolaikinių technologijų diegimu ekonomikoje bei karybos sfėroje, tačiau pati fundamentaliausia realizmo prielaida apie konkurencinę tarptautinę galios politikos prigimtį išlieka teisinga ir informacijos amžiuje.