



栏目导航

- [网站首页](#)
- [智库新闻](#)
- [智库公告](#)
- [智库研究](#)
- [智库建言](#)
- [智库智者](#)
- [智库专题](#)
- [智库同行](#)

Please enter the keyword

Search

Current Location: [Home](#) > [Think Tank Research](#)

Wang Wen: The role of think tank in the global cognitive war and suggestions for dealing with it

Time: 2024-07-09 | Source: Xinhua Think Tank Research | Author: Wang Wen

"Accurate and in-depth reports, analysis and data may become an 'influence weapon' that affects the views and analysis of foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, news media and other institutions," the think tank report launched in September 2023 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSISIS), a top think tank in the United States, explained. , "In the process of competing with hostile countries and building strategic partnerships, the United States has potential weapons that can be used, but it now seriously underestimates the value of these weapons." The "weapon" mentioned here means that "the United States has the unique ability to generate official analysis reports and databases... using reports to deal with threats posed by Russia and China". [1] It is rare in the history of American think tanks to so openly regard research reports as "weapons" and promote the detailed explanation of analytical reports and databases to participate in the competition of foreign powers.

The warning of this research report on the "weaponization of think tanks" to the current development of Chinese think tanks is that under the unprecedented changes in the world, the game of major countries is becoming more and more intense. Although the military conflicts of major countries are not routine, they take "reports", "analysis", "data" and "information" as

"weapons" to change the brain cognition of other people. The big-power cognitive war is happening all the time.

In this regard, think tank scholars should go beyond the study of pure textualism, clarify the boundaries of the "think tank" in the new era of expanding its functions, devote themselves to the global cognitive war in the new era as much as possible, and add smokeless cognitive war variables to knowledge production and daily work. At the same time, China should continue to promote the construction of a new type of think tank with Chinese characteristics, realize the development and transformation of concepts, systems, talents and other aspects, and improve China's international discourse dissemination and shaping power in the long-term Chinese and foreign games in the future, so as to help build a strong country and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

01 Western think tanks play an important role in the global cognitive war

With the accelerated update of "artificial intelligence +" technology, the behavior style of major countries with cognitive science as the frontier support and data algorithms as strategic logic to change cognition is becoming a new trend in the current big power game. The Russia-Ukraine conflict that broke out in February 2022 is regarded as the first typical case of the combination of cognitive warfare and military conflict. NATO, led by the United States, uses Western media and data hegemony to manipulate information and shape information globally, trying to completely curb and completely eliminate Russia's international presence as a global power. [2] In this process, the American and Western think tanks play an important role.

Since David Goodfen, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, first proposed the concept of "Cognitive Warfare" in September 2017, the research and action of "Cognitive Warfare" by Western think tanks has gradually set off a new trend. In December 2019, two Harvard scholars defined "cognitive warfare" as a means of warfare that "focus on the strategy of changing the way the target audience thinks, so as to change their behavior". [3] In March 2020, the Innovation Center under the NATO Command released a report on the theme of "Combat 2040: How NATO Will Compete in the Future", clearly proposing that the "human brain" or "cognitive domain" is the sixth operational domain after land, sea, air, sky and network, which marks that cognitive warfare has officially become a great country. The new heights of strategic games.

In the following three years, seminars, innovation challenges, project designs and research reports in the cognitive field in the United States, France, Canada, the United Kingdom and other Western countries have been frequently launched. At present, NATO has released as many as 13 "cognitive war" research project reports, including "Neuroscience Weaponization", "Intellectual Enhancement", "Cognitive War: Attack on Facts and Ideas", etc. The French National Institute of Higher Cognition has held a number of international academic conferences on the theme of cognitive warfare. The British Strategic Command issued a strategic report, regarding the "continuous competition in the cognitive dimension" as the competition of a third dimension outside the real and virtual dimensions. On June 21, 2022, the first NATO Scientists Conference with the theme of "Cognitive War" was held in Brussels. One of the important results of the conference was "Cognitive War Dominates the

Future". Obviously, in the eyes of Western think tanks, cognitive warfare has become a new main battlefield for the big power game and national strategic layout.

Western countries in the United States are trying to use new artificial intelligence technologies and data algorithm resources to seize the heart, arm public opinion, and master the "brain control" in the competition of global powers through public diplomacy, academic exchanges, report release, data sharing, culture and art, social media, book publishing, video pictures and other daily ways. And the whole time and space, the whole field and the whole government have formed a strategic suppression of the target countries.

Cognitive wars are more offensive, targeted and destructive than information wars and public opinion wars that have been discussed by the academic community for many years. As American scholar Alonso Bernard said, cognition is not only "forcing our enemies to follow our will, but also to let the enemy destroy themselves from the inside so that they cannot resist, stop or divert our goals". The aforementioned CSIS report also proposed that "the United States needs to use large-scale data collection capabilities to help shape long-term perception and national security policies", which is actually an important logical basis for the participation of U.S.-West think tanks in the foreign cognitive war.

All signs show that think tanks are becoming an important part of the cognitive warfare deployed by the United States and the West. Think tanks shape themselves into "influential weapons" by retrieving data, sorting out information, integrating views, weaving stories, and even using low-threshold and low-cost means such as fake news, deep forgery, Trojan viruses, etc., and then spread to the strategic target countries in various ways, so as to create social suspicion, breach of trust, anxiety, Panic, which in turn interferes with the pace of development of other countries, undermines the political stability of other countries, and even promotes the subversion of other countries' regimes, and finally achieves their own strategic goals.

In recent years, the think tanks of the United States and the West have concocted many research reports on the so-called Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong and Taiwan issues, especially unilaterally collecting negative data on China's economy, concocting the "peak theory of China's rise" and "the final conclusion of China's rise", suppressing China's development expectations, disrupting China's social psychology, and affecting the trend of China's foreign investment. It can be regarded as a concrete form of launching a cognitive war with think tanks as the main participants.

02 Give full play to the role of a new think tank to deal with the global cognitive war

In recent years, under the background of the failure of the trade war, science and technology war and financial war against China, the United States has launched a new round of comprehensive offensive against China with the "peak theory of China's rise" and "the final conclusion of China's rise" as the main "weapons". In this regard, the new think tank with Chinese characteristics needs to give up illusions, change ideas, cultivate talents and change the system, and win this global cognitive war with the perseverance of "protracted war".

◆ **First, break through the concept and encourage the whole people to participate in the "protracted war" to solve the problem of "scolding".**

For a long time, many people have believed that international communication is international news reporting, or external reporting of Chinese information. This makes the personnel involved in international communication limited to a few officials, media people and think tank scholars related to "publicity". In fact, the literal translation of "International Communication" in English is "international communication", and there are countless Chinese people related to "international communication". In the information age, technological empowerment makes every Chinese's food, clothing, housing, travel, speech and behavior may attract international attention, and every Chinese may become an important force for international communication.

In essence, international communication (international communication) is the basic path to solve the problem of "scolding". The cause of international communication needs more think tank participation, and even more requires the participation of the whole people. In the past, the national war of resistance to protect the family and the country and tighten the belt to develop "two bombs and one star" to solve the problem of "beating"; later, the emancipation of the whole people's ideology and the development of "starvation" were solved; now, the historical responsibility of solving the problem of "scolding" also requires the participation of the whole people.

◆ **The second is to break through the system and promote the institutional opening up of foreign exchange management.**

At present, the foreign exchange management system of universities and institutions is still relatively strict. Compared with well-known scholars in Europe and the United States, the frequency of international participation of Chinese scholars is obviously low. In terms of talent system, think tank scholars in Europe and the United States who have certain international discourse generally have experience in working in the foreign affairs department, which makes them more skilled in vocalization, more sophisticated in communication, and more authoritative in information dissemination. In comparison, China still has sufficient diplomatic background, but also has a unique language style and certain international influence. There is still a need to accelerate the construction and improvement of the relevant system for talent training.

◆ **Third, improve the talent policy and cultivate more outstanding talents in cognitive warfare.**

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out at the Central Talent Work Conference that "we should actively loosen the ties for talents and improve the talent management system" and "we should make good use of all kinds of talents to treat urgently needed special talents". In view of the special situation of the current global cognitive war and the important role played by international communication talents in it, it can be considered to raise the second-level discipline under the discipline of journalism and communication, "international communication", to cultivate more outstanding cognitive war

talents who are good at international communication.

In a word, in the face of the severe situation of the global cognitive war and the full-scale international discourse dispute, the Chinese think tank should strengthen confidence in the process of the great power game, accelerate the expansion of professional functions, release vitality internally, reform the mechanism, be good at fighting externally, dare to deconstruct, break the Western discourse hegemony, and reshape it is conducive to The global discourse of world peace and development.

(The author is the executive dean of Chongyang Institute of Finance, Renmin University of China)

For details of references, please refer to the text.

[Previous article: Qin Daoming: The construction of a think tank is a big cause. Think tanks generate questions from universities. Building a good think tank requires great wisdom.](#)

[Next: Yang Jun: Research on the path of quality improvement of the construction of new think tanks with Chinese characteristics in the new development stage](#)

- [Home page](#)
- [Think tank news](#)
- [Think tank announcement](#)
- [Think tank research](#)
- [Think tank suggestion](#)
- [Think tank wise man](#)
- [Think tank special topic](#)
- [Think tank companion](#)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

[Back to the homepage](#)

© 2015-2025 Hunan Think Tank Network All Rights Reserved

Record No.: [Hunan ICP No. 15014294-1](#)