**Military Forum-Social cognition: an important tool for cognitive domain operations**   
  
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●Shaping social cognition  
 ●Intervening in social cognition   
●Influencing social cognition

**introduction**   
Social cognition refers to how individuals understand and think about others, and form inferences about others or things based on social information in the environment. Social cognition is the basis of individual behavior and an important starting point for cognitive domain operations. As a member of society, people are naturally influenced by social cognition. Analyzing the social path to the effectiveness of cognitive domain operations has important practical significance for strengthening cognitive domain operations and winning future wars.

**Actively shaping social cognition through public opinion propaganda**

Cognitive attack and defense cannot be achieved overnight, but need to be carried out continuously for a long time. Cognitive domain operations often start before the war, and use political, economic, diplomatic and other means to act on various social fields of the target country, actively shape social cognition through public opinion propaganda, form social mainstream opinions that are beneficial to oneself, and play a miraculous role of comprehensive checks and balances in wartime.

**Focus on overall mobilization.**   
Before the war begins, cognition comes first. To implement cognitive domain operations, effective public opinion preparation is required in the early stage, and on this basis, a unified and self-interested social cognitive situation is formed. Psychologist Lasswell once said: "There is no doubt that the government's guidance of public opinion is an inevitable development trend of large-scale modern wars." Before the war is launched, we must aim to win the advantage of public opinion, carry out cognitive deployment in advance, and strive for the broadest domestic and international support. The focus of cognitive domain operations before the war is launched is largely to create a mainstream social opinion through news and public opinion, and to carry out comprehensive social mobilization for preparing for war, launching war, and winning war, so as to effectively guide the public to support the government's decision-making and win the political support of the international community.

**Strengthen strategic deployment.**   
During the period of war preparation, cognitive domain operations should focus on early strategic deployment and public opinion shaping. According to the needs of the country and the government, we should actively publicize the advantages and justice of our country, and thoroughly expose and criticize the enemy's sinister intentions and weak nature, so as to form a mainstream social opinion that a just war must win and dare to fight and win, and shape a good cognitive situation to deter opponents and win support. Through effective public opinion building, we can declare our determination and will to win, show full war preparations and strong military capabilities, influence, intervene and shape the cognitive psychology of the target object, effectively inspire our confidence and morale, dispel the enemy's will to resist, strive for strategic initiative and public support to the maximum extent, firmly grasp the war dominance and moral discourse power, make the enemy realize and foresee unbearable consequences, and then achieve the purpose of early deterrence and flexible control of the situation.

**Keep a close eye on the legal struggle.**Wars have always emphasized that the cause of war must be justified. Mastering the right to define and interpret war in cognitive narratives, forming a consistent mainstream social opinion, consolidating the value recognition of the country or nation, and mobilizing extensive forces and resources are important goals of early cognitive domain operations. Doing a good job in the narrative of justice and creating a social cognition that the cause of war is justified, justice is in our hands, and the law is in our hands is a "sharp sword" that is unsheathed before the war is unsheathed and a "heavy weapon" that is launched before the war is launched. To this end, cognitive domain operations need to actively create topics, try to characterize the war and justify the action, do a good job in the narrative of "legitimate defense", define "forced legality", and explain "last resort", so that defending the right to justice in war becomes the mainstream social opinion.

**Intervention of social cognition through social media platforms**

The emergence of mobile, intelligent, and social information dissemination has made network cognitive offense and defense an important means of cognitive domain warfare, which has effectively expanded the accessibility and reach of cognitive domain warfare. Judging from the cognitive offense and defense in recent local wars, multi-level, multi-theme, and universal social media cognitive offense and defense can quickly leverage public opinion and influence the direction of the war. It can not only form public opinion hotspots according to battlefield needs to promote cognitive changes, but also bypass the enemy's public opinion blockade to implement cognitive penetration.

**Using information flow to dominate cognitive trends.**   
Compared with traditional media, social media platforms are more interactive and have a wider coverage. The decentralized "difference narrative" and the fragmented "personal narrative" of netizens are more likely to influence public opinion and interfere with social cognitive judgment to a large extent. The display of identity power in the network society has a very important impact on changing the direction of public opinion, which also makes information flow an important variable in cognitive domain operations. In modern cognitive domain operations, the characteristics of "information weaponization" and "public opinion weaponization" are more prominent. Through data manipulation, flow restriction, blocking and deletion, robot forwarding and other methods, the information flow of social media can be effectively controlled, and public opinion hotspots can be formed in a short period of time, focusing on social consensus, and promoting the formation of an "information waterfall", so that the public is influenced by mainstream social public opinion, thereby solidifying their cognition.

**Exerting cognitive influence through public figures.**   
To a certain extent, the more developed the information dissemination is, the more scarce the attention is, and the more carefully crafted and excavated the information that arouses the audience's cognition is. In cognitive domain operations, how to make specific information attract the attention of the target audience becomes the first step. The initiator of cognitive domain operations can use the method of public figures such as Internet celebrities and top Internet celebrities to put carefully packaged information on social media platforms to attract the attention of the target audience and increase the visibility and reach of self-interested information. Information disseminated by public figures can suddenly appear from the complex public opinion field, become a reference for people's thinking, and become the mainstream opinion in inter-group interaction and circle interaction, thereby expanding the volume of one's own propaganda, denouncing and suppressing the propaganda of the other party, and guiding and shaping the public to form qualitative cognition.

**Emerging technologies are used to empower cognitive offense and defense.**Technology has changed the way of warfare and has greatly expanded the means of cognitive confrontation. For example, the emergence of emerging technologies such as algorithm push, intelligent voice, deep fake, false reality, and augmented reality has enriched the strategic means and tool selection for cognitive domain warfare to fully penetrate the social level. In future cognitive domain warfare, it will be possible to use intelligent monitoring systems to enhance cognitive situational awareness, use big data technology to accurately draw the cognitive landscape of key groups, and use algorithm technology to continuously influence the cognitive thinking of target objects. Using artificial intelligence technology to carry out saturated and precise cognitive attacks on specific audiences, using deep fake technology to interfere with enemy decision-making cognition, and using brain-computer interfaces, neuroscience and other technologies to directly act on military personnel will become an important means of influencing social cognition and leading the direction of public opinion, facilitating more direct and efficient achievement of combat objectives.

**Keeping up with the progress of military operations affects social cognition**

War practice shows that military operations play a key supporting role in shaping cognition. In modern warfare, military operations and cognitive offense and defense go hand in hand and work together. The two influence and support each other. The powerful shaping of battlefield situation can greatly change social cognition, and the smooth development of military operations can promote drastic changes in social cognition and make it develop in the preset direction.

**Cooperate with military deterrence actions to disintegrate public morale.**   
Creating a favorable situation through military deterrence actions is an important part of war preparation and an effective means to improve the effectiveness of war. In cognitive domain operations, insisting on cognitive offensive and defensive actions and military actions to understand tasks and judge situations simultaneously, to study and plan, make decisions and deploy, to plan and arrange, and to organize implementation simultaneously can skillfully use the deterrent effect of military actions to amplify the effect of cognitive attacks and achieve the purpose of disintegrating the morale of the target object. In the future, cognitive domain operations should be carried out simultaneously with military deterrence actions, fully release information about military deterrence actions, and use multiple means to show the enemy one's comprehensive strength, war potential, equipment performance, and military and civilian will, thereby forming a strong deterrent and containment effect on the enemy's social population.

**Combine favorable battlefield situations to differentiate camps.**Changes in battlefield situations often cause public opinion to oscillate, which in turn spreads and penetrates the society, generating a strong cognitive impact. Therefore, when implementing cognitive domain operations, we must be brave enough to break through the mindset, design the goals and tasks of cognitive attacks in advance, combine favorable battlefield situations, and use the strong deterrent effect of military operations to promote cognitive changes in the target audience. If the battle goes smoothly, we can further publicize and amplify the effectiveness of military operations, use public opinion to show momentum, create a threatening atmosphere of impending storms and overwhelming pressure, and force the enemy's people to waver in confidence and give up support.

**Integrate military combat effectiveness to soften the will.**   
Use military actions to exert pressure and promote drastic changes in social cognition. Be good at grasping the effects of military operations, cleverly transform military victory into cognitive strength, and continuously strengthen the deterrent effect of cognitive attack on the target object. In the process of implementing cognitive domain operations, cognitive domain operations should be seamlessly embedded in "hard destruction", and the "soft kill" effects such as cognitive deterrence, cognitive interference, and cognitive destruction should be fully integrated to promote drastic changes in the psychological cognition of the enemy's social population, strengthen their fear of war and anti-war sentiment, and then use the extended effect of combat effectiveness to induce them in a timely manner, so as to induce a series of adverse chain reactions within their society to soften their will to resist and combat confidence.