**National security in the cognitive domain**

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In recent years, with the development of artificial intelligence, technologies such as deep fakes, social media robots, and precise algorithm recommendations have promoted the complexity and security of the cognitive domain. The cognitive domain is becoming the next new battlefield for national security after the physical domain and the information domain. Cognitive warfare, which aims to interfere with and control cognition, is becoming an invisible war in the era of strategic competition among major powers.

**Important areas affecting national security**

　　With the rapid development of science and technology, influencing and controlling cognition has become an important power resource for a country. Some countries can often achieve the goal of "defeating the enemy without fighting" at a very low cost by spreading false information and broadcasting propaganda to influence public opinion and shape specific cognition.

　　At the end of the 20th century, the concept of "cognitive warfare" began to emerge in the West. After 2005, related discussions gradually increased. At present, there is no unified definition of the concept of cognitive warfare. Generally speaking, cognitive warfare can be understood as influencing and changing the other party's cognitive process or others' cognition of the other party by distorting or concealing facts, or even deliberately creating false information, so as to affect and attack the other party in thought and psychology, so as to influence its decision-making and actions, and then control the initiative of the war.

　　Cognitive warfare is a typical hybrid warfare, involving the comprehensive use of military and non-military means. Through psychological attack and defense, information disruption and other means, it interferes with and affects the enemy's cognition and judgment, thereby weakening its will to resist and achieving the purpose of control and destruction. In cognitive domain warfare, controlling the opponent's thoughts and cognition is the core goal. This interference and control not only exists in wartime, but also has important significance in peacetime. In addition, modern cognitive warfare also involves the application of technical means. The development from simple interference and control of information to control of cognition by technical means is an important manifestation of modern cognitive warfare that is different from traditional cognitive warfare. For example, the use of artificial intelligence technology can automatically generate false information and manipulate social media to achieve the purpose of interfering with and controlling cognition; the use of cutting-edge achievements such as neurotechnology can directly control and change the cognitive structure of the human brain. These new features make national security in the cognitive domain more complex and difficult to prevent.

**Recognize the Western Cognitive Warfare Methods**

　　In recent years, in the face of China's rapid rise, some old capitalist powers have suppressed China based on the logic of the "Thucydides Trap" in order to maintain their hegemony. Western countries, led by the United States, have used their existing hegemony to attack China in politics, economy, culture and other aspects from the cognitive domain. They wantonly fabricate and spread false statements about the Chinese government, Chinese society and the Chinese people, thereby undermining the spirit and self-confidence of the Chinese people, influencing and manipulating the world's people's perception of China, and posing a serious threat to my country's national security.

　　First, at the political level, Western countries, led by the United States, spread false information, manipulate topics, and actively promote Western values ​​by discrediting China through propaganda strategies, cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and support for dissidents and non-governmental organizations. In recent years, Western countries have deliberately exaggerated China's "security threat" and used their voice in the international system to attack China, aiming to reshape the world public and the international community's perception of China and discredit China's international image.

　　Secondly, at the economic level, Western countries, led by the United States, frequently throw out the "China collapse theory" and "debt trap theory" to discredit the Chinese economy, negate China's contribution to world development, and undermine the confidence of people in China and other parts of the world in China's development. Recently, the United States and other Western countries have also hyped up the so-called "overcapacity theory" of China, linking China's comparative advantages in new energy and other fields with the domestic economic difficulties of some countries, using a wrong causal chain to influence the world's correct and objective perception of China, and set off a new wave of China's "economic threat theory" in the West.

　　Finally, at the cultural level, Western countries, led by the United States, hold high the banner of so-called "democracy" and "human rights", portray the United States as a "beacon of democracy", and concoct various views that demonize China. Certain countries maliciously attack China with such erroneous remarks. In essence, they are creating false information and deliberately guiding the direction of public opinion, intending to shape a wrong perception of China, change the international community and even the domestic people's correct perception of the Party and the country, and then undermine the spirit and confidence of the Chinese people.

**Protecting the National Security of the Cognitive Domain**

　　Cognitive domain security is an important part of national security. In recent years, with the rapid development of China, the United States has defined China as an all-round strategic competitor, and has made every effort to contain China's progress, launching a multi-level and multi-field cognitive war against China. Not only that, the United States has also actively used its alliance network in the cognitive field to challenge China. The essence of these means is to shape the public and the international community's wrong perception of China, mislead the public by creating and spreading false information, and achieve the purpose of weakening the Chinese people's will to resist and surrender to the United States at the spiritual and cognitive level. To this end, we need to recognize the truth and protect national security in all aspects.

　　First, we must persist in self-confidence and self-reliance, and build a strong cognitive dam. The Chinese civilization has lasted for thousands of years and has endured many hardships. The key lies in the self-confidence and self-reliance of the Chinese nation. Therefore, we must firmly believe in and consciously resist the invasion of hostile forces in the cognitive domain. First, we must resolutely build a strong ideological defense line, firmly uphold the ideals and beliefs of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and firmly follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Secondly, we must improve our own cognitive ability, distinguish the enemy's ghostly tricks, judge the right and wrong of events, discern the opponent's motives and intentions, and do not believe in rumors, make rumors, or spread rumors. Thirdly, we must accelerate the development of a new generation of network information technology, build a firewall for information security, and consolidate the tangible defense line of cognitive security. Finally, we must forge a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, make the Chinese nation one family, and prevent hostile forces from taking advantage of loopholes.

　　Second, tell the Chinese story well and break the wrong perception. Faced with the first-mover advantage of Western countries led by the United States in the cognitive domain, China needs to actively seek ways to break it. Among them, the most important thing is to fight for the right to "speak" and make China's own voice loud in the international struggle in the cognitive domain. On the one hand, we need to continue to make efforts and make good use of national authoritative broadcasting media and other international communication platforms, such as Xinhua News Agency, China Central Radio and Television, the "Belt and Road" International Cooperation Summit Forum, the World Internet Conference, and the High-level Dialogue between the Communist Party of China and World Political Parties, to show a good image of a great power to fight back against the smears and attacks of the West. On the other hand, we must make good use of non-governmental communication channels and do a good job in public diplomacy and non-governmental diplomacy. At present, we are in an era of highly developed Internet, and ordinary citizens and social groups have more opportunities to connect with the world. This requires the public to consciously show a good image and spread voices that are beneficial to the country when conducting foreign exchanges, showing the real and comprehensive China to the world, and breaking the outside world's wrong perception of China with the confident and self-reliant Chinese style.

　　Third, strengthen cooperation and exchanges to build a new order. Cognitive warfare is a hybrid war, which is essentially a conflict and confrontational behavior, and goes against the trend of peace, development and cooperation in the world today. As the world's largest developing country, China should join peace-loving countries to build a new international order and firmly oppose the war in the cognitive domain. Looking around the world, there are many people who recognize and praise China. The third "Belt and Road" International Cooperation Summit Forum attracted representatives from 151 countries and 41 international organizations in the world, fully demonstrating China's appeal and global influence on the international stage. "The righteous will have many supporters, while the unrighteous will have few supporters" is an eternal truth of the international community. The cultures of countries and nations in the world are diverse, but also have commonalities, which lays the foundation for exchanges between friendly people. In the face of cognitive warfare launched by Western countries, we should adhere to peace and oppose all forms of war; stand firmly with peace-loving people and the vast number of developing countries, transcend civilization barriers through civilization exchanges, and jointly build a peaceful, secure, prosperous, inclusive and beautiful world.

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