

Role of PR-technologies in the context of ensuring national security of Russia

Vladimir Shinkaruk

*Volgograd State University,
Institute of Law, Chair of Criminal
Procedure and Criminalistics*
Volgograd, Russia
shinkaruk@volsu.ru
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1047-4475>

Natalya Solovyeva

*Volgograd State University,
Institute of Law, Chair of Criminal
Procedure and Criminalistics*
Volgograd, Russia
solovieva_na@volsu.ru
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9698-0845>

Pavel Fantrov

*Volgograd State University,
Institute of Law, Chair of Criminal
Procedure and Criminalistics*
Volgograd, Russia
pavelfantrov@volsu.ru
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9832-6169>

Abstract— The relevance of researching the role of PR technologies in the process of ensuring Russia's national security is increasing, as it is being tested for strength in almost all of its areas. The effective implementation of PR technologies, the purpose of which is to create a positive attitude towards the Russian government through the organization of special measures, can help level out internal threats to national security. The effectiveness of PR-technologies depends largely on the formation of state policy in the field of national security. Thus, their effectiveness should be measured on the basis of the level of civil society's involvement in the implementation of national security areas. In this regard, it is important for the Russian authorities to ensure the transparency of their activities and actively engage in an open dialogue with civil society structures. The paper assessed such PR projects as "Active Citizen", "Open Budget", "Russian Public Initiative", "Strategy of the Russian Federation" and "Dialogue with the Prosecutor", as well as public forums that contribute to improving the quality of decision-making by the authorities and increasing trust between society and the state. The article concluded that not only hierarchical (vertical) but also horizontal communications are required when interacting with state institutions and society for successful combating the existing internal threats to national security and realizing PR technologies in this area. The implementation of PR technologies will allow overcoming the "communication gap" between the state and society, which is extremely important in the context of their partnership interaction because maintaining national security is in the interests of both parties.

Keywords— *PR, national security, Russia, government, civil society, interaction.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, Russia faced a multitude of internal threats to its security: the hostile activities of terrorist and extremist organizations, radical public associations and organized criminal groups do not stop; interethnic and interfaith contradictions persist; social differentiation of society increased; there are fundamental problems of introducing innovative technologies into significant spheres of social activity; there is an erosion of traditional spiritual and moral values; there was a demographic crisis, etc. Without the establishment of close interaction between the state and society, it seems impossible the optimal functioning of the system for ensuring the national security of Russia.

PR-technologies have great potential for ensuring the national security of Russia. The question of studying the role of PR technologies in the national security system is one of the key issues at the current stage of development of the Russian super-ethnos. Currently, its relevance lies in the need to improve the defense mechanisms against internal threats to the national security of Russia and to form a positive attitude of citizens to power. The need to implement these technologies is due to a certain stage in the development of civil society and the emergence of its main institutions when the authorities and society become interdependent.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

The methodological basis of the study was a set of methods of scientific knowledge. These methods were used in the process of identifying the role of PR-technologies implemented by public authorities in the context of ensuring national security in order to form a positive attitude of Russian citizens to power. The following scientific methods were used in writing the article:

- general scientific (ascent from the abstract to the concrete, analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, modeling);
- systemic - in assessing public relations, which is a holistic system that includes various areas of national security;
- institutional, focused on the study of institutions that are the subjects and objects of implementation of PR-technologies;
- sociological, allowing on the basis of evidence to assess the effectiveness of PR-technologies used in ensuring the national security of Russia.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Foreign researchers define PR-technologies as "... purposeful activity in forming a certain opinion about a specific subject" [1, pp. 413]. Their goal is to form a positive attitude towards a particular subject through the organization of special events. Thus, PR-technologies create conditions in the external environment. These conditions ensure success and they are associated with values that lie outside the properties of a particular subject and have a positive universal value. Direct interaction with the target audience is used for this purpose.

Ensuring the openness of government structures through the implementation of PR-technologies gives a mass perception of a sense of belonging to the processes of government management [2, pp. 622]. The implementation of public relations technologies allows to diagnose in time the emerging points of social tension, to adjust the course of reform processes, ensuring the distribution of responsibility between the state and society. PR-technologies are the “soft” tool that conceptually, symbolically fits into the mental structures of modern Russian society, consolidating the authorities and citizens for the protection of national interests, which, in turn, is the key for the sustainability of the system for ensuring the national security of Russia.

As M. Castells rightly believes that modern PR technologies create virtual spaces with the help of the Internet space and offer the authorities, their partners and opponents new ways of interaction [3, pp. 67]. Thus, the introduction of online and “e-government” technologies into practice has contributed to increasing the openness of government, strengthening the interaction between the institutions of the state and civil society. In the context of ensuring national security, Russian state structures are trying to master successfully the technologies of PR communications, political advertising and other methods of maintaining contacts and communication with citizens. So, they have created and are implementing such projects as “Active Citizen”, “Open Budget”, “Russian Public Initiative”, “Strategy of the Russian Federation” for the purpose of creating a positive image of the Russian government. They imply feedback from the population and contribute to a clearer expression of the citizens' position on topical issues of national security, not only at the sites created by state authorities but also within social projects initiated by the public associations themselves.

In the context of the implementation of PR technologies for ensuring national security, the network project “Strategy of the Russian Federation” is of great interest. This project is a tool for implementing Federal Law No. 172 dated June 28, 2014 “On Strategic Planning in the Russian Federation”, and, in fact, it is a platform for interaction between business, government and society. Its main tasks are as follows: creating integrated feedback; notifying citizens and entrepreneurs about the implementation of public development programs and projects by public authorities; monitoring the implementation of plans for the integrated development of constituent entities of the Russian Federation; forecast and analysis of state programs of the Russian regions. For 2 years of implementation of the “Strategy of the Russian Federation”, its experts have developed 117 projects that contribute to strengthening the security of the individual, society and the state.

Another example of the implementation of PR technologies by state authorities is the operation of the project “Russian Public Initiative”. The implementation of the resource-technological components of the “Russian Public Initiative” leads to positive structural changes in the mechanisms of ensuring national security, contributing to the improvement of the social and political status of non-state actors. Thus, citizens using network technologies take part in the socio-political process. However, the practical implementation of this project is not without flaws. Firstly, citizens continue to be skeptical about the idea of filing and

implementing initiatives. A good example is a fact that the state authorities implemented one of nine initiatives that did not get the necessary votes and did not support the initiatives that gained more than 100 thousand votes. Thus, the expert group rejected the initiative “On criminal liability for the illegal enrichment of officials and other persons obliged to submit information about their income and expenses” due to its inconsistency with the Constitution of the Russian Federation. This fact caused a wide public response, as the initiative hit the site and received widespread support from citizens. Secondly, the project has been repeatedly criticized for the possible “cheating” of votes, confirmed by statistical anomalies. Thirdly, the presence of similar initiatives on the site makes it difficult to assess its real support. The solution to this problem is seen in creating a system of references to similar civil initiatives.

In connection with the foregoing, a number of questions arise. Is the implementation of the PR project of “Russian Public Initiative” effective? Is this implementation necessary in the conditions of insignificant influence on the development of political decisions in the field of national security? It is quite possible to imagine a situation whereby the initiative of state or municipal authorities that is unpopular in society will be registered on the Russian Public Initiative website, and then regardless of the number of votes cast, it is implemented as part of a public initiative. The result will be not only the manipulation of the opinions of citizens but also their ignoring. There will be a situation when the support of civic ideas is practically not required for their implementation, and popular initiatives have no chance for their implementation. Undoubtedly, this state of affairs has a negative impact on the level of civic engagement in support of the PR project “Russian Public Initiative”.

Despite the existing shortcomings of the implementation of the PR project “Russian Public Initiative”, it generates a certain interest on the part of citizens. This is evidenced by 2852 initiatives that are on the ballot in May 2019. Some of the proposals contained in them reflect the tasks set out in the Presidential Decree of December 31, 2015 No. 683 “On the Russian Federation's National Security Strategy”, and they have potential for raising the level of national security. For example, such initiatives of citizens: “To create an effective organization of social re-adaptation of people released from places of deprivation of liberty”, “To ensure at the state level the most attractive conditions for investors in all regions, including the poor”, “To ensure food security of Russia”, “To improve the work of law enforcement to combat fraud”, etc.

The implementation of the PR project “Russian Public Initiative” contributes to solving the following tasks in ensuring national security: the respect for the right of citizens to participate in managing state affairs in order to draw the attention of the state and civil society to the problems of protecting the country's vital interests; development of cooperative-communicative relations of state authorities and civil society; the improvement of the legislation to ensure national security and the legitimization of rule-making ideas in this field. It should be noted that not all of these tasks are fully implemented. In addition, it is unclear which of them authority considers a priority. Naturally, the foreground is the observance of the right of

citizens to participate in the management of state affairs, as well as the improvement of the legislation to ensure national security. However, their implementation is faced with objective and subjective obstacles; as a result, citizens often have the impression of imitating PR technologies. Apparently, the federal and regional authorities should use PR technologies and political communication tools more actively to increase their authority. In this regard, foreign scholars rightly point out that the elimination of negative prerequisites is possible, if the authorities are ready to engage in productive dialogue with civil society, taking into account its social needs [4, pp. 478].

In the context of ensuring national security PR-technologies contribute to leveling the contradictions of society and the state, representing an algorithm of actions for the purposeful interaction of government institutions with the structures of civil society [5, pp. 154]. The Russian government realizes an informational and communicative function of public authority and management, which allows assessing the attitudes of various civil society structures to certain decisions and actions, correlating projects with the interests of society, forming mass ideas on the most significant issues in order to gain understanding and support of society.

The public forums effectively work as a platform for the implementation of PR-technologies and solving the tasks of the priority directions of national security. For example, the "Truth and Justice 2018" media forum was held. According to its results, the President of the Russian Federation signed a number of instructions related to solving problems of the media and public safety. The All-Russian Civil Forum has also been a platform for public-state dialogue in recent years. In 2017-2018 years the forum had 14 expert platforms, including "Local Self-Government", "Public Control", "Quality of Social Assistance", "Consumer Rights", and others. Based on its results, the proposals were made to strengthen patriotic education, prevent extremism, reform the tax system, recruit qualified boards of judges, and develop the legal profession as an institution of civil society. The forum articulated the opinion of the expert community, which believes that Russia is in a deep systemic crisis, manifested primarily in the economic recession, the low efficiency of state institutions and the decline in life quality. The successful implementation of PR technologies by the Russian authorities allowed the participants of this forum to offer an alternative view on the state of the non-profit sector in Russia and the implementation of public relations technologies. Nevertheless, the dynamics of the development of civil society institutions in Russia is negative, due to the growing atomization and social apathy of the Russians. This negatively affects the level of its national security.

The list of large public forums held in 2017-2018 years is "Territory of Meanings", "Tavrida", "Iturup", "Mashuk", "Baltic Artek", "Together Yarche", "Rostov", "Native Harbor", TIM "Biryusa", "UTRO", "iVolga", "Amur ", "Altai, "Points of Growth", Congress of the Russian Schoolchildren Movement, Forums "Arctic", "Made in Russia". Their implementation is an important step towards building horizontal links between regions and implementing PR technologies that allow activist initiatives to become regional and federal projects in the following priority areas

of national security: prevention of extremism and ethnic conflicts; enhancing a safety culture; patriotic education; spiritual and moral development, and civic education of youth.

The evolution of the regional system of ensuring the national security of Russia [6, pp. 126] depends on the peculiarities of PR technologies. Thus, in the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation, the potential of PR-technologies should be used more actively. Such technologies are designed to "socialize" the younger generation, which needs support to realize their potential. There are many ways to use PR-technologies that contribute to the involvement of active young citizens in the social and political life of this region. For example, the youth forums held in 2017 have proven themselves well: "XIX World Festival of Youth and Students", "SeliAs-2018", "Rostov-2018. Territory of Success", "Volga", "Mashuk", etc. Along with the involvement of young people in the discussion of the creative civil agenda in the regions of the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation, a system of grant support for youth projects is being formed. This grant system includes presidential grants and Rosmolodezh.

The PR-project "Dialogue with the Prosecutor" is successfully implemented in the regions of Southern Russia, which includes the North Caucasus and Southern Federal Districts of the Russian Federation. This project set the task of preventing extremism, crime and harmful addictions among young citizens [7, pp. 35]. There is a significant increase in its participants. The project realization in various regions of the South of Russia varies greatly. Thus, in some regions, the problem of crime against children is acute (Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia), while for others the prevention of drug-related crime (Volgograd Region, Rostov Region) is the most urgent. It should be noted that the discussed threats to national security vary considerably in the neighboring regions - the subjects of the North Caucasus Federal District of the Russian Federation. If for Dagestan and Ingushetia the key areas of security are prevention of extremism and the fight against the production of counterfeit alcohol, then for the neighboring Chechen Republic these problems are characterized to a much lesser extent. In the regions of the South of Russia, authorities and citizens who have willingness to engage in a systemic dialogue, seek to find common ground in solving key problems of state and public security. Such dialogue helps to increase the level of the legal and political culture of citizens.

In the context of national security, problems of the quality and effectiveness of government, as well as the relationship between government and civil society are extremely traditional and painful for modern Russia [8, pp. 12]. Due to ethnocultural peculiarities of the regions of the South of Russia, these problems become especially acute and explosive, and they undoubtedly affect the effectiveness of PR-technologies in the interaction of state and civil institutions. Their effective implementation is complicated by the fact that in a number of North Caucasian republics a "society of classical social Darwinism" has actually been formed. This society functions according to the principle "the strongest survive" and it is distinguished by a deep social and material gap between its tops and bottoms.

As D. Blagden rightly believes, the effective implementation of public relations technologies could allow leveling many conflicts that neither the state structures nor the institutions of civil society can individually resolve [9, pp. 728]. For example, the ethnic conflict between the two titular ethnic groups of Kabardino-Balkaria, social and political contradictions in modern Ingushetia. Here, the authorities of the regions with high conflict potential could be helped by modern PR technologies for establishing stable political communications with traditional public institutions. Only active joint actions (of course, using PR technologies) of constructive-minded associations of citizens and authorities can resolve such conflicts. Special attention of the regional and federal authorities should be given to measures that set the task of building tolerance, especially among the young population, and the active involvement of citizens in the process of cultural exchange. In this regard, it is necessary, firstly, to involve more actively national public associations in the development and implementation of federal and regional programs in the area of ensuring the security of the individual, society and the state. Secondly, the activities of ethnic public associations can cover as many citizens as possible. State structures should engage in the dialogue with formal and informal leaders, who are disposed to work constructively with the authorities, in order to work effectively in the areas of ensuring both the rights and freedoms of citizens and solving problems of public security [10, pp. eight]. With their help, it is necessary to look for ways to solve possible conflict situations. Thirdly, regional authorities need to stimulate socially useful activities of national-cultural autonomies, providing them with resource support.

In general, for the successful implementation of PR-technologies in a multi-ethnic environment, it is necessary to focus on the principles of political participation of citizens, value consolidation, equality of opportunities for civic solidarity, and cross-cultural interaction.

In the context of raising the level of Russia's national security, it is unacceptable to focus on isolationism and autarky of ethnic systems. The priority direction of maintaining national Russia should be the strengthening of the unity of the multinational people and ensuring national harmony. Interethnic relations are topical security issues; therefore, regional authorities need to implement PR technologies effectively in the context of ensuring Russia's national security. They should give citizens the values of love for the motherland, service to the Fatherland and patriotism. The presence of heroic historical past, when representatives of various religious confessions and nationalities fought shoulder to shoulder with a common enemy, should become a conceptual idea in their implementation [11, pp. 191].

IV. CONCLUSION

The presence of internal risks and threats to the national security system of Russia objectively increases the requirements for the effectiveness of the use of PR technologies by government agencies. The role of PR-technology is to smooth the polarization of society. PR-technologies contribute to creating an image of competent and effective leadership, which possess strong power and,

moreover, is capable of productively solving problems facing the state, without suppressing the constitutional rights of citizens to receive accurate and complete information. The sustainability of the political system of Russian society, the fulfillment of a protective function by the state and, consequently, the ability to protect national interests and ensure the national security of the Russian Federation largely depend on their implementation. The success of their use is determined by the productivity of the interaction between the state and civil society, which should assume "horizontal" communication when the state "vertical" one indirectly manages social processes in Russian society. This, in turn, will allow leveling the "communication gap" between the state and society.

REFERENCES

- [1] N. Eyrich, M.L. Padman, and K.D. Sweetser, "PR practitioners' use of social media tools and communication technology," in *Public Relations Review*, 2008, Vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 412-414.
- [2] I.L. Morozov, "Information and political security of the democratic state – world experience and Russia," in *Life Science Journal*, 2014, no. 11, pp. 620-623.
- [3] M. Castels, "The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban Regional Process," Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1989.
- [4] D. Riley, and J. Fernandez, "Beyond Strong and Weak: Rethinking Postdictatorship Civil Societies" in *American Journal of Sociology*, 2014, no. 12, pp. 432-503.
- [5] L. Tsaliki, "Technologies of Political Mobilization and Civil Society in Greece. The Wildfires of Summer 2007," in *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 2010, no. 2, pp. 151-161.
- [6] V.N. Gulyaikhin, and P.P. Fantrov, "Conceptual dimension of problems of joint activity of the state and civil society institutes on ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation," in *Science Journal of VolSU. History. Area Studies. International Relations*, 2016, no. 3, pp. 122-131.
- [7] P.P. Fantrov, and V.M. Shinkaruk, "The regional strategy of the national security of the South of Russia: confrontation of civil associations with criminal threats," in *Legal Concept*, 2018, no. 2, pp. 33-38.
- [8] I.A. Bronnikov, "The information society: recent trends and prospects," in *Moscow University Bulletin. Series 12. Political Science*, 2017, no. 6, pp. 7-26.
- [9] D. Blagden, "The flawed promise of National Security Risk Assessment: nine lessons from the British approach," in *Intelligence and National Security*, 2018, no. 5, pp. 716-736.
- [10] K. Schake, "National Security Challenges," in *Orbis*, 2017, no. 1, pp. 4-12.
- [11] V.N. Gulyaikhin, O.E. Andryushchenko, P.P. Fantrov, and E.V. Galkina, "The stereotypes of political thinking of youth in the context of national security strategy of Russia: experience of regional research," in *Science Journal of VolSU. History. Area Studies. International Relations*, 2018, no. 2, pp. 186-194.