

Information Terrorism as A Global Challenge Affecting the Moral and Spiritual Development of Youth

Sherzodjon Shukhratovich Qurbonov

Independent Researcher, Institute of Socio-Spiritual Research, operating under the Republic Center for Spirituality and Enlightenment, Uzbekistan

Yazdonov Zikirillo Shukurillovich

Doctor of Philosophy (DSc), Associate Professor at the Urgut Branch of Samarkand State University, Uzbekistan

Received: 26 November 2025; **Accepted:** 30 December 2025; **Published:** 11 January 2026

Abstract: This article explores information terrorism as a critical threat in the context of modern society, with a particular focus on its impact on youth consciousness. It examines how manipulative content spread through information and communication technologies negatively affects young people's values, spiritual stability, and social identity. The study emphasizes the importance of countering such threats through a combination of international scientific approaches and national moral-ethical strategies. The article proposes strengthening ideological immunity among youth by developing critical thinking, information literacy, and cultural identity. The research highlights that information security should be considered not only a technical challenge but also a philosophical and moral issue.

Keywords: Deinformation, spiritual resilience, digital communication, communicative consciousness, instability, threat image.

Introduction: On September 23, 2025, our President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in his speech on terrorism at the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, noted that Uzbekistan and the entire Central Asia are carrying out effective work to implement the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, that a Regional Council on Rehabilitation and Reintegration has been established in cooperation with the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, and, in addition, that the Office is ready to create the necessary conditions for opening a regional office of the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Uzbekistan[1.2.].

In the context of an information society, security issues are becoming increasingly complex, and in addition to traditional sources of danger, invisible and unconventional forms of threat are emerging. Information terrorism is emerging as such a complex, multi-layered socio-political and cultural phenomenon. The increasing migration of society into the digital space, the decisive role of information media in social relations, ideological processes, the formation of individual consciousness and ideological positions

become the main components of this threat. Information terrorism refers to a complex of manipulative influences aimed not only at causing physical harm, but also at destabilizing the consciousness, spiritual values, and moral guidelines of society. Here, the concept of "terror" encompasses not only non-traditional methods aimed at instilling fear, but also at destabilizing the human psyche, directing it towards a radical ideological structure. In the theoretical analysis of this process, it is necessary to deeply study the combined mechanisms of information warfare, mind control technologies, cognitive manipulation, and psychological pressure methods.

Literature Analysis

The formation of the concept of "information terrorism" in the context of an information society is one of the global issues that directly affect the spiritual life of humanity today. M. Poster's theory of digital communication systems turning people not only into consumers of information, but also into controlled subjects, the ideas of J. Habermas, the views of M. Castells, as well as the approaches of Z. Bauman, S.

Žižek, M. McLuhan, U. Beck, M. Foucault, Sh. Turkle were analyzed.

Analysis and results. Today, manipulation technologies are implemented through modern communication channels, especially social networks, artificial intelligence systems, algorithmic filtering and targeting. Psychologically based methods of controlling the human mind are implemented through the dissemination of false information (disinformation), fear appeal, micro-targeted forms of propaganda and propaganda. These technologies pose a great danger, especially to the younger generation, because their critical thinking skills are not fully formed, their criteria for evaluating information are imperfect, and their moral immunity may be low. As a result, hesitation, distrust, and identity crisis arise in the human psyche. In particular, noise in the information environment and manipulative content taken out of context distort personal and social orientation, creating a favorable psychological environment for radical ideologies. Such effects pose a serious threat to the internal stability of society, leading to the erosion of social loyalty and civic position.

Another important factor is that the spiritual and moral vulnerability of the youth further increases the threat of information terrorism. As a result of the melting of local spiritual values in the global information flow, their replacement by alternative identities manifested in the form of pro-Westernism or radicalism, young people are becoming spiritually confused and psychologically unstable. In such conditions, forces that are not aimed at properly shaping the consciousness of young people, but, on the contrary, exploit it for their own ideological goals, are starting to promote radical ideas. In understanding this situation, it is important to analyze the psychology of youth, social identification processes, and the destructive effects of mass culture. In particular, the concepts of "membership" and "spiritual strength" occupy a central place, since they are the fulcrums of social stability and personal immunity. Information terrorism uses technological, aesthetic, and ideological means aimed at disrupting these points. It is for this reason that it is becoming necessary to develop spiritual technologies - that is, means of education, religious and educational influence, and strengthening cultural codes - in a new, strategic approach.

The emergence of new sources of danger in the context of an information society and the formation of the concept of "information terrorism" is one of the global issues that directly affect the spiritual life of humanity today. Because modern technologies have become not only a means of communication, but also a new mechanism for the formation and control of

consciousness. As M. Poster noted: "digital communication systems turn people not only into consumers of information, but also into controlled subjects" [2.36.]. This approach means that technologies also pose a threat to spiritual independence in the process of forming consciousness, since a person's informational freedom can be imperceptibly limited.

However, in Poster's opinion, the mechanisms of social resistance are not sufficiently highlighted, which requires a broader philosophical analysis of this issue. At this point, the views of M. Castells are noteworthy: "power in an information society is exercised through the formation and control of information flows" [3.29.]. This idea shows the structural roots of information terrorism, because whoever owns information flows also has the opportunity to determine social consciousness. However, Castells' theory reveals more mechanisms of power, but does not fully illuminate the internal dynamics of spiritual processes. A. Appadurai writes in the context of global culture: "information flows rework global cultural representations, constantly creating fantasies of fear and danger" [4.55.]. This view shows not only the political or economic, but also the spiritual and cultural roots of information terrorism. Appadurai's theory helps to understand information terrorism as a social mechanism that forms an atmosphere of fear, instability and doubt in the mind.

The ideas of J. Habermas are also directly related to this topic. He says: "the breakdown of communicative consciousness leads to the weakening of social cohesion through manipulation" [5.112.]. This view reveals the most negative consequence of information terrorism - it disrupts the foundations of communication in society and, as a result, serves to destroy social cohesion. Habermas's approach emphasizes the need to understand information terrorism not only as an external threat, but also as a phenomenon that destroys the internal communicative structure of society.

If we express a scientific attitude, Poster explains information control through the weakening of individual freedom, while Castells connects it with global networks and mechanisms of power. Appadurai's theory reveals the cultural-symbolic dimension, while Habermas analyzes the main consequence of spiritual processes through the destruction of communicative consciousness. In general, these views show that information terrorism is not only a technological threat, but also a multifaceted threat aimed at the foundations of human spirituality and social communication.

When the problem of the development of new sources of development and "information terrorism" by the information society is analyzed in the context of spiritual processes and technology, we can also see socio-physical mechanisms that can have a profound impact on the development of physical technical support and value systems. As Z. Bauman noted: "the liquid modern, constantly being produced, shapes the spiritual imagination of people through uncertainty and fear" [6.45.]. This idea is based on the fact that not only aggression is terrorism, but also the process of protecting consciousness from terrorism and destroying spirituality. However, Bauman attributes this to the participation of "instability", but does not consider how consciousness can fight against it. S. Žižek's approach is even more radical: "in the information space, images of fear and danger often work more effectively than real danger, because they determine the social consciousness of people" [7.98.]. This idea reveals the semiotic and symbolic aspects of information terrorism: the "image of danger" embedded in the consciousness directly affects a person's spiritual decisions. However, Žižek's view sheds more light on the ideological formation, rather than the technological mechanisms, of information terrorism. M. McLuhan, paying special attention to technology, says: "information technologies are an extension of human sensations and consciousness, and therefore their negative use can also lead to a violation of consciousness" [8.41.]. This reasoning shows the technological roots of information terrorism: if a tool expands human sensations and consciousness, it is natural that it will become a powerful weapon for spiritual manipulation. But McLuhan's views present technology in a deterministic way, while human critical thinking and the possibilities of conscious resistance are relegated to secondary importance.

A. Giddens, analyzing the phenomenon of security, notes: "In modern society, security crises are often directly related to information flows, and people are forced to live in a state of losing their moral stability" [9.114.]. This approach shows the social consequences of information terrorism: through the erosion of moral stability, people adapt to living in a "constant state of danger". If we express a scientific attitude, Bauman associates danger with instability and shows the socio-cultural side of the process, while Žižek reveals the symbolic-semiotic impact. McLuhan, emphasizing the technological roots, illuminates the means of information terrorism, while Giddens interprets the erosion of moral stability as the main consequence of the risk society. Together, these views reveal the technological, social, symbolic and spiritual aspects of information terrorism.

The new sources of danger emerging in the information society and the concept of "information terrorism" are one of the most urgent problems related to human development. Because modern technologies are becoming not only a means of transmitting information, but also a force that controls consciousness and reshapes values. As U. Beck noted: "in a risk society, technological progress itself creates new sources of danger, and they often take on an uncontrollable scale" [10.72.]. This reasoning allows us to interpret information terrorism as an integral part of the phenomenon of a global risk society, but Beck's theory is more focused on social structures and does not sufficiently address the issue of moral immunity. M. Foucault, commenting on the mechanisms of control and power, writes that "information flows become a new disciplinary field of power and have the power to monitor and subjugate consciousness" [11.214.].

This view reveals the technological and psychological roots of information terrorism: a person is not only observed, but also subjected to manipulation of his consciousness without his realizing it. When critically assessing Foucault's view, he emphasizes the repressive side of the process, but does not sufficiently take into account the human capacity for resistance and critical thinking. M. Castells also draws attention to this issue in his theory of the network society, arguing that "control of information flows is the new main resource of power, which controls social consciousness and values" [12.71.]. This approach shows how information terrorism is inextricably linked with the mechanisms of social control. However, Castells' theory is based on structural analysis and pays little attention to the human capacity for moral resistance.

Sh. Turkle, studying the transformation of personality in the digital space, writes: "a person becomes a multifaceted being in the virtual space, and the difference between these manifestations increases the risk of spiritual disintegration" [13.125.]. This idea shows the ability of information terrorism to create identity divisions in the consciousness of an individual.

Therefore, information terrorism is a phenomenon that disrupts not only external control, but also internal spiritual and psychological balance. In short, information terrorism is not only a harmful influence carried out through the media, but also a strategy for gaining control over minds in a broad sense. It undermines social stability by eroding the spiritual structure of society, weakening moral guidelines and radicalizing psychologically vulnerable groups. In the fight against these threats, not only a technical, but also a deep spiritual and intellectual approach, a conscious educational policy and strong civil immunity are necessary.

References

1. Mirziyoyev Sh.M. At the 80th session of the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2025, New Uzbekistan newspaper, 24.09.2025, No. 197
2. Poster, M. (1995). The Second Media Age. – Cambridge: Polity Press.
3. Castells, M. (1996). The Rise of the Network Society. – Oxford: Blackwell.
4. Appadurai, A. (1996). Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. – Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
5. Habermas, J. (1984). The Theory of Communicative Action. – Boston: Beacon Press.
6. Bauman, Z. (2007). Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty. – Cambridge: Polity Press.
7. Žižek, S. (2008). Violence: Six Sideways Reflections. – New York: Picador.
8. McLuhan, M. (1964). Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. – New York: McGraw-Hill.
9. Giddens, A. (1991). Modernity and Self-Identity. – Cambridge: Polity Press.
10. Beck, U. (1999). World Risk Society. – Cambridge: Polity Press.
11. Foucault, M. (1995). Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. – New York: Vintage Books.
12. Castells, M. (2000). The Rise of the Network Society. – Oxford: Blackwell.
13. Turkle, S. (2011). Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other. – New York: Basic Books.