

Feeling lost and
disempowered?

It may be by design.



RESISTING PSYCHOLOGI- CAL WARFARE

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A guide for maintaining clarity

in a time of

mass propaganda.

TIP 1: ACCEPT YOU ARE BEING PROPAGANDISED (1/2)

In times of imperial aggression, the propaganda machine spits out false reality at a frenzied rate.

It can be effective by being "affective" — when it arouses big emotions that bypass our critical thinking.

It can also be effective by **going unseen** — when it weaves into the fabric of how we perceive the "natural world."

It is not a moral failing to fall for propaganda. If it didn't work, it wouldn't be so important to continually produce.

TIP 1: ACCEPT YOU ARE BEING PROPAGANDISED (2/2)

None of us are immune. Propaganda is constant, sometimes subtle, and other times overwhelming. **It will try to take the shape of something that aligns with your values** — e.g. imperialism under the cloak of "women's liberation".

Accepting that we are all susceptible allows us to more readily notice when our worldview has been shaped against our interests, and to course-correct when we need to.

TIP 2: FOCUS ON WHAT YOU KNOW, ADMIT WHAT YOU DON'T (1/2)

Before we get into ways to approach information, first ask yourself: how important is it that I form an opinion on this particular topic? *Will it change the way I act?*

Part of psychological warfare involves drawing us into **culture wars**, picking sides and having online fights over things entirely outside of our control.

When in doubt...

TIP 2: FOCUS ON WHAT YOU KNOW, ADMIT WHAT YOU DON'T (2/2)

...you can just stick to what you do (hopefully) understand: the traits of imperial aggression, seen repeatedly.

- The ~~US/Israeli~~ empire has unilaterally started a new front in its ongoing war of aggression.
- This is a colonial war. ~~Israel~~, brutal colonial occupier of Palestine and Syria, continues to expand into Lebanon to enact their delusional "~~Greater Israel~~" plan.
- The ~~US~~ wants to weaken, fracture, or puppet-dictate Iran according to whatever opportunities arise from this latest pressure — in alignment with global strategy of both militarily crushing anti-imperial resistance and dominating key supply chains.
- Sub-imperial powers like so-called "~~Australia~~" and "~~Canada~~" will be complicit while trying to deny accountability.

This is enough of a basis to speak and act from.

TIP 3: REJECT BLACK & WHITE MORALISING OF NATIONS (1/3)

Our soft western brains have been moulded by Hollywood to look for "good guys" and "bad guys" to root for, *but it is a mistake to take this framework to nations.*

Iran is not "good" or "bad." Iran is a nation of 90+ million people. *Iran is a historical process*, with many factions, beliefs, and competing interests. What is dominant in Iran now is a response to historical conditions, both *imposed externally* and *evolved internally*.

TIP 3: REJECT BLACK & WHITE MORALISING OF NATIONS (2/3)

The *hidden logic* of being drawn into these judgements, at a time when empire has Iran firmly in its crosshair, is that if you decide Iran is "bad" (yes, that includes the state institutions), *then you will be less likely to give your full-throated support for the nation's right to fight for self-determination.*

TIP 3: REJECT BLACK & WHITE MORALISING OF NATIONS (3/3)

Remember: we don't need perfect victims. We need the domination of empire to end, and this can only be accomplished through anti-imperial struggle.

If anyone is trying to convince you of the moral character of Iran — question that. *Why?* Why do they want you to collapse complexity into simple *moral, emotive* categories? *Why now?*

Are you being manipulated?

TIP 4: LEARN PATTERNS TO CUT THROUGH LIES (1/3)

Our instinct for information that feels “off” comes from understanding patterns.

As empire drops its mask and makes a return to speaking in overtly colonial terms, propaganda has weakened.

We can easily dismiss “bombing for freedom” and “nuclear deal” narratives.

The average person on the street knows at least enough to say “it’s about oil.”

But what about more pervasive propaganda, like “30,000+ *protesters massacred?*” How do we break that down?

TIP 4: LEARN PATTERNS TO CUT THROUGH LIES (2/3)

30,000+ *protesters killed*. Any time the west needs to demonise an enemy, an *atrocity figure* like this will do the rounds. That's our first pattern: so let's investigate.

When the figure first leapt to 2000, who broke the story?

The Washington Post. Their coverage has biased extremely ~~pro-Israel~~. *Untrustworthy*.

Who was the source for the figure?

HRANA. NGOs have been used to promote imperial propaganda for decades, so...

Who funds HRANA?

The NED. William Blum has a body of work pointing to the NED as a front for the CIA.

And the 30,000+ figure in TIME?

The only source was Amir Parasta, lobbyist for ~~US/Israeli~~ backed Shah promoting regime change.

TIP 4: LEARN PATTERNS TO CUT THROUGH LIES (3/3)

These patterns do take time to learn. Reading history and analysis will equip you with the tools to connect these dots.

Note that we haven't arrived at "the truth" through this interrogation, and we never will. What's important is we've cast doubt on this information, and we are not going to mindlessly parrot imperial propaganda to others.

TIP 5: ASK, WHAT'S THE POSITION OF THE PERSON TALKING? (1/2)

Do they have a clear position, agenda, interests?

By now we've all seen how "*listen to X people*" can be weaponised to mean "*listen to X people [with agendas that mirror imperial interests].*"

It is important to listen to the people most impacted by imperial aggression. Their lived experience is an important perspective to hold, learn from, and connect with in solidarity.

It's also important to develop our own politics and reject contradictory voices. No matter how "western" I am, or how little I may know about daily life in Iran, if an Iranian (disapora or otherwise) tells me that ~~Israel~~ is their path to liberation then *we are political enemies*. My anti-colonial, anti-imperial project is incompatible with their project of selling out their homeland to an imperial colony.

TIP 5: ASK, WHAT'S THE POSITION OF THE PERSON TALKING? (2/2)

In the case of **pro-intervention diaspora**, consider factors like *"why did they leave? What class position/interests did they hold before leaving? How is that reflected generationally? Could life in the neoliberal west have changed their interests, and in what way?"*

This is not suspicion, it is acknowledging position. It is the opposite of treating a people as a monolith. If a speaker is unclear in their agenda or positionality, consider taking what they say with a grain of salt.

This is a matter of putting principles above the politics of representation.

TIP 6: LANGUAGE MATTERS! (1/2)

One is a government

The other is a “*regime.*”

One is a president

The other is a “*dictator.*”

One worships god

The other is “*theocratic.*”

One has a military

The other are “*terrorists.*”

The language of the other is reserved always for enemies of the west, *meanwhile nobody on the globe has been more brutal and authoritarian than white supremacist colonisers.*

TIP 6: LANGUAGE MATTERS! (2/2)

The language of dehumanisation and fear always leads to violence. Uncritically accepting these terms opens us to swallowing more serious forms of propaganda.

It doesn't matter what opinion you hold about these institutions, you are doing the work of empire when you parrot this language.

For the record, we state: the sovereign government of Iran is the Islamic Republic, not "the regime." The organised force that is waging anti-imperial war against the ~~US/Israel~~ is the IRGC and not, as some insist, "the people." The battle being fought is an existential battle of national security.

Language matters, and we resist psychological warfare by speaking with clarity.

TIP 7: NEVER SHARE THE ENEMY'S PROPAGANDA (1/1)

Here we turn to martyr Basel al-Araj and his eight rules of war in *Today's Wars are Struggles Between Societies*:

“Never spread the occupation's propaganda, and do not contribute to instilling a sense of defeat [...] Never spread panic; be supportive of the resistance and do not spread any news broadcast by the occupation. (Forget about the ethics and impartiality of journalism; just as the Zionist journalist is a fighter, so are you). [...] [their] goal is to suggest the rapid collapse of the resistance. Do not believe them.”

We are all responsible, in some small way, for shaping perceptions of events in our social sphere. **Resisting psychological warfare includes becoming militant in what we present, and how we frame it.** Never give the genocidaires power in the way you speak of them: always take it from them.

TIP 8: REJECT CHAUVINISM, GROUND IN YOUR OWN PLACE (1/2)

Our role in this moment is not to speak *for* the people of Iran. Nobody has asked us to do that. The term for this is "*western chauvinism.*"

Consider these words from Ali Alizadeh (London-based Iranian analyst):

"There's no third camp. As someone who is acting in the international arena, you're either with America and Britain and EU's regime change, or you are with allowing a nation in Iran to have national self-determination. Iranians have enough experience, have enough political will, have enough institutions to determine their own future, to transform Vilayat faqih — make it more religious, make it more secular — whatever direction they want to go, they can go."

TIP 8: REJECT CHAUVINISM, GROUND IN YOUR OWN PLACE (2/2)

Rather, our role is to come to terms with the fact that we are a sub-imperial power. *That means our state supports this war materially, logistically, verbally.*

We are complicit in this imperial aggression and this is where our most important work lies.

Psychological warfare wants us demobilised, fractured in our own communities, arguing over the moral character of a political struggle that is not our own while the smooth operation of the settler-colony continues.

TIP 9: GROUND YOURSELF IN YOUR COMMUNITY (1/2)

There is an overwhelming amount of news coming out of this warzone. The emotions we're all feeling as this new stage unfolds are *intense*. Many of us are glued to screens right now, unable to tear away.

This onslaught of news can make us feel hopeless, dysregulated. *It's meant to.*

The rate of imperial aggression will only increase as empire's global domination is threatened. *We need to be able to metabolise these news cycles while still turning up for our comrades.*

This is a gentle reminder to check back into your body now and again. *Breathe, put down your phone, get some sun.* Check in with your community, *have a good yarn.*

TIP 9: GROUND YOURSELF IN YOUR COMMUNITY (2/2)

Our most meaningful work is local. It might not have the same spectacle-power as actively falling bombs, but our *slow work* of building up *resilient, organised, collectively-minded communities* is more important than ever.

Ground yourself in your values. For us, that means destabilising imperial supply chains, and looking to the leadership of First Nations organisers with a commitment to Land Back as a primary site of resistance.

We are not helpless, we still carry our collective future in our hands.

THANK YOU FOR READING, STAY STRONG <3



Further reading:

This work has been primarily influenced by:

- The Black Peoples Union's *Iran Solidary Statement - Empire is the Enemy Everywhere.*
- The work of Lara Sheehi and guests on the *Psychic Militancy Podcast.*
- Basel al-Araj's *Today's Wars are Struggles Between Societies.*
- Ali Alizadeh's appearance of *Deep Dive Perspective*, episode titled *Western Hypocrisy on Iran: Human Rights or Imperialism?*
- Source investigation on the "massacre figures" comes from *The Anti-Empire Project* substack piece *The Iran Insurgency.*
- William Blum's works, we recommend *Trojan Horse: The National Endowment for Democracy*