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THE USE OF ADVERTISING INSTRUMENTS IN THE ARMS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT MARKET



ABSTRACT: The specificity of the market of arms and military equipment, and above all its dependence on the political, legal, technological, economic and cultural conditions, impact on the way of conducting activities related to market communication, as well as the hierarchy of the employed instruments of promotion. The greatest use is made of direct communication, and a lesser role is played by instruments of mass communication such as advertising. Even though advertisements used in the arms market do not directly influence customer behaviour and purchasing decisions, yet they are crucial from the viewpoint of image and information, for example they enable showing the company and its products in a desirable light, or draw attention to some aspects of the functioning of the armaments sector (ensuring national/international security, obtaining advantages from international cooperation, creating employment, and technological development). The aim of the article was to establish the importance of adverts in the arms and military equipment market, as well as to identify the media and advertising styles used in them.

KEYWORDS: institutional markets, arms and military equipment market, market communication, promotion tools, advertisement

INTRODUCTION

The arms and military equipment market functions on a basis different from those in markets offering 'civilian' goods. According to W.L. Baldwin, it is very difficult, or even

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impossible to define the market of arms in categories applied to products and services produced and purchased as those in the market of e.g. natural resources or domestic appliances. This is primarily because the market system in its full meaning has never operated in terms of manufacturing and trading in military goods¹.

Wanting to classify the market of armaments among the types of market functioning in modern economy, it could be treated as an institutional market, although bearing in mind the involvement of various governmental institutions in the process of arms purchasing, it would be more appropriate to describe it as a market of governmental institutions. Its modus operandi involves the procedures of placing orders for arms and military equipment, as well as transactions which are conducted by governments (or the institutions which represent them), and contracts signed by companies. When considering the manner of placing orders for arms and military equipment – usually based on tenders – this market can be classified as organised (formalised). However, it should be remembered that practically every country provides some derogations which allow to procure arms in the non-tender mode.

One of the most pertinent characteristics of the market of arms and military equipment is its strong dependency on political and legislative conditions. The legal arms trade in practically every country is subject to restrictions (such as the required licences to use arms, honouring restrictions and embargoes on the supply of arms) and supervision. This means that there are terms such as demarketing and antimarketing which are associated with this market. The former describes a situation in the market being the seller's market, usually linked with a lesser market activity on the part of companies, especially visible in their market communication (promotion) limited to absolute minimum. The latter, namely antimarketing, refers to a situation in which there exist various restrictions regarding the use of marketing initiatives. Companies functioning in these conditions usually strive to find ways of avoiding the existing limitations, using instruments of marketing, even on the borderline of the binding legal regulations. It appears that both these terms are applied in relation to the arms and military equipment market². They do not eliminate market activity, but impact on the way of using marketing-mix instruments, including advertising.

¹ W.I. Baldwin, *The Structure of the Defense Market*, Duke University Press, Durham (NC) 1967, p. 53.

² K. Białocki, *Instrumenty marketingu*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Branta, Bydgoszcz-Warszawa 2006, p.48-49.

THE ESSENCE OF PROMOTION ACTIVITIES ON THE ARMS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT MARKET

The increased importance of marketing activities in the arms trade became already visible in the end of the 1970s³, but a clear acceleration of this process occurred after the change in the global geopolitical situation which took place at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s⁴. At the same time, this was the beginning of the shift in the arms market, from a producer's market towards a consumer's market, which in a natural way prompted the employment of new, previously unused (or used on a limited scale) instruments of marketing.

Activities concerning market communication related to armaments have always been treated as a controversial area, greatly influenced by dilemmas of an ethical nature. In the common understanding, the arms trade is treated as a 'dirty business' or the 'business of death'. This results in a reluctance to undertake promotional activities (mainly advertising campaigns) on such a scale, and in a way which takes place in civilian commercial markets. The differences in this aspect are also visible when comparing the arms market with civilian institutional markets.

The realisation of activities in terms of market communication involves the possibility of using diverse tools; in practice there is a certain flexibility in the approach to using tools in the realised marketing activities. Companies increasingly apply the concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC), by selecting the appropriate tools depending on the characteristics of their product, as well as the requirements and expectations of the market and its end-users. In the case of the arms market, one can also observe the use of selected instruments, which creates the possibility of constructing a well-functioning system of market communication.

Similarly to other institutional markets, for the arms and military equipment market, out of the available promotion tools the most important role is also played by direct (interpersonal) communication – above all face-to-face sales. The relevance of this instrument results from the specificity of relations within the arms market, which accompany the sales procedure. Conducting works on individual systems of armaments, implementing their production, as well as providing after-sales service, all require the direct contact of arms producers with representatives of the armed forces (i.e. the users), and the government (i.e. the procurer).

³ K. Weihe, M. Brzoska, P. Lock, H. Wulf, *Advertising and public relations in the arms industries: their role in the mass media*, [in:] *Current Research on Peace and Violence* Vol. 3, No. 3/4 (1980), Tampere Peace Research Institute, University of Tampere pp. 129-152.

⁴ R. Stohl, S. Grillot, *The international arms trade*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2009, p. 43-45.

The specificity of the arms sector means that in the process of the company contacting the market there are employed other instruments of indirect (mass) communication, such as advertising, sales promotions and public relations, however they influence their recipients in another way, as exemplified by the 'push' and 'pull' effect. Advertising activities are mostly linked with the 'pull' effect, which means that the focus is directed on raising interest and demand for a given product/service⁵. Such activities usually impact on the motivation of potential customers, and the expected results are reached in the medium and long-term perspective. The 'push' effect regards mostly activities related to sales promotion which impact on purchasing behaviour, and in terms of their results mainly present a short-term perspective⁶. Both effects should be treated in a complementary manner, which allows for a greater effectiveness of promotional activities.

IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF ADVERTISING IN THE ARMS MARKET

In terms of the content of advertising in the institutional market, the literature demonstrates diverse approaches by individual authors. T. Gołębiowski stated that from the viewpoint of the subject of advertising on the institutional market, the activities can be distinguished which are linked with the product, the brand and the company⁷. Other authors (G. Golik-Górecka, A. Olczak, and M. Urbaniak) highlighted advertisements of the product and the company, suggesting that the scope of company advertising also includes activities concerning the brand^{8,9} while W. Spreen focused on product and brand advertising in relation to the international aviation market (both civilian and military). In describing the activities centred on brand advertising, he also emphasised shaping the company image and aiming at its differentiation from the competitors, and therefore being connected with advertising the company¹⁰.

It appears that the varying views presented above result from the fact that in the case of entities operating in the institutional markets, for a long time their activities centred on the

⁵ Ph. Kotler, G. Armstrong, J. Saunders, V. Wong, *Marketing. Podręcznik europejski*, PWE, Warszawa 2002, pp. 846-847.

⁶ Ph. Malaval, Ch. Benaroya, *Aerospace Marketing Management*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston/Dordrecht/London 2002, p. 328.

⁷ T. Gołębiowski (ed.), *Marketing na rynku instytucjonalnym*, PWN, Warszawa 2003, pp. 339-340.

⁸ G. Golik-Górecka, *Marketing business to business*, Difin, Warszawa 2004, pp. 174-175.

⁹ A. Olczak, M. Urbaniak, *Marketing B2B w praktyce gospodarczej*, Difin, Warszawa 2006, p. 101.

¹⁰ W. Spreen, *Marketing in the International Aerospace Industry*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2007, p. 129-131.

brand were practically non-existent or very weakly outlined. A marked increase in interest in this area occurred around the end of the 20th and in the early 21st century, which is clearly demonstrated by the example of the US aviation group Boeing. When in 2001 the newly appointed Head of PR, J.A. Muehlber started to draw attention to the necessity of applying branding, she met with unfavourable reactions – the head of another department commented that Boeing is not a consumer company and has no brand. Yet in the following few years attempts were made at creating the brand, as seen in the document entitled Vision 2016, describing the development strategy of the company¹¹. In the case of Boeing the situation is specific due to the fact that the company operates both in the civilian and military markets.

It seems that nowadays as far as the arms market is concerned, one can mainly discuss advertisements of products and companies, which stems from the fact that the activities regarding the brand are not as strongly distinguished as in the civilian market. However, there is a noticeable growing trend, mainly in the case of US companies (e.g. Boeing, Lockheed-Martin, Grumman Northrop), towards creating a brand, which for companies is becoming a value around which are being developed activities concerning market communication. One can also suspect that this dimension of advertising activities will increase in importance and become clearly distinguished from the field of advertising.

A product's advertisement highlights above all its technical advantages, e.g. quality parameters, which are to meet customer expectations, impact on the purchasing decision, and inform about additional services, whereas a company advertisement – most frequently used by arms producers – mainly shapes the company image and the awareness of the company (brand). Its other task is to strengthen the degree of the company's identification by the recipients of advertising, and to distinguish it from its competitors.

Moreover, it should be mentioned here that Spreen named three types of advertising activity in the international aviation market, which can also be referred to the arms and military equipment market¹²:

- global advertising campaigns – aimed at building the company (brand) image as well as that of its products both in the domestic and international markets. This should help in making the enterprise a player which counts in the arms market, and attract the attention of potential investors in it;

¹¹ Ph. Kotler, W. Pfoertsch, *Zarządzanie marką w segmencie B2B*, PWN, Warszawa 2008, p. 16.

¹² W. Spreen, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

- product advertising – usually communications of this type concern specific products targeted at selected buyers; they appear in the specialist press (e.g. "Jane's Defence Weekly", "Military Technology"), and in publicity materials prepared for trade fairs and exhibitions;
- community advertising – aimed at building support for the company on the part of local authorities and politicians. It mostly uses the local media (press, radio, TV, social media) and outdoor advertising (billboards).

One should also draw attention to the use of cooperation in some advertising campaigns carried out by arms producers (the so-called cross-promotion). This often results from the fact that some projects are realised by two or more companies, an example can be joint advertising by Lockheed-Martin with the producers of engines for the F-16 planes (Pratt & Whitney and General Electric), together with the arms producers (e.g. Raytheon).

MEDIA USED IN ADVERTISEMENTS OF ARMS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT

In terms of the form of adverts seen in the market of armaments, they differ due to the use of specific media. Therefore one can distinguish printed advertisements (press), TV and radio commercials, advertisements in electronic environment, exposition and outdoor advertisements, and advertising gadgets, where the scope of use of individual media is highly diversified.

PRINTED ADVERTISING (PRESS)

In the case of armaments, the greatest importance is still attached to printed advertisements (specialist magazines and books, publicity materials for trade fairs and exhibitions, folders, brochures and catalogues). The basic form is advertising published in specialist magazines with a local, regional or global reach. In some publications, advertisements of arms companies and products take up to 25%-30% of their volume. One can name here "Raport WTO" published in Poland, in which during the period 2011-2016 adverts constituted 30% of the content¹³. This confirmed the rule that when a country embarks on purchasing arms, or even when there is only some initial information about planning future purchases or modernisation work, it leads to an increased advertising activity on the part of arms producers.

¹³ Based on own reserach.

This was visible, for example, in connection with a tender for trainer aircraft for the Polish air force, which resulted in the publication of adverts for the T-50 Korean plane and the Italian Aermacchi M-349 in practically all Polish magazines dedicated to military and aviation subjects. A similar situation occurred when in 2012 a tender procedure was opened for the purchase of helicopters for the Polish Army¹⁴. At the same time, no prospects for the purchase of arms and military equipment causes a low interest on the part of arms producers in publishing their adverts. This regards not merely the situations when the budget for purchasing new equipment or its modernisation is restricted, but also when conditions stipulated in contracts openly specify the supplier. One can use the example of the programme "Wisła", regarding the purchase of the mid-range air defence system, which follows the trend of the Polish Ministry of Defence (MON) buying equipment in the USA¹⁵. Other suppliers were aware of the lack of possibilities to compete for the contract valued at USD 4.75 billion, hence their purely symbolic advertising activity. At the same time, US companies (Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin) participating in the programme, having a practically guaranteed win against their competitors, did not indulge in active marketing activity. A similar situation also occurred for other programmes, which over recent years has been reflected by, among others, the number of adverts published in the Polish specialist press. In the already mentioned magazine "Raport WTO", the share of advertising in the content has systematically decreased; in 2018-2019 this was around 23%, in 2021 15% , and in the first issues in 2022 it fell to approximately 10%. A similar tendency was recorded for other magazines published in Poland, such as "Nowa Technika Wojskowa" and "Wojsko i Technika"¹⁶.

Over the last decade or so, the advertising market in specialist publications dedicated to the arms and defence sector has become very restrained, which is due to a few reasons. The cuts in military budgets which took place in many countries, from the viewpoint of arms producers, have influenced the reasons for publishing adverts. This is felt not only by publishers of local titles but also those with a global reach, e.g. "Military Technology". Advertising activity has also been negatively affected by the process of consolidation within the arms market, resulting in a smaller number of companies interested in publishing their adverts. Another

¹⁴ P. Skulski, *Uwarunkowania komunikacji rynkowej na międzynarodowym rynku uzbrojenia i sprzętu wojskowego*, Wyd. UEW, Wrocław 2013, p. 238-239.

¹⁵ M. Likowski, T. Hypki, *Wisła wpadła do Potomaku*, [in:] *Raport WTO*, 4/2018, p. 4.

¹⁶ Based on own research.

threat for traditional publications comes from their competitors in the electronic media, above all e-publications and the social media websites.

Thus advertisers from the arms sector have become highly desirable partners for press publishers, which can result in them exerting pressure and influencing the publishing policies and contents of the published materials. This could lead to the emergence of negative phenomena such as cryptic advertising, however it should be pointed out that the conditions in the market of press advertising may also result in positive changes such as more meticulous and better studied preparation of advertising campaigns. This can apply to the frequency of the adverts publication or to their appropriate placement; an example of these positive actions are the adverts for drones manufactured by WB Electronics published in the April 2022 issue of the magazine "Nowa Technika Wojskowa". The advert was accompanied by an article about unmanned aircraft in the Polish army, and it appeared at the time of a strong interest in drones due to their use in military actions in Ukraine¹⁷. In this context it should be stressed that articles appearing in press publications have significant potential in terms of the image and information aspects, mainly because they are viewed by their readers as being more objective than classic advertising.

Advertising activities also include launching publications dedicated to specific types of armaments, companies from the arms sector, as well as those involved in the arms and military equipment trade – one can name "Российское оружие в сирийском конфликте" (Russian weapons in the Syrian conflict) from 2016, dedicated to Russian weaponry used in the armed conflict in Syria, which happens to be an advertising catalogue of Rosoboronexport¹⁸.

The publication of advertisements of companies from the arms sector in widely available magazines and newspapers is quite rare, and usually may happen on the occasion of national celebrations (e.g. Independence Day in the USA, Independence Day in Poland), and anniversaries of historic events (e.g. Victory Day, 9/11 Day). In recent years such initiatives have also accompanied the rivalry around high-value arms contracts, even though this is not a frequent occurrence. An example illustrating such situations was linked with competing for a contract to supply tanker aircraft for the US air force (2006-2008) and a contract for supplying vessels to the US coast guard (2011-2012). In these periods, newspapers – including The

¹⁷ T. Dmitruk, *Bezzałogowe statki powietrzne w Siłach Zbrojnych RP*, [in:] *Nowa Technika Wojskowa*, 4/2022, pp. 36-45.

¹⁸ В.Н. Половинкин (редактор), *Российское оружие в сирийском конфликте*, ООО СТАТУС, Москва 2016, pp. 224.

Washington Post – published numerous adverts from arms producers striving for the contracts. However, these actions focused on Washington as the place where key decisions regarding supply of arms are made¹⁹.

RADIO AND TV ADVERTISING

Radio and TV advertisements play a decidedly lesser role regarding the arms market than in the case of the market of consumer goods, and therefore are seldom used. Such communications would mainly apply in promoting expositional events such as trade fairs, exhibitions and product demonstrations. In respect of advertising arms and military equipment, the US market is an exception on a global scale, where domestic producers offer advertising spots, mostly in connection with national celebrations and anniversaries of historic events. Occasionally one can also encounter TV and radio commercials for products made by arms manufacturers, such as the TV spot “Go Anywhere, Do Anything” for the F-35, P-3 Orion and T-50 aircraft produced by Lockheed-Martin²⁰.

ADVERTISING IN ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENT

In recent years there has been a growing interest in Internet advertising, mainly via arms sector websites. Ever more frequently advertisements are also being placed on the websites of magazines and specialist journals, publishers of specialist books on defence matters, as well as the websites of institutions supporting the arms sector, and finally websites dedicated to issues of security and military technology (e.g. Defence IQ, Defence 24, Bharat Defence Kavach, Defence Aviation, Defence Industries). This has been accompanied by a notable growth of interest in active participation by companies from the arms sector in the social media, i.e. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which provide an opportunity for a quick reaction to ongoing events and for interactive communication with other Internet users. The effectiveness of this communication channel was confirmed by, among others, research on the commercial market of firearms in the USA, which revealed that social media provide effective communication

¹⁹ P. Farhi, *Influx of ads for military weapons throwing commuters for loop*, [in] *The Washington Post*, 25 June 2010.

²⁰ P. Skulski, *op.cit.*, p.240.

between users and websites of shops selling firearms online²¹. The study carried out by an international research team as part of the project Militarization 2.0 also indicated the importance of social media in spreading information concerning widely-understood military issues and in creating certain attitudes²². The potential offered by social media explains the growing interest on the part of companies from the arms sector in using this form of communication, mainly in activities concerning image-building and information. Out of the top 100 arms producers listed in SIPRI 2012, 88 used YouTube, 75 had Twitter profiles, and 69 were on Facebook. In 2014, out of the 584 surveyed PMSCs (Private Military and Security Company), 252 had at least one social media account²³.

An example of a well-designed and efficiently performed advertising campaign in traditional and electronic media is the activity of the Turkish producer of the TB-2 Bayraktar drones, Baykar Makina, practically from the moment of launching the production of this UAV in 2014²⁴. Actions were prepared both for the specialist as well as widely accessible media, which allowed for the creation of the image of an inexpensive but reliable weapon, and translated into a very large interest in practically all products made by the company^{25,26}. The Turkish producer also employed very effectively in terms of marketing, the successes of the Ukrainian armed forces using the systems of unmanned vehicles (UAV) in combat against the Russian invasion in 2022. In turn, this allows not only to obtain orders for the currently produced drones, but also for the promotion of future projects at present subject to R&D^{27,28}.

The growing interest in the electronic media is also reflected by the fact that arms producers have been frequently preparing their promotional materials (including advertisements) employing electronic means such as CD, DVD and pen-drives. This form is

²¹ L. Jordan, J. Kalin, C. Dabrowski, *Characteristics of Gun Advertisements on Social Media: Systematic Search and Content Analysis of Twitter and YouTube Posts*, [in:] *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, No.22 (3) March 2020, <http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>, doi: 10.2196/15736: 10.2196/15736, [accessed on 19.04.2022].

²² S.T. Jackson, J. Joachim, N. Robinson, A. Schneiker, *Assessing meaning construction on social media: a case of normalizing militarism*, SIPRI Policy Brief, October 2017, pp. 1-16.

²³ Ibidem, p.7.

²⁴ S. Witt, *The Turkish drone that changed the nature of warfare*, [in:] *The New Yorker*, 9 May 2022, <http://newyorker.com>, [accessed on 20.05.2022].

²⁵ D. Gatopoulos, S. Fraser, *Cheap but lethal Turkish drones bolster Ukraine's defenses*, [in:] *AP News*, 17 March 2022, <http://apnews.com>, [accessed on 04.05.2022].

²⁶ L. Kay, *How Turkey's Bayraktar drones became an international success*, [in:] *Defense World*, 27 May 2021, <http://defeseworld.net>, [accessed on 24.04.2022].

²⁷ T. Kadam, *New Milestone For Turkey's 'Next-Gen' Akinci Drone – A Record Breaking Flight Over Three Countries To Azerbaijan*, [in:] *The EurAsian Times*, 23 May 2022, <http://eurasiatimes.com>, [accessed on 30 May 2022].

²⁸ J. Sabak, *Turcja projektuje odrzutowy bezzałogowiec uderzeniowy*, [in:] *Defence24*, 6 March 2021, <http://defence24.pl>, [accessed on 28.05.2022].

gaining advantage over the traditional promotional materials such as catalogues and advertising brochures.

EXPOSITION AND OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

Exposition advertising is connected with participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, and its aim is to present products and provide information about the company in direct (exhibiting the product) or indirect (models, folders and brochures, audio-visual presentations) form. It is characteristic of arms producers to make a large scale use of models representing the products they offer, due to the difficulty of transporting armoured vehicles (e.g. tanks, transporters), aircraft and ships, generating significant costs and presenting problems of an organisational and logistic nature (such as the appropriate permits).

An important element of exposition advertising relates to preparing stands and stalls, to provide an opportunity to exhibit the company logo and adverts of the offered products, with a creative approach allowing for better brand recognition.

During exhibition events, there is a wide use of outdoor advertisements, mainly billboards, banners and special racks/advertising displays. These elements appear both at the stands prepared by individual companies, and the outdoor displays of particular products. Figure 1 shows an example of a product exhibited at a trade fair, accompanied by advertising banners and displays, as well as the company stand clearly showing the producer's name.

Figure 1.

Turkish Otokar Cobra armoured vehicle on outdoor stand



Source: Przemysław Skulski

In recent years there has been a growing use of outdoor advertising away from trade fairs and exhibitions, mostly by US arms producers, however as a rule they appear in particular

places and at a particular time. Just as in the case of adverts in the daily press, this can be observed in Washington during negotiating tenders for the largest contracts for the purchase of arms and military equipment, or when deciding about expenditure on new arms programmes. These messages are addressed to, above all, politicians who make decisions concerning the production and procurement of arms and military equipment. This method is also employed by US companies operating outside the USA. One can mention here the billboard campaign advertising the F-35 Lightning II in Australia (among others, in the international airport in Canberra) early in 2012, therefore at the moment of finalising the contract for supplying this aircraft to the Australian air force (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

F-35 Lightning II advertising in the international airport in Canberra, early in 2012



Source: Przemysław Skulski

GADGET ADVERTISING

A commonly used element of advertising activities is the preparation of various gadgets which are then gifted to representatives of companies cooperating with arms producers, as well as to potential contractors, the media and visitors to company stands during exposition events and official visits. Such gifts may include pens, diaries, T-shirts, and keyrings with the company logo, and inventiveness applied in their creation is highly appreciated – those which do not followed the typical ‘norm’ ensure greater recognition for the company. An example which met with great success were the badges prepared by PZL-Świdnik for the company’s participation in exhibition events. Another popular idea are collector’s models of military equipment, easily acceptable due to their relatively low cost yet emotionally positively charged,

especially for collectors, many of whom work in that sector, whereas luxury gifts (e.g. replicas of weapons, expensive alcohol) should be targeted at visitors of the highest rank.

It should be stressed that offering gifts is treated differently in various parts of the world, which is linked with local cultural considerations. It would seem that this custom is far more significant in contacts with partners from Asia and the Middle East than when dealing with those from Europe and North America. However, the existing cultural diversity means that knowledge of the rules of conduct should be treated as an indispensable element of operations in foreign markets, mainly to avoid embarrassing situations such as refusal of a gift. Another restriction stems from legal regulations in force in many countries, which do not permit offering gifts, or drastically reduce their allowed value.

THE STYLE OF ADVERTISEMENTS OF MILITARY PRODUCTS

As already mentioned, advertising arms and military equipment is a controversial issue, largely due to ethical dilemmas arising from the functioning of the arms sector and arms trade (such as corruption, political pressure). Bearing in mind the negative attitude to the arms sector on the part of a large part of society, these companies stress their dedication to the principles of ethical business, to social norms functioning in individual countries, as well as to political correctness. Their fear of a negative reaction to arms advertisements which do not adhere to these values is often justified. One could mention here the advert for the US-made tiltrotor plane V-22 Osprey, published in the “Armed Forces Journal” and in the “National Journal”. It showed the plane from which US marines land on the roof of a mosque. It caused a storm in the media, led to protests by the Muslim community, and was quickly withdrawn, while Boeing and Bell Helicopter issued their apologies to all those who felt insulted²⁹.

At this point it is worth mentioning the significant changes observed over the period of a few decades regarding society’s reception of advertisements for the arms manufacturers, which affects construction of their content. During the Second World War, American arms producers employed adverts clearly referring to the ‘elimination’ of the enemy and to repaying them for the suffering caused and the incurred losses. In the early stages of the Cold War, i.e. the 1950s and the 1960s, Western adverts often made references to the threat of Communism and danger of nuclear annihilation. Nowadays, using this type of message is limited not just by

²⁹ H. Bernton, *Magazine ad “unleashes hell” for Boeing and Bell*, [in:] *The Seattle Times*, 1 October 2005.

the aspiration to political correctness, but also by existing legal norms and requirements of the so-called self-regulation. In the majority of countries it is not permitted to show advertisements inciting the use of violence.

It appears that cultural conditions exert certain influence both on construction of advertising communication, and on the scale of the use of advertisements by the arms producers. This concerns mainly softening the impact of the content reflected by the terminology implemented in the adverts – ‘equipment’ and ‘defence systems’ instead of ‘arms’ and ‘weapons’. At the same time, copywriters emphasise the efforts made by these companies to guarantee protection, national and international security. Such an approach should be deemed correct from the viewpoint of aiming at the expected results, even though the analysis of activities by many manufacturers of armaments suggests a large dose of hypocrisy. Many companies, while tending to the creation of their own appropriate image and the maintaining of political correctness, still manage to sell their products to countries subjected to armed conflict and to politically unstable regions of the world.

In terms of the impact of cultural considerations on the scale of employing advertisements, it seems that pacifist attitudes of some societies have resulted to a certain degree in a lesser activity in this scope on the part of the producers of arms and military equipment. Here one could mention Japan, where there are no legal restrictions as to advertisements of arms, yet they are quite rare – even in specialist publications.

The construction of advertising content is also affected by the characteristics of the offered products (their high technological level) and of the entities present in the arms market. Advertisements for arms and military equipment are focused on providing concrete information, often highly technical, as after all their recipients are mostly specialists (civilian and military) for whom the applied terminology and technical details are understandable. These adverts can be classified as being low-context – using specific information, data and facts, and their advertising slogans are dominated by rational concepts with positive approach. Some advertisements for arms and military equipment also make reference to emotions, which emphasise the offered benefits connected with gaining advantage over their competitors (quality, modernity, wide product range). These adverts frequently combine rational and emotional elements. After the start in 2001 of the ‘global war on terrorism’, and following the engagement of numerous countries in the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, there

was a noticeable increase in using adverts referring to providing security. Moreover, negative slogans with references to fear, danger and uncertainty are fairly rare in this type of advertising.

These observations were confirmed by the analysis conducted on a sample of 590 adverts published in the period 2010-2020 in specialist magazines dedicated to defence and military technology. Among the examined publications, some were local (Australian "Defence Today", Czech "ATM", French "Technology and Armament", Korean "Defense Times Korea", Polish: "Armia", "Nowa Technika Wojskowa" and "Raport WTO", and Russian "Nacionalnaja Oborona"), as well as regional and global ("Al Defaiya", "Asian Military Review", "Military Technology", and "Jane's Defence Weekly"). This allowed to distinguish six types of messages employed in press advertising³⁰:

- reference to benefits – message usually related to concrete information, stressing elements which ensure gaining competitive advantage – technological innovativeness, better capabilities (results), wider product range and possibility of modification. Adverts of this type are often used in the early phases of promotional activities.
- reference to security – message related to emotions linked with providing protection and/or security (of soldiers, country, region). One can note that such messages are used mainly in the later stages of advertising campaigns, and their task is to maintain the appropriate image of products and their producers.
- emphasis on cooperation – the leading concept in this type of message is demonstrating the cooperation capability of the company, as the basis for building a competitive position and effective operations. This information is particularly important in cases of realising multinational programmes. These adverts often highlight possibility and willingness to cooperate with local entities.
- emphasis on connections with the environment – the main motive of the message is to show sensitivity towards the widely interpreted environmental factors. This may involve information about creating employment due to commencing production, caring about the natural environment, building relations by international entities with the country in which they conduct their business activity.
- informative and technological message – highlights providing concrete information and technical data concerning the offered equipment. Apart from the advertisements making

³⁰ Based on own research.

reference to the potential benefits, this was the most popular type of advertising in the analysed sample; it is also characteristic that usually they are free of emotional content.

- non-standard message – this approach usually means making reference to a sense of humour, and effects borrowed from films and mass culture. The experience of the last few decades clearly proves that the arms sector rarely uses this type of message, and when it happens, this usually applies to smaller companies, offering small weapons and light firearms, and military equipment, as well as producers of diverse components. The biggest players in the arms market generally favour a conservative approach to advertising, which often results from the specificity of their clients, their will to maintain political correctness, and also the fear of a negative reception of such non-standard messages by society.

In the case of some adverts, it would be very difficult to classify them unequivocally to a given type of message. This is mostly because they often combine diverse messages – focusing on providing a higher level of security due to the choice of a given vehicle or aircraft, while at the same time stressing the connection with the local market. Security can also be associated with the technical solutions offered by the products and with their wide range. This is why when making the division, it was assumed that the criterion of classifying an advert into a certain category is its main advertising slogan.

SUMMARY

The characteristics of the market of arms and military equipment impose certain specificity in the use of marketing instruments, which is conditioned by factors of a political, legal, technological, economic and cultural nature. Within the arms market, just as in the case of civilian institutional markets, one can observe a hierarchy of the applied instruments of market communication. The characteristics of the arms market mean that the greatest use is made of the instruments of direct communication, and the lesser of the tools of mass communication such as advertising.

Although advertising activities in the arms and military equipment market do not exercise a direct influence on the signed contracts, yet they constitute significant image-building and informational actions, aimed at showing in the appropriate light the company itself and its products, and drawing attention to some aspects of the functioning of the weapons industry, as well as national and international security (international cooperation regarding security, acceptance of expenditure on purchasing and modernisation of armaments, creation of

employment, and technological development). Among the forms of advertising discussed in the article, the greatest impact is still generated by adverts published in the specialist press. Apart from those, other kinds of advertising are also employed – outdoor displays, exhibitions, gifts and electronic media. The latter should be especially highlighted, due to their growing application, whereas TV and radio advertising has become rare and produces marginal impact. Over the last decade or so, a new phenomenon has also emerged – the appearance of adverts for arms and military equipment in the civilian public space. In the USA there is a growing presence of adverts for arms on billboards in city streets, and the number of those appearing in the local press is also increasing. However, even if they still are small-scale activities, it cannot be ruled out that with a growing competition and intensifying military threats which lead to the growth in defence expenditure on the global scale, their importance will also increase in other countries.

Over the last few decades one can observe changes in the construction of arms advertising, which apply mainly to semantic aspects (the use of politically correct expressions), as well as those related to the development of printing and editing techniques. An example is the gradual replacement of drawings – which dominated in such context even in the 1960s – by photographs, whereas from the late 20th century (the second half of the 1990s) onwards, there has been noted a growing use of computer graphics and visualisations. Yet the philosophy behind the company/sector communication with the market has been only slightly modified.

The creation of efficient marketing communication demands the integration of various instruments. Even the most creative adverts will not guarantee market success and contracts for the supply of arms and military equipment. However, they constitute one of the elements of the promotion-mix on the institutional market, which should be used to increase the effectiveness of marketing communication. This is why there is a growing acceptance of the concept of integrated marketing communication (IMC), which means taking a comprehensive approach to it. Such thinking in terms of promotional activities is now visible in the case of the largest armaments producers, such as Lockheed-Martin, Boeing, BAE Systems, Leonardo and Airbus.

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