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THE IMAGE OF PUBLIC SERVANTS IN TIMES OF WAR

The image of public servants plays a key role in ensuring public trust in public administration. In times of war, this aspect is especially important, as the effectiveness of the government largely depends on the perception of its representatives by citizens and the international community.

The image of public servants is a set of perceptions, assessments and impressions of the public about public servants, which is formed on the basis of their behavior, professionalism, openness, integrity, communication and decision-making. The image plays an important role in ensuring trust in the government, affects the level of support for state institutions and the overall effectiveness of public administration [1].

In times of war, building and maintaining a positive image of public servants, and as a result, building the reputation of the public service, is an extremely important issue due to the need to respond quickly to war-related challenges:

–information attacks and disinformation (propaganda and disinformation can purposefully undermine the authority of civil servants);

–corruption and corruption scandals (any manifestations of abuse of power in times of war become particularly sensitive and undermine trust);

–high level of responsibility and stress (civil servants often make difficult decisions under conditions of shortage of resources and time, work overtime in difficult stressful situations);

– the impact of negative stereotypes on the formation of a positive image of public servants (widespread stereotypes in society about high levels of corruption in public authorities, bureaucracy and inefficiency of public services can undermine trust even in competent employees);

–communication and motivation problems (insufficient or ineffective communication with citizens can cause misunderstanding or distrust, and reduce the level of motivation of civil servants), etc.

We agree with the views of A. Ishchenko and A. Sinchuk [2] that the image of public authorities directly affects the attitude of people to political or economic measures in the country. It is the image that forms the desire of the population to interact and cooperate with public officials or, on the contrary, creates negative associations and stereotypes and, at the end of this process, ensures a stable distrust and unwillingness of citizens to cooperate with public authorities. Therefore, creating, shaping, and maintaining a positive image requires considerable effort and is an extremely important task for every civil servant.

In our opinion, in order to create and maintain a positive image of public servants in times of war, it is necessary to use modern and effective methods based on effective foreign experience. Namely:

1. Transparency and openness (civil servants must unquestioningly adhere to the principles of openness, regularly inform the public about decisions made and their consequences, use social networks, press conferences, etc. to strengthen the trust and openness of public authorities to citizens);

2. Professionalism and competence (civil servants must demonstrate a high level of knowledge, skills and responsibility in the performance of their duties. The effectiveness of decisions is one of the main factors of public trust);

3. Active participation in volunteer activities (participation in helping the military and the affected civilian population contributes to a positive perception of civil servants and demonstrates their involvement in a common cause);
4. Cooperation with international organizations (work with international partners in the field of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and diplomatic support helps to strengthen the image of not only individual officials, but also the state as a whole);
5. Fight against corruption (strict control over the activities of employees, audit of the use of budget funds and prompt response to violations help to avoid the negative impact of corruption risks on the image of the state apparatus);
6. Developing the social and emotional intelligence of public servants (critical for shaping their positive image, especially in times of war. It promotes the development of communication, empathy, resilience, crisis management, and motivation of public servants);
7. Adherence to ethical standards demonstrates high professionalism, which can gradually change negative stereotypes.
8. Use of educational and communication campaigns to form a realistic view of the professional activities of civil servants.

Thus, the image of civil servants in times of war is a critical factor in stability and effective governance. Honesty, openness, professionalism, and active civic engagement help to build trust among citizens and the international community. Successful communication and the fight against corruption will ensure a positive perception of public servants even in the most difficult times.

List of references

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