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CULTURAL, PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES SERIES

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VOLUME VI:
**THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

EDITED BY
VLADIMIR SAZONOV, ANDRES SAUMETS AND HOLGER MÖLDER

SISUKORD

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INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF RUSSIAN INFORMATION WARFARE

Vladimir Sazonov, Holger Mölder, Andres Saumets

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Introduction

The German general, professor of political science, and progenitor of the Bundeswehr leadership concept of *Innere Führung*, Wolf Graf von Baudissin (1907−1993), reached a striking *conclusion* a result of his deliberations on the nature of war. He found that war is a spiritual activity by nature and the underlying reasons for war can be attributed to clashing worldview. In this conflict, the country or alliance of countries with the superior worldview will emerge victorious. Baudissin further proposed that the victor will be the *western* worldview. As bold as this assertion may be, the most surprising feature to emerge from his reflections is that Baudissin does not place any importance on armaments races or technological supremacy, but rather emphasized the mental dimensions of conflicts. Thus it is the smarter, and not the stronger who will win. In this *war of worldviews*, supremacy is achieved by adopting a correct leadership philosophy. Although Baudissin was reflecting on his own era, the developments that have occurred over the last decades confirm his theories with astonishing precision. It is therefore, possible to apply his findings to more recent conflicts as well. When considering that in the war between worldviews "only such armed forces will survive that are composed of free citizens and that operate in accordance with the democratic order of a state".[1] It becomes evident that a military organization must be aligned with traditional Western humanistic and democratic values of peace, freedom, and responsibility. It is only then can it achieve military superiority. A soldier is only as strong as the society that they defend. A society must be in harmony with its armed forces if a soldier is to be effective. According to Baudissin's thesis this harmony is only possible in a free society. An army embodies its political system and the army that is centered on freedom that can overcome

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[1] **Baudissin, W. Graf von** 2006. Als Mensch hinter den Waffen. Hg. von A. Dörfler-Dierken. Göttingen, S. 67.

the one that is grounded on repression. A free army is simply more capable of defeating a non-free army. Therefore, according to Baudissin, a country's modern armed forces should be educated in a way that promotes and develops "the will to become free and be free".[2] Baudissin also reached another fundamental *conclusion*: in the war of worldviews, the main objective is not to achieve military victory over the supporters of a particular worldview or to enact the *military defeat* of an enemy. It is rather to achieve a mental victory over an opponent by altering their convictions and integrating them into the victor's worldview.

Similarly, Russia's information warfare against Ukraine and against the West has also been a clash of worldviews wherein one party has attempted to defeat the other and alter the opponent's worldview. But as the Chinese general Su Zi points out, the greatest victories do not always come with violent effort. He writes: "Therefore the skillful leader subdues the enemy's troops without any fighting: he captures their cities laying siege to them: he overthrows their kingdom without lengthy operations in the field" (Su Zi, III, 6).[3]

Ukraine in Russia's sphere of influence

Before delving further into an in-depth analysis of the current Ukrainian crisis, it is essential to understand the underlying reasons for its outbreak. Russia's wounded reaction to the events in Ukraine after the Euromaidan protests[4] in December, 2013 is well explained by Zbigniew Brzezinski[5] who describes Ukraine as an "important space on the Eurasian chessboard", the control over which is a prerequisite for Russia "to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia".

Ukraine's independence in 1991 was already too much of a shock for many patriotically minded Russian political groups, as it meant a major defeat for Moscow's historical strategy that sought to exercise control over the geopolitical space around Russia's borders. According to Brzezinski[6],

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[2] **Baudissin Dokumentation Zentrum** (Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr) 56, 5.4/4: 18.–23. Februar 1956. W. G. v. Baudissin's presentation „Freiheit als Verpflichtung".

[3] **Sun Zi** 1994. Art of War. Translated by R.D. Sawyer. Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press.

[4] **Мухарьский, Антон** 2015. Майдан. Революція духу. Київ: Наш формат.

[5] **Brzezinski, Zbigniew** 1997. The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives. New York: Basic Books, p. 46.

[6] **Brzezinski** 1997, p. 92.

the loss of Ukraine decreases Russia's ability to rule over the Black Sea region. Crimea and Odessa have historically been important strategic access points to the Black Sea, as well as to the Mediterranean via the Bosphorus strait. Throughout history, Ukraine has always been essential to Russian nation-building narratives. Since Kyiv has traditionally been regarded as the "mother of all Russian cities", Ukraine holds a special place in Russian national myth. Therefore, Ukraine not only plays a pivotal role in Russian geopolitical strategic thinking, it also retains a symbolic value as the homeland of Russian civilization that should not be underestimated.[7] As Hugo Spaulding remarked:

> *Russia's strategic interest in controlling Ukrainian political affairs reflects Russian President Vladimir Putin's belief in the need to maintain a buffer between NATO, the European Union, and Russia. The collapse of former President Viktor Yanukovych's pro-Russian regime in February 2014 forced Putin to re-evaluate his strategy for controlling Ukraine, particularly as it became clear that Ukraine's new government was likely to be pro-Western and eager to join the EU and even NATO. Unable to rely on a proxy government any longer, Putin replaced his policy of economic coercion with one incorporating military coercion through successive operations. Both approaches pursued the same strategic goal of dominating Ukraine's internal and foreign affairs.*[8]

Russian information operations against the Ukrainian state and the Ukrainian Defence Forces

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Russian information operations against Ukraine started earlier than 2013–2014. Already in 1991, Russian propaganda was being directed against the independent state of Ukraine after dissolution of the Soviet Union.

After the fall of the pro-Russian President Yanukovich on February 22nd, 2014, the Kyiv government embarked on a more determined path towards integration with the West. In Moscow, the prospect of losing Ukraine from its geopolitical sphere of influence was perceived as tantamount to a catastrophic defeat, perhaps even worse than the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

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[7] See more **Sazonov, Vladimir; Mölder, Holger; Müür, Kristiina** (eds.) 2016. Russian Information Warfare against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces: April-December 2014. Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. [**Sazonov *et al*.** 2016]

[8] **Spaulding, Hugo** 2015. Putin's next objectives in the Ukrainian. – Backgrounder, February 2015. Institute for the Study of War, p. 1, <www.understandingwar.org> (last accesses 24.08.2016).

In order to prevent that from happening and to keep Ukraine, or at least part of Ukraine, under its control, Russia occupied Crimea[9] in March 2014 and undertook measures to destabilize the predominantly Russian-speaking Eastern Ukrainian regions by means of asymmetric warfare[10] – information operations, economic measures, cyber warfare, psychological warfare, etc. During the conflict Russia never pursued any kind of international or regional crisis management measures, despite being in a unique position to mediate between the Ukrainian government, which it officially recognized, and the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, which were not officially recognized, neither internationally nor by Russia. Russia's behaviour during the crisis indicates that it was and is not interested in peace, but rather seeks to use the current crisis to advance its national interests and to enhance its political hegemony as an alternative power to the West. By destabilising Eastern Ukraine and undermining the peace processes, Russia also avoids taking any responsibility for the security and well-being of the mostly Russian-speaking people living in the conflict area.[11]

It widely acknowledged that Russian information operations have become progressively massive, aggressive, influential, and visible. Dmytro Kuleba, Ambassador-at-Large at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, determined (2015) that the aggressive wave of Russian information campaigns began to appear approximately one year before the annexation of Crimea, in 2013[12]. Russia's actions confirm that it was well-prepared, and militarily ready to conduct the operation in Crimea.

During the 2014–2015 conflict in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, all levels of the Russian leadership, from the political (against the state of Ukraine, its structures and politicians) to the military were involved in information operations. According to Jolanta Darczewska[13], the mass scale mobilization of

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[9] Concerning the annexation of Crimea see **Mölder, Holger; Sazonov, Vladimir; Värk, René** 2014. Krimmi liitmise ajaloolised, poliitilised ja õiguslikud tagamaad: I osa. – Akadeemia, No.12, pp. 2148–2161; **Mölder, Holger; Sazonov, Vladimir; Värk, René** 2015. Krimmi liitmise ajaloolised, poliitilised ja õiguslikud tagamaad: II osa. – Akadeemia, No. 1, pp. 1–28.

[10] See, for example **Rosin, Kaupo** 2015. Hübriidsõda Ukrainas. – 2014 aastaraamat. Eesti Kaitsevägi. Kaitseväe peastaap, OÜ Greif, pp. 33–39.

[11] See more **Sazonov** *et al.* 2016.

[12] **Kuleba, Dmytro** 2015. Russian information operations against Ukraine. Interviewed by Vladimir Sazonov, Kyiv, 27 May 2015.

[13] **Darczewska, Jolanta** 2014. The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare the Crimean operation, a case study. – Point of View. Number 42 (May 2014). Warsaw, Oúrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpia, Centre for Eastern Studies, p. 5.

federal television channels[14], radio stations, newspapers and online resources that was supported by diplomats, politicians, political analysts, experts, and representatives of the academic and cultural elites was unprecedented. In Russia's information campaigns against Ukraine, Moscow propagandists drew upon myths and narratives related to the Second World War, the activities of Stepan Bandera and Ukrainian nationalists of the 1940s, as well as Nazism and Nazi-induced violence in order to further their objectives. This was supplemented with images of the "glorious Soviet period". Such manipulations have become commonplace in the Russian media since Vladimir Putin came to power in the Russian Federation and they show no signs of abating.[15]

The current volume, *The Crisis in Ukraine and Information Operations of the Russian Federation*, aims to provide a better understanding of Russian policies towards Ukraine at the beginning of the 21st century, and to explain why Russia wants to control its neighboring territories such as Ukraine. This is why it is necessary to study the nature of Russian information warfare and hybrid war in the context of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict.[16]

The current issue includes articles of experts from Estonia, Ukraine, Latvia and Poland. All authors express their personal views. In his foreword to the issue, Maj. **Uku Arold** discusses the peculiarities of information operations of Russian Federation. Dr. **Sergii Pakhomenko** and Dr. **Catherine Tryma** analyze the ways in which identity can influence the current warfare in Ukraine. Col. Dr. **Adam Wetoszka** of Poland, analyses the concept of hybrid war. Dr. **Vladimir Sazonov** and M.A. **Igor Kopõtin** analyse the Russian information war against the Ukrainian Armed Forces in 2014–2015. Dr. **Holger Mölder** focuses on the impact of President Putin's and his administration's policies on the international system. M.A. **Maili Vilson** recounts the EU foreign policy responses to the Putin's challenges. Dr. **Yevhen Fedchenko** reveals the parallels between the Soviet propaganda and the activities of contemporary Russian ideologists. Dr. **Ieva Berzina** discusses how Latvian society perceived the Ukrainian crisis. Theologian Dr. **Ain Riistan** draws attention to on the role of the Moscow Patriarchate in the Russian information war during the conflict in Ukraine. Finally, a

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[14] Federal television of the Russian Federation.

[15] **Lipman, Maria** 2009. Media Manipulation and Political Control in Russia. Chattam House, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/300109lipman.pdf> (last accesses 24.08.2016).

[16] **Rácz, Andras** 2015. Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

warfare expert from Ukraine M.I.B. **Dmytro Zolotukhin** explains what is the memetic warfare and how it threatens democratic values.

In conclusion, the research of multiple international experts clearly indicates that Russia considers information warfare to be of equal importance to military operations, or even more so. In some cases, military actions have even taken a supporting role, in the non-declared information war against Ukraine conducted by Russia.

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Tartu/Tallinn, October 2016

PECULIARITIES OF RUSSIAN INFORMATION OPERATIONS

Uku Arold

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For an academic researcher it is not an easy task to define the information influence activities of the current Putin regime in a parsimonious way. Some of the obstacles are similar to the challenges that NATO and its nations face in adapting foreign policy, the military, and intelligence organisations in today's era of globalised information. Other obstacles are uniquely Russian, derived from aspects of a worldview and codes of conduct dating back to Soviet Socialist and even to Czarist times, or spring from the peculiarities of a regnant regime. In this introductory article overview of the phenomenon of Russian information operations, the reasoning for a taxonomy referring to NATO terminology is provided in order to help readers categorise the findings of the following study papers in this volume. Methodological and empirical considerations specific for research on this partly amorphous subject area are discussed as well.

What are information operations?

Patrick D. Allen has highlighted the five most popular misconceptions of our own information operations in Western understanding.[1] In the light of these insights I provide an overview of the activities that are carried out under the umbrella term 'information operations'.

1. IO Is Not Just Slowing Down an Enemy's "OODA Loop"

   Allen explains: *While slowing the enemy's OODA loop is one way to use IO, there are other ways to use IO that don't delay the enemy's OODA loop, or that make the enemy's OODA loop irrelevant to the friendly objective. For example, if the friendly side has successfully convinced the enemy that a friendly deception plan is the real plan, then the friendly*

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[1] **Allen, P. D**. 2007. Information Operations Planning. Boston, London: Artech House, pp. 14–18. [**Allen** 2007]

side does not want to delay the enemy walking into that trap. As Napoleon stated, "Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake."[2]

Penetrating the adversary's decision-making processes is central to Military Deception (MILDEC) and Command and Control Warfare (C2W). However, the concept of information operations goes further. Modern military conflicts are not limited to two or more warring state actors. The primary aim for all parties is to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the civilian population and international public. Different actors have varying motivations and degrees of confrontation. As additional target audiences crucial to the success of the overall campaign emerge, no clear-cut line can be drawn between friends, neutrals, and enemies. In this globalised information era the battlespaces are just much more complex.

2. IO Is Not Just Influence Operations

Allen explains: *The phrase "IO is the name, influence is the game" is false (by being too limiting), but has appeared frequently in the psychological operations (PSYOP) community. /// But influence operations ignore the technical aspects of IO that act against opposing information and information systems and help protect friendly information and information systems.*[3]

This misguided approach has been common both in NATO policy circles and among military staffs. Although, according to the agreed concept for NATO, strategic psychological operations exist. In practice, policies and decisions aiming to influence foreign targets on a strategic scale have not usually been called by that name. In US case, 'military information support', 'global engagement', 'public diplomacy' and 'strategic communications' have been preferred approaches instead of the disputable term PSYOP. With raising awareness about the hazards of adversary propaganda, for want of a better term, 'information operations' was borrowed from the defence community and became popular.

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[2] *Ibid.*
[3] **Allen** 2007.

3. IO Is Not Just Special Technical Operations (STO)

Allen explains: *The community that is focused on the technical aspects of information storage, flows, and processing tends to forget that the ultimate aim of affecting information is to affect enemy decisions. /// This leads to another aspect of IO – you can't guarantee that the enemy will decide and act as you desire. Even if you have the perfect deception plan and have spoofed all of their information systems, the enemy may still make a decision that is contrary to where you have been trying to lead him.*[4]

This point addresses the contemporary debate about cyber warfare in a more general way. In meaningful information operations, it is not bits and bytes that do things with other bits and bytes. These don't matter much. Information and communication technology (ICT) is just a vehicle to transport influence. Only if clever use of ICT (and not just in dystopian scenarios) can really have a <u>significant</u> impact on adversary Command and Control, or can change the behaviour of important social groups in a <u>planned</u> way, can we say that it matters. We should not invest in computers fighting heroically with other computers but should focus where the required influence could be attained. These targets are in the wider information environment – actual key people, logistic supply systems, relevant social groups and norms – and not in technology itself. As early as 1998, Robert L. Leonard declared the attack-defend approach to information warfare through the ICT and information systems lens 'totally useless' as, by its inherently symmetrical definition, it does not encompass the quintessential laws of war.[5]

4. IO Is Not Just Electronic Warfare (EW)

Allen explains: *EW claim to the full EM spectrum appears to be an effort to control CNO and possibly the OPSEC core capabilities as well. However, there is much more to computer network operations than simply operating in the EM spectrum. First, for example, social engineering – non-electronic ways to gain access to computer networks – is completely separate from the EM spectrum. Second, focusing on the EM spectrum*

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4   *Ibid.*

5   **Leonhard, R. R**. 2007. Sõjapidamisprintsiibid infoajastul [The Principles of War for the Information Age]. Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, lk 215.

misses the longer time frames involved in CNO and IO. For example, placing a Trojan Horse virus for later access, or setting up for time-delayed launching of software or physical actions, does not benefit from focusing on just the EM spectrum. Third, physical access to, or interference with, a computer network is part of the CNO charter, yet that also lies beyond the EM spectrum. Fourth, although parts of military deception can be performed in the EM spectrum, many other parts cannot. Lastly, only a very small portion of PSYOP and other influence operations involve the EM spectrum.[6]

This approach has been popular in forces where people from Electronic Warfare branches have been tasked with developing concepts and doctrines for information operations. It does provide a holistic framework that is connected with hard physics. Metaphors from physics have always been tempting for military theorists: mass, energy, center of gravity, power, balance, etc. EW sub-disciplines are important players in many situations where information operations are the answer, but they do not help much in the battles of narratives.

5. IO Is Not Just Information Assurance

Allen explains: *The existing overlap among definitions of IO and IA are recognized by DoD's new IO definition. IO, by definition, involves an adversarial situation, where humans or manmade systems are designed to attack and defend, or compete against each other in the realm of influence. IA, however, is designed to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability (CIA) of information regardless of the source of the threat to that information.*[7]

This approach is reflected in a number of study papers by different Western think tanks dealing with Russian disinformation. We have to safeguard our computers and secrets better and, in public, help to repair truth that is broken by the Russian 'war on information'. These are notions that should never be underestimated, but they still address only a fraction of Russian information operations.

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[6] **Allen** 2007, pp. 14–18.

[7] *Ibid.*

Russian terminology

In Russian academic literature and normative documents regarding national security the term 'information operations' (*информационные операции*) is used mainly as a reference point to NATO or its member states' antiparallel doctrines and staffs. The terms 'Information-psychological operations' and 'information-technical operations' are used to signify a set of influence operations and a set of electronic warfare and cyber measures, respectively. The preferred umbrella term for both cerebral and wired aspects, as well as for offensive and defensive measures in information operations, is 'information confrontation' (*информационное противоборство*). The legacy of this concept is borrowed from the early US concept of 'information warfare' (now deceased) that has been adopted in Russia as 'information confrontation', 'information war(fare)' (*информационная война*) and 'information struggle' (*информационная борьба*). As the struggle has become considered officially permanent by Russia[8], the term 'information confrontation' has found its way into national security documents, "banning" information warfare has made it into Russian initiatives on 'international informational security', and this remains the name of central academic subject matter journal by the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Military Academy[9]. The use of 'information struggle' sometimes refers to the tasks of units engaged in 'information confrontation' and is used as a more easily quotable but outdated synonym for 'information confrontation'.[10] [11] [12]

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[8] **Герасимов, В**. 2013. Ценность науки в предвидении. [The Value of Science in Anticipation]. – Военно-промышленный Курьер, № 8 (476). 27.02–5.03.2013, стр. 1–3. <http://vpk-news.ru/sites/default/files/pdf/VPK_08_476.pdf> (accessed 10.05.2016).

[9] Journal *Informatsionnye Voiny*. Scientific-practical interdisciplinary (military theory, philosophy, psychology, sociology, politics, economy, history, applied mathematics) journal. Issued since April 2007, 4 volumes in year, circulation: 1000. Principle editor is Moscow University Higher School of Contemporary Social Sciences department head, formerly Deputy Director FSB Vladimir Leopoldovich Schultz.

[10] **СМИ: Медведев поручил создать центр подготовки специалистов по информационным войнам** 2009. [Media: Medvedev ordered establishment of centre for preparation of information warfare specialists]. –Корреспондент.net, 8 октября 2009, 12:18. <http://korrespondent.net/world/russia/992318-smi-medvedev-poruchil-sozdat-centr-podgotovki-specialistov-po-informacionnym-vojnam> (accessed 10.09.2016).

[11] **Армия России впервые отработала информационное противоборство на учениях «Кавказ-2016»** 2016. [Russian Army for the first time worked on information confrontation during "Caucasus-2016" exercises]. – ТВ Звезда. 14 сентября 2016, 12:21 <http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201609141221-va0s.htm> (accessed 17.10.2016)

[12] **Interfax newswire** 14:02 14/09/2016. Information warfare group formed during Caucasus 2016 exercises.

Maj. Gen. I. N. Dylevsky *et al.* published an article in the institutional journal of Russian Ministry of Defence *Voyennaya Mysl* "On dialectics of deterrence and the prevention of military conflicts in the information age" where the renewed overall military doctrine is elaborated.[13] The Russian military doctrine of 2010 was renewed in 2014. Its main amendments were clearly connected with lessons identified from operations in and around Ukraine 2013–2014. Dylevsky *et al.* explain why in the 2010 revision, and much more in the 2014 revision, preparing units and facilities for information confrontation has such a high priority. It appears that by careful wording the authors balance providing an exhaustive overview for insiders while maintaining operational security from curious external eyes.

> By means of information confrontation might consider: facilities of technical intelligence, specially designed or existing informational means, psychotronic means, means of special program-technical influence, means of information protection.[14]

The military encyclopedic lexicon published on the Ministry of Defence webpage, originating from the 2007 print edition, gives a taxonomy of information confrontation means ('information weapons') as depicted in figure 1.
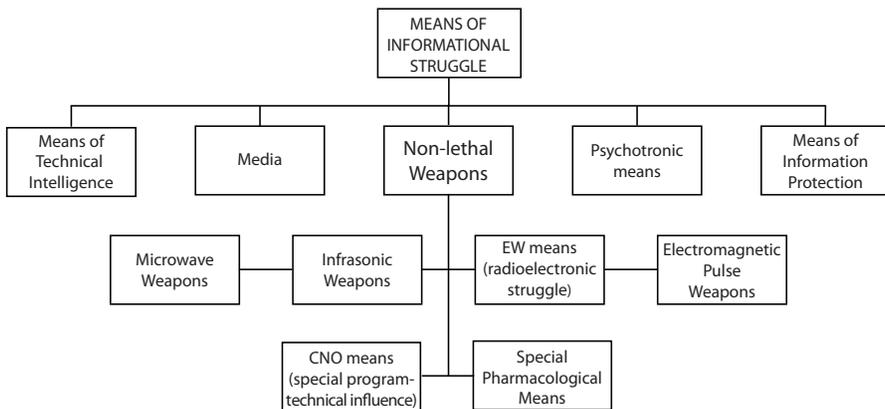
Figure 1. Means of informational struggle in 2007 – old view[15]

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[13] **Дылевский, И. Н.; Запивахин, В. О.; Комов, С. А.; Коротков, С. В.; Кривченко, А. А**. 2016. О диалектике сдерживания и предотвращения военных конфликтов в информационную эру. – Военная Мысль, № 7/2016.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] **Средства информационной борьбы** («Информационное оружие»). – Военный энциклопедический словарь. <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details. htm?id=14342@morfDictionary> (accessed 10.10.2016).

Former chief of the 5th Directorate of Operational HQ, Russian General Staff, Dylevsky indicates that most non-lethal weaponry, once fancy, have found their way out of the information confrontation paradigm for now. Tools and techniques that potentially have strategic impact have persisted in the sphere of favoured military thought, i.e., information confrontation. Intelligence, media, and information protection have fallen under the supervision of the national security council; information security and daily media management are guided from the presidential administration. There are indications that the psychotronic weapons programme (the Russian version of "Men staring at goats") has a prominent role in the upper echelons of national security circles. EW proved its efficacy during the Cold War and is now struggling for a larger role in information confrontation where cyber-people already claim major victories.

The most notorious of these is one of the first state-sponsored cyber espionage campaigns code-named by the targets as "The Cuckoo Egg", and most recently the accomplishments of APT-28 and APT-29 in hacking, manipulating and exposing the Democratic National Congress files. With considerable confidence, APT-28 aka Fancy Bear is attributed to the Russian internal security service FSB, and APT-29 to Russian military intelligence GRU. [16][17][18] Hence, the proven will and capability to engage in manipulating elections of the arch-enemy is something hard for EW (REB) forces to compete with.

There is a presidential grant recently awarded that motivates rationalisations on the subject of information confrontation.

One of the exemplary audits was made by the director of C2/engineering faculty, institute No. 37 of the Military Science Academy, Dmitri Sirotkin, and Alexandr Tyrtyshny, aspirant from the faculty of law, institute civic sciences, New Russian University[19]. Whereas authors focus on the defence

[16] **Alperovitch, D**. 2016. Bears in the Midst: Intrusion into the Democratic National Committee. – Crowdstrike Blog. June 15, 2016. <https://www.crowdstrike.com/blog/bears-midst-intrusion-democratic-national-committee/> (accessed 18.10.2016).

[17] **Rid, T**. 2016. All Signs Point to Russia Being Behind the DNC Hack. – Vice News. Motherboard. July 25, 2016 // 08:55 AM. <http://motherboard.vice.com/read/all-signs-point-to-russia-being-behind-the-dnc-hack> (accessed 18.10.2016).

[18] **FireEye** 2014. APT28: A Window Into Russia's Cyber Espionage Operations? <https://www2.fireeye.com/rs/fireye/images/rpt-apt28.pdf> (accessed 18.10.2016).

[19] **Сироткин Д. В.; Тыртышный А. А**. 2016. Модель организации взаимодействия между федеральными органами исполнительной власти в области информационного противоборства. [Organisational cooperation model for federal organs of executive power in information confrontation]. – Информационные Войны, № 3/2016. [**Сироткин, Тыртышный** 2016]

activities of information confrontation, in the context of Russian newspeak it provides rather good insight into the existing legal framework of information confrontation defence capabilities corresponding to recent developments in the organisational national security setup. It does exclude the judicial branch of power as it is not graspable by the analysis of legal documents. The legislative branch is represented by status quo legislative acts as it does not have any independent legal agency. The internal work of the Presidential Administration can be identified just from its leading agenda of mass media and coercive measures by the presidential security organisation (Block 4) as, traditionally, its inner dynamics are not meant for legal consideration. The steering role of the military in information confrontation has considerably increased during the Russian-Ukrainian War, in a practical sense.

Among Russian power elites, belief in an almighty information confrontation has, qualitatively, an even bigger role than belief-in-spin among British political journalists. There is probably no trick used in Western political communication campaigns or in Defence information operations (or situations that are believed to be information operations) that Russia has not tried to emulate in its own context afterwards.

For Russia, *information confrontation* is the term that applies to tactical, operational, strategic and even grand strategic level. For NATO, *information operations* is a predominantly military activity on operational and tactical levels. Communications is brought to the heart of strategy under the umbrella term of Strategic Communications. Imperatives for strategic communications differ from those of information operations on several important points. For instance, democratic nations stress the obligation of national governments and of NATO to communicate policies and activities openly, honestly, and encourage dialogue. For people trained in the traditions of Soviet and contemporary Russian strategic thought, public statements are a smokescreen. Colonel V. Olevski, a frequent reviewer of NATO political and military transformations for Russian military journals, consistently translates NATO Strategic Communications to Russian in a blunt manner as 'strategic propaganda' (*стратегическая пропаганда*).[20] [21]

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[20] **Олевский, В**. 2016. Доктрина психологических операций НАТО. [NATO psychological operations doctrine]. – Зарубежное военное обозрение, № 6/2016, стр. 28–36.

[21] **Олевский, В**. 2014. Концепция «Стратегической пропаганды» НАТО, ч. 1. [NATO concept of „strategic propaganda", part 1]. – Зарубежное военное обозрение, № 9/2014, стр. 9–16.

BLOCK 1	BLOCK 2	BLOCK 3	BLOCK 4
Ministry of Defence (National Command and Control Centre)	• Ministry of Interior • Federal Service of Technical and Exports Control • Ministry of Signal	• FSB • SVR • Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Telecom, Information Technologies and Mass Communications • State Commission of Radio Frequencies	• Federal Protection Service • Media
Guiding documents	• Regulations of the ministries • Presidential Decree No. 1085 from 2000	Federal Law No. 40 „On FSB" Presidential Decree No. 945	Law „On Media" Presidential Decree No. 1013
Providing forces for information confrontation	Information confrontation is one of the guiding activities along other national functions	Timely detection and elimination of internal and external threats in the field of information confrontation in certain social activity spheres	Providing certain security issues of information confrontation

Figure 2. Organisational co-operation model for federal organs of executive power in information confrontation[22]

The term 'propaganda' does not have negative connotations in the vocabulary of Russian leaders. In December 2013 when Russia performed a major reshuffle among state controlled media in the wake of the Ukrainian campaign, Putin's press chief Dmitry Peskov stated: "*The tool of propaganda is an integral part of any state. It is everywhere. And Russia should use it as well. Propaganda in the good sense of the word*."[23] In the Soviet Army the function of psychological operations used to be called 'special propaganda' (*спецпропаганда*). In the Communist Party hierarchy and in important public organisations there were specific subunits for 'propaganda'. Guidelines were regularly printed for "agitators and propagandists" on how to explain current issues in working collectives.

This approach sits in high contrast to protestant cultures. Calling something 'propaganda' has been derogatory since its introduction in a Papal

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[22] **Сироткин, Тыртышный** 2016.

[23] **The Moscow Times** 2013. Russia Needs More Propaganda, Putin Spokesman Says. December 20, 2013. <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/russia-needs-more-propaganda-putin-spokesman-says-30646> (accessed 15.10.2016).

bull in 1622 on the establishment of counter-reformatory organisations.[24] [25] Communication theorist Denis McQuail draws attention to a common hypocrisy regarding use of the P-word: "*Generally, propaganda is conducted by an 'enemy' whereas 'our own' transfer information, proofs and arguments*."[26]

Russian approach to the internet

Russian information operations have become best known for their internet trolling campaigns. The phenomenon is not new in Russian internal politics where 'the commissars of the internet' or 'the brigadniki' have been generally acknowledged as players of the FSB and the Ministry of Interior's K Department since the 1990s. The primary purpose of said erstwhile trolls was to intimidate liberal voices into silence by publicly posting personal data and blunt personal insults against the intelligentsia.[27] An analogous US program that was revealed was called Operation Earnest Voice whereby an attempt was made in Muslim political internet forums to pacify militant sentiment using sockpuppet accounts. According to Russian schoolbooks on its own information operation officials, Op Earnest Voice is believed to have gone underground and been redirected to Putin, and the UK GCHQ JISTR programme is believed to target the Russian political system on a constant basis.[28] Generally, the use of MID talking points and Russian underworld jargon have caught the attention of trolls, making their impact weak. However, in some countries the business model of online journalism still encourages provocative anonymous comments "below the line", the lifeblood of normalizing covertly popularized Russian ideas among particular electorates.

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[24] **Jowett, G. S.; O´Donnell, V**. 2006. Propaganda and Persuasion. (4th ed.). London-New Delhi: SAGE Publications, p. 72.

[25] **Taylor, P. M**. 2003. Munitions of the Mind: A history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era. (3rd ed.). Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, p. 111.

[26] **McQuail, D**. 2003. McQuaili massikommunikatsiooni teooria. [McQuail Mass Communication Theory]. Tartu: TÜ Kirjastus, lk 400.

[27] **Полянская, А.; Кривов, А. Ломко, И**. 2002. Комиссары Интернета. [Commissars of the internet]. <http://ipvnews.org/bench_article19112010.php> (accessed 20.10.2016).

[28] **Володенков, С. В**. 2015. Информационное противоборство как составляющая современных «гибридных войн»: роль и особенности. – «Гибридные войны» в хаотизирующемся мире XXI века. [Information confrontation as part of contemporary "hybrid wars" – its role and features" in compendium "Hybrid Wars" in Chaotic World of the XXI Century]. Москва: Издательство Московского университета, стр. 189–209.

The Putin regime has been always very careful about uncontrollable information flows. Putin himself called the internet "a CIA project" after claims about the NATO-made-Maidan and US-made Arab Spring.[29] For several years Russia has promoted a new area of international law, international information security, whereby information warfare and the development of information weaponry would be internationally banned. At the same time, all signatory parties would agree to a partitioning of the internet to nationally sovereign territories where the sovereigns are urged to track and capture any extremist.[30] Russia has proposed this package of proposals on several fora, most prominently to the 2011 UN General Assembly in connection with public protests against bribery, thievery and rigging elections. In 2015 Russia managed to gain the support of one additional oppressive state and proposed a national code of conduct for the internet once again.[31]

Public diplomacy

Russia could claim success in its approaches to information operations where it is more consistent with its 'nature'. In this sense, even the official documents that used to flirt with human liberties and democracy (in some circles referred as the Constitution of the Russian Federation) tend to downplay its importance in national security policy papers and laws. We witness more and more newspeak instead of clumsy doublespeak concerning restrictions to international law and human rights.

Russian documents explaining soft power in the sense in which Joseph Nye introduced it – 'power by attraction' as opposed to hard power or 'power by coercion' – remain relatively dead. On the other hand, publications about the use of non-military coercion under the terms 'humanitarian dimension of foreign policy' or 'Russian energy soft power' are vividly discussed by

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[29] **MacAskill, E**. 2014. Putin calls internet a 'CIA project' renewing fears of web breakup. – The Guardian, 24 April 2014 22.09. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/24/vladimir-putin-web-breakup-internet-cia> (accessed 18.10.2016).

[30] **МИД РФ** 2011. Convention on International Information Security (Concept). – Webpage of Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://archive.mid.ru//bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/7b17ead7244e2064c3257925003bcbcc!OpenDocument> (accessed 5.10.2016).

[31] **UNGA** 2015. Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security Report of the Secretary-General. 22 July 2015. – Webpage of United Nation General Assembly.
<http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/172> (accessed 5.10.2016).

prominent members of the political elite; policies employing the former approach can be witnessed in national (supposedly unofficial) decisions.

The most prominent Russian public diplomacy organisation is The Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund[32]. Alexander Gorchakov was a XIX century Russian foreign minister who made important innovations in the tactics of manipulating internal and foreign public opinion.[33] He was also a promoter of Russian-Prussian relations against France (*Dreikeiserbund*).[34] Gorchakov was one of the few public officials of Czarist Russia who was adored by the official Soviet Union in Stalin's era during the first third of World War II when Russia and Germany were allies. [35]

A draft information security doctrine from 2015 which was meant to substitute the previous version from the first year of Vladimir Putin's presidency is quite revealing on the *modus operandi* of NGO participation in international co-operation; they are basically good old front organisations in the subversion business abroad.

Sometimes official Russia has shown the clear understanding that it is not very effective at moulding public opinion in foreign cultures, therefore experts have been hired from the target society. Western PR companies have been used to try to bolster the image of Russia prior to the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg, softening the image of Josif Stalin who is generally considered to be a prime example of a criminal against humanity. The epic fail of using PR companies to get the Russian point of view across came in the form of Vladimir Putin's article in the New York Times which was edited by the author at the last moment to underline that Americans as a nation have no reason to feel exceptional (i.e., to make the harshest possible cultural insult against US national identity). However, supposedly thanks to Ketchum, Vladimir Putin made Time Magazine man of the year. Although, this very accolade was also given in the past to figures like Ayatollah Khomeini and Adolf Hitler, so it could not be considered a clear-cut victory either.

The Putin regime is much more effective at arts that have been perpetrated on the domestic population for centuries.

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[32] **Gorchakov Fund webpage**. <http://gorchakovfund.ru/> (accessed 14.10.2016).

[33] **Gecse, Géza** 2012. Bütsantsist Bütsantsini. Suurvene mõttelaadi olemus. [From Bynzantium to Byzantium. Essence of the Russian Imperialist Thought]. Tallinn. Ajakirjade Kirjastus, lk 104–108.

[34] **Alexander Gorchakov** 2016. Wikipedia article.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Gorchakov> (accessed 17.10.2016).

[35] **Ragsdale, H.; Ponomarev, V. N**. 1993. Imperial Russian Foreign Policy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 369.

Disinformation

In academic research about current Russian information operation practices there is lot of fuzziness about how much actual truth is contained in Russian information campaigns. Overwhelmingly, these attempts at categorization originate from the receivers' end of the communication model.

Marcel van Herpen from the Cicero Institution, who has exhaustively researched policy as practised by the current Putin regime, compares it to National Socialist propaganda research findings. He says that, besides lies, the Putin regime operates with different kinds of truths: from the outright lie, to the half truth, to the truth out of context. He noted that the latter two played a major role in Moscow's aggression in Ukraine.[36]

Alan Yuhas from the Guardian US newspaper describes the Russian info campaign as the following: "*Skewed facts, half-truths, misinformation and rumors all work in the propagandist's favor.*"[37]

Dalibor Rohac from Foreign Policy makes a list of Russian messaging as: propaganda, lies, half-truths, conspiracy theories.[38]

Ben Nimmo from CEPA provides a more systematic description and a mnemonic hint to characterize the aims of Russian disinformation: Dismiss, Distort, Distract, Dismay.

Consequently, it is hard to say from these accounts where it is more a matter of rhetorical flourish for journalistic clarity and where this categorisation attempts to reflect the actual planned aims and doctrine of the perpetrator.

First, there is a need to distinguish misinformation from disinformation. Misinformation is information that is believed, does not reflect reality, but is not deliberately disseminated to mislead.[39] Misinformation is often a result

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[36] **Herpen, M. van** 2016. Putin's Propaganda Machine. Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 1.

[37] **Yuhas, A**. 2014. Russian propaganda over Crimea and the Ukraine: how does it work? – The Guardian, 17 March 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/17/crimea-crisis-russia-propaganda-media> (accessed 17.10.2016).

[38] **Rohac, D**. 2015. Cranks, Trolls, and Useful Idiots: Russia's information warriors set their sights on Central Europe. – Foreign Policy, 12 March 2015. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/12/cranks-trolls-and-useful-idiots-poland-czech-republic-slovakia-russia-ukraine/?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=*Democracy%20Lab&utm_campaign=2014_Democracy_Lab> (accessed 18.10.2016).

[39] **Kuklinski, J. H.; Quirk, P. J.; Jerit, J.; Schwieder, D.; Rich, R. F**. 2000. Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship. – The Journal of Politics, Vol. 62, No. 3. (August 2000), pp. 790–816. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2647960?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents> (accessed 18.10.2016).

of interfering noise in the communication process or speculation that rushes in to fill an information vacuum.

Disinformation, on the other hand, is a deliberately misleading piece of information. In the Russian context, disinformation (*дезинформация*) is the predecessor of active measures (*активные мероприятия*), currently a subdivision according to the new term *support measures*/*assistance operations* (*мероприятия содействие*).[40] [41] Department D [D for Disinformation] was created in the KGB First Directorate (Foreign Intelligence) in 1959. During reorganisation in 1968 the expanded department became Department A [A for active measures].[42]

The official definition of KGB active measures was "*agent-operational measures aimed at exerting useful influence on aspects of the political life of a target country which are of interest, its foreign policy, the solution of international problems, misleading the adversary, undermining and weakening his positions, the disruption of his hostile plans, and the achievement of other aims*[43]".

Basically, a very wide array of activities to exert influence on a strategic level. Everything that is planned as active measures is active measures according to this definition. The only distinctive characteristic is the perpetrator – the special service. In practice, Western services tend to expand this definition to encompass all overt and covert influence activities, whether they were carried out by the KGB, the military, the Communist Party or the Soviet press.[44]

As FSB spokesman 1994–1996 Alexander Mikhaylov admitted to Russian intelligence journalist Andrei Soldatov in an interview in March 2002:

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[40] **Estonian Internal Security Service** 2014. KAPO Annual Review 2014. <https://www.kapo.ee/sites/default/files/public/content_page/Annual%20Review%202014.pdf> (accessed 15.10.2016).

[41] **Soldatov, A., Borogan, I**. 2010. The New Nobelity. The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Eduring Legacy of the KGB. New York: PublicAffairs, p. 108. [**Soldatov, Borogan** 2010]

[42] **Barron, J**. 1974. KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents. London: Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 420–423.

[43] **Mitrokhin, V**. 2013. KGB Lexicon. The Soviet Intelligence Officers Handbook. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 13. [**Mitrokhin** 2013]

[44] **Schoen, F.; Lamb, C. J**. 2012. Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference. National Defense University Press. Washington, D.C. <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-11.pdf> (accessed 15.10.2016).

> *Disinformation involves having a direct impact on the enemy, not on society as a whole. And if we're talking about enemies – well, yes, assistance operations are operations which have an impact on the enemy.*[45]

For the Russian Federation foreign intelligence is mostly about influence activities. The definition of intelligence that is currently valid according to the Estonian Internal Security Service Annual Review 2014 is

> *a secret form of political struggle that uses means and methods of a concealed character to gather classified information and implement active measures in order to influence the opponents and weaken their political, economic, scientific, technical and military positions.*[46]

This purpose is reflected in Russian federal law "On foreign intelligence" Article 2 Intelligence activities which explains this two-fold approach to intelligence: information gathering and covert operations.[47]

The classic rationale behind covert action is that policy makers need a third option between doing nothing (the first option) in a situation in which vital interests may be threatened and sending in a military force (the second option), which raises a host of difficult political issues. For Western intelligence, propaganda and paramilitary options are main types of covert action.[48] It is a hotly debated issue if there should be an option for democratic leaders to claim plausible deniability of covert action and whether intelligence agencies should occasionally be tasked with propaganda activities.[49] Having claimed media as type of weapon and by defining intelligence as form of political struggle, this could be considered default practice for Russian federal agencies conducting covert action on the information field and using agents of influence. Going much further than just being publicly creative with the truth is rather standard procedure for Russian political leaders as well.

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[45] **Soldatov, Borogan** 2010, p. 266, note 19.

[46] **Estonian Internal Security Service** 2014. KAPO Annual Review 2014. <https://www.kapo.ee/sites/default/files/public/content_page/Annual%20Review%202014.pdf> (accessed 15.10.2016).

[47] **Федеральный закон «О внешней разведке»** 10 января 1996 года, № 5-ФЗ. – SVR webpage. <http://svr.gov.ru/svr_today/doc02.htm> (accessed 10.06.2016).

[48] **Lowenthal, M. M**. 2005. Intelligence. From Secrets to policy. 3rd Edition. CQ Press, pp. 157–158, 162–165.

[49] **Shulsky, A.; Schmitt, G. J**. 2002. Varjatud sõda [Silent Warfare]. Tallinn: Eesti Ajalehed, lk 169–177.

It is worthwhile to remember that, for NATO operations, Military Committee policy on psychological operations expressly forbids the use of unattributed or falsely attributed messaging and the dissemination of untruth.[50]

Russian information confrontation principles

There are two distinct sets of Russian information confrontation principles that are widely referred to by Russian information warfare researchers. The first set originates from a Russian Ministry of Defence 2011 document "Russian Federation Armed Forces' Information Space Activities Concept" (*Концептуальные взгляды на деятельность Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации в информационном пространстве*).[51] This document was published on the Russian Ministry of Defence webpage first in Russian and later in English[52]. It is often referred to by think tanks in NATO countries as Russian cyber war doctrine or Russian information war principles. However, the content of this document is rather uninformative. It lists principles for capability planning and administrative work: legitimacy, priority, complexity, interaction, cooperation, innovation. These are not principles of war in the Jominian sense, but headlines for paragraphs declaring everything the Russian military does in infospace as proportional and justified. Wordings and dissimilarities between Russian language and English language official versions hint that this document might have been developed as a part of international information security initiatives for diplomatic use. Praise of this document as the first official reference to the military use of information space does not stand up either because military doctrines from 2000[53] and 2010[54] revisions, approved by the presidents of Russian

[50] **Military Decision on MC 402/2** – NATO Military Policy on Psychological Operations.

[51] **Минобороны России** 2011. Концептуальные взгляды на деятельность Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации в информационном пространстве. <http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=10845074@cmsArticle> (accessed 8.10.2016).

[52] **Russian Ministry of Defence** 2011. Russian Federation Armed Forces' Information Space Activities Concept. <http://eng.mil.ru/en/science/publications/more.htm?id=10845074@cmsArticle> (accessed 8.10.2016).

[53] **Военная доктрина Российской Федерации** 2000 [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], утв. Указом Президента РФ от 21 апреля 2000 года, № 706. – Система ГАРАНТ. <http://base.garant.ru/181993/#block_1000> (accessed 8.10.2016).

[54] **Военная доктрина Российской Федерации** 2010. [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation]. Russian Security Council webpage.
<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/33.html> (accessed 8.10.2016).

Federation, both include the utilisation of informational instruments of power for the advancement of national interests in comprehensive military planning.

The second set of principles is evolving in books and articles by various Russian scholars of information confrontation and information security. Slightly different versions of this list could be observed in schoolbooks for degree education and the vocational training of information confrontation researchers and operators. The following list is taken from a version of the classic encyclopedia "Information-psychological Warfare Operations. Concise encyclopedic lexicon. 2nd edition" from 2011 by Vladimir Vepernitsev, Andrei Manoilo, Anatoly Petrenko, and Dmitriy Frolov[55]. These principles are illustrated by a draft Russian Federation Information Security Doctrine from 2015[56].

1. **Asymmetry**
   Comments:
   a) Rhetorical negations have cognitively similar value with endorsement due to metaphorical framing – repetition of same associations strengthens neural links between them.
   b) Computer network defence is always one step behind the attacker, by symmetric responses to attacks gaining strategic initiative not being feasible.

   Doctrine: A main national information security provision area is "development of information confrontation resources and means" and "countering the information influence exercised on the public", especially on youth spiritual (i.e., orthodox clerical) and patriotic traditions. Russia would essentially counter "the use of information confrontation means and methods" by foreign security services.

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[55] **Вепринцев В. Б.; Манойло А. В.; Петренко А. И.; Фролов Д. Б**. 2011. Операции информационно-психологической войны. краткий энциклопедический словарь-справочник. Горячая Линия-Телеком, стр. 318–319.

[56] **Доктрина информационной безопасности Российской Федерации** (проект) 2015. [Russian Federation information security doctrine (draft)]. – Russian Security Council webpage. <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/6/135.html> (accessed 8.10.2016).

2. Domination

Comments:

a) For superiority in information space increasing the number of media outlets and opinion-formers (agents of influence[57] and "useful idiots"[58]) affecting the target is the first option.

b) To disrupt competitive messages, Denial-Of-Service attacks and Electronic Attacks are used as standard against the adversary's official information channels and against a mass media sympathetic to the adversary's cause.

c) Competitors' arguments would be void when senders are discredited by specific, genuine or manipulated mass personal data exposure that contributes to character assassination.

d) In an unfavourable cultural context information overload could be attained by inserting a large number of internally conflicting emotional theories and claims into the information space.

Doctrine: Threats are:

– "Increase in the amount of content in foreign mass media containing biased and prejudiced information" about Russian policies.

– "Russian mass media outlets are often subjected to blatant discrimination abroad."

– The ability for citizens to bypass the internal total surveillance system SORM and remain anonymous or undetected in their activities would hamper the state organ's capability to prosecute them.

3. Clandestine

Comment:

a) To maintain credibility, proxies are preferred for disseminating factually untrue information.

b) Expendable sources are set up for first claims in order to provide a point of reference for official spokespeople and politicians.

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[57] Agent of influence – "*An agent operating under intelligence instructions who uses his official or public position, and other means, to exert influence on policy, public opinion, the course of particular events, the activity of political organisations and state agencies in target countries.*" (**Mitrokhin** 2013, p. 3).

[58] **Useful Idiot** 2016. Wikipedia article. "*In political jargon, useful idioot is a term for people perceived as propagandists for a cause whose goals they are not fully aware of, and who are used cynically by the leaders of the cause*." Exemplary use of term has been about Western left-leaning intellectuals, who being illusioned about the Soviet Union were promoting its causes. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Useful_idiot> (accessed 19.10.2016).

c) If no time to set up proxies or temporary sources, unattributed information would be disseminated by trolls and later claimed as representation of public opinion.

Doctrine: Threats are other security services and "externally controlled non-governmental organisations" that, through communication, are able to undermine the sovereign power of the Putin regime. Religious, ethnic, and civil rights groups are warned about specifically.

4. Surprise

Comment:

a) As in any conflict, the upper hand is gained by misleading about the place, time, historical patterns or the vector of attack.

b) Levers of influence (economic, diplomatic, informational, legal, etc.) are changed frequently to dispel attention and raise false hopes.

Doctrine: domestic advancement to ICT originated from Russia to avoid backdoor attacks.

5. Aiming balance of powers

Comment:

a) This principle reflects the Putin regime aspiration for a multipolar world security setup in which Russia, through its superb manipulation skills, could become the actual "administrator of international affairs".

b) To contain competing alliances using all levers of national power.

c) To create and empower information institutions with global reach.

Doctrine: Whereas Russia sees "militarisation of the global information space" and "information arms race", national interests are declared:

– to gain the provision of "national sovereignty in the global information space" and "shaping of an international legal order aimed at countering the threat to strategic stability".

– to secure the dissemination of favourable information to the Russian public and international community incl. "official position of the Russian leadership on events of social significance in Russia and the world".

– to build internal psychological resistance with features of soft power around "the preservation and strengthening of the cultural, historical, moral and spiritual (i.e., Russian Orthodox Christian) values of the multi-ethnic people of the Russian Federation" and "support for spreading the spiritual and cultural values of the people of Russia worldwide."

6. **Lack of international binding regulations**
   a) Clear distinctions of war and peace, and between warring parties and others, no longer apply to contemporary conflicts.
   b) Professionals of information confrontation are encouraged to be creative and not to bother about legal boundaries while commissioned to perform subversive activities in another state in peacetime.

   <u>Doctrine:</u> Russia would fight against use of ICT for propagating terrorist ideology and "spreading ideas of extremism" (in Russia, a legally vague but exhaustive punitive definition). Russia's state policy is to build a network of government-controlled NGOs to support Russian foreign policy abroad and target similarly-labelled nodes of foreign societies, to task ethnic Russians in foreign NGOs abroad with projecting Russian national interests into the information sphere.

7. **Long term impact**
   a) Measures of information confrontation have been considered weapons of mass destruction among Russian legal and security circles since at least the 1990s.
   b) Desisting from informational hostilities does not cure affected societies momentarily.
   c) Information confrontation means providing a window of opportunity to set frozen conflicts that need relatively little effort to perpetuate for future leverage.

   <u>Doctrine:</u> For domestic security, the protection of national interests in the infosphere would be provided by consolidating the efforts of government institutions, NGOs and citizens to achieve national priorities. (Citizens' needs would be "balanced" by "necessary restrictions". Citizens would have the right to search, receive, convey, process and disseminate information by any <u>legal</u> means.)

8. **Allies and adversaries combine**
   a) Plausible enough cover of perpetrators (separatists, extremists, activist media, anonymous trolls, hacktivists) provides a venue for the continuation of official co-operation on pragmatic issues.
   b) *Divide et empera* by corruption or extortion.
   c) Exploiting splits and national vulnerabilities to disrupt alliances.

   <u>Doctrine:</u> The first area for the provision of information security is "information support" for the state policy, which is based on:

– countering negative foreign information influences on Russian public life "through the imposition of moral values not traditional to Russia" (i.e., liberalism, democracy, pluralism, etc.).
– "strengthening the Russian mass media, including through the expansion of their capabilities to increase their audience and promptly disseminate objective information to the citizens". For that: enhance the drilling of journalists.
– "pursuing a single coordinated information policy of Russian state-owned mass media and the information resources of the state organisation in cooperation with mass media".

In order to control this exhaustive task list and maintain regime stability, the doctrine underlines the cultivation of an autocratic approach by "*strengthening the vertical and centralizing the control of resources and means for providing information security of the Russian Federation*" on all levels and by definition throughout the entire society and down to every individual and any foreign resident connected to Russia somehow. The scope of professional academic literature provides a peek into the range of information confrontation activities: from organising work in public libraries according to ideological ends, to the provision of support to the strategic use of weapons of mass destruction. As Russia considers itself permanently at war, for media at home and abroad the words of prominent Soviet World War II propagandist Ilya Ehrenberg echo loudly between the lines of the doctrine: "*In wartime, every objective reporter should be shot.*"[59]

Practical considerations on researching Russian information operations

1. Paranoia

A CEPA report from January 2013 concluded:

> *Russia's strategic culture is profoundly paranoid and likely to remain so. As a result Russia behaves in ways that threaten or subvert other countries and obstruct Western diplomacy. The right response to this is not to appease Russia, but to contain it and to mitigate the effects of its actions.*[60]

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[59] **Miner, S. M**. 2003. Stalin's Holy War: Religion, Nationalism, and Alliance Politics, 1941–1945. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, p. 290.
[60] **Lucas, E**. 2013. Report No. 34: Rethinking Russia: The Paradox of Paranoia. – Center for European Policy Analysis. <http://cepa.org/sites/default/files/documents/CEPA%20Report%20No.%2034,%20Rethinking%20Russia.pdf> (accessed 8.10.2016).

It is Russian history (see cultural awareness) and the personal background of the power elite (see criminality) that reinforces this approach. Near-total control over national broadcasting and intelligence, spoiled with the high probability rate of meeting the sponsor's inner requests, feed the paranoia further. This is reflected in national doctrines in a sordid manner, and in information confrontation literature in most exaggerated ways. In peer-reviewed academic Russian journals it would not be a surprise to read articles where civil emergencies are attributed to US geodetic weapons, or crime waves to some foreign electromagnetic system. The totality of propaganda of the current regime, accompanied by an atmosphere of fear, makes empirical research on the Russian population challenging; there is a need for good testing methodologies to evaluate if a researcher is really measuring attitudes about grievances or is just chronicling socially desirable responses. Russian public literature, academic included, is not as a rule of thumb suitable for diagnosing other countries because of the high impact of pervasive information confrontation measures and the inner cultural paranoia of writers. Russian politicians and political researchers tend to overestimate the ability of their own and their real and imaginary adversaries to control situations and to program societies.

2. Operational security obstacles

Russia considers information security one of its key priorities. Developments on this area are considered essential elements of friendy information (EEFI) that should be protected against curious eyes by the classification of data, by law, by desinformation and by active defense. Since 2014 many elaborative current publications on information confrontation are not therefore legally available abroad. The same goes for online resources as well. Outside the .ru domain a considerable part of runet is inaccessible. "Free VPN" on the other side is never completely free. Special care should be taken when researching through internet sources; attempts to plant malware on sites dealing (or claiming to deal) with ideological developments and methodologies of information confrontation are not rare. In social media indicative pieces of information have been set up to mislead researchers about the organisation and setup of Russian information confrontation forces and regulations. While in Russia, a researcher in this field of interest should consider him/herself pinpointed for a variety of 'support measures'. In this case, faith in the Russian judicial system does not help. Doing research safely from your home country could easily mark you out for character assassination if you have reached too far.

3. Cultural awareness

The evolution of Russian philosophy and doctrines is not isolated from strategic thought in the West. Russia has absorbed several ideas from military disputes in larger NATO countries as well as from China, usually a decade or more after these ideas were popular in their respective countries. However, analysing Russian thought and might needs in-depth understanding of its phenomenal culture, or some even call it distinct civilization. Dogmatic thinking about the predetermined historical role in world affairs spoils Russian academic analysis in a similar way to how, in Western predominant understanding, the virtues of an individual's desires have been raised as a central theme in economic and political research. In Russia, the latter is not the case not only for the power elite but for common countrymen as well.

It is important to keep in mind that Russian reflection of our theories when translated back after doctrine development in Russian academic security circles could end up considerably different from the original purpose of the security or military approach, to the extent of becoming incomparable.

4. Information overload

If a researcher does not limit his or her interests only to popular publications available in English, the amount of Russian language information on information confrontation would be overwhelming. Some of it is created as a smokescreen. For example, in order to mask state-controlled cyber activities, popular hacktivism and trolling is encouraged during campaigns. The first filter would be to leave out all literature dealing with psychotronic weaponry. Though fancy, research on this area is highly classified and to keep such classification much deliberate disinformation is spread. "Victims" into whose heads thoughts have been inserted are common and the researcher does not have the authority to check if these recollections are genuine or something to do with a set of personal positive diagnostics from ICD-10 chapters F20-F29.[61] When discarding such sources so widely there is always the risk of missing important parts of clairvoyant data that could have been used for strategic decision-making,

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[61] **WHO** 2016. International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10)-WHO Version for 2016. Schizophrenia, schizotypal and delusional disorders (F20-F29).
<http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en#/F20-F29> (accessed 8.10.2016).

or missing the opportunity of solving the Nooscope mystery[62], but parsimony in this field would not garner much information anyway.

5. *Führerprinzip*

Empirically, there is little significance in researching official statements in isolation. Information confrontation is about combining and adjusting the levers. Unfortunately, both practical propagandists and academic social and humanitarian science researchers have undergone a relapse back to totalitarian times in large numbers. Instead of formal logic, peer-reviewed magazines provide articles containing "conclusive proof" that the Great Leader has occasionally, in one context or another, supported one of the hypotheses. Along with these masterpieces, all analytical products copying Russian foreign policy talking points should be considered not as reliable sources for direct insight but rather as deliberate disinformation pieces to be analysed separately with critical rhetorical devices. However, current official curricula in higher military and security academia does include elaboration of the evergreen subject "Russian idea" which has the compulsory defining component "Putin".[63]

Figure 3. Training of future Russian generals on 4 P's. "The unifying idea: Patriotism, Professionalism, Ascetism, Putin".

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[62] **Ivshina, O**. 2016. Nooscope mystery: The strange device of Putin's new man Anton Vaino. – BBC Russian Service. 19 August 2016.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37109169> (accessed 8.10.2016).

[63] **Аксёнов, П**. 2016. Академия генштаба: дело может кончиться большой войной. [General Staff Academy: The case could result in a major war]. – BBC Russian Service. 8 September 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/russian/vert-fut-37302945> (accessed 8.10.2016).

6. False positives

It is important not to overestimate Russian information confrontation capabilities and sophistication. Due to the Russian strategic culture and political choices of the Putin regime, almost any official or semi-official statement about international affairs or our particular homeland could be perceived as irritating. Irritating effects *per se* in most cases do not necessarily reflect deliberate information operations. Many things said in Russia are said because those who say them genuinely think so. They think so because the cultural background and inner defence mechanisms of information confrontation have already worked their magic on the sender. The risk of false positives when dealing with Russian propaganda is currently very high because several institutes are currently discovering Russia and its information activities but have no experience in how to analyse this strange information flow coming from Russia or from the respiratory organs of 'useful idiots' in West.

Papers in the current compendium are really worth being studied by anyone interested in Russian information operations. Many reports here are fresh, first-hand, systematized accounts from different frontlines where the Putin regime gambles in order to survive. These pieces of research touch upon many different perspectives of the phenomenon that is here to stay. The interdisciplinary approach to Russian information operations (information confrontation) that the Estonian National Defence College excels at, among many other studies, is well worth continuing in more in-depth research and conferences.

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IDENTITY AND PROPAGANDA
IN RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN HYBRID WARFARE

Sergii Pakhomenko, Catherine Tryma

■

Introduction

Western media and experts refer to the violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and the armed conflict in the Donbas region as: the "Ukrainian crisis". The term "hybrid warfare", however, serves as a better designation for the series of actions conducted by Russia against Ukraine, as it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the causes, orientation and nature of these events. "Hybrid warfare" is a military strategy that combines conventional war, cyber war, and small war tactics. Some of the fundamental components of "hybrid warfare" include information dissemination, psychological actions, and cyber attacks aimed at both the physical and technological infrastructure of a state and its citizens[1].

According to the Deputy Secretary General of NATO A. Vershbow, "'hybrid warfare' combines military threat, lurking intervention, covert supply of weapons and weapons systems, economic blackmail, diplomatic hypocrisy and manipulation within the media using straight misinformation". Thus the American diplomat described Moscow's actions in respect of Ukraine and the growing threat to NATO members from Russia[2].

When analyzing the discrete components of the Russian Ukrainian conflict, it is evident that the informational strategies and propaganda used by the actors on both sides of the conflict played a significant role in the war itself, and were an effective means of shaping public opinion. One of the most notable ways of conditioning public opinion was through the repeated invocation of "national identity", or "identity" as a whole.

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[1] **Stoltenberg: NATO Foreign Ministers approved a new strategy for a hybrid war**. <http://ria.ru/world/20151130/1332861135.html#ixzz3vYQGojU1> (accessed November 20, 2015).

[2] **ESDP and NATO: better cooperation in view of the new security challenges**. Speech by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the Interparliamentary Conference on CFSP/CSDP, Riga, Latvia, 5 March 2015. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_117919.htm?selectedLocale=en> (accessed March 5, 2015).

In the post-Soviet scientific linguistic tradition, the term "nation", as well as its derivative concept – "national identity", not only denote civil concepts (as in the Western tradition), they also have strong "ethnic" connotations as well. The interpretation of national identity is not just limited to the political realm, it is also defined by cultural communities, which are united by ethnicity. The civil-political and ethno-cultural conception of identity has also become more intertwined in recent times. Cross-cultural interactions and the convergence of close ethnicities (e.g. Russian and Ukrainians in Donbas), combined with a lack of a clear official standardization of ethnicity, has resulted in the populace of Ukraine increasingly turning towards ethnic identity as an organizational focal point.

R. Ashmore, K. Doe and T. McLaughlin-Volpe generally define social identity as an aggregate of categorical accessories, i.e. a number of characteristics inherent to a person, which are (or implied) also shared by a group of people[3].

According to L. Nagorna, the most effective social organizer is identity because it is fused with the political, cultural, and religious spheres, and is also interwoven with many other aspects. Identity is a determinant of the networks that connect humans to one another within a group, or within an institution, or to an idea etc. Thus, the term "identity" covers a complex array of meanings, expectations, representations, political preferences, and commitments to a particular system of values[4].

There are many different kinds of identity, such as national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious. All of them share similar cultural classification criteria and often overlap and reinforce one another. Each of them independently or collectively can mobilize and sustain a strong community[5].

It will be shown that the phenomenon of national identity can function as a tool to build social unity, but at the same time can also be manipulated by propaganda. The centrality of national identity in information warfare arises from its capacity to effectively distill and actualize issues related to language,

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[3] **Ashmore, Richard D.; Deaux, Kay; McLaughlin-Volpe, Tracy** 2004. An Organizing Framework for Collective Identity: Articulation and Significance of Multidimensionality Psychological Bulletin. Copyright 2004 by the American Psychological Association, Vol. 130, No. 1, pp. 80–114.

[4] **Nagorna, L**. 2008. Regional Identities: The Ukrainian context. Kyev: I. F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, p. 34.

[5] **Panchuk, M**. 2013. To the question of identification of Ukrainian citizens. – Scientific notes of I. F. Kuras Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, № 5 (67), p. 14.

culture, history, and values. Thus it is a powerful organizational agent that can be used to further facilitate schisms between social communities, especially if these communities are already endowed with disparate identity markers. In the course of a conflict, the propaganda that is disseminated by each of the opposing parties will engender a new set of socio-cultural values and priorities, and will result in the creation of alternative perceptions, as well as the formation of new identities for the populace. (In the Ukrainian conflict, this was manifested by the process of "Ukrainianization" wherein national civic patriotism was strongly endorsed by the representatives of each of the different ethnic groups in Ukraine, or conversely became substantiated in the denial of Ukrainian identity by the pro-separatist residents of the Donbas region).

Identity as a propaganda tool

It is worthwhile to examine how propaganda can be used to manipulate identity markers, and more specifically to explain how it was used in relation to the conflict in the Donbas. The Russian propaganda machine works towards the popularization of three main ideas. First it asserts the alleged oppression of Russians and Russian-speakers by the new administration in Kyiv. This issue has, with varying degrees of intensity always been present in the rhetoric of Russian propagandists, but became particularly strident after the events of the Euromaidan and was further augmented by a fallacious depiction of far-right nationalists, "banderivtsi" and members of the "Right sector", colluding to foment a "revolution" in order to bring a "junta" to power. Another important factor in intensifying the hysterical alarm over the fate of ethnic Russians, and Russian speakers in Ukraine was the hasty abolition of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, or the "Law on the Principles of State Language Policy"[6]. According to the Russian propagandists, this

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[6]   From 1989–2012 the language policy in Ukraine was regulated by the Law on Languages, which was adopted at the end of the Soviet Union, during the perestroika era. This law ratified the Ukrainian language as the official state language, but at the same time enacted broad guarantees that the Russian language and other languages of national minorities would be protected and could be practiced in the spheres of education, media, culture and social life. The language situation in Eastern and Southern Ukraine is characterized by the ubiquity of the Russian language in social and everyday life. In these areas there is also disparity between ethnic and linguistic identity. A certain portion of ethnic Ukrainians and other national minorities in these regions consider Russian to be their mother tongue. The rights of the Russian-speaking (and other non-Ukrainian) populations are also protected by the Constitution and by

was essentially "the abolition and prohibition of the Russian language in Ukraine". Hence the protection of Russians and Russian speakers was used as one of the primary rationales to justify the annexation of Crimea, and was also used as a reason to support the separatists in Donbas. The ensuing rhetoric of many officials of the Russian Federation in the summer of 2014 was rife with hyperbole, and denunciations. Even high-level Russian officials accused the Ukrainian government of undertaking "ethnic purges"[7].

The second notion forwarded by propagandists sought to characterize the conflict as an ethnic one, wherein the South East regions of Ukraine, or the so-called "Novorossiya" ("New Russia"), had historically been part of Russia. The incident that actuated the broad popularization of this idea emerged from V. Putin's press conference when the president stated that

> /.../ Kharkov, Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odessa were not parts of Ukraine in tsarist times. These territories were transferred in the twenties by the Soviet government, and why they did it, only God knows.[8]

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specific legislation. At the same time, it should be noted that the socio-cultural heterogeneity of Ukraine and the varied historical experiences of each of the regions precipitates the rivalries that occur between the regions, and language is often used as a pretext for political infighting. The language issue is also often used as an effective means of mobilizing the electorate. In order to rally more loyal pro-government voters in 2012, the Party of Regions (the party of ex-President Viktor Yanukovych) adopted a new "language law": "the Law on the State Language Policy". The new law retained the Ukrainian language as the official state language, but at the same time stipulated that "regional languages", could also be declared as the official languages of each of the administrative-territorial regions of Ukraine, if at least 10% of the population were non-Ukrainians and they wished to make their mother tongue the official language. This law was very controversial, and its opponents argued that it was a camouflaged attempt to elevate the status of the Russian language. Pre-election opportunism and the symbolic nature of the law are evidenced by the fact that since its adoption nothing has actually changed in the state language policy, and in fact nothing was ever even implemented. Thus it was only a weak and symbolic gesture undertaken by the Party of Regions to demonstrate that it would fulfill some of its pre-election promises. The hasty abolition of the law in 2014 following the post-revolutionary euphoria of the Maidan movement was the perfect gift for the Russian propaganda machine, which immediately launched an offensive. The new government was accused of seeking "the prohibition of the Russian language" in Ukraine. The interim President, O. Turchynov quickly vetoed the repeal of the law, but the propaganda had already hit its mark.

[7]   **Lavrov: In Ukraine they are enacting scenarios of ethnic cleansing**.
<http://ria.ru/world/20140617/1012419004.html> (accessed December 10, 2015).

[8]   **Putin's speech: New Russia and other bright quotes**.
<http://news.bigmir.net/world/809994-Vystuplenie-Putina---Novorossija--i-drugie-jarkie-citaty>
(accessed December 05, 2015).

Soon after the press conference, with the efforts of both the regular Kremlin propagandists and representatives of the academic community, the concept of "Novorossiya" began to gain purchase, and went on to acquire specific territorial and qualitative characteristics, yet still remained faithful to the principles outlined in the president's statements.

And finally, the third postulate, which completes the logic of the first two, is that the creation of new separatist entities, which are united by the epithet "Novorossiya", are the realization of the self-determination of another, non-Ukrainian (i.e. Russian) identity that is inherent to these territories. The Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Institute of Demography, Migration and Regional Development of the Russian Federation, Yuriy Krupnov calls this identity – "the people of Novorossiya". "According to the UN Charter, the people of Novorossiya have a right to self-determination, and courageously seek to exercise this right[9].

Trends of propaganda with the usage of the image of identity

An examination of the main groups targeted by the propaganda apparatus is also informative:

1) For the population residing in the conflict zone, the appeal to identity typically occurred in the initial stages of the conflict. Much of the rhetoric was colored by fear, threats and the inevitable cultural genocide of the Russian-speaking residents of Donbas. This hyperbole was instrumental in inciting the populace to protest and occupy the administrative and police agencies of the region. The population in the conflict zone was also subjected to continual informational distortions of the Russian media as it made free use of terms such as: "junta", "banderovtsy", "karateli" (punishers) etc., to characterize the Ukrainian government and army.

2) In the unoccupied territories of Ukraine, Russian propagandists attempted to foster mutual antipathy between the populace by inventing torture incidents, broadcasting humiliations suffered by Ukrainian soldiers, and forcing Ukrainian prisoners of war to march through the streets of Donetsk on Ukraine's Independence Day, August 24, 2014. These "special events" as well as many other carefully orchestrated incidents

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9   **Krupnov, U**. 2015. Kremlin must defend the UN Charter and to give the people of New Russia to realize the right to self-determination. <http://istina.com.ua/news/yuriy-krupnov-kreml-dolzhen-zashchitit-ustav-oon-i-dat-narodu-novorossii-vozmozhnost-realizovat-pravo-na-samoopredelenie> (accessed December 01, 2015).

were designed to provoke Ukrainian patriots, and foster mutual feelings of disgust and hatred among the residents of the Donbas region. The actions were undertaken with the intention of initiating an acrimonious separation between the ethnicities of the region, which would then show that Ukraine could not maintain stability in the region, and thus doom any hope of it remaining as a part of Ukraine.

3) The Citizens of the Russian Federation were inculcated with the idea that the Russian people living in Eastern Ukraine were facing severe oppression, and it was necessary to assist them. This depiction of events was instrumental in instigating the mass volunteer movement "to defend our brothers in Donbas", and became a de facto endorsement of the occupation of the Ukrainian state.

   Demeaning depictions are often used as a way of minimizing empathy towards an opponent, and ensuring that they are not recognized as humans who are also capable of thinking, feeling, and deciding independently. The adversary becomes dehumanized and is perceived simply as the enemy. The use of derogatory names such as "ukropy" and "koloradu" (dismissive slang terms for Ukrainians and separatists, respectively) to characterize the opponent, were adopted by both parties in the conflict.

4) There is a sustained attempt to convince the international community that Ukraine is divided into two culturally distinct areas: Asian and European. This is further enhanced by the allegation that Ukrainian forces are comprised of far-right nationalists and neo-Nazis. To some extent there are a handful of politicians and military battalions that do fit this sobriquet, but by accepting the impression that this is the prevailing state of affairs, and perpetuating the idea that Ukraine is a Nationalist haven that is hostile to European values, the relationship between Ukraine and the European community becomes ever more tenuous. Furthermore, by accentuating the civil and socio-cultural split of Ukraine, and promoting violence as the only way of maintaining the unity of the state, it becomes easier to affix the label of failed state to Ukraine.

Identity as an object of propaganda

The ways in which identity and, more importantly, self-identification are transformed by propaganda are considered here.

The various propaganda operations, the empty rhetoric, and the emphasis on ethnic tension in "Novorossiya" are in fact repudiated by the extensive use of the Russian language both by members of the Ukranian military, and

the considerable number of non-Ukrainian soldiers presently serving in the Ukrainian army and volunteer battalions. These armed forces are comprised of natives from the Mykolaiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odessa, Kharkiv regions, which are precisely the same regions that were so casually incorporated into "Novorossiya" by the Russian propaganda juggernaut. The presence of these ethnic Russian and Russian speaking soldiers in the Ukrainian armed forces, roundly refutes Moscow's statements accusing Ukraine of oppressing Russians and Russian-speakers. If this were true, it would be very improbable and illogical that these soldiers would fight on the Ukrainian side. This begs the question, how could a Russian-speaking Ukrainian supporter, let alone patriot, even consider joining the Ukrainian forces if his national and cultural or linguistic rights were being oppressed?

In a survey of the residents of Donbas conducted in 2013, only 6.3% felt that linguistic issues were among those most in need of reform[10]. A simple fact that also puts this in perspective is that Russia denounced Viktor Yushchenko for being a "nationalistic" President, and further alleged that during his presidency attacks against the rights of Russians had intensified. Yushchenko was also accused of hampering Russians in their efforts to learn and retain their mother tongue. The aforementioned survey however contradicts these allegations and found that the only 16.6% of Russians residing in the Donbas region felt that they were being disenfranchised, and only 6.9% perceived that there was a lack of opportunity to develop their national culture[11].

Furthermore, despite this ostensible cultural crisis in Ukraine, and in the Donbas region in particular, such "persecution" never galvanized a significant pro-Russian movement, or pro-Russian organization of any consequence. In the parliamentary elections of 2012, the "Russkiy bloc" party won a miniscule 0.4% of the vote in the Donetsk region, and gathered only 0.47% of the vote in the Lugansk region[12].

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[10] **The most pressing problems for residents of Donbas are of a socio-economic nature**. See <http://press.unian.net/pressnews/976722-naibolee-aktualnyimi-dlya-jiteley-Donbasa-yavlyayutsya-problemyi-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-haraktera-issledovanie.html> (accessed October 08, 2015).

[11] **Features of the language situation in Ukraine**. <http://inlang.linguanet.ru/Cis/CisLanguageConditions/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=2560&SHOWALL_1=1> (accessed November 16, 2015).

[12] **Central Election Commission**. Election of the People's Deputies of Ukraine 2012. <http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/vnd2012/wp302?PT001F01=900&pf7171=56> (accessed November 16, 2015).

This clearly demonstrates a marked lack of public support for these parties that were ostensibly formed to protect the rights or Russians and Russian speakers and furthermore demonstrates a complete absence of harassment by state authorities.

Although the conflict in Ukraine is not confined to ethnic categories it does not mean that identity has not played a role in it. Generally speaking, identity will become a marker for opposing sides in any conflict and is not necessarily limited to only ethnic disputes. In every war, a clash of identities is inevitable, because one faction must somehow demarcate the enemy from "the self", and then espouse for their destruction. In this way, mass consciousness generates the stereotypes that sustain the attendant propaganda, which is then used to construct a reality that of "us *vs*. them" and "friend *vs*. foe".

In the Ukraine's case, it is important to realize that this binary separation was not present before the conflict, but rather arose in the midst of it, while the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic were being formed. Any sentiment that argues otherwise is a clear post factum fabrication and is part of a determined effort to convince individuals and communities that the altered political reality was a natural event, rather than the result of ulterior motives. An extremely subjective and emotional text from one Donetsk blogger highlights the fact that there were no grounds for conflict prior to the war:

> *It's hard to believe, but two years ago a lot of Donetsk residents carried Ukrainian flags and sang the anthem. I was among them. There were the Euro-2012 football matches, which were an incredible emotional high, and we communicated perfectly with the guys from Franik (Ivano-Frankivsk – S.P.), Poltava and Kyiv. For my separatism, I would like to first of all thank Ukrainian television, the online media and, of course, the valiant Ukrainian army in all its manifestations. It was you who made us enemies, you who pitted the Ukrainians against each other, you who forced them to kill each other, and you who keep doing it. You killed the Ukrainian in me, bastards.*[13]

It would, however, be specious to think that an alternative non-Ukrainian identity shared by the residents of Donbas was the consequence of only military operations. The aforementioned state of affairs did not happen by accident and was actually the result of an altogether different set of socio-cultural circumstances peculiar to the area of Donbas. The Donbas region is inhabited by many so-called biethnors. Biethnors are people with mixed Ukrainian-

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[13] **And I am new as a separatist**. – Lieve Magazine "Lair intolerant medieval obscurantists". <http://shrek1.livejournal.com/971999.html> (accessed November 17, 2015).

Russian ethnic heritage who have not traditionally defined themselves according to situational changes in ethnic identity, or by the very small role that ethnicity plays in the hierarchy of identities.

They rather have affiliated their identity with the territory or the region in which they live. This special form of territorial patriotism or regional identity was formed before the war. It became more fixed during the conflict when the region itself started to become more antagonistic towards Ukraine. Current studies need to consider that, in addition to ethnic and national conceptions of identity, "territorial patriotism" and its attendant connections is perhaps an even more important impetus in identity formation. According to Charles Rick, a factor of the regional identity is "nationalitarian" meaning that this phenomenon is similar in nature to the national sense of identity, but is a type of patriotism that endorses a region or seeks to give voice to a regional group[14].

The components that comprise the regional identity of the Donbas region include: Ukrainian-Russian biethnicity (a dual identity wherein the line between Ukrainian and Russian identities is blurred), the dominance of the Russian language, and an industrial culture that exalts the Soviet past and its accompanying symbols. This reverence for the previous Soviet culture naturally extends to the current Russian state. The distinct linguistic-cultural and ethnic features of the region mean that the affinity with other regions is unstable and the political loyalty of the population is rather focused on the region and the local elite.

Since 2004, various election campaigns have witnessed the unprecedented political mobilization of voters who are motivated by regional identity. Symbols and identities rather than policies have gained favor with voters and have played a decisive role in the process. Local elites use media outlets that are under their control to instill a sense of "Donbas patriotism" in minds of the regional residents. A milder variant of this mindset is substantiated in the continual emphasis of the uniqueness of the region, its economic power and its sports achievements. This is supplemented by continuous criticism of the attempts to extend the Ukrainian centered cultural matrix to the region. The vulgarization of the unique aspects of the Donbas region has resulted in an exaggerated sense of regional patriotism, and a belief that the region is somehow both superior, and indispensable to the rest of Ukraine. This is condensed in the idea "Donbas feeds the whole Ukraine" which assumes

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[14] **Rick, Ch**. 1996. The phenomenon of identity. – Education and social development of the region, № 3–4, p. 212.

the attitude that the region must sustain the underdeveloped "nationalistic" western part of the country.

As soon as the separatist territories of Donbas were no longer under the control of the Ukrainian government, the formation of altogether different, non-Ukrainian identity became greatly accelerated. Most importantly, the instigator of this process was the intensive propaganda.

In order to distract the populace from the economic crisis suffered by the "republics" the leaders must continually monitor and maintain the proper ideological atmosphere. This is achieved by synthesizing a blend of hyperbolic territorial patriotism, Russian policies, and a simulacrum of Soviet symbolism. The common denominator of this propaganda is its anti-Ukrainian stance.

According to D. Tymchuk, since July 1st, 2015 the "DPR" media broadcast 24,017 reports with "thematic" content. The themes of the reports are controlled by the relevant "DPR" agencies. Identity is the common thread of the reports, which encompass themes such as: "the removal of social tension" (5653), "Ukraine is to blame for the troubles in Donbas" (4423), "achievements and development prospects for the DPR" (3903), "the promotion of A. Zaharchenko" (2278), "the development of an image 'junta'" (2033), "Russia's support for the Republic" (1016) and the others[15].

With these media reports the inhabitants of the occupied parts of Donbas, who live in very difficult circumstances, and actually struggle to survive, are instead directed towards thinking about their own identity and their deep connections to the region.

In his blog Philip Myzuka writes:

> *The Soviet mentality, the myth of Donbas' disobedience and lack of common ground with other residents of Ukraine has played a bad joke on these people..... And the residents do not understand who they are. Ukrainians? Russians? Novorossiyans? Are they solely to blame? And do the rest of the Ukrainian citizens want to maintain relations with the population of Donbas? Or, is it an abscess that needs to be removed?[16]*

This is a deft summarization of the issues that the residents of the region faced in the first year of the war and illustrates their uncertain identity.

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[15] **Media: "DPR" often blame Ukraine, and write about the "achievements of the republic"**. <http://zn.ua/UKRAINE/smi-dnr-chasche-vsego-vinyat-vo-vsem-ukrainu-i-pishut-ob-uspe-hah-respubliki-is-197447_.html> (accessed December 29, 2015).

[16] **Myzuka, Ph**. I was born in Debaltseve. <http://petrimazepa.com/greenlight/born.html> (accessed December 17, 2015).

Conclusions

The conflict in the Donbas is part of the "hybrid warfare" strategy enacted by Russia against Ukraine, which has seen the deployment of an impressive array of informational and propaganda components. Propaganda assisted in inciting armed clashes between Ukrainian citizens, despite a lack of historical animosity, territorial claims, or ethnic resentment.

Identity is a crucial aspect of the information war, and can be manipulated by sustained propaganda. In order to camouflage their participation in the conflict, Russia has, from the beginning, sought to characterize the conflict in terms of language, culture, history, and thus confer upon it all the necessary features of an internal ethnic struggle between Russians (Russian-speakers) and Ukrainians. This depiction of events legitimizes their support of the separatists (the protection of ethnic Russian) and justifies the secession of the South-Eastern territories (the right of nations to self-determination). An equally important goal was to inculcate fear among the population of Donbas through the use of stereotypes, which are intrinsic to a regional society, and through the creation of artificial threats to the regional identity, together with the concomitant perception that the government in Kiev is the source of these threats.

With the onset of direct military clashes and the initiation of a massive propaganda campaign aimed at reinforcing the territorial identity of Donbas, the orientation of the populace quickly became aligned with the Russian perspective, and its attendant archaic, quasi-Soviet worldview. As this adjustment becomes more ossified, the separatist territories will have an altogether different spectrum of political, media and humanitarian organizations from the rest of Ukraine, and will define themselves accordingly.

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AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY HYBRID CONFLICT

Adam Wetoszka

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Abstract

The article examines the nature of contemporary hybrid warfare and describes the characteristic features and properties of present day hybrid conflicts. The author also analyses the Ukrainian-Russian conflict and tries to identify its phases and those elements which classify it as hybrid warfare. He shows how hybrid actions may affect a state which is targeted by the conflict as well as the external environment.

Moreover, the author identifies the particular tactics used by the aggressor against a state and symptoms which may indicate the initial development of hybrid warfare.

Contemporary armed conflicts fought over European borders undermine the familiar status of the uninterrupted peace and safety of the Old Continent. The warfare staged close to the border line of the European Union supports this thesis. The Ukrainian conflict not only generates classic threats to the safety of neighbouring states, but a careful observer will notice new, unconventional activities of the involved parties, which point to a different nature of adversary – a novum of the recent armed conflicts – hybrid warfare.

The question then arises: what is hybridity and how is it applied? Perhaps, as a rule, it is something difficult to define, unpredictable in order to be unnoticeable, camouflaged, multilateral, and yet an effective instrument used in modern armed conflicts.

This article attempts to identify the particular elements of a hybrid conflict as well as determine the specific characteristics which are attributed to this phenomenon.

Current threats and conflicts differ significantly from those that occurred in the not so distant past. The disintegration of the bipolar Cold War world and progressive globalisation have altered the nature of the global security environment. Present day armies have to face new challenges, risks and

threats, including asymmetrical ones[1]. It is also becoming increasingly true that massive armies, even professional ones, are incapable of dealing with the tasks they face.

Today military operations of a regional nature and a wider range are characterized by the complexity of all the means engaged. This comprehensive nature is understood as hybridization, in the broad sense of the word, which is challenging to understand. In the most recent armed conflicts, the mutual overlapping and combining of regular and irregular warfare techniques is clearly evident.[2] For example, a common strategy is to bring about economic dependency on the potential aggressor. Another distinctive characteristic of hybrid warfare is seen in the use of media and diplomatic efforts to impact society, national ethnic or religious groups, soldiers and civilians. These activities are influenced by such factors as the security environment, including asymmetry, political and cultural divisions, as well as the side effects of globalisation.

The etymology of the term "hybridity" derives from the Latin word *hybrida*, which means a hybrid, an individual created from crossing two genetically different individuals, belonging to different types of species or breeds[3], e.g. a descendant of a Roman male and a non-native Roman female.

A hybrid is a very broad concept occurring in almost all sciences, including biology and technology. The effect of a hybrid takes place due to crossing or mixing properties, or elements belonging to various objects, organisms or states, often different structurally, distant genetically and opposed. The goal of this process is to give rise to a better, "superior" organism in terms of resistance to diseases, endurance or enhanced adaptation capabilities. We are well aware of the fact that, in the automotive industry, a hybrid propulsion system (a combination of a combustion engine and an electrical engine) produces higher performance with less fuel consumption by using the two engines interchangeably, depending on the needs of certain driving conditions. In aviation, the unsuccessful German transport aircraft Messerschmitt

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[1] For the needs of this article we may assume that an asymmetrical threat is a subject (currently associated with the weaker party of a certain conflict), using certain unconventional means and techniques and unusual, non-traditional methods of operation, from the standpoint of its opponent (endangered subject).

[2] This type of warfare is conducted by units (formations) created already in times of peace or on an ad hoc basis during a war that exploit specific, unconventional and burdensome, for the opponent, ways to combat and disrupt enemy activities, in an area held by the enemy.

[3] **Słownik Wyrazów Obcych PWN** 1980. [Dictionary of Foreign Terms PWN]. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, p. 290.

Me 323 Giant of 1942 was referred to as a hybrid, since initially its design was a sailplane, which had engines mounted on the wings, three on each side of the fuselage.

Thus, hybrid warfare combines strategy and tactics with irregular operations, along with cyber warfare and information operations. Hybridisation of war is characterized by the coexistence of various parties in the conflict (states and external actors, soldiers and civilians) and different types of armed operations – both symmetrical and asymmetrical[4].

Figure 1. Hybrid warfare. Source: <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/resourcelibrary/cyberpioneer/topics/articles/news/2015/mar/05mar15_news.html>

In relation to modern armed conflicts, hybridisation can be understood as the coexistence of "old" and "new" wars, classic armed conflicts and the most recent wars, clashes of national armies and asymmetric conflicts, state-of-the-art military technologies and primitive weaponry, fights over territories and resources as well as disputes about identities and values, and confrontation of the local and cosmopolitan[5].

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4   **Czaputowicz, J**. 2012. Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe. Współczesne koncepcje [International Security. Modern Concepts]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

5   **Kaldor, M**. 2001. New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era. Stanford University Press, pp. 5–10; **Krystiana, J.; Robb, J**. 2007. Brave New War. The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization. Wiley, Hoboken, pp. 152–164.

Hybridisation may apply both to the warring parties (state, external actor, irregular armed formation) and the space of the conflict (in particular, the battlefield), its origin and nature (conflict ecosystem)[6].

In principle, it results from the coexistence in time and space of several different generations of warfare, which cross over and mutually penetrate the battlefield or operations other than war. For an outside observer, on one hand, war is the space where regular units of the armed forces of a state, divided into certain types of loosely organised and poorly armed local gangs stage warfare; special operations of military formations equipped with cutting edge military technology and at the same time an attack of an infuriated crowd on "invader army", application of technologies and instruments of cyber battlefield and on the other hand, ambushes and traps made by the enemy in confrontation[7].

A careful scrutiny reveals that hybrid warfare generates four types of threats: traditional, irregular, terrorist and destructive. The basic area of hybrid warfare is obviously the conflict zone as well as the area adjacent to the conflict zone and the international community.

A characteristic feature of present day hybrid-type warfare is the fact that military armed operations must be accompanied by non-military components. This can be seen through the prism of contemporary conflicts in which armies often take on a policing role, provide humanitarian aid, the so-called post-conflict rehabilitation or training missions in a new environment. They also become involved in stabilization phases on completion of a conflict. Such activities require the trust of the local community due to the fact that civilian communities perceive soldiers either in friendly or hostile terms, with no intermediary stages. The experiences obtained during missions in Afghanistan and Iraq indicate that military operations (conducted even with state-of-the-art equipment) do not guarantee victory over an enemy who uses unconventional, asymmetrical methods and means of combat. This results from the fact that war has undergone the process of hybridisation, which presents a new type of military challenge in this modern age.

Likewise, the subject literature proves that the concept of hybrid warfare is vague and uncertain, deprived of defined precision, and full of blurred

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[6] **Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces**, collation on: Works undertaken in the Ministry of National Defence, NATO, EU in operational capabilities in the area of hybridity of contemporary warfare, Bydgoszcz 2015, p. 7. [**Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces** 2015]

[7] *Ibid.*

principles, and what is worse, it undermines clear and stringent considerations about the future global security environment[8].

The characteristic quality of hybridity in contemporary wars is the coexistence of two essential planes of conflict: territorial and virtual. The territorial plane refers to the classically understood national, state and traditional ethnic communities, clans or tribes permanently inhabiting a given territory. In contrast, the virtual plane has a cross-territory, cross-border network structure which allows communication within a given network, and global promotion of values, ideas and principles, including the sustaining and recovery of its own structure. Warfare on the territorial plane is designed to extend and maintain jurisdiction and administrative control over a given area, protect the borders defining the extent of the jurisdiction, enforce constitutional principles and legal norms with regard to the population living in the area, and ensure public order and the management of natural resources and economic activity. Warfare in the virtual dimension redefines conflict parameters, and even eliminates certain determinants such as territory, natural resources, military organization and public order[9].

The Russian Federation, by practising the concepts of hybrid warfare in Chechnya, Georgia, Ukraine and Crimea, effectively achieved its political objectives. This has led to a situation in which the status of the waged war has become the state of peace; also humanitarian intervention made it possible to conduct the war without a formal declaration.

The Russian idea of "new generation warfare" is based upon the following elements: political diversion, creation of support infrastructure interventions, deterrence and manipulation of negotiations[10].

The war in Ukraine proved that political sabotage may be accomplished through media, on the basis of propaganda and agitation, at the same time touching upon socially sensitive issues, such as social, language and cultural differences. Media operations are designed to deepen the differences and bilateralism between social groups, create corruption and agitate influential officials. Creating support infrastructure interventions means taking over key national infrastructure components, i.e. airports, stations, depots. These activities are of a non-military nature and aspect, e.g. by creating a situation

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8   **Gentile, G. P**. 2009. The imperative for an American general purpose army that can fight. – Orbis, 2009, No. 3, p. 461.

9   **Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces** 2015, p. 8.

10   **Antczak-Barzan, A**. 2016. Dynamika wojny hybrydowej na Ukrainie [Dynamic hybrid warfare in Ukraine]. – Kwartalnik Bellona 1/2016, p. 46. [**Antczak-Barzan** 2016]

in which the personnel, crew or workers themselves desert a captured facility on their own. Well-organised support also includes properly trained militants who secure the interests of an aggressor at the occupation point. Intervention is the utmost element of hybrid warfare. The experiences of the war in Ukraine showed that it may take the form of a sudden impromptu organization of field exercises at the border with a significant number of deployed troops and equipment. At the same time, illegal cooperation is carried out with a transfer of equipment, the training of insurgents and the creation of logistic bases. Deterrence consists of the threat of using nuclear weapons, organising manoeuvres and aggressive activities of land and air forces so that neighbouring states are wary of engaging in the conflict.

The Russian approach to the concept of conducting hybrid warfare was partially revealed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, General Valery Gierasimow, during his speech on 26 January 2013 addressed to the members of the Russian Academy of Military Sciences, at the meeting which concluded the work of the Academy in 2012. The speech was primarily an expression of the views of the Command of the Russian Federation military forces on how to stage a new type of war – a conflict where all differences disappear between war and peace in the classical approach, and also between uniformed personnel and undercover activities. According to Gierasimow, such a combination, especially when wars are not declared and conflicts are in the initial stages, is quite different than the usual focus of military thinkers. Most importantly, it has the potential to change an utterly stable country into an arena of the most intense armed conflict within several months, if not days. Moreover, as mentioned by the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, the new conflicts entail a fundamental change in the laws of war. The role of non-military measures undertaken to achieve political and strategic objectives has grown. According to the Chief of the General Staff, these measures may be significantly more efficient than the conventional military methods, since the use of asymmetrical actions reduces the enemy advantage in armed combat. The use of special forces and internal opposition in order to create an ever-growing front over the whole territory of a hostile state, as well as information operations (the forms and means of which undergo constant change) have been mentioned as examples of such methods. In addition, Gen Gierasimow clearly stated that current military actions are becoming more and more dynamic, active and effective. Tactical and operational intervals, which an enemy might take advantage of, are also disappearing[11].

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[11] **Doctrine and Training Centre of the Polish Armed Forces** 2015, p. 15.

Upon analysis of Gen Gierasimow's address and the events in Crimea, or recently in eastern Ukraine, it is clear that the Russian concept of waging a contemporary conflict (a hybrid war) assumes adherence to the following scheme:

1) **Phase 1. Preparation** – the launching of PsyOps (psychological operations) over the area of a planned conflict by rekindling separatist mindsets and creating an atmosphere of inevitable conflict, combined with diplomatic efforts in the international arena (both in relation to its own allies and the potential enemy's allies).

2) **Phase 2. Disinformation** – carrying out disinformation activities (at all levels, starting with strategic communications and ending with local messages) by all available communication media responsible for transferring information in the conflict area and in the international environment:
   – In the diplomatic aspect – in order to achieve the desired response, each recipient (including the aggressor for internal needs) receives a message aimed at mitigating or exacerbating the actual picture of the situation. It must be adapted to the individual characteristics of the country, its international and internal situation (differing for politicians and for domestic public opinion);
   – In the military aspect – throughout the whole period of the operation, conducting a significant number of exercises and repositioning of tactical battle groups by the aggressor, in the guise of carrying out a training cycle of military units in order to facilitate a covert deployment of troops intended for actions in the enemy area, and simultaneously distracting the enemy's attention.

3) **Phase 3. Destabilizing** – overpowering central and local centres of enemy authority, its power structures, media and business representatives, using commonly applied methods and tools, including political, economic and technologically advanced (e.g. cyber attacks).

4) **Phase 4. Military operations** – establishing local units of separatists composed of e.g. national minorities acting with the support of armed forces and special forces of the aggressor (without any identifying marks), equipped with specialist equipment and armament, whose main task is to hinder the armed forces of the target country's ability to conduct operations and in a coordinated way to take control of key installations and areas which exert an impact on the success of the operation (border crossings, media relay, major roads, bridges, railway lines and airports).

5) **Phase 5. Incorporation –** establishing central and local authorities dependent on the aggressor that will support the process of a formal inclusion of the area of activity into the state structures of the aggressor[12].

In addition the Russian Federation attempted to disrupt the authorities and Ukrainian troops by launching military exercises in all military zones. There were also activities aimed at undermining the actions and unity of international organizations, such as NATO, the EU and the UN. Economic blackmail was also used, which threatened to suspend gas and oil supplies. The corruption of officials in the ministries responsible for the military and law enforcement also occurred on a frequent basis. By combining activities in cyberspace with conventional activities, the aggressor introduced units without valid state identifications. In consequence, public facilities and military bases were captured; simultaneously, separatists were trained and supplied with modern weapons.

An analysis of the elements of modern hybrid war reveals the following significant threats:

- **Political threats**, as a state of intensified actions run by organised social groups (political), prevent the country from fulfilling its main functions, and thereby weaken or nullify the actions of bodies or institutions which are responsible for pursuing national objectives and interests.
- **Economic threats** are perceived as a security threat to the national economy, to the extent that the economy cannot develop, generate profits and savings for investments, or when external threats lead to disruptions in its functioning, which compromise the citizens and companies and may even endanger the physical survival of the State.
- **Military threats** constitute a situation where a reduction or loss of conditions for a peaceful existence and the development of the State may occur; also an infringement or loss of its sovereignty or territorial integrity as a result of the use of armed violence (military).
  - **Social threats** relate to all that threatens the loss of the national and ethnic identity of individual communities.
  - **Threats to critical infrastructure.** Critical Infrastructure is the systems and the inter-related functional facilities, including buildings, technical installations and services critical to the security of the state and its citizens, which are to ensure the proper functioning of public administration authorities, and also institutions and companies.

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[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

- **Information threats.** This is the security area whose content (objectives, conditions, methods, contents) refers to the information environment (including cyberspace) of the State, such as:
  – propaganda/information operations;
  – manipulation of information;
  – launching propaganda campaigns and psychological operations using services offered by the Internet and mobile telephone network;
  – operations against the critical infrastructure of the State, including hacking security systems. Unauthorised access or misuse of information or unauthorised modification of information;
  – cyber terrorism, cyber crime, hacking.

Contemporary hybrid warfare and its nature may be best illustrated by the example of the Ukrainian – Russian conflict and the annexation of Crimea. It is occasionally described as a war of a new kind, without the direct use of military force. The involvement of non-military means is clearly evident here: political, economic, and social means lead to similar results without the use of force or personal losses[13]. Information warfare played a fundamental role in shaping the conflict "without conflict" or "non-occupation war"[14].

The war of information may be compared to the development of a disease in the human body, for instance, diabetes. Initially it develops and attacks in an inconspicuous way, followed by a stage of rapid development, which results in weakening and later damage of different organs. The war of information may take years. When carried out systematically, it may have irreversible consequences. Hybrid warfare and information warfare have certain common features. They may be conducted in a secretive manner, "on the sly", without a public declaration of engagement, from the position of a neutral state or a neutral arbitrator, or a proxy of either warring party, and in this way they may enable continuation of intended operations by the actual side of the conflict. They use a similar range of means and resources, and similar or complementary technologies of operation. However, hybrid war should yield a substantial politico-military result; whereas information warfare is designed to initiate and act as a catalyst for this success[15].

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[13] See: **Antczak-Barzan** 2016, p. 47.

[14] Experiences show that this type of action may be efficient with regard to States which are weak, collapsed, stratified and ridden by social conflicts.

[15] **Pac, B**. 2016. Integration of information and hybrid warfare in international conflicts. – Kwartalnik Bellona 1/2016, p. 56.

The propaganda warfare with Ukraine and the dissemination of information abroad showed Russia as a generous and caring country supporting a neighbour in chaos. In reality the support was to strengthen the separatists.

An intensive information campaign was also conducted in Western Europe and in Russia itself for the sake of its own citizens in order to back up the separatists in Crimea. The internal activities were to generate awareness and to mobilize society in consolidating the image of NATO and Western Europe as a permanent adversary of Russia. Meanwhile, they created a strong image of Ukraine as a nationalistic, Bandera's State, with a new fascist biased government aimed at restricting the rights of the Russian minority. Furthermore, the thesis of the historical background of Crimea belonging to Russia was spread. The aim of such propaganda actions focusing on Russia's own society is to arouse the feeling of injustice, isolation and unfair treatment by the rest of the world.

On one hand, the society has the feeling of its own uniqueness and is convinced of the appropriateness of the actions undertaken by the state (reconstruction of Russia as a superpower). On the other hand, the society experiences ‚unfair' alienation; it faces deepening antagonisms between the values of the East and the West. It is easier to manipulate such a society, which, in turn, can alleviate hardships and inconveniences resulting from waging an armed conflict over a longer period of time (e.g. shortage of food caused by western sanctions or reductions in expenditures on social benefits and salaries)[16].

Propaganda aimed at neighbouring countries is a warning meant to evoke fears of conflict escalation and loss of freedom. This method is applied to the Caucasian countries, i.e. Georgia, Moldova and Belarus. Another type of propaganda is directly addressed to the Baltic countries. All international propaganda is in fact information chaos, disinformation, fabricating reality, and manipulation aimed at destroying the unity of Western Europe. In a sense, the activities partly fulfilled their objectives by dividing the West, arousing fear in neighbouring countries and, in particular, by dividing Ukraine in terms of ideology, community and, above all, territory.

This conflict has also exploited the use of sound and image for propaganda manipulation. Television footage often presented materials from other locations and a different time than it was broadcast. Amidst the information chaos, the average viewer was unable to notice significant differences.

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[16] See: **Antczak-Barzan** 2016, p. 51.

Showing the suffering of civilians, children in particular, became the fundamental "propaganda trumpet", targeting "the rich west".

During the crisis in Kiev Maidan, protesters used mobile phones and cameras as shields, since the recorded and forwarded pictures might serve as evidence of the aggressive activities of the authorities. It was also intended to cause an international intervention, which, in the end, did not occur.

Another issue connected with waging a hybrid war is humanitarian intervention or its proper use for the sake of the conflict. Humanitarian aid, present in international law, begins to be used for other purposes. Under the pretext of such aid, foreign armed forces are introduced, not necessarily acting in the manner the supported State would wish. In addition, reality showed that humanitarian intervention may be carried out against the will of the supported country and the humanitarian aid serves the interests of the state it was sent from.

In conclusion, it must be stressed that the hybrid nature of contemporary wars reveals that the opponent who uses asymmetrical methods of combat will not follow the principles of the humanitarian laws of armed conflicts. They will attack persons and objects protected by international law, exploiting civilians to shield their own operations. They will predominantly use local militias and other non-state players, creating situations where the key points and installations are taken control of by an indirect aggressor. As for direct action, the aggressor will seek to create military-like situations, as a result of which the crew, personnel and/or employees will abandon the desired target facility.

It is quite likely that the aggressor will not use any uniforms or identification badges of military formations. This was seen through the activities of the Russian Federation in Crimea and currently in the eastern districts of Ukraine (Lugansk and Donetsk districts). On one hand, we may distinguish the hybridity of these activities that connect the old and new methods of combat (regular and asymmetrical methods, as well as state-of-the-art or primitive measures of exerting an influence), including "subliminal aggression" (which does not exceed the borderline of an open, regular war). On the other hand, we may observe the combining of military operations with information warfare (at all levels, from strategic to local communication).

In the subject literature, there is no definite and generally comprehensible definition of a "hybrid war". Neither is it present in any available classification of wars in the art of war theory. Nevertheless, as stated above, hybridity of contemporary wars should be understood as a coexistence of "old" and "new" wars, classic armed conflicts and most recent wars, clashes of national

forces and asymmetrical conflicts, state-of-the-art military technologies and primitive weaponry, fights over territories and resources as well as disputes about identity and values, and confrontation of the local and the cosmopolitan. It must be assumed that hybridity in contemporary wars has also become a sign of our times and its existence is palpably clear.

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RUSSIAN INFORMATION WAR AGAINST UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES IN 2014−2015: THE UKRAINIAN POINT OF VIEW

Vladimir Sazonov, Igor Kopõtin

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1. Introductory Notes

In this article we will provide an overview about the processes of Russian information warfare against Ukrainian defence forces in 2014 and 2015 and present the Ukrainian point of view.

At first it should be noted that Russia's information's operations[1] in Ukraine is only a part of bigger non-linear[2] war of Russia against Ukrainian

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[1] See on Russian strategic communication – **Ginos, N. D**. 2010. The Securitization of Russian Strategic Communication. A Monograph. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College; On information operations see e.g., **U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Information Operations** 2014. Joint Publication 3–13, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; **Darczewska, J**. 2014. The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare: the Crimean operation, a case study.' – Point of View, No. 42 (May 2014), Warsaw: Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpia. [**Darczewska** 2014]

[2] Non-linear or hybrid war. The term hybrid war was fist time used in his thesis by **Nemeth, W. J**. 2002. Future War and Chechnya: A Case for Hybrid Warfare, Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, June 2002, <http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/5865/02Jun_Nemeth.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed on 20 June 2016). A. Rácz remarkes that *"Although the concept of hybrid warfare was not new, the way Russia implemented it was indeed a novelty."* (**Rácz, A**. 2015. Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist. Helsinki: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, p. 13). [**Rácz** 2015] Rácz explains the term hybrid war in following way: *"All in all, the term 'hybrid warfare' in Nemeth's work basically signified a society-specific way of warfare, which combined irregulaar and regular tactics with modern information measures"* (*ibid.,* p. 30). According to Jānis Bērziņš *"one of Putin's closest advisors, Vladislav Surkov (under the pseudonym of Nathan Dubovitsky), coined the term 'Non-Linear Warfare' in an article describing what would be the Fifth World War, the one where all fight against all. The idea is that traditional geo-political paradigms no longer hold"* (**Bērziņš, J**. 2015. Russian New Generation Warfare is not Hybrid Warfare. – The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Europe. Pabriks, A.; Kudors, A. (eds.). The Centre for East European Policy Studies, University of Latvia Press, Rīga, p. 42); **Jaeski, A**. 2015. Hybrid Warfare on the Rise: A New Dominant Military Strategy? – NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence, Riga, 24th November 2015. <http://www.stratcomcoe.org/article-deputy-director-aivar-jaeski-hybrid-warfare-rise-new-dominant-military-strategy> (accessed on 30 July 2016).

state.[3] András Rácz pointed out that in non-linear war "*the regular military force is used mainly as a deterrent and not as a tool of open aggression*" in comparison to other types of war. András Rácz accentuated what was new in year 2014 – "*highly effective, in many cases almost real-time coordination of the various means employed, including political, military, special operations and information measures*" that caught both the Ukrainian government and the Western countries off the guard in Crimea and Eastern part of Ukraine.[4] As we know information operations are only an important part of non-linear war and as Ukrainian expert Yevhen Fedchenko[5] pointed out that "*the information war as a part of hybrid war is very important because its influences are ongoing and it has a global impact as more and more countries are finding traces of Russian active measure on their territory*".[6]

The role and importance of information warfare were also received special attention not only by Russian political *élite,* but also by Russian military authorities. For example, Russian Army General Valery Gerasimov[7] already in early 2013 accented the importance of information warfare in post-modern high-tech epoch, especially in the military conflicts. He writes that "*information warfare opens wide asymmetric possibilities for decreasing the fighting potential of enemy*".[8] The new Russian military doctrine from the end of December 2014 states that in the modern war the information superiority

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[3]   **Howard, C.; Puhkov, R**. (eds.) 2014. Brothers Armed. Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine. Minneapolis: East View Press; **Pabriks, A. & Kudors, A**. (eds.) 2015. The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Europe. The Centre for East European Policy Studies. Rīga: University of Latvia Press.

[4]   **Rácz** 2015, pp. 87–89.

[5]   Director of the Mohyla School of Journalism in Kyiv and co-founder of the *StopFake.org.*

[6]   **Fedchenko, Y**. 2016. Kremlin Propaganda: Soviet Active Measures by Other Means. – StopFake, 21.03.2016, <http://www.stopfake.org/en/kremlin-propaganda-soviet-active-measures-by-other-means/> (accessed on 30.07.2016).

[7]   Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia.

[8]   **Герасимов, В**. 2013. Ценность науки в Предвидении. – Военно-Промышленный курьер, No. 8(476), 27 February 2013, pp. 2–3, <www.vpk-news.ru/articles/14632> (accessed on 23.05.2016); see also **Müür, K.; Mölder, H.; Sazonov, V.; Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, P**. 2016. Russian Information Operations against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces: April-December 2014 in Online News. – Journal of Baltic Security, Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 32–33. [**Müür et al.** 2016]

is essential to achieve victory on the physical battlefield.[9] Russia is paying special attention to information security and works in this sphere.[10]

This analysis[11] is based on interviews with different Ukrainian experts from different spheres – e.g., military (officers and retired officers from Ukrainian defence forces), political science (analytics from different institutions e.g., International Centre for Policy Studies), media research, officials from ministries and governmental organizations (e.g., Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine; Ministry of Defence; Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, President's Administration of Ukraine; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Committee on National Security and Defence), different advisors, journalists, volunteers from NGO-s (e.g., Centre for Military and Political Studies, Information Resistance section) and, of course, partly based on available open access sources.[12]

2. Informational tools, methods and narratives, which Russia uses against Ukrainian Armed Forces

On the example of Ukrainian military conflict since late 2013 and early 2014 (events on Maidan and occupation of Crimea) we have seen that Russia's information warfare machine and soft power is actively used by Kremlin as

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[9]   **Российская Газета** 2014. Военная доктрина Российской Федерации, 30 December, <http://www.rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html> (accessed on 03.05.2016); **Müür** *et al*. 2016, p. 32.

[10]   See e.g. **Shtepa, V**. 2016. Russia's Draft Information Security Doctrine at Odds With Realities of Modern Information Environment. – The Jamestone Foundation, 15th July 2016, <http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=45637&cHash=b4ddf217d48b5af96c4b86c52db172b5#.V52JQvl9672> (accessed on 30.07.2016); **Доктрина информационной безопасности Российской Федерации** (проект). – Совет Безопасности Российийской Федерации, 29.07.2016, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/6/135.html> (accessed on 30.07.2016).

[11]   Current article was written as smaller part of the project "*Information operations of Russian Federation 2014–2015 on examples of Ukraine crisis: Influences on Ukrainian Defence Forces*" (Estonian National Defence College, leader of the project Vladimir Sazonov).

[12]   This research based on interviews carried out by V. Sazonov, I. Kopõtin in May-June and October 2015 and in March 2016 in Kyiv and in ATO region, and also in Tartu and by K. Müür in Kyiv in March 2016. The interviews revealed how, during the course of Russia's information and psychological war against the Armed Forces of Ukraine and volunteer battalions in 2014, Russia attempts to harm the morale of Ukrainian soldiers and officers by using all methods and techniques available. In current research is also partly used materials published in **Sazonov, V.; Mölder; H.; Müür K**. (eds.) 2016. Russian Information Warfare against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces: April-December 2014. Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2016 (in press) [**Sazonov** *et al*. 2016]; see also **Müür** *et al.* 2016, pp. 28–71.

a tool of Russian non-linear warfare. No doubt, Russian information warfare functions quite well and uses all possibilities and resources that are available in arsenal of informational-psychological sphere. Kremlin's propaganda is working well, influentially, spreading (mis)information strongly and massively and tries to target all possible target audiences in Ukraine (e.g., soldiers and officers, civilian society, different religious and ethnic groups, different subcultures, government, NGO-s etc.), but in Western countries generally. In Ukraine it aims to disparage the Ukrainian government and demonstrate it as a corrupt, illegal, incapable and fascist and neo-Nazis, junta[13] and also tries to harm of moral of Ukrainian army on frontline and in ATO, additionally tries to influence of population of whole Ukraine with spreading sometimes contradictory, fear-, panic- or hate-based misinformation and fakes.[14] This is very generally and very briefly, what we can note on Russian information warfare in Ukraine.

Russia's propaganda machine uses very different methods and wide arsenal of tools in information warfare and it is not even possible list all of them in current short article. However, exemplarily we will mentioned only one of this methods – it is "data deluge method"[15]. This could be very influential method and a good example of using "data deluge method" in

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[13] **Демченко, В**. 2014. Войска хунты начали подготовку наступления на Луганск. – Комсомольская правда, 1 July, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26249.5/3129999/> (accessed on 02.05.2016).

[14] See e.g. **Müür** *et al*. 2016; Dr. Yevhen Fedchenko (2015) quite well describes the Russian information warfare in general terms in following way: "*For the Kremlin, propaganda has become an integral part of information warfare. Throughout the past decade the Russian propaganda machine has been structured and effectively implemented, reaching a climax during the occupation of Crimea and the subsequent devastating war in Eastern Ukraine. It started in 2005 with the creation of Russia Today (subsequently RT) and every year more "media" outlets are added to this global network. Almost every week another propaganda outlet, Sputnik International, opens a new bureau somewhere in the world, hiring qualified local journalists and producing radio and multimedia content in almost 30 languages. According to their website, "Sputnik points the way to a multipolar world that respects every country's national interests, culture, history and traditions". This is just one of the many examples of media outlet double-speak. In reality, their aim is to influence global public opinion, distort reality and act as a mouthpiece for the Kremlin.*" – **Fedchenko, Y**. 2015. Debunking Lies and Stopping Fakes: Lessons from the Frontline. – POLICY PAPER 2015, <http://www.globsec. org/upload/documents/policy-paper-1/13-fedchenko.pdf> (accessed on 15.05.2016).

[15] Uku Arold writes about "data deluge method": "*The briefing of Russian Ministry of Defense on crash of the airliner MH17. Shortly before that Russian TV channels produced a variety of different conspiracy theories about the plane incident, making the information from media extremely confusing*". (**Arold, U**. 2015. Infosõja mõistatus. – Kaja. Kommunikatsiooni ja suhtekorralduse ajakiri, 18, p. 14).

information campaigns by Russia is the case of MH17.[16] Even if we look very briefly in the period which followed the crash of MH 17 on 17th of July 2014, we can find in Russian mass-media (all Russian federal TV-s, on-line news, newspapers, radio channels etc.) huge number of misinformative messages, fakes, and lies about this catastrophe. For example, already few days after the crash of MH17, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*[17] gave some laconic information about MH17 and catastrophe, but which consist lot of misinformation and even fakes. Since 23rd of July 2014 situation changed and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* started to produce quite specific image that Ukrainian armed forces are probably guilty of this catastrophe. In one article, which was published on 23rd of July, only 6 days after the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* aimed to show that the most likely the culprit is a Ukrainian soldier Sergei Patchenko.[18] Later *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has not mentioned him anymore and gave different versions. However, it was only a speculation, no serious facts were given to support it, but the narrative that Ukraine is guilty began to work.[19] The narrative that Ukrainians shoot down MH 17 was also forcefully promoted in all Russian federal television channels, and also in online and social media. Russian mass-media blamed the Ukrainian army directly for shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 and tried to convince that Ukrainian soldiers are responsible for this catastrophe.[20] Of course, Russia's information warfare uses "data deluge method" also in many other cases, trying to target people with and sometimes controversial information. The purpose is, of course, to disorientate the target audience.[21]

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[16] *Ibid.,* p. 14.

[17] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, established in 1925 in Soviet Union, is one of the oldest newspapers in Russia. The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* Publishing House does not only have online and print outlets, but also owns a radio channel.

[18] **Александрова, О**. 2014. Солдата украинской армии затравили за фото на фоне «Бука». – Комсомольская правда, 23.07.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26259/3138276/> (02.05.2016).

[19] **Комсомольская правда: Малайзийский Боинг был сбит в небе над Донбассом украинским летчиком**. – Радио Эхо Москвы, 23.12.2014, <http://echo.msk.ru/news/1460870-echo/comments.html> (accessed on 11.05.2016).

[20] See e. g. **Варсегов, Н**. 2014. Украинские пушки бьют по месту катастрофы «Боинга», чтобы не дать работать голландским специалистам. – Комсомольская правда, 10.11.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26305.5/3183895/> (accessed on 08.05.2016); **Полосатов, С**. 2014. Появился фотоснимок, на котором украинский истребитель атакует малайзийский «Боинг». – Комсомольская правда, 24.11.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26307/3186146/> (accessed on 06.05.2016).

[21] Interview with **Dmytro Kuleba**, carried out by Sazonov on 27th of May 2015; see also **Sazonov** *et al.* 2016.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Russian information operations against Ukraine are not of new origin. Ukrainian media expert Vitalii Moroz[22], and Tetyana Lebedeva[23] point to the years 2003–2004, when Russian propagandists began to create the idea of dividing Ukraine into two or three parts. Nataliya Gumenyuk[24], pointed out that "*really serious situation began in 2003 when different political technologists began to tell story about three different types of Ukraine*".[25]

Vitalii Moroz associates it with the events in Russia at the same time – oppression of the NTV news channel and the appearance of political technologists in the Russian media space.[26] Some of these technologists were simultaneously hired by the team of Yanukovych to work against the Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko.[27] According to Tetyana Lebedeva, Russian information activities started to creep in already during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma, but the impact of the "first Maidan" – the Orange Revolution of 2004 – made the Russian rulers uneasy to maintain their influence over Ukraine.[28] Back then, the Russian information operations were not as massive, aggressive, influential and visible as they are now. Ukrainian expert Dmytro Kuleba[29], considers a more aggressive wave of Russian information campaigns to have started approximately one year before the annexation of Crimea, in 2013.[30] The overtake-process indicates that this was a well-prepared action and Russia was militarily ready to conduct the operation in Crimea.[31]

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[22] Interview with **Vitalii Moroz (**Head of the New Media Department at Internews Ukraine), carried out by Sazonov.

[23] Interview with **Tetyana Lebedeva** (Honorary Head of the Independent Association of Broadcasters), carried out by Sazonov.

[24] Editor-in-chief in Hromadske TV.

[25] Interview with **N. Gumenyuk**, carried out by Sazonov and Kopõtin.

[26] Interview with **V. Moroz**, carried out by Sazonov.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Interview with **T. Lebedeva**, carried out by Sazonov.

[29] Ambassador-at Large at the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry.

[30] Interview with **D. Kuleba**, carried out by Sazonov; About annexation of Crimea see **Mölder, H.; Sazonov, V.; Värk, R**. 2014. Krimmi liitmise ajaloolised, poliitilised ja õiguslikud tagamaad: I osa – Akadeemia, No. 12, pp. 2148–2161; **Mölder, H.; Sazonov, V.; Värk, R**. 2014. Krimmi liitmise ajaloolised, poliitilised ja õiguslikud tagamaad: II osa. – Akadeemia, No. 1, pp. 1–28.

[31] **Müür *et al*.** 2016, p. 34.

LTCol. ret. Dmitry Tymchuk[32], LTCol ret. Juri Karin, Col. Konstantin Mashovets and Col. ret. Vyacheslav Gusarov from NGO *Information Resistance* showed in their book about Russian aggression in Ukraine that Russian information activity began already in the beginning 1990s. The first phase from the beginning of 1990s till 2013 was a "preparatory phase" (*подготовительная фаза*) and "informational sounding (exploring) of situation" (*информационное зондирование ситуации*).[33] Tymchuk, Karin, Mashovets and Gusarov pointed out that since August until November 2013 there was a phase of "creation of informational lodgement (*place d'armes*)" in Ukraine (*создание информационного плацдарма*). It was followed by the next phase from December 2013 until February 2014, "phase of informational aggression" in Crimea (*фаза информационной агрессии в Крыму*) and "rocking the situation on Donbass" (*раскачивание ситуации на Донбассе*). The next phase began in March and ended in June 2014 – it was phase of "wide pressure of information" (*фаза «широкомаштабного информационного прессинга»*).[34]

Col. ret. Vyacheslasv Gusarov (2.03.2016), expert of information security, pointed out:

> *The active phase of information war began in 2013. We think that it began in July 2013 after the presentation of President Vladimir Putin on celebration of 1025 years since Christianisation of Kievan Rus. In his speech Putin said that Russia will never leave Ukraine, will be it in Europe or in Eurasian Customs Union.*[35]

In the conflict in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, Russian information operations during 2014 were used at all levels starting with the political level (against the state of Ukraine, its structures and politicians) up to the military level. According to Jolanta Darczewska[36], an unprecedentedly large scale exploitation of federal television[37] and radio channels, newspapers and online resources was supported by diplomats, politicians, political analysts, experts, and representatives of the academic and cultural elites.

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[32] Head of Center for Military and Political Studies, Information Resistance (IR) section.

[33] **Тымчук, Д.; Карин, Ю.; Машовец, К.; Гусаров, В**. 2016. Вторжение в Украину: Хроника российской агрессии. Брайт Стар Паблишинг, Киев, p. 209. [**Тымчук** *et al*. 2016]

[34] **Тымчук** *et al*. 2016, pp. 211–214.

[35] Interview with **V. Gusarov,** carried out by Sazonov and Müür.

[36] **Darczewska** 2014, p. 5.

[37] Federal television of the Russian Federation.

In Russia's information campaigns against Ukrainian state and army, Moscow propagandists use different myths, ideas and narratives that are mostly related to contemporary Russian and Soviet history – e.g., the Second World War, Stepan Bandera and banderovitsi[38], but also Nazism and violence, genocide[39], Russophobia, Chauvinism etc. Additionally, they use the images of the "glorious" Soviet period, especially from reign-time of Joseph Stalin, who again has become more popular among Russians since Vladimir Putin became president of Russian Federation.[40] Such manipulations in Russia's media are very common since Vladimir Putin came to power in the Russian Federation.[41] Narratives, which is related to Nazis is successfully and massively used by Russians in information campaign against Ukrainians. The Ukrainian defence forces and its volunteer units are often compared to executions squads (e.g., *Einsatztruppen* in Third Reich), Nazis, killers, terrorists, bandits, servants of the Kyiv junta. Ukraine is portrayed as a failed state, or a puppet of NATO and Western countries. Many Russian media channels have published fake news about foreign soldiers and NATO troops in Ukraine[42], or try to show that some of NATO or European Union's states help the Kyiv junta and Ukrainian army, who kill civilians and are Nazi sympathizers.[43] Another strong narrative promoted is the Western conspiracy against Russia, Russians and the Russian World.[44] Western politicians are

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[38] *Banderivtsi* – followers of Stepan Bandera (1909–1959). Stepan Bandera was leader of the Ukrainian nationalists, head of Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN, in Ukrainian *Організація Українських Націоналістів*). Bandera was also the leader of Ukrainian independence movement. See e.g., **Киев митингует против нацизма и бандеровщины**, 7.11.2015. – IA Regnum, <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2007058.html> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[39] **Гришин, А**. 2014. Обыкновенный геноцид: «Высшее руководство Украины приказывало уничтожать русскоязычных». – Комсомольская Правда, 29 September, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26288.5/3166244/> (accessed on 06.05.2016).

[40] **Булин, Д**. 2011. Популярность Сталина в России стремительно растет. 27 апреля 2011 г. – BBC Russian, Русская служба, <http://www.bbc.com/russian/society/2011/04/110427_stalin_vciom_support.shtml> (26.05.2016).

[41] **Lipman, M**. 2009. Media Manipulation and Political Control in Russia. Chatham House, Moscow.

[42] See e.g. **Титов, С**. 2015. Рада впустила на Украину иностранные войска. – Комсомольская правда, 4.6.2015. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26390.4/3267570/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[43] See e.g. **Смирнов, В**. 2014. В Эстонии «поставят на ноги» бойцов украинской армии, бомбивших Донбасс. – Комсомольская правда, 22.9.2014. <http://kompravda.eu/online/news/1850795/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[44] See e.g. **Коц, А.; Стешин, Д**. 2014. Ополченец из Афганистана: Ливия, Сирия, Ирак... Вас, русских, окружают. – Комсомольская правда, 20.11.2014. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26310.3/3188038> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

depicted as cowardly and double-faced persons who support killing civilians in Ukraine, especially children.[45] Ukrainian soldiers and volunteers are also often portrayed as criminals, drug addicts, alcoholics, robbers and cowards, who tortue and killed civilians (espeicially children, old people and woman).[46]

The Ukrainian armed forces are pictured as revolting due to grave conditions in the army and Ukrainian soldiers do not want to shoot civilians.[47] An article claims that "*the moral conditions of the Ukrainian army make us more and more concerned. But the moral condition of army authorities is laughter through tears*".[48] *Komsomolskaya Pravda* tries to show that Ukrainian army is ruled by violence and chaos, hunger, and illnesses. During the escalation of conflict in Donbass, especially before the mobilisation of Ukrainians, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* regularly spoke about deserters from Ukrainian army, hundreds and thousands who massively leave the army and go to the Russian side[49].

Russian propaganda machine is continuously creating new terms, especially those related to WWII[50] that should support them in information war – trying to humiliate Ukrainians by using metanarratives such as *Maidanjugend* (*майданюгендовец*), which is a direct analogy with *Hitlerjugend*.[51]

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[45] See e.g. **Туханина, О**. 2014. Почему Запад вступается за Пусси Райот, а не за мертвых девочек из Луганска. – Комсомольская правда, 24.08.2014. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26273.7/3150573/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[46] See e.g. **СМИ: Военные ВСУ спиваются целыми подразделениями**. – IA Regnum, 20.10.2015, <https://regnum.ru/news/society/1994593.html> (accessed on 22.06.2016); **Пьяные украинские солдаты неудачно штурмовали позиции ДНР – Басурин**. – IA Regnum, 20.10.2015, <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1994847.html> (accessed on 22.06.2016); **Баранец, В**. 2014. «Комсомолка» узнала имена фронтовиков, которых ограбили украинские солдаты. – Комсомольская правда, 26.9.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26287/3165405/> (accessed on 22.06.2016); **Дэ, В**. 2014. Украинская армия открыла огонь по своим же солдатам. – Комсомольская правда, 17.10.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26296/3174231> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[47] **В украинской армии начались бунты**. – Комсомольская правда, 23.04.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26223/3106716> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] **Стешин, Д**. 2014. Снова бои под Донецком: армия Украины перешла в отступление. – Комсомольская правда, 3.6.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26389/3267064/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[50] See e.g. **Гришин, А**. 2014. Никогда мы не будем близнецами с фашистами. – Комсомольская правда, 9.12.2014. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26317.5/3196304/> <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26317/3196365/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[51] **Людей заставляют врать, что их бомбили ополченцы 2014**. – Комсомольская правда, 4.09.2014. <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26278.4/3155601/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

Additionally, Russia has used Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate in its information campaigns.[52] Very often one can find articles, where a priest is telling a story how Ukrainian army is killing people, priests, looting churches.[53] Sometimes the Ukrainian government is represented as evil and associated with demons and Satan.[54]

Here were listed only some few man narratives which Russia is using in information war against Ukraine.

3. Russia's information and psychological operations in ATO region in 2014–2015

Col. ret. Vyacheslav Gusarov describes that situation about Ukrainian army before 2014 in following way:

> *There was no army in Ukraine, because the army kept falling apart. This is my personal opinion, because I served in the army for a long time and I saw that no one of presidents, no one of prime ministers, no one of heads of national security have not done anything to support the army, and not only the army – the whole security forces – militia, SBU, state emergence services – they all were demoralized.*[55]

In such difficult situation, when Ukrainian army was week and ministries and some governmental organisations (especially in security sphere) were demoralized, Russia began an active information war against Ukraine.

Russian information warfare turned to the following methods in Donbass conflict in 2014:

Firstly: mobile phone operators were used as tools in information campaigns against Ukrainian army. During the psychological operations and information campaigns panic and fear were widely spread via mobile phone operators among Ukrainian people. The most widely used operator in

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[52] See e.g. **Riistan, A**. 2015. Ukraina konflikti teopoliitikast: Moskva patriarhaadi perspektiiv. – Kirik ja Teoloogia, 20.03.2015, <http://kjt.ee/2015/03/ukraina-konflikti-teopoliitikast-moskva-patriarhaadi-perspektiiv-2/> (26.05.2015).

[53] See e.g. **Новикова, А**. 2015. Украинские националисты планируют карательную акцию против священников. – Комсомольская правда, 14.10.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26294/3172487/> (03.05.2016).

[54] **Варсегов, Н**. 2014. В души украинских правителей вселился дьявол. – Комсомольская правда, 17.09.2014, <http://kompravda.eu/daily/26283/3161165/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[55] Interview with **V. Gusarov**, carried out by Sazonov and Müür.

the anti-terrorist operations region[56] is *KyivStar*, the control packet of which belongs to Russian businessmen.[57] Phone numbers of people who visit the ATO area will be registered by information centres to be functioning in so-called Novorossiya. They began to send text messages with following content: e.g. "Soldier, go home if you want to live", "Welcome to the territory of Donetsk People's Republic", "Your generals are cowards and liars", "Your commanders have escaped, because they know that the war is already lost", "You are alone and nobody will help you".[58] The phone numbers of family members and friends are used in a similar way – examples of messages that have been sent include: "your son is a prisoner of war" or "your husband is dead/killed". Sometimes separatists call the officers in the ATO area and try to intimidate them. The network of separatist agents uses the same scheme.[59] For example, when the battles were under Debaltsevo (in July 2014 and later, in January – February 2015) this strategy of calling or sending SMSes was used quite actively. However, not only there. During the intense phase of the battles, Ukrainian soldiers also received messages such as "your commanders have fled" or "the Ukrainian army will flee", "your generals are cowards".[60]

Secondly, significant role in Russian information war also belongs to monitoring of newspapers by separatists and also in using pro-Russian activists in information and psychological operations. Separatists and pro-Russian activists began monitoring newspapers in ATO region. They also shoot the cars that belong to Ukrainian press centre of ATO. Separatist use also network of agents, lot of pro-Russian activists among local people and military personnel.[61]

Thirdly, they created fake homepages and portals. Pro-Russian separatist created several fake-homepages for Ukrainian press centre of ATO. Because cyber-attacks from Russian side and from separatists happened quite often, the Department of Information Operations of the General Staff of Ukrainian Armed Forces advised soldiers how to use Internet and social networks. The biggest group of risk is, of course, younger soldiers, who could often

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[56] Here and later ATO (anti-terrorist operations region).

[57] **Из России с любовью**. Кому принадлежат украинские операторы, 30.6.2015, <http://ukrainianiphone.com/2015/06/owners-of-ukrainian-operators/> (accessed on 22.06.2016).

[58] Based on interviews carried out by Kopõtin.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Interview with **D. Kuleba**, carried out by Sazonov.

[61] Interview with **officers from Department of Information Operation** (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine). Interviewed by Igor Kopõtin, Kyiv, 25.06.2015.

underestimate risks and whose habits from civil life are still strong. Another problem is that in Ukraine the legal basis (ground) for activity in cyber space do not exist.[62]

Fourthly, the role of separatist mass media in information war was extremely high. Separatist's information channels such like *www.dnr-news.com,* TV channel *Lugansk24* etc., spread fear among Ukrainians, showing that Ukrainian army had huge numbers of losses, they demonstrated Ukrainian prisoners of war in *Youtube*.[63] The aim was to raise panic and mistrust among mobilized soldiers against leaders of Ukrainian army. With same purpose was published the march of Ukrainian prisoners of war in Donetsk in January 2015.[64]

For example LTC (ret.) Oleksiy Melnyk[65] described how Russia was trying to undermine the morale of Ukrainians in 2014 regarding to mobilisation:

> *Another strong message is to create panic and horror about mobilisation and other issues related to manning the army. The aim of such messages is to undermine morale of soldiers, their relative and society at large by repeated demonstration of bloodied and mutilated corps, scared and demoralised prisoners (Ukrainian solders) admitting their fault, beaten and shot in front of a camera. For example, a Day of Victory parade took place in Donetsk on 9 May 2014 where prisoners were publicly humiliated.*[66]

Fifthly, Officers from Information Department of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are thinking that the problem is in Ukrainian newspapers and television channels, majority of which is controlled by of pro-Russian oligarchs. In General Headquarter believed that the biggest newspaper

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[62] *Ibid.*

[63] E.g. **Пленные укропы под Иловайском**, 30.08.2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uM4t295e4k> (accessed on 25.03.2016). **Пленные укропы**. Донецк, 22 января 2015 года, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9BWcS9sPwM&oref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Dq9BWcS9sPwM&has_verified=1> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[64] **В Донецке прошел «парад» пленных**. – Комсомольская Правда, 24.08.2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-EzdyyHQRA> (accessed on 25.03.2016); see also **Захарченко устроил «марш пленных киборгов»: пусть просят прощения у жителей Донецка**. – MK.EU, 22 января 2015, <http://www.mk.ru/social/2015/01/22/zakharchenko-ustroil-marsh-plennykh-kiborgov-pust-prosyat-proshheniya-u-zhiteley-donecka.html> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[65] He is co-director of the Foreign Relations & International Security Programmes (Razumkov Center), in 2005-2008 Melnyk works in Ministry of Defence of Ukraine as Head Organisational and Analytical Division and also as First Assistant to Minister of Defence.

[66] Interview with **O. Melnyk**, carried out by Sazonov.

with the provocative is newspaper *Vesti*, which is high-circulation Russian-language newspaper. Since this newspaper is distributed massively panic, it influences most strongly relatives of soldiers.[67]

Sixthly, According to the officials of the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine and media experts, another effective way to get people quickly and effectively under control in the Donbass area are loudspeakers that were actively used already in the Second World War. Information that is transmitted through loudspeakers to Ukrainian soldiers on the front line reduces their willingness to wage war and influences their morale. Loudspeakers accentuate that Ukrainian government members and commanders are traitors and liars who have sent Ukrainian troops to death and left them here. And since the Russian military machine is so powerful, they all will die soon.[68]

Seventhly, Russian side spreads panic and scary rumors using social networks such as *Facebook, Twitter, Odnoklassniki* and *VKontakte* and also local people. Such rumours or "news" – "Enemy forces are approaching", "Russian tanks are coming" – spread via Facebook faster than through the formal chain of command. Ukrainian solders are not aware that they help to distribute these rumours, especially when they return home and tell their friends about frontline experience, which is also a cause of dangerous information leakages.

But rumours were also spread not only in social media, but also on the streets, markets in different cities and villages e.g., in Mariupol in May 2014 using popular jitneys[69] Stories travelled from one person to another. Stories were often telling that:

> *Militia does not want to cooperate with fascists from Kiev and that (Ukrainian) National Guard shot them using tanks in the building of city administration; There were prepared 300 coffins in the city; There are 150 dead bodies in the building of city administration etc.*

These rumors caused discontent and sometimes anger in citizens towards government of Ukraine.[70]

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[67] *Ibid*.

[68] Interview with **T. Popova** (Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine), carried out by Sazonov, on 27.05.2015 in Kiev.

[69] Interview with **Sergey Pakhomenko and Vadim Korobko**, Russian information operations against Ukraine. Interviewed by Igor Kopõtin in Mariupol on 08.03.2016.

[70] *Ibid.*

As an example we can take the following dialogue:

> Local people see Ukrainian soldiers, they approach and ask:
> Local people: *Were are you coming from?*
> Soldiers: *From Zakarpattia.*
> Local people: *But what are you doing here?*
> Soldiers: *We are here to protect you.*
> Local people: *We do not need your protection, go back where you came from*.[71]

This kind of attitude of local people depressed Ukrainian soldiers. Addition to that they were afraid that food products that local people gave them could be poisoned.[72] So, Russian agents and Pro-Russian separatists very skilfully used local people and manipulated with their mind.

Eighthly, another influential problem is also a widespread and effective network of Russian agents in Ukraine (especially in Donbass area and Crimea), which are connected to the *GRU*[73] and *FSB*[74], which were created in Crimea and the Donbass region even before the outbreak of the military conflict. They began to spread information to create panic, fear and hatred. The psychological influencing of people was carried out in a highly methodological and systemic manner. With the support of local agents, the Russian information operations in Donbass area had begun already many years before the actual conflict broke out in Donbass. It is important to note that local Communist functionaries and pro-Russian activists played an important role in that. Based on its network of agents, separatists monitor the distribution of newspapers in the ATO region.[75]

When the intensive phase of the conflict began, Donbass area had already become susceptible for Russia's propaganda and large number of groups of saboteurs, pro-Russian activists and Russian spies were brought there. This was done on earlier stage, particularly during the war, quite actively and vigorously. Russia had sent its spies and groups of diversants to the Donbass region. These groups sized approximately 30–40 people per group. They were professional and experienced intelligence officers (saboteurs, spies),

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[71] Interview with **officers from Department of Information Operation** (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine). Interviewed by Igor Kopõtin, Kyiv, 25.06.2015.

[72] Interview with **"Oleksandr"**. Interviewed by Igor Kopõtin, 03.03.2016.

[73] Main Intelligence Directorate (*Главное разведывательное управление*).

[74] The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) (*Федеральная служба безопасности Российской Федерации*).

[75] Interview with **S. Vysotsky**, carried out by Sazonov on 29.05.2015.

who were sent to Eastern Ukraine to destabilize the situation and carry out information operations, as well as military tactical tasks.[76]

One example, which describes how the operation was carried out in 2014 in Eastern Ukraine took the following form. Saboteurs, spies (Russian "diversants") and intelligence officers arrived in a certain location and were accompanied by trained journalists (usually two). One journalist was specialized in military field, and the second dealt with civilian issues. They began to fabricate certain "necessary" situations and then made a video that was immediately uploaded to *YouTube* or other social media.[77]

These reportages were shown on television both in Russia and Ukraine. *LifeNews* in particular indulged in forwarding them, as well as Russian channels *NTV, Россия, Россия 24* and many others. Typical images broadcasted included the Donbass people rebelling against the Ukrainian fascists and executions squads, that Kyiv junta ordered troops to kill Russians, torture the civilians in Donbass, etc. This was coordinated by the group leader who was a professional saboteur and spies with significant experience in military operations who received instructions from an FSB coordinator. The leader of this group had at least two important numbers in his mobile phone. One was the number of the *FSB* coordinator, who was responsible for the region and local agents. Both the *FSB* coordinator and the group leader coordinated their work and tried to recruit local people. Many of the local groups of the militants were ready to help and were just waiting for the instructions from the coordinator. Essentially, almost all the Communist functionaries were recruited in Eastern Ukraine.[78]

Ninthly, weaknesses of Ukrainian media communications between army and society were used masterfully by Russian propaganda machine. Improprieties which took place during the mobilization and weak media communication of army with society caused the distribution of rumors and so-called video "reportages" with content which was harmful for army. For example in Ukrainian TV channel *Hromadske TV*[79] was spread information that in Kharkov in June 2015 during the mobilization the people were taken "for document" control to the department of militia (local police), but instead of that they got invitation to military service. It might cause massive protests in

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[76] *Ibid.*

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] Ukrainian TV channel.

Kharkov, were the number of Pro-Russian population is quite remarkable.[80] The "failure" of mobilization in Western Ukraine was showed via *Youtube*.[81] Negative image of compulsory mobilization was also transmitted by Russian media channels.[82]

Although Ukrainian media was successful in creation of positive image about Ukrainian mobilized soldiers[83], there still remained some problems, when mobilized have low motivation regarding their age and their inadequate military training. This all has negative influence on military discipline in whole military unit.[84] Mobilized volunteers and soldiers from National Guard organized in October 2014 protest in front of Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament).[85]

Generally pro-Russian separatists and Russia quite masterfully used problems of Ukrainian army – surplus bureaucracy, logistic difficulties and social contradictions.[86]

4. Summary

The interviews showed that Russian information operations are situational in nature, and make use of a wide variety of information tools and different methods. Russian propaganda machine is quite flexible and quickly adapts to new situations. Although many information operations are spontaneous, they are clearly derived from an existing bigger strategic plan.[87] Russian

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[80] **Анна Соколова про мобілізацію у Харкові**. – Hromadske.TV, 26.06.2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AejHyGvRsdo> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[81] **Новые хитрости военкоматов в ходе мобилизации**. – www.slovoidilo.ua, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZrK_6SwVd4> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[82] **На улицах Украины проходит шестая волна насильственной мобилизации**. – Polirussia.news, 06.07.2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSUzkH_PfZc> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[83] **Мобілізовані**. – Hromadske.TV, 19.05.2015, <http://www.hromadske.tv/politics/mobilizo-vani/> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[84] Interview with **"Right Sector" activist Vadim "Mad"**, carried out by Kopõtin on 29.06.2015.

[85] **СМИ: Группа срочников Нацгвардии закрыла командиров и пошла на акцию протеста в Киев**, 13.10.2014, УНИАН, <http://www.unian.net/politics/995409-smi-gruppa-srochnikov-natsgvardii-zakryila-komandirov-i-poshla-na-aktsiyu-protesta-v-kiev.html> (accessed on 25.03.2016).

[86] Interview with **officers from Department of Information Operation** (Ministry of Defence of Ukraine). Interviewed by Igor Kopõtin, Kyiv, 25.06.2015.

[87] However, this Russian system also has its weaknesses. Since many campaigns are hastily and spontaneously produced, sometimes even serious mistakes occur in Russian informational activity.

propaganda is like a chameleon that constantly changes and adapts. This makes it difficult to fight.[88]

Information and psychological operations in 2014 and 2015 were carried out in parallel with military operations, often integrated to support each other. For example, at the start of one of the larger military offensives conducted by Ukraine, fierce fighting fronts were set up at Debaltseve, Ilovaysk, Mariupol, and the Donetsk Airport.

Information campaigns were also employed to respond to preparations for further mobilization of the Ukrainian army. In addition to Russian media and trolls, the FSB and the GRU, their agents active in Eastern Ukraine, and a myriad of recruited separatist activists also played an active role in information campaigns.

One technique is distribution of panic stories, which were also massively distributed on the frontlines. Local population and *Facebook, Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki* messages also played an important role in distributing such rumours and stories. As a result, Ukrainians were compelled to abandon a number of villages without a fight.

Acknowledgements

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[88] In addition we must not forget that Russian Federation has a long propaganda tradition into which it has always invested a great deal of time, money, and human resources. This tradition has its roots not only in Soviet past, but even in earlier periods of Russian history. Many historical phenomena, ideas and key narratives, historical myths originated from medieval period, 17th–19th or from the beginning of the 20th century (e.g. "Moscow is Third Rome", Holy Rus, Greater Russia, Russian World, Russian soul and many others) are actively reused by Russian propagandist machine in their renewed forms. Various historical myths used during the Russian Empire before 1917 have been reawakened and mixed with numerous Soviet ideas, narratives and phenomena. Even the concept of the so-called Russian World is partly based on the legacy of Imperial Russia (1721–1917) and partly on the ideas introduced by Bolsheviks.

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THE WAR OF NARRATIVES – PUTIN'S CHALLENGE TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN UKRAINE

Holger Mölder

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Abstract

Rationalist theories have met with difficulties when used to establish credible security governance in multicultural environments for actors possessing a different sense of logic. The case of Ukraine serves as a perfect example of a Hobbesian challenge to a Kantian international system. The present research topic is influenced by the theoretical works of Alexander Wendt and Richard Lebow, and seeks to examine the cultural patterns that influence international systems and their security governance practises. In addition, it is also an attempt to produce contrasting conceptions for interpreting norms, perceptions, and motives. Motives impelled by a Kantian system are divergent from the motives of Hobbesian and Lockean systems. In Ukraine, the Hobbesian political culture, presented by Russia, challenges the Kantian principles of international organisations (UN, EU, OSCE, NATO), which are responsible for the security governance in the postmodern international system. Figuratively, 'the world of Merkel', which is influenced by Western liberal traditions, is opposition to 'the world of Putin', which corresponds to a Hobbesian and Lockean interpretation of international security. A determined Hobbesian actor can pose serious challenges, or even enact permanent changes, to a Kantian international system. With their intervention in the Ukrainan crisis Russian political elites successfully carried out neoconservative postulates of foreign policy, while international institutions (e.g. the UN, the OSCE) have met with serious difficulties in their attempts to introduce necessary measures of effective security governance.

Keywords: *Ukraine, Russia, international system, cultural theory of international relations, political cultures, neo-conservatism*

Introduction

Richard Ned Lebow's[1] *A Cultural Theory in International Relations* provides a theoretical framework for examining international relations in terms of universal drives (appetite and spirit), powerful emotions (fear), and routines (habit). The international order has always been influenced by a dissonance between rational norms and irrational behaviour. In addition to rational (e.g. reason) and irrational (e.g. interest, honour, fear, resentment) motives, there are various powerful cultural paradigms that can also play a significant role in shaping the interactions between international actors. The current paper examines contrasting narratives that may affect the values and preferences of international actors in their specific security environments. As Lebow[2] notes, "a general theory of international relations must be more a theory of process than of structure." This perspective establishes the templates that characterize particular worlds and their subsystems. In this theoretical framework, security environments are constructed areas where the security of the actors operating within the area operates independently from one another.

Regardless of the way people perceive each other, these impressions are often mental constructs, which are manifested in conflicting identities that can be summarized as the *Self* and the *Other*. Nevertheless, the motives for producing such constructs often rely on emotions, which are based on irrational sentiments rather than on rational calculations. Every culture tends to follow its own specific patterns. These patterns can reinforce perceptions of *the Other* and influence the possible subsequent actions in relation to them. The UN-led postmodern system generally follows a Kantian logic of security governance. This means that it aspires to be rational. However, as history has often proven, a Kantian system often must confront Hobbesian, and Lockean challenges, which may reinforce culturally distinctive paradigms. In the Hobbesian security culture, fear is one of the most powerful motivators, and is the natural consequence of a perception of a permanent state of war in the anarchical order of the international system. Conflict between contrasting security narratives, which are built on the reinforcement of a constant state of fear against the *Other* in the affiliated security environments, may culminate in various status conflicts.

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[1] **Lebow, R. N**. 2008. A Cultural Theory of International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 5. [**Lebow** 2008]

[2] **Lebow** 2008, p. 59.

The latest Hobbesian challenge to the Kantian international system, occasioned by Russia, is particularly manifested in the status conflict between Ukraine and Russia, which is accompanied by the value-related internal conflict between pro-Western and pro-Russian identities in Ukraine. Russia's striving towards gaining greater status in the international system is combined with a fear that the Eastern Ukrainian insurgents will lose their pro-Russian identity. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine perfectly illustrates the fragility of the current Kantian system. The logic of Kantian culture, which emphasizes cooperation instead of conflict, and is associated with friendship-oriented security regimes and arrangements (e.g. security communities, collective and cooperative security arrangements), contrasts with the logic of Hobbesian and Lockean cultures. The author argues that the theoretical principles of security governance are mostly products of the Kantian culture, and are therefore ineffective for Hobbesian and Lockean security environments. The Hobbesian and Lockean environments may expose the deficiencies of the Kantian system and make the whole system more vulnerable.

The Hobbesian challenge initiated by Russia in Ukraine symbolizes the war between culturally opposing narratives, wherein the world of Merkel, which embodies the Kantian logic of an international system, faces the world of Putin, which is shaped by a Hobbesian logic. This conclusion is based on Chancellor Merkel's description to President Obama of her phone conversation with Vladimir Putin during the height of the Ukrainian crisis in March 2014, when she described the President of Russia as possibly being out of touch with reality and living in another world.[3] The Hobbesian conception of international order can be thought of in terms of a revanche of history, or a countervailing wave, and it was precisely this kind of theory that was introduced by Kagan[4] in order to counterbalance Fukuyama's[5] end of history concept from the early 1990s. These contrasting security narratives are strongly substantiated by the current crisis in Ukraine. The Russian security narrative still relies on the success story of the cold-war's competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, while the leading narrative

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[3]   **Baker, P**. 2014. Pressure Rising as Obama Works to Rein in Russia. – New York Times, March 2. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/03/world/europe/pressure-rising-as-obama-works-to-rein-in-russia.html?hp&_r=0> (01.05.2014).

[4]   **Kagan, R**. 2008. The Return of History and the End of Dreams. New York: Vintage Books. [**Kagan** 2008]

[5]   **Fukuyama, F**. 1992. The End of History and the Last Man London: Penguin.

of the Kantian system advances a global security community based on commonly recognized values and beliefs.

International systems and their political cultures

The point of departure in this theoretical debate is derived from the three types of political cultures that were identified by Alexander Wendt.[6] The Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian cultures can be considered ideal types, and are subsets of the social values that originated from the Western civilization.[7] These cultural frameworks help to determine the functional paradigms of international systems and describe the basic behavioural patterns assigned to distinctive international actors within the system. The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 has been the traditional symbolic demarcator of a modern international system based on the sovereignty of states. There are also certain dependent paradigms that characterize the nature of international systems. Three of them: stability, polarity and culture of the system are displayed in table 1.

Table 1. International systems and their political cultures[8].

Modern International System	1648–1991		
1. Westphalian order	1648–1815	unstable multipolarity	Hobbesian
2. Concert of Europe **a)**	1815–1914 1815–1854	stable multipolarity	Lockean
b)	1854–1871	unstable multipolarity	Hobbesian
c)	1871–1914	unstable bipolarity	Hobbesian
3. World War I	1914–1919		
4. Versailles system	1919–1939		
a)	1919–1936	unstable liberal society	Kantian
b)	1936–1939	unstable bipolarity	Hobbesian

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[6] **Wendt, A**. 1999. Social Theory in International Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [**Wendt** 1999]

[7] *Ibid*., p. 250.

[8] **Mölder, H**. 2010. Cooperative security dilemma – practicing the Hobbesian security culture in the Kantian security environment. Tartu: Tartu University Press, p. 94.

Table 1. Continuation

Modern International System	1648–1991		
5. World War II	1939–1945		
6. Cold War	1945–1991	stable bipolarity	Lockean
Post-modern International System	1991–		
a)	1991–2003	stable liberal society	Kantian
b)	2003–	unstable liberal society	Kantian
Bush's challenge	2003–2008		Hobbesian
Putin's challenge	2014–		Hobbesian

The first international systems were actually based on European systems, which had expanded throughout the world via the colonial conquests of the European powers. From the 19th century, international systems were developed to resemble Western systems after the successful wars of independence in North and South America, the Meiji reforms of 1868 in Japan, which marked the end of its isolation, and with the emergence of new actors capable of engaging in international relations. The postmodern system that followed can be identified as a global phenomenon that developed after the collapse of the colonial system during the 20th century. The first international systems were usually unicultural entities adhering to European or Western traditions, norms and patterns. Prior to the First World War existing ideological differences had no influence on the foreign policies of various actors, and it is only after 1917 that ideological struggles became an important underlying component of international conflicts.[9] The multicultural origin of the postmodern system makes it more comprehensive and less manageable as cultural heterogeneity may reinforce contrasting identities, which are not subordinated to the interests of global community.

The unicultural background of earlier international systems favored universal explanations for international relations. It was only at the end of 20th century that some scholars, such as Samuel P. Huntington, realized that cultural variations also influence international relations.

> In the scholarly world, the battle has thus been joined by those who see culture
> as a major, but not the only influence on social, political, and economic

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9   **Peterson, M. J**. 1982. Political Use of Recognition: The Influence of the International System. – World Politics, Vol. 34, Issue 3 (April 1982), p. 327.

behaviour and those who adhere to universal explanations, such as devotees of material self-interest among economists, of 'rational choice' among political scientists, and of neorealism among scholars of international.[10]

Up to the 20th century, the system of international relations was strongly influenced by a Hobbesian culture. The basic tenets of this system are derived from the works of English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) and his book *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651. In it Hobbes promotes the idea that the world lives in a state of constant anarchy and relations between actors are unregulated. The Hobbesian culture originates from the concept of a state of nature, and sees conflicts originating from three main principles – competition, diffidence and glory. Hobbes and his disciples assumed that states continually seek ways to maximize their power. A war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*) is the fundamental cause of an anarchical security environment and the only way to avoid violence is to impose absolute power.

According to Alexander Wendt[11], a Hobbesian culture is based on three assumptions: 1) states deal with other states that are similar; 2) other entities are enemies and therefore pose a threat to life and liberty; 3) In their reciprocal relations states utilize war, threats, surrender, and power balancing. Consequently, states and their national interests dominate in international relations, and international institutions are deprived of an independent role in the international system. Collective interests for peace and stability do not exist, and states interact with the rest via power capabilities. These paradigms constitute the basic principles of the realist school of IR theory and the Hobbesian security culture. The latter follows a self-centred and competitive view of international society, where enmity is part of the natural relationship between actors, and wars are widely practiced normative political measures.

The Lockean culture values the status quo above power enhancement. This means that maintaining stability is an important political guideline for the Lockeans. It is also important to consider the circumstances under which "Leviathan" was written. Seventeenth-century England was experiencing a civil war where insecurity, force, and survival were part of everyday life. John Locke, who lived a half century later, observed a more stable England and argued that "although state of nature lacked a common sovereign,

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[10] **Harrison, L. E.; Huntington, S. P**. 2000. Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress. New York: Basic Books.
[11] **Wendt** 1999, p. 268.

people could develop ties and make contracts, and therefore anarchy was less of a threat."[12] The Hobbesian tradition is similar to the Lockean in that it describes international society as an anarchical body, which is manifested in competing nation-states. It seems, however, that the main difference between these two cultures is that Locke advances the ideal of a stable international system, whilst the Hobbesian world stresses the mercurial and conflict laden nature of international relations. In the context of international relations, stable systems may mitigate the negative effects of an anarchical international order. Hobbes posited that individuals and the state have made a social contract in order to avoid an anarchic environment. Locke also stresses the necessity of a contract between individuals in order to set up a sovereign.[13]

In his essay from 1795, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, Immanuel Kant proposed a totally different cultural approach, in which the general the principles of conflict and competition are replaced by the principles of cooperation and friendship among international actors.[14] In his essay, Immanuel Kant established the general principles for constructing an international society by emphasizing peaceful relations between actors, establishing peace among representative democracies, building economic interdependence, and enacting international rule of law.[15] Kant theorized that an international society with benevolent common values could engender the emergence of a common identity. This is the foundation of the Kantian security culture. He proposed a war-free federation of liberal states that would emphasize human rights, pursue perpetual peace, and respect the supremacy of international law.

The Hobbesian culture is oriented towards maintaining anarchic relationships between international actors. Its doctrines (bandwagoning, coalition-building, arms races) are designed to enhance standing in the international system. The Lockean culture recognizes that rivalry and competition exist in the international system, but at the same time seeks to stabilize the anarchical order of the system through doctrines that pursue balancing, the creation of alliances, or maintaining neutrality. The Kantian culture attempts to

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[12] **Nye, J. S**. 2009. Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History. New York: Pearson Longman, p. 4.

[13] **Holsti, K. J**. 1996. The State, War, and the State of War. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 46.

[14] **Wendt** 1999.

[15] **Russett, B.; Oneal, J. R. and Davis, D. R**. 1998. The Third Leg of the Kantian Tripod for Peace: International Organizations and Militarized Disputes, 1950–85. – International Organization, Vol. 52(3), p. 441.

disassociate from anarchy and surmises that the influences of an anarchical international order will be diminished if cooperative regimes, which favour peace and complex interdependence are promoted. While the Hobbesian and the Lockean culture both originate from idea that there exists a competitive logic in international relations, the logic of the Kantian culture presupposes that the implementation of measures that will create more trust between international actors can ameliorate its most detrimental elements.

Table 2. Ideal types of political cultures[16].

Cultures	Hobbesian	Lockean	Kantian
Environment	unstable anarchy	stable anarchy	community
Systemic requirements	conflict	conflict	cooperation
Motives	fear	appetite	reason
Positioning with others	enmity	rivalry	cooperation
Social interactions with others	war	competition	friendship
Polarity	polarity	polarity	non-polarity
Stability	unstable	stable	stable/unstable
Doctrines	coalition-building, arms-racing, bandwagoning	balancing, neutrality ally-seeking	peace, complex interdependence

The ancient Greek philosophic schools of Plato and Aristotle concluded that appetite, spirit, and reason were the three fundamental human drives. In reality, these fundamental drives are frequently accompanied by a fourth and very powerful drive – fear. Fear has always had an immense role in shaping the interactions and multifunctional relations between the constructed identities of the *Self* and the *Other*. Basic motives are aspects of different political cultures. A basic motivator in the Kantian culture is reason, which stresses that actors should be able to subordinate their relative interests to the common good. The Lockean culture emphasizes the motive of appetite, wherein actors compete with each other in order to achieve their relative gains. In the Hobbesian culture, the main driving force is fear, with actors seeking greater security in a state of perpetual war. Spirit, however, is a universal motive that is common to all of the political cultures. Although Lebow admits that

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16 **Mölder** 2010, p. 34.

> *Spirit has not made the basis for any paradigm of politics or international*
> *relations... A spirit-based paradigm starts from the premise that people indi-*
> *vidually and collectively seeks self-esteem /.../ that makes people feel good*
> *about themselves, happier about life and more confident about their ability to*
> *confront its challenges.*[17]

In the 1990s, a movement towards a Kantian society was clearly visible in international relations, and there was a strong international response to the actions that ran counter to it (e.g. the Gulf war, the Yugoslavian wars). Often, during the transition period from one system to another, or even afterwards, an international system will retain some of the cultural influences of the previous system. This phenomenon may elicit challenges, as various actors desire a return to earlier cultural patterns. The vulnerability of the postmodern international system is summarized in the following arguments: 1) the international system is no longer a Western system and has become culturally heterogeneous; 2) the global system may encompass various cultural environments, which manifest cultures other than those of the system; 3) any challenger to the international system has an advantage over the existing system because it is able to take the initiative and force the whole system to adapt accordingly.

The postmodern international system – Merkel's world

The postmodern international system, figuratively called Merkel's world, emerged in the 1990s. The new system adhered to the principles of the Kantian political and security culture, and endorsed cooperation and democratic principles among international actors who would constitute a peace-oriented international society. However, in the postmodern system there remained several culturally contrasting environments, which did not cohere with the Kantian culture endorsed by the international system. These anomalous environments followed a distinctive set of political cultures based on rivalry and enmity instead of the Kantian principles of cooperation. The Kantian system was committed to the maintenance of peace and security within the affiliated Lockean and Hobbesian environments, but the culture of fear has remained a driving force in the arrangement of long-standing relationships for many self-constructed security environments such as the

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[17] **Lebow** 2008, pp. 60–61.

Middle East, the Caucasus region, India, Pakistan, and the Korean Peninsula, as well as others.

The European Union embodies the Kantian principles of democratic peace "by adopting Immanuel Kant's recipe for perpetual peace: representative democracy; international law and organizations i.e. enlargement of existing institutions by new members; and the development of free trade."[18] The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) created the opportunity to launch a security community-building initiative in the European Union and to gradually build a complex interdependency that could transcended the traditional security dilemmas faced by Europe, which historically had produced many wars. With the adoption of the Copenhagen criteria in 1993, the European Union was able to establish a normative mechanism to measure the eligibility of potential candidate nations for accessing the European Union. The Copenhagen criteria followed the Kantian tradition of the European political culture, and established a set of liberal democratic norms to be adapted:

> *Membership requires that candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union. Membership presupposes the candidate's ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.*[19]

As the new European security environment relied on an institutional framework to maintain peace in Europe, an attendant credible security governance framework became necessary. Security governance is a postmodern phenomenon. International security management has shifted from a state-centric approach, with formal institutions, towards a more flexible and diverse arrangement.[20] Theories explaining security governance emerged in the 2000s in order to advance ideas as to how the European states could

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[18] **Lucarelli, S**. 2002. Peace and Democracy: Rediscovered Link. The EU, NATO and the European System of Liberal-Democratic Security Communities. – NATO Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Individual Research Fellowship Final Report. Available at:
<http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/00-02/Lucarelli's.pdf> (23.03.2015).

[19] **Presidency Conclusions**. Copenhagen European Council 1993.
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/ec/pdf/cop_en.pdf> (27.04.2015), p. 7. A. iii.

[20] **Bevir, M.; Hall, I**. 2014. The Rise of Security Governance. – Interpreting Global Security. Ed. by M. Bevir, O. Daddow, and I. Hall. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 31–61.

address transnational security threats.[21] Hobbesian and Lockean systems benefit from an anarchical order of international system and must shape their policies to control the anarchical order (e.g. by balance of power, collective defence or concert). These systems however, have retained certain

> /.../ inherent limitations, the most important of which is a preoccupation with the military aspect of security and the unspoken assumption that all states share the Westphalian preoccupation with autonomy and the aggregation of power.[22]

The theory of security governance offers an alternative to the Westphalian mindset, which is more closely aligned with the Kantian model of security management. Many postmodern forms of security governance propose a departure from the anarchical system and an acceptance of the role of non-state actors in security management.

The European Union is a recently conceived mechanism designed to effectively implement a Kantian method of security governance in a postmodern international system. The political strength of the European Union is manifested in the France-Germany axis, which was created already during the Cold War and prefers the use of diplomatic measures for peace management over the achievement of outcomes through military hegemony, which is the method stressed by the Hobbesian and Lockean systems. The spirit of the 1990s – which is considered the golden age of the Kantian culture, has been maintained in the European security environment largely due to the willingness of France and Germany to retain it. Because of the Kantian principles adopted by the influential members France and Germany, the European Union is seeks to maintain a stable peace in Europe and avoid the escalation of international conflicts that are favored by the Hobbesian challengers. Despite the numerous setbacks, France and Germany consistently attempt to maintain dialogue with Russia and are proponents of the value-based integration of the Eastern European states into the European Union. When George

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[21] See i.e.: **Kirchner, E. J.; Dominquez, R**. 2011. The Security Governance of Regional Organizations. London and New York: Routledge; **Kirchner, E. J.; Sperling, J**. 2007. Global Security Governance: Competing Perceptions of Security in the 21st Century. London: Routledge; **Krahmann, E**. 2003. Conceptualizing Security Governance. – Cooperation and Conflict, Vol. 38(1), pp. 5–26; **Webber, M.; Croft, St.; Howorth, J.; Krahmann, E**. 2004. The Governance of European Security. – Review of International Studies, Vol. 30(1), pp. 3–26.

[22] **Kirchner, E**. 2014. Theoretical Debates on Regional Security Governance. – EUI Working paper RSCAS 2014/40. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/31117/RSCAS_2014_40.pdf?sequence=1> (26.04.2015).

W. Bush launched his challenge to the Kantian international system in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq, it was France and Germany that led the opposition.

Merkel's outlook on the world in 2014 is a tangible continuation of the spirit of the 1990's that champions diplomatic solutions rather than demonstrations of power, and the espousal of rivalry and enmity in international relations. If the present system intends to retain its Kantian norms and make them accepted by all, it must continue to advocate for their further implementation, and not to be provoked by challengers calling for changes. In an interview with the Estonian media, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier stated:

> *I emphasize it again and again that foreign policy has to ensure that such agreements as the Minsk Agreement could operate, even if the implementation and execution of it is extremely difficult. It is important not to give interviews and complain that everything has failed, but to be ensure that parties of the conflict, who signed the agreements will adhere them.*[23]

After the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself in a profound internal and external identity crisis.[24] Initially, Russia was an important cooperative partner for the West, although it never adopted the Kantian system. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the analyst Ted Hopf[25] wrote that there were two alarming threats to the West: 1) the nuclear proliferation and loss of Russian control over the former Soviet nuclear weaponry; 2) the resurrection of Russian military power, wherein Russia's insecurity would compel it to over-arm itself against potential adversaries. Hopf[26] mentioned a potential security dilemma with Ukraine "that would be exacerbated and fueled by governmental abuses of ethnic minorities and denial of democratic and civil liberties." He advocated for the introduction of codes of conduct for the former Soviet republics in order to minimize threats to Russia's insecurity. In some respects Ted Hopf could be considered something of a prophet by suggesting that Russia's insecurity might lead to the emergence of a classical

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[23] **ERR News** 2015. Eestisse saabunud Frank-Walter Steinmeier ERR-ile: tuleb sundida konflikti osapooli kokkulepetest kinni pidama (Frank-Walter Steinmeier: To force the parties of the conflict to respect the agreements). <http://uudised.err.ee/v/eesti/b7a2e96e-93f5-4156-b861-ab04d4f3fb8b> (25.04.2015).

[24] **Larson, D.W.; Shevchenko, A**. 2010. Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to U.S. Primacy. – International Security, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 63–95. [**Larson, Shevchenko** 2010]

[25] **Hopf, T**. 1992. Managing Soviet Disintegration: A Demand for Behavioral Regimes. – International Security, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Summer, 1992), p. 58.

[26] *Ibid*.

security dilemma between the former Soviet republics and Russia, which would afterwards be followed by another security dilemma between the West and Russia.

When most international peace operations, with minor exceptions, fell under the mandates of the UN Security Council and while the rest of the world was building a security framework led by the United Nations[27], Russia was instead successfully establishing a kind of alternative security subsystem. This system maintained its sphere of influence in areas of the former Soviet Union, which were witnessing many conflicts, but placed the onus of responsibility for sustaining peace and stability, upon the Commonwealth of Independent States and its security pillar the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The Civil wars in Tajikistan, Georgia, Moldova, and Russia, including the secessionist conflicts pitting Abkhazia and South Ossetia against Georgia, Transnistria against Moldova and Chechnya against Russia, as well as the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region were all conflicts that Russia managed to contain. Russia was also able to pre-empt the involvement of external entities typically associated with the sphere of peace settlement. The diverse regional security governance practices of the post-Soviet areas evolved methods of resolution that were altogether different from those used by NATO and the European Union to resolve the Yugoslavian crisis.

The European Union is a purely Kantian institution, which certainly will lose if the Kantian system of security governance is withdrawn and the world system returns to a Hobbesian or Lockean arrangement. In the current Ukrainian conflict, the European Union, which represents the world of Merkel, must compete with Putin's world, and the battleground between these two culturally distinctive worlds is Ukraine. If the ambitions of the Hobbesian challengers becomes actualized in the loosely connected multipolar union of nation-states with competing interests, and if the strategic contests between the great powers reappears, it will make a stable peace extremely vulnerable. A strident challenge against the Kantian international system is evidenced by Russia's characterization of the role of the European Union in the Ukrainian conflict, and their allegations that the association agreement between the European Union and Ukraine was the catalyst for the conflict. The current challenge clearly demonstrates that, at this time, Russia and pro-Russian forces regard not only NATO as a hostile organization, but also the

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[27] On some cases, this mandate was given by the UN Security Council afterwards, following the intervention (e.g. Kosovo 1999, Iraq 2003).

European Union together with its Kantian tools of security governance, as it too was added to the list of systemic opponents.

From Bush's world to Putin's world

Another countermovement seeking to overturn the Kantian international system originates from a competing narrative that can be figuratively called "Bush's world". In its own way this worldview contributed to the rise of Putin's world in the international political landscape in 2014. Bush's world initially forced itself into the European security environment before the Iraqi intervention of 2003. The neo-conservative ideology that is central to Bush's world, and which embraces the concept of transatlanticism, created a rift in the Western security community as the system became divided between the transatlanticists supporting the hegemonic approach to global security, and the euro-centrists who preferred to adhere to the previous course of gradual development towards a Kantian society through the reinforcement of cooperative regimes. During Bush's challenge to the Kantian world order, Europe was divided between a euro-centric orientation, which opposed the challenge (France, Germany, Belgium, and later Spain) and a transatlantic orientation, which supported the challenge (notably the United Kingdom, Poland and Denmark, but also most of the Eastern European nations). A split emerged between the nations that recognized the United States as the leader in the world hegemony, and the nations that perceived the United States as an important security partner in the non-polar international system.[28]

Putin's challenge to the Kantian international system is a follow-up to the neoconservative revolution of Bush. An advocate of the neoconservative worldview, Robert Kagan[29] (2008) wrote in his *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, that after a decade of nations disappearing or amalgamating, and with the vanishing of ideological conflicts, as well as cultures disappearing due to free trade and communication networks, the world started to again normalize with struggles for honour status and influence. According to Kagan, it may be worth considering a rearrangement of the global, international society in light of the challenges posed by Russia, China and radical Islam to the Kantian world that was established in the

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[28] See also **Mouritzen, H**. 2006. Choosing Sides in the European Iraq Conflict: A Test of New Geopolitical Theory. – European Security, Vol. 15(2), pp. 138–139.

[29] **Kagan** 2008.

1990s. If these challenges are perceived as the 'normal way' to operate within the international system, Putin's world can be easily justified.

The neoconservative wave in the United States was sustained by two powerful emotions: honour and fear. It was an attempt to revive a *The Hunger Games*[30] mentality, which had traditionally defined international politics in the 19th and 20th century. In recent years, the various slogans that invoke history, and emphasize the East-West confrontation during the cold war, have played a key role in Putin's challenge against a world he probably does not understand. Western interference in Russia's sphere of influence has become a popular narrative advanced by Russia's media channels. On the world stage it becomes a multi-act play where Putin takes the role of the comfortable antihero opposed to the West, and plays it according to the rules formulated during the cold war. The main difference between Bush's challenge and that of Putin's, is that the US neoconservatives were fighting for US hegemony, but Putin's dream is to revive a world of multipolarity, in which Russia belongs to the club of great powers.[31] A problem for the postmodern international system might be that Putin's challenge profits some circles of the Western political elites, whereas the Kantian system does not benefit many of the influential actors.

The Russian military analyst Pavel Felgenhauer has stated that the leaders of both Russia and the West are children of the cold war and a return to history is not something unnatural for them. Moreover, military interests are always very tangible: a predictable situation satisfies all parties, and it allows the military industrial complex to request budget increases for maintaining the military industry and for developing the new technologies. According to Felgenhauer, the Russian General Staff and the Pentagon, who once stood toe to toe, are both happy, because it means that a new generation of nuclear submarines and rockets will be born.[32] Nevertheless, such nostalgia for the good old cold war days with its stable rules of the game that were tightly controlled by the two centres of power is misguided. The tendency is to describe Putin's Russia in terms similar to those that were used to characterize the Soviet Union, but these two worlds are actually completely

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[30] *The Hunger Games* is a trilogy of novels written by Suzanne Collins (2008–2010), which describes a dystopian post-apocalyptic world, which practices games for survival.

[31] **Larson, Shevchenko** 2010, p. 93.

[32] **Tammsaar, R**. 2015. Venemaa perimeetri kaitsest. [Interview with Pavel Felgenhauer]. – Diplomaatia, märts 2015. <http://www.diplomaatia.ee/artikkel/venemaa-perimeetri-kaitsest/> (21.03.2015).

different. This, however, does not make them any less dangerous. Accepting Russia's challenge and a longing to turn back history, makes peacemaking in Ukraine a very complicated process for the West. Russia simply does not want there to be peace, at least in the short term, because unrest in the region successfully challenges the system that Russia hopes to change.

The growing passive involvement of international institutions in Ukraine may indicate that international society is becoming frustrated with Merkel's world and prefers the spectacle of Hollywoodesque war games to the mundane implementation of stable security governance. Public discourse is often very effective in proclaiming the need to raise military expenditures, but it is mostly silent when it comes to promoting peace management. These children of the cold war are also quite reminiscent of *The Children Of The Corn* from the famous short story by Stephen King[33], in that both believe in s mythological power that is shaped by ideology and both feel a kind of nostalgia towards a stable system with clear polarities. This brave new world permeates the Hollywoodesque world, where the good guys permanently fight with the bad guys, and always win. The Hollywoodesque world order both creates and demonizes anti-heroes (e.g. Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Osama bin Laden, Vladimir Putin). But these anti-heroes may in fact become actual heroes for those who are disappointed in the current system. The Hobbesian challenge emphasizes continual preparation for wars rather than attempting to prevent them. Armed conflict is perceived as a normal way of life within the Hobbesian system.

At the cusp of the 21st century, the neoconservative movement in the United States initiated a countermovement against the Kantian international system. The neoconservative revolution was initiated after the Islamic terrorist attacks against the United States in 2001 with a global campaign termed the "Global War against Terrorism". This was followed by the Iraqi intervention in 2003. The main postulates of the neoconservative foreign policy are defined by Irving Kristol[34] and include: the necessity of patriotism; that world government as a terrible idea; that statesmen should have the ability to accurately distinguish friend from foe; the protection of national interests both at home and abroad; and the necessity of a strong military. All of these

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[33] *The Children of the corn* is a short story of Stephen King (1977). This narrative is used for making the parralel, where the author intends to refer that the return of history also means the return to world of ideologies that ruled during the 20th century.

[34] **Kristol, I**. 2003. The Neoconservative Persuasion. – Weekly Standard. <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Utilities/printer_preview.asp?idArticle=3000&R=785F2781> (02.04.2014).

postulates described by Kristol also apply to Russia today. Robert Kagan's[35] remark that Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus, garnered a significant response from the world's public audience. The neoconservative movement sought to use a globally dominant position to restructure international systems in a way that would be advantageous to the United States.[36]

Peter Beinart[37] has noted some of the similar ideological patterns that are shared by both the US neoconservatives and President Putin. The first is an obsession with the spectre of appeasement. This is combined with a perception of the nation as being continually bullied by adversaries. After attacking Iraq in 2003, the US neoconservatives declared that the era of American weakness had ended. This was paralleled a decade later when, after annexing Crimea, Putin declared that the era of appeasement is over and "Russia found itself in a position it could not retreat from." The second is that both ideologies are strong advocates for "democracy," "freedom," "self-determination" and "international law", as long as those principles do not obstruct national power. Putin regards to the anti-Russian government in Ukraine as illegitimate, which is similar to the attitudes of US neoconservatives towards the Chauvist (pro-Chavez) governments in Latin America, or the Islamist governments in the Middle-East. Third, the neoconservatives do not understand economic power, and for them it is separate from military and foreign policy issues. For decades, the neoconservatives advocated for the expansion of the US's global military footprint and urged it to boost its defence budget. Similarly, Putin fights for the geopolitical glory of Russia, yet ignores the economic welfare of Russians.

Russia is an international actor with increasing power that seeks to be recognized as a great power.[38] Its provocations may prove dominant over the existing system, because it seeks to rearrange the order of things by creating an altogether new order, and it desires to overturn the status quo. In such a situation Putin's world could prove victorious, not because it is better, but

[35] **Kagan, R**. 2002. Power and Weakness. – Policy Review. <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/zselden/course%20readings/rkagan.pdf> (20.04.2015), p. 1.

[36] **Kanet, R. A**. 2008. New US Approach to Europe? The Transatlantic Relationship after Bush. – International Politics, Vol. 45, p. 351.

[37] **Beinart, P**. 2014. Vladimir Putin, Russian Neocon. – The Atlantic, March 24. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/03/vladimir-putin-russian-neocon/284602/> (29.04.2015).

[38] **Lebow, R. N**. 2010. The Past and Future of War. – International Relations, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp. 243–270.

rather because it takes the initiative.[39] For example in the 1930s, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Soviet Union, and others took the initiative by challenging the Versailles system led by the League of Nations, and eventually destroyed it. Challengers to Merkel's world rely on the Orwellian slogan "War is good, peace is bad"[40]; and in the conflict between the *Self* and the *Other*, intolerance against the *Other* is highly valued by societies that are based on collectivist-linked ideologies. Just as American national pride was the driving force in the US neoconservative revolution, Russian patriotism also reinforces the Putin's world.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had a significant influence on Russia, as its sphere of influence shrank, and the country's prestige and competitiveness in several strategic areas, including the military and economic spheres decreased. These processes galvanized a strong revival of Russian nationalism, which became ingrained in Russian society and then reached its zenith during Vladimir Putin's presidency. While the US neoconservatives advanced the idea that Americans are from Mars and the Europeans from Venus and dreamed of the military hegemony of the United States, Putin's challenge produces slogans such as: "Liberals are bad, conservatives are good," and stressed the conflict between the traditional values of the righteous *Us* and the decadent values of the *Others*. In Putin's world, liberalism symbolizes a negative value. The Russian political narrative often assigns negative connotations to *liberasts*, *inregrasts* and *tolerasts* in order to ridicule a liberal world-view and to distinguish their own "righteous" views from those who represent liberal, multicultural or tolerant views.

Neoconservatism adopted several representational strategies that professed to represent the "common sense" of the majority of Americans and claimed to speak for the "real America" that was ignored by the dominant liberal culture.[41] Irving Kristol claims that:

> *Neoconservatism aims to infuse American bourgeois orthodoxy with a new self-conscious vigour, while dispelling the feverish melange of gnostic humours that /.../ has suffused our political beliefs and tended to convert them into political religions.*[42]

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[39] **Krastev, I**. 2014. Putin's world. – Project Syndicate. <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/ivan-krastev-blames-the-west-s-weak-response-in-crimea-for-empowering-russia#AK0vzVbmtIUQCseG.99> (30.04.2014).

[40] Novels of George Orwell *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949).

[41] **Williams, M. C**. 2007. Culture and Security. Symbolic power and the Politics of International Security. New York: Routledge, p. 108. [**Williams** 2007]

[42] **Kristol, I**. 1983. Reflections of a Neoconservative. New York: Basic Books, pp. xiv–xv.

Similar ideological patterns have appeared in Russia's political discourses during Putin's presidency. The Russian neoconservatives demand even more decisive measures in foreign policy. Every nationalist movement shares xenophobia in common. The common denominator between both of these movements is that both make a clear distinction between *Us* and *Them*.[43]

Michael Williams[44] concludes that in contrast to designations assigned to liberals such as doubt, self-loathing and indecision, a neoconservative foreign policy is committed to the defence of domestic virtue, the protection of American values and society, and a maximization of American power. Likewise Russian values and the maximization of Russian power are often present in the speeches of President Putin. These speeches are used to mobilize the Russian people against an external threat and enhance national cohesion during a time of crisis.[45] An overt opposition to NATO's enlargement provides a focal point for nationalist consolidation efforts in Russia. Prior to the renewal of the great power politics between the nations, Russia made several attempts to present the OSCE as an alternative forum to NATO.[46] However, in the light of last developments in international relations, Russia is gradually distancing itself from the alternative institutionalist approach and now seeks a return to the great power games.

The Hobbesian offensive in Ukraine

Patrick Cockburn's[47] recent book "The Rise of Islamic State" analyses the rise of an altogether different and powerful force with the potential to destabilize the political status quo in the Middle East. In his review of the book, Jason Burke concluded that "western policymakers have shown little but wishful thinking and inconsistency in dealing with the conflict in Syria or the in Iraq supposed peace for several years."[48]

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[43] **Laine, V**. 2015. Nationalism is a double-edged sword. – FIIA Comment, No. 1 (January 2015). <http://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/472/nationalism_is_a_double-edged_sword/> (26.04.2015). [**Laine** 2015]

[44] **Williams, M. C**. 2007, p. 117.

[45] **Laine** 2015.

[46] **Williams** 2007, pp. 85–89.

[47] **Cockburn, P.** 2015. The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution. Verso Books.

[48] **Burke, J**. 2015. The Rise of Islamic State review – the story of ISIS. – The Guardian, 9 February 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/feb/09/rise-of-islamic-state-patrick-cockburn-review-isis-new-sunni-revolution> (20.03.2015).

Moreover, these words also apply to the situation in Ukraine, where no one is able, nor are they willing to make credible steps towards resolving the conflict. The inconsistency of Western policies in Ukraine has led to a situation where Russia uses the conflict in order to advance a Hobbesian offensive against the Kantian world, while simultaneously offering the West a backdoor to a successful return to the cold war-like polarized system. The successful challenges to the Kantian systems moves the international status of Russia to the next level, and satisfies the populace's constant clamouring for its national rebirth as a great power.

Wars are usually the result of a long series of provocations between conflicting parties. These provocations must accumulate before being followed by an actual declaration of war, or the actual crossing of a border.[49] This is exactly what happened in Georgia's conflict with South Ossetia in 2008. In Ukraine, before the armed clashes erupted in the Eastern provinces, there had been a continual escalation of violence since November 2013 that began at the Maidan square in Kiev. From November 2013, to April 2014, the West was inconsistent in implementing the credible security governance for Ukraine that could have prevented the ensuing war. The annexation of Crimea by Russia created a scenario where leaders had to fall back on wishful thinking, simply hoping that the Russian authorities would not go through with incorporating Crimea into the territory of Russia. Later the rest of the world finally accepted that the loss of Crimea was the price to pay for maintaining peace. Lebow[50] concludes that the most aggressive actors are those that desire greater status, and those that are already dominant powers, but still seek hegemony. This is confirmed by the appearance of neoconservative challenges manifested in Putin's world (as a rising power) and in Bush's world (as a dominant power).

In terms of the Hobbesian security environment, the current conflict in Ukraine is reminiscent of a typical proxy conflict from the cold war wherein the great powers are not directly involved, but rather make use of proxy warriors who are dependent upon their patron's support (e.g. Vietnam, Afghanistan) in order to further their cause. In the proxy conflicts of the cold war, the belligerents were the mindless tools of the great powers, who prosecuted their own petty squabbles within the larger framework of the bi- or multipolar confrontation. The belief that wars are natural part of strategic games between great powers is still widely accepted in Eastern Europe, which

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[49] **Lebow** 2010, p. 254.

[50] *Ibid*., p. 258.

explains their readiness to go along with Hobbesian challenges against a Kantian system. Bush's challenge, also known as the *Pax Americana*, became a very popular concept among the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, where the fall of Marxist ideology produced a surge of nationalism, as well as other more or less extremist ideologies. Within Germany, extremist ideologies found fertile ground in the Eastern part of Germany, which had been formerly under Communist control.[51]

In Russia, nationalist sentiments, which quickly replaced the Communist ideology, are gathering in strength, although paradoxically, some Soviet symbols have been appropriated by the nationalist movement. The majority of Russian society harbours anti-Western feelings. Similar to the Arab societies during the Arab Spring movement, the liberal opposition that criticized the Crimean annexation, and the conflict in Ukraine, constitutes a tiny minority in Russia. The most well organized opposition group in Russia consists of extremist movements of communists and nationalists. If the West accepts the challenge initiated by Putin, it will demonstrate the weakness of the Kantian peace process, and will doom the concept of security governance to failure. The major task of the West is to convince Putin that he too will fail, because that the forces following him are even more radical and more conflict-oriented. In Ukraine, international institutions should take charge of the crisis resolution and undertake active diplomacy in order to implement the Minsk agreements as neither side can hope to achieve a military victory, and a long-term crisis will affect not only Ukraine, but also Russia as well, because in the long-run, economic sanctions are effective.

There are some obvious differences between the Russia-Georgia conflict of 2008 and the Ukraine conflict of 2014–15. In 2008, a direct conflict between two internationally recognized states – Georgia and Russia emerged. As this conflict occurred within a clearly defined interstate framework, the West was able to negotiate peace settlements. But in the case of Donbass, a proxy war has ensued without the direct involvement of Russia or Russian forces. This allows Russia to distance itself from peace management. Officially, Russia and Ukraine are not at war, or even in conflict and they continue to practice bilateral diplomatic and economic relations, just as if it were peacetime. Russia supports the rebels in Donbass, just as it did it earlier in Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, so to what extent Russia is able to control the pro-Russian forces fighting in the Eastern Ukraine remains

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[51] I.e. the Pegida movement was born in Dresden, and the National Democratic Party of Germany won five seats in the Landtag of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, etc.

unclear. The involvement of international organizations in the peace management process, including the OSCE as the primary underwriter of the Minsk Agreements, remains complicated as the rebels can use their unrecognized status to their advantage.

Russia's policy towards the crisis in Eastern Ukraine is altogether different from its Crimean policy. In the case of Crimea, Russia actively intervened in the political process, resulting in Crimea's annexation in March 2014. Nevertheless, Russia keeps a much lower profile in the Eastern Ukraine, and has not shown any intentions of incorporating the area into Russia. The pro-Russian rebels are comprised of volunteers and the insurgency receives moderate support from Russia that keeps the conflict going. This state of affairs could be explained by a long-term political goal of destabilizing Ukraine, which would compel it remain within a self-constructed sphere of influence. Russia would like to establish itself as a responsible regional power, whose influence on the area of the former Soviet Union republics is indisputable, with the only probable exception of the three Baltic states. This strategy is based on Russia's sense that it cannot join Western structures (e.g. the European Union, NATO). Consequently, it denies that the interests of other countries in the Post-Soviet area may be divergent from their own interests and that others may wish to join.[52] During the conflict with Georgia in 2008, Dmitry Rogozin[53] compared the NATO aspiration of Georgia's to the parking of an alien military vehicle near the Russian borders, and Sergey Lavrov insisted that Georgia's desire to join had more to do with American aspirations rather than Georgia's internal state interests.[54]

Conclusions

Distinctive cultural environments and conflicting narratives may produce status conflicts between the status quo powers and hegemonic, or rising powers. As certain actors may fear a loss of their respective positions within

[52] **Aron, L**. 2014. The front line of Russia's home front. – American Enterprise Institute, March 6, 2014. <http://aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/europe/the-front-lines-on-russias-homefront/> (16.06.2014).

[53] In 2008 Dmitry Rogozin was Russia's ambassador to NATO, and is now the Deputy Prime Minister. Sergey Lavrov is the Foreign Minister of Russia.

[54] **George, J. A., Teigen, J. N**. 2008. NATO Enlargement and Institution Building: Military Personnel Policy Challenges in the Post-Soviet Context. – European Security, Vol. 17, No. 2&3, June 2008, pp. 350–351.

the system, it may incite them to challenge valid systems. Others are simply interested in boosting their status in order to achieve more benefits from a re-arrangement of the international order. The Russian security narrative resurrects the spirit of the cold war competition between the East and West, with Russia continuing to present itself as an alternative power to the United States in a polarized world. Security governance practices are difficult to implement in Ukraine, because the post-Soviet area has been excluded from the Kantian security governance environment since the 1990s, and some actors in Ukraine's security environment do not recognize norms and practices that are inherent to the Kantian political culture. Russia seems to be the only external power able to influence the decision-making process of self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, but it has been extremely passive in enforcing peace management and in its support of the implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

There are obvious similarities between the US neoconservative movements and the foreign policy initiatives undertaken by the President Putin in Russia. For US neoconservatives the intervention in Iraq was a demonstration of American military power and an attempt to return to a more Hobbesian arrangement in international relations. The crisis in Ukraine is a litmus test for the neoconservatist policies of President Putin and his supporters. Neoconservative postulates adopted in the United States, and later in Russia, have resulted in emotional narratives emphasizing honour, interest, and fear combined with resentment caused by disrespect for their status claims. Consequently, for the Russian neoconservatives, the crisis in Ukraine must demonstrate to a wider audience that the Kantian system of security governance is an ineffective mechanism that does not work. This would then justify Russia's claims that its status as a great power should be respected by the West, foremost the United States and the European Union. The neoconservative ideology stresses a defence of domestic virtues and the maximization of power capabilities in order to enact a foreign policy that can assure the defence of national interests. If the current Hobbesian challenge against the Kantian system is successful, a return of history may come to haunt such countries as Armenia, Belarus or the Central Asian republics who will be subject to Russia's sphere of influence and remain behind a new iron curtain.

The main problem in producing credible security governance practices for Ukraine is that the West, including the European Union, does not have a master plan for dealing with Russia, or the possible intentions of President Putin, or his attempts to escalate the status conflict with the West. The

Western policy towards Russia is reminiscent of a situation described in the by Dino Buzzati in his novel *The Tartar Steppe*[55], wherein the West accepts the Hobbesian challenge offered by Russia, acknowledges that wars are inevitable mechanisms of international politics, and so then must wait for the Russians to attack instead of using all possible measures to prevent the attack. The massive outpouring of extreme nationalism that currently prevails in the public discourses of Russian society does not facilitate a comprehensive peace management plan, nor does it encourage mainstream theories of security governance. It is easy to criticize or even demonise the Russian president, but the question must be asked: what comes after Putin? The key issue in the current intercultural conflict lies not on Putin's personified intentions, but on the preparedness of majority of the Russian society to adapt to the Kantian international system. If they identify themselves as "the Others" in the postmodern system, then security governance has no chance. The experience of the Arab Spring movement shows that the majority of the Arab societies were not prepared for Western liberal democracy, and it seems that at least for the moment, Russia is not either.

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[55] Novel of Dino Buzzati *Il deserto dei Tartar* (the Tartar Steppe) was firstly published in 1940.

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THE EUROPEANIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY IN THE FACE OF THE RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION WAR

Maili Vilson

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Abstract

Since 2014 a key development emerging from the crisis in Ukraine has been the extensive use of various disinformation and propaganda techniques used by Russia against not only Ukraine, but also against the European Union (EU) member states and the West in general. While such campaigns were gradually acknowledged in Berlin, Brussels, and Washington, the reactions of the EU and NATO came with a long delay. This article focuses on the institutional and political (re)actions of the EU to the Russian disinformation campaign against the European Union member states and Eastern neighborhood countries after the beginning of the Ukraine crisis in 2014. The key developments are the launch of a special Eastern StratCom Task Force within the EEAS as a completely new institutional formation, the adoption of the Action Plan for Strategic Communication, and the increased financial support for the European Endowment for Democracy. Tracing the EU collective response indicates that there was a decision of the member states to favor an EU-level solution over a solely national one in the foreign policy arena. This article argues that these developments are indicative of the Europeanization of the foreign policies of the member states, which is in itself a remarkable development given the altered European security environment.

Keywords: *European Union, Russia, disinformation, foreign policy, Europeanization*

Introduction

The conflict in Ukraine has been termed as a "hybrid"[1], "non-linear"[2], "asymmetrical"[3] and "compound"[4] conflict. Despite the conceptual ambiguity of the various notions, all of these essentially indicate a "fusion of war forms"[5] ranging from (conventional and irregular) military force to economic coercion, as well as psychological pressure and strategic (mis) communication. One of the key elements of this conflict has been the extensive use of various disinformation techniques targeted first and foremost at Ukraine, but also at the European Union (EU) and the West in general. While such campaigns were gradually acknowledged in Berlin, Brussels, and Washington, the reactions of the EU and NATO appeared reluctantly and with a lag.

It is not an overstatement to say that the Russian campaign came as a complete surprise to the West. In his well-known statement, General Philip Breedlove, the NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, characterized Russia's disinformation activities as "the most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare"[6]. For the West, tackling disinformation was a challenge not only because of the fundamental principles of the freedom of speech, but also because there was a simply lack of appropriate structures and experience in countering such a disinformation campaign of such magnitude.

While information and propaganda campaigns are nothing new in international confrontations, the EU entered a completely new domain after the Ukrainan crisis. Never before had the EU and its policies faced such a security

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[1] **Reisinger, H.; Golts, A**. 2014. Russia's Hybrid Warfare: Waging War below the Radar of Traditional Collective Defence. – NATO Defense College, Rome, Research Paper No. 105, November. [**Reisinger, Golts** 2014]

[2] **Galeotti, M**. 2016. Hybrid, ambiguous, and non-linear? How new is Russia's 'new way of war'? – Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 282–301; **Pomerantsev, P.; Weiss, M**. 2014. The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money. A Special Report by the Interpreter, Institute of Modern Russia. [**Pomerantsev, Weiss** 2014]

[3] **Thomas, T**. 2015. Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric – and Putin-Led. – Journal of Slavic Military Studies, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 445–461.

[4] **Minasyan, S**. 2015. "Hybrid" vs "Compound" War: Lessons from the Ukraine Conflict. – Policy memo, No. 401, PONARS Eurasia.

[5] **Hoffman, F**. 2007. Conflict in the 21st century: the rise of hybrid wars. Arlington (VA): Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, p. 7.

[6] **Vandiver, J**. 2014. SACEUR: Allies must prepare for Russia 'hybrid war'. – Stars and Stripes, 4 September. <http://bit.ly/2bT88kb> (accessed February 20, 2016).

risk. The fact that the Russian disinformation campaign became a priority for the EU, the EU member states and institutions to not only discuss the issue but to also pursue a common European response, indicated an expansion of the EU's foreign policy competence. More specifically, this article makes the argument that recent EU developments geared towards countering Russia's disinformation campaigns can be analyzed in the context of the Europeanization of national foreign policy of the member states. Despite the EU's initially reluctant and, in the eyes of many, insufficient reactions, it is evident that external (third countries) and internal (member states) pressures have precipitated changes at the political and institutional-procedural levels of the EU decision-making domain, indicating another step towards the Europeanization of foreign policy preferences of the member states.

In order to analyze the EU's response to the Russian disinformation campaign, this article will proceed as follows. The first section summarizes the key aspects of the (dis)information war in the literature and describes the main messages of the Russian campaign. It outlines various target groups, including the EU member states and the Eastern neighborhood countries[7]. The next section discusses the key tenets of the Europeanization approach, with specific focus on the challenges of Europeanization in the field of foreign policy. This provides the framework for analysis of the EU's responses to the disinformation campaign. The following section uses process-tracing to study the political, institutional and procedural changes in the EU that have been implemented as a result of the Russian campaign. It links the empirical results to the Europeanization approach, arguing that the resolution to pursue a common European response signifies the expansion of the EU foreign policy competences and favors the EU over the national foreign policy level.

1. Information warfare in the Ukraine crisis and the challenge for the European Union

The Ukraine crisis which emerged after President Yanukovych refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU in November 2013 rapidly escalated from a public protest on the streets of Kyiv into a full-scale military conflict

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[7]   Eastern neighborhood is a region of the EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy which is aimed at fostering closer economic and political cooperation with its neighbors, specifically with Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. EaP offers the partner countries financial, political and technical support and know-how for conducting political and economic reforms, and the possibility of closer integration with the EU.

involving both Ukrainian and Russian military forces. The annexation of Crimea and the controversial referendum to join Russia, as well as the civil war in the Eastern Ukraine wherein the pro-Russian rebels fought against the Ukrainian government forces was soon recognized as the war that destroyed the post-Cold War European security architecture. Despite thousands of casualties and several ceasefire deals, the situation remains unresolved.

As Russian and pro-Russian forces have utilized various military and non-military strategies in Ukraine, the crisis is often referred to as a hybrid war. Reisinger & Golts highlight five aspects that are central to Russia's version of hybrid war: 1) "actions with an appearance of legality" (such as the referendum in Crimea), 2) "snap inspections" in the army as a military show of force, 3) the use of "little green men" – special forces without identification tags acting as local security forces, 4) taking advantage of tensions among different local groups or the pretext of "protecting Russians abroad", 5) a full-scale disinformation campaign (using the World War II discourse to draw parallels between the past and current events, the "humanitarian" narrative of sending aid convoys, the concept of Novorossiya, *etc*.).[8] All of the above-mentioned strategies were very much present in the case of Ukraine; however, an intensive and multi-directional disinformation campaign was also launched against the EU as it had maintained its support for Kyiv.

The study of the use and abuse of information is inherently linked to the term "propaganda". A classic definition of propaganda by Lasswell defines it as "the manipulation of symbols as a means of influencing attitudes on controversial matters".[9] Encyclopaedia Britannica defines propaganda as "the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols…"[10]. Propaganda is primarily perceived as a negative and/or an aggressive phenomenon, with a very broad and elusive definition[11]. A more appropriate term would be "disinformation" which is a type of communication "containing intentionally false, incomplete, or misleading information (frequently combined with true information),

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[8] **Reisinger, Golts** 2014, pp. 3–8.

[9] **Lasswell, H. D**. 1968. Detection: Propaganda detection and the courts. – Language of Politics: Studies of Quantitative Semantics. Ed. by Lasswell, H. D. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, p. 177.

[10] **Smith, B. L**. 2016. Propaganda. – Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/propaganda> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[11] See also: **Pynnöniemi, K**. 2016. The elusive concept of propaganda. – Fog of Falsehood: Russian Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine. Ed. by Pynnöniemi, K; Rácz, A. The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, pp. 27–48.

which seeks to deceive, misinform, and/or mislead the target"[12]. This definition incorporates several relevant dimensions which capture the essence of disinformation. First, it emphasizes intent – as the current information society has made all types of dissemination easy and instantaneous, a disinformation item made public is a strategic move, which serves to achieve certain (hidden) objectives. Second, it underlines the element of deliberate deception by using fabricated, partial or inaccurate communications.

In the case of the Russian disinformation campaign, Wilson distinguishes four different types based on the target audience[13]. The first is disinformation as distraction, the purpose of which is "not to convince or persuade, but to keep the viewer hooked and distracted, passive and paranoid"[14] by spreading different versions of reality and thereby leaving the audience "flailing in moral and even factual relativity"[15]. For example, spreading numerous versions about the crash of MH17 to "distort the media space and introduce uncertainty into the Western narrative"[16], or demoralizing specific countries either by using 'trolls' to flood internet platforms with hundreds of provoking comments, or offering some vague but threatening statements by mid-level officials, which are then reported by foreign journalists. The second type is "nudge" disinformation, which essentially means establishing contacts with political parties and individual politicians with any kind of anti-systemic (in the European case, often anti-American) worldview, and providing them and their cause(s) with wide media coverage. According to Wilson, this may lead to the overrepresentation of some radical or marginal groups in the public space, giving the impression that these groups bear more influence than they actually do, thereby actually reinforcing them with the public who is used to relying on the objectivity of the media.

The third type of disinformation is circulated at domestically, i.e., to Russian audience. In contrast to the distortion techniques used abroad, the main aim here is to consolidate the support for Putin and his policies. This is done by reporting on Putin's successes as the President of Russia and using

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[12] **Shultz, R; Godson, R**. 1984. Dezinformatsia. Active Measures in Soviet Strategy. New York: Bergamon Brassey's, p. 194.

[13] Here, Wilson's preferred term "propaganda" is replaced with "disinformation".

[14] **Pomerantsev, Weiss** 2014, p. 11.

[15] **Wilson, A**. 2015. Four types of Russian Propaganda. – Aspen Review Central Europe, No. 4. <http://bit.ly/2btKUA6> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[16] **Lough, J.; Lutsevych, O.; Pomerantsev, P.; Secrieru, S.; Shekhovtsov, A**. 2014. Russian Influence Abroad: Non-state Actors and Propaganda. – Chatham House. <http://bit.ly/2bfTPl2> (accessed February 20, 2016).

fear and threat tactics to assert that Putin's it the most qualified man for the job, while all the rest are incompetent at governing the country. This is combined with advancing a scenario wherein=other countries also desire war with Russia. Finally, the fourth technique described by Wilson is termed "alternative realities", which is targeted at Russia's neighboring countries, or the so-called "near abroad", that preferably have a Russian minority. This includes a comprehensive strategy of building up and providing support for pro-Russian parties, politicians, NGOs and other groups, who in return repeat the pro-Russian message through different media platforms and in public, in order to create not only alternative narratives but an entirely parallel reality to influence the population.

The main messages advanced by the disinformation campaign differed between Western and Eastern Europe. In the former, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries were portrayed as problematic and burdensome to the West, e.g. unable to control their borders, facing social unrest due to conflicting societal groups, and needing extensive and continuous support to sustain their economies. The campaign used anti-American slogans to create unrest in the domestic politics of Western Europe by bolstering Eurosceptic and far right and far left parties as opposition to the Western European governments and EU institutions.[17] Campaigns tailored to address the issues that were topical to a specific country were also more successful[18].

In the Central Eastern and East European countries, a sizeable portion of the campaign was directed at the local Russians or pro-Russian sympathizers in the society, presenting Crimea's "historical return" to Russia as a state of "normalcy". The campaign further attempted to undermine the EU by convincing neighboring states of the negative effects of European integration and liberal democracy, e.g. Russia promoting itself as a force for moral good and traditional values on the matter of gay rights.[19] The campaign also sought to appeal to Russian minorities, or other historical or nationalist elements within neighboring countries, in order to create controversy within the society[20]. The Russian domestic disinformation campaign (which

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[17] **Samadashvili, S**. 2015. Muzzling the Bear. Strategic Defence for Russia's Undeclared Information War on Europe. Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Brussels. <http://bit.ly/1RqpIq7> (accessed February 20, 2016), pp. 39–40. [**Samadashvili** 2015]

[18] **Gotev, G**. 2014a. EU communication versus Russian propaganda. – EurActiv.com, 18 November. <http://bit.ly/2bT4kQb> (accessed February 20, 2016). [**Gotev** 2014a]

[19] **Samadashvili** 2015, p. 39.

[20] **Czekaj, M**. 2015. Russia's Hybrid War Against Poland. – Eurasian Daily Monitor, Vol. 12, No. 80. The Jamestown Foundation. <http://bit.ly/1QbD9sR> (accessed February 20, 2016).

was also broadcasted to the Russian speaking communities in the neighborhood) was considered to be extremely aggressive[21] and reiterated certain themes such as Russia as a great power, the West's seeks to contain Russia, the (moral) decline of the EU and the US, the Ukraine revolution as a Western coup, and the denial of Russian soldiers in Ukraine, together with Crimea's rightful return to Russia[22].

The main international media channels involved in disseminating these messages included RT (formerly Russia Today), which airs shows in Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish and Russian, and Sputnik, an online media platform available in more than 30 languages, including many official EU languages. The funds invested in the communication abroad have increased annually, reaching at least €643 million in 2015, according to Kremlin.[23] In addition to media channels, Russia also adopted the widespread practice of using the so-called "trolls", or paid commentators to disseminate pro-Russian rhetoric in their statements and comments[24]. As the analysis of the Czech Republic (but also observed elsewhere) has demonstrated, such media platforms are of unclear origin and feature posts by anonymous authors promoting pro-Russian policies[25].

While the effects of Russia's media channels on the public opinion in the West was difficult to estimate, their audiences remained relatively marginal, especially when compared to those of the mainstream Western media outlets[26]. It is estimated that the biased coverage of the Ukraine crisis dealt a significant blow to RT in the West and Ukraine[27]. However, the greater cause for concern lay in the stronger effect of disinformation on ethnic Russian

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[21] E.g. **Van Herpen, M**. 2016. Putin's Propaganda Machine. Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, p. 1.

[22] **Rettman, A**. 2015a. EU to strike back at Russian propaganda. – EUObserver, 19 March. <http://bit.ly/1F1ZANx> (accessed February 20, 2016). [**Rettman** 2015a]

[23] **Rettman, A**. 2015b. Russian propaganda wins EU hearts and minds. – EUObserver, 23 June. <http://bit.ly/1dfLP4j> (accessed February 20, 2016). [**Rettman** 2015b]

[24] E.g. **Bugorkova, O**. 2015. Ukraine conflict: Inside Russia's 'Kremlin troll army'. – BBC Monitoring, 19 March. <http://bbc.in/1BEL8WS> (accessed February 26, 2016).

[25] **Smolenova, I**. 2015. Russia's Propaganda War. – Forbes, 25 March. <http://bit.ly/2c46Wfh> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[26] For specific numbers, see **Snegovaya, M**. 2015. Putin's Information Warfare in Ukraine: Soviet Origins of Russia's Hybrid Warfare. – Russia Report No. 1, Institute for the Study of War. [**Snegovaya** 2015]; **Ennis, S**. 2015. Russia in 'information war' with West to win hearts and minds. – BBC Monitoring, 16 September. <http://bbc.in/2bk9MZG> (accessed February 26, 2016). [**Ennis** 2015]

[27] **Snegovaya** 2015, p. 19.

or Russian-speaking communities residing outside Russia. Despite living abroad this group is immersed in the Russian media space and therefore not reachable by their European governments.

What measures did individual European countries take to counter disinformation since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis? Two options were the most common. With respect to the Russian TV channels disseminating disinformation, some countries opted for coercion by fining or banning media providers. For example, Latvia and Lithuania restricted some broadcasts for short periods of time for "inciting hatred". Elsewhere, countries supported the expansion of programs in Russian to reach wider audiences. For example, the UK invested in the *BBC World Service, while* Germany and the US supported *Deutsche Welle, Radio Liberty* and *Euronews*[28]. A more substantial move was made, after years of debate, in Estonia, by launching the first official Russian-language TV channel in September 2015, in an attempt to engage the local Russian community and provide an "adequate picture of Estonian society"[29]. These endeavors are a good examples of the concern of Central and Eastern European countries about the possible impact of disinformation.

Overall, the EU was criticized for remaining passive against the barrage of Russian disinformation[30]. The EU's reaction was also *ad hoc* (e.g. The EEAS created an *ad hoc* group including members from various EU Directorate-Generals to produce and implement a communication strategy in the EaP countries, following the onset of the crisis in Ukraine)[31]. The EU provided financial support for the media in Europe to diversify its broadcasts with cultural programs and EU affairs[32]. This was combined with more coercive actions, such as the personal sanctions imposed on Dmitry Kiselyov, the

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[28] E.g. **Ennis** 2015; **BBC** 2015. BBC World Service gets funding boost from government. – BBC, 23 November. <http://bbc.in/1ShB3ts> (accessed February 26, 2016); **Panichi, J.; Spence, A**. 2015. BBC enters Putin's media war. – Politico, 7 September. <http://politi.co/2btHUDQ> (accessed February 26, 2016).

[29] **Tambur, S**. 2015. Estonia launches its first Russian-language TV channel. – ERR News, 28 September. <bit.ly/1O50Woy> (accessed February 26, 2016).

[30] **Hegedűs, D**. 2015. Fighting back in the 'information war'. – European Council on Foreign Relations, 29 July.

[31] **Samadashvili** 2015, p. 49.

[32] **Waszczykowski, W**. 2015. The battle for the hearts and minds: countering propaganda attacks against the Euro-Atlantic Community. – Report No. 164 CDSDG 15 E bis, Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 10 October, p. 13.

head of Russia Today and "the public face of President Putin's propaganda machine"[33].

It is important to note that the EU's capabilities and progress in (re)acting to the Russian disinformation starts from the recognition that the EU policies are dependent on its 28 member states and their preferences. Foreign policy is a domain where the common EU policy is relatively new and most of the control is in the hands of member states, nevertheless, the EU is still seen as a foreign policy actor who does make policy decisions. And this makes them part of the international community. A slow reaction, or none at all undermines the EU's credibility, not only in the eyes of its own citizens, but also for other countries, especially its neighbors. It was therefore imperative that the EU take a definitive stance in the disinformation campaign. As the analysis of the evolution of the EU policy explicates, it not only took a position, it also agreed to negotiate a common strategy for countering the disinformation. The fact that the European Council decided in favor of an institutional solution – to create a Task Force to refute the disinformation claims – is indicative of the ambition to seek a common European response and expand into a new common policy area. This marks yet another small step towards the Europeanization of member states' foreign policies. In order to ascertain the empirical developments discussed below, the paper first turns to the theoretical outline of the Europeanization approach.

2. Europeanization of EU foreign policy

The process of Europeanization is aimed at analyzing the relationship between the EU and its member states. Europeanization was initially defined as a top-down approach explaining the impact of the EU on its member states[34], but has subsequently evolved into a complex multidimensional phenomenon. To date, the field includes at least three dimensions: adaptation and policy convergence, or the merging of member states' policies with the EU (also

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[33] **Bershidsky, L**. 2015. A Putin Crony's Unrequited Love for Europe. – Bloomberg View, 8 September. <http://bv.ms/2bKRpMN> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[34] **Risse, T.; Cowles, M. G; Caporaso, J. A**. 2001. Europeanization and Domestic Change: Introduction. – Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change. Ed. by Cowles, M. G; Caporaso, J.A; Risse, T. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. [**Risse *et al***. 2001]; **Ladrech, R**. 1994. The Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France. – Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 69–88; **Radaelli, C**. 2000. Whither Europeanisation? Concept Stretching and Substantive Change. – European Integration online Papers (EIoP), Vol. 4, No. 8, <http://bit.ly/2bkeXZl> (accessed February 20, 2016).

referred to as 'downloading'); the projection of national preferences and ideas onto the EU with the aim of shaping European policies ('uploading'); and horizontal harmonization between member states and institutions as a result of the two previous dimensions ('crossloading').[35] These three dimensions are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, thus making an analysis of Europeanization very challenging. The abundance of definitions has often led to conceptual and analytical ambiguity as well[36]. The definition forwarded by Pomorska is employed here due to its multidimensionality and -directionality. It defines Europeanization as "an ongoing and mutually constitutive process of change, linking national and European levels, and capturing the growing interdependence of both".[37]

As policy change is a key element in the Europeanization process, various authors have sought to describe the mechanism(s) and direction of change. It is argued that the 'downloading' of EU policies varies not only by member state, but also by issue area or specific institution[38], and in order to understand how change comes about and why the variation of adaptation occurs, several competing and complementing explanations have been suggested. For example, the concepts of 'misfit'[39] and 'goodness of fit'[40] are employed to argue that the extent of congruence between the European and the national (domestic) level determines the pressure for adaptation. In the event of a

[35] **Börzel, T**. 2005. Europeanization: How the European Union Interacts with Its Member States. – The Member States of the European Union. Ed. by Bulmer, S; Lequesne, C. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 45–69. [**Börzel** 2005]; **Bulmer, S**. 2007. Theorizing Europeanization. – Europeanization: New Research Agendas. Ed. by Graziano, P; Vink, M. P. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 46–58; **Wong, R.; Hill, C**. 2011. Introduction. – National and European Foreign Policies: Towards Europeanization. Ed. by Wong, R; Hill, C. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, pp. 1–18. [**Wong, Hill** 2011]

[36] **Mair, P**. 2004. The Europeanization Dimension. – Journal of European Public Policy, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 337–348; **Olsen, J**. 2002. The Many Faces of Europeanization. – Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 40, No. 5, pp. 921–952.

[37] **Pomorska, K**. 2007. The Impact of Enlargement: Europeanization of Polish Foreign Policy? Tracking Adaptation and Change in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. – The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 25–51.

[38] **Larsen, H**. 2009. A Distinct FPA for Europe? Towards a Comprehensive Framework for Analysing the Foreign Policy of EU Member States. – European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 537–566. [**Larsen** 2009]; **Tonra, B**. 2015. Europeanization. – The Sage Handbook of European Foreign Policy. Ed. by Aarstad, A. K; Jorgensen, K. E; Drieskens, E; Laatikainen, K; Tonra, B. Sage Publications Ltd.

[39] E. g. **Börzel, T**. 1999. Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanisation in Germany and Spain. – Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 573–596.

[40] **Risse *et al*.** 2001.

'good fit', there is less pressure on a member state to change its policies or institutions. However, there are many intervening variables or 'mediating factors' in the domestic setting which can influence whether, and to what extent, domestic changes can occur. These can include veto players, and formal and informal institutions[41]. Börzel summarizes four diffusion mechanisms which can result in domestic change: coercion (the EU prescribes or imposes a model on a member state); mimetic imitation and normative pressure (a member state emulates a model in order to avoid uncertainty, or is encouraged by the example of other states); competitive selection (member states compete for the most efficient arrangement in order to avoid comparative disadvantages); and framing (European actors behave as 'norm entrepreneurs' and alter the ideas of domestic actors by disseminating new ones)[42].

Foreign policy is widely accepted as being a restricted domain of the sovereign nation state, and strictly intergovernmental in the EU since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty (2009). The debate on the Europeanization of national foreign policies has therefore often hinged on the definition of EU foreign policy, and its application, i.e., the mechanisms and direction(s) of the influence, the scope of issue areas, and the outcomes. Even if we accept that EU foreign policy is more than the sum of its member states' foreign policies, the EU can hardly be considered to be a 'normal' state-like actor. The EU's foreign policy can be seen as consisting of several different foreign policies: national foreign policies of the member states, external trade relations and development ('community' policies), and the Common Foreign and Security Policy.[43]

On balance, as a domain that touches upon core aspects of national sovereignty and remains largely intergovernmental even after the Lisbon agreement, foreign policy is not perceived as particularly amenable to the processes of Europeanization. Europeanization of foreign policy is expected to be less likely and much weaker when compared to other EU policies.[44] Regarding

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[41] **Börzel** 2005; **Ladrech, R**. 2010. Europeanization and National Politics. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan; **Michalski, A**. 2013. Europeanization of National Foreign Policy: The Case of Denmark's and Sweden's Relations with China. – Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol. 51, No. 5, pp. 884–900.

[42] **Börzel, T**. 2003. How the European Union Interacts with its Member States. – Reihe Politikwissenschaft, No. 93. Institut für Höhere Studien, Wien, pp. 13–14.

[43] **Larsen** 2009; **White, B**. 2001. Understanding European Foreign Policy. Basingstoke: Palgrave; **Wong, Hill** 2011.

[44] **Alecu de Flers, N.; Müller, P**. 2012. Dimensions and Mechanisms of the Europeanization of Member State Foreign Policy: State of the Art and New Research Avenues. – European Integration, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 19–35.

the mechanisms and direction of change, it must first be acknowledged that, when compared to other fields, Europeanization of foreign policy is bound to be a more voluntary process – that is based on socialization and policy learning[45]. Overall, there is no consensus on whether substantive convergence in this area can happen in the longer run, or whether the process amounts to a mere superficial procedural convergence. Furthermore, although it cannot be denied that national interests still play a crucial role in national foreign policy-making, elite socialization is clearly observable among both EU and national officials who have worked in EU institutions over the years.[46]

Although the EU foreign policy still retains a significant amount of inter-governmentalism in its decision-making, there is ample evidence of foreign policy changes as a result of national and European interactions. In terms of 'downloading', these can include, for example, structural reorganization, the sharing practices between the foreign policy staff of the member states, elite socialization, prioritization of the European policy agenda and objectives, and change in policy preferences[47]. 'Uploading' national preferences, on the other hand, is an opportunity for a member state to use the EU for a particular policy choice, as acting collectively entails lower costs than member states acting alone. Here the member states are the drivers of the policy change, and can utilize the EU to promote their national interests as well as potentially also influence the foreign policies of other European member states.[48] 'Crossloading', or converging in terms of policy preferences is essentially an identity issue in the long-term perspective. Here, 'Europe' as an identity category exists side-by-side with the national identity, and may in the end lead to convergence between the two. Examples of this are the discussion concerning

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[45] **Baun, M.; Marek, D**. 2013. The Foreign Policies of the New Member States: A Framework for Analysis. – The New Member States and the European Union: Foreign Policy and Europeanization. Ed. by Baun, M.; Marek, D. London: Routledge, pp. 1–21.

[46] **Aggestam, L**. 2004. Role Identity and Europeanization of Foreign Policy: A Political-Cultural Approach. – Rethinking European Union Foreign Policy. Ed. by Tonra, B.; Christiansen, T. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 81–98; **Hill, C.; Wallace, W**. 1996. Introduction: Actors and Actions. – The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy. Ed. by Hill, C. London: Routledge, pp. 1–16.

[47] **Gross, E**. 2009. The Europeanization of National Foreign Policy: Continuity and Change in European Crisis Management. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 17. [**Gross** 2009]; **Forster, A.; Wallace, W**. 2000. Common Foreign and Security Policy: From Shadow to Substance? – Policy-Making in the European Union. 4th edition. Ed. by Wallace, H.; Wallace, W. Oxford: Oxford University Press; **Wong, Hill** 2011.

[48] **Gross** 2009, p. 18; **Major, C**. 2005. Europeanisation and Foreign and Security Policy – Undermining or Rescuing the Nation State? – Politics, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 175–190.

common norms, shared definitions of European and national interests, as well as collective understanding of the role of member states and Europe in the world, which all feed back into the national foreign policy making process.[49]

Using the Europeanization approach, the article will now turn to the empirical analysis of the countermeasures deployed against the Russian disinformation campaign after the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis in November 2013. By using process-tracing[50], the chapter will show how the European Union moved from negotiation to action in forming a fairly coherent strategy for countering Russian disinformation. The chapter demonstrates how the member states effectively uploaded their policy preferences to the European level and crossloaded between various policy issues, thus shaping the EU policy of countering disinformation. It also shows how the member states pursued this policy and referred to it in the national level, downloading policy preferences as expected in the case of Europeanization.

3. The EU's response to the Russian disinformation campaign

With the Ukrainian crisis, the disinformation campaign in Ukraine and the EU expanded exponentially. As the attention of the EU and the world were on the annexation of Crimea and the ensuing military confrontation, disinformation was not at the top of the EU's agenda at the time. Although concerns about the provocative and offensive messages were shared among member states, there were only a few official mentions of these at the EU level. In December 2014, Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy publicly acknowledged the Russian "communication efforts" towards the EU and the internal EU debates to address the issue[51]. From there onwards, the EU's responses can roughly be divided into political statements made by different actors and institutional-procedural changes such as a

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[49] **Gross** 2009, p. 19; **Smith, M. E**. 2000. Conforming to Europe: the Domestic Impact of EU Foreign Policy Cooperation. – Journal of European Public Policy, Vol. 7, No. 4, p. 614; **Wong, Hill** 2011, p. 7.

[50] Process-tracing is defined here as "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the author" (**Collier, D**. 2011. Understanding Process Tracing. – PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 823–30). As a qualitative research method, it relies on careful description and sequences of variables in the analysis. See also: **Mahoney, J**. 2010. After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research. – World Politics, Vol. 62, No. 1, pp. 120–47.

[51] **Gotev, G**. 2014b. Hahn: We have some ideas how to deal with Russian propaganda. – EurActiv.com, 2 December. <http://bit.ly/2c42TQd> (accessed February 20, 2016).

new Task Force, an Action Plan for Strategic Communication, and the discussion on the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

The first key document to emerge at the EU level was a non-paper sent by four EU member states (Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania and the UK) to the High Representative/Vice President of the EU Federica Mogherini on 8 January 2015, calling on the EU to increase "public resilience to disinformation and propaganda in the EU and [their] eastern partners; supporting independent and alternative voices, including in Russia; and ensuring [the EU's] own systems are sufficiently robust to information manipulation, while safeguarding… core values"[52]. The authors called for a response consisting of the following aspects: raising public awareness about disinformation and the proper response to it (e.g. by establishing a web platform for deconstructing disinformation); taking an assertive or proactive approach to increasing EU visibility (e.g. preparing a strategic communication Action Plan, and providing alternative sources of information to Russian-speakers by supporting independent international and national media platforms in Russian language); and ensuring accountability among media providers regarding any violations of the rules of broadcasting and public information in the EU.

The non-paper was followed by the first official statement with regard to the disinformation campaign, made by the most outspoken EU institution – the European Parliament (EP). In its resolution, adopted on January 15th, 2015, the EP supported sanctions against Russia and urged the EU to adopt a "communication strategy" to counter Russian disinformation "towards the EU, its eastern neighbors and Russia itself", as well as to develop instruments for addressing the campaign[53]. This was reiterated a month later, shortly before the European Council meeting in March, in another resolution, which emphasized "the need for a coherent European approach towards the misinformation campaigns and propaganda activities pursued by Russia both inside and outside the EU"[54].

Around the same time, the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU took an official stance on the issue in its findings on Ukraine, and asked the High Representative "to further improve strategic communication in support of EU

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[52] **EU Strategic communication responding to propaganda non-paper** 2015. 8 January.

[53] **European Parliament** 2015a. Resolution of 15 January 2015 on the situation in Ukraine, 2014/2965(RSP).

[54] **European Parliament** 2015b. Resolution of 12 March 2015 on the Annual Report from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament, 2014/2219(INI).

policies and to explore options for the establishment of a dedicated communication team to lead these actions"[55]. In response to this, another informal paper, submitted by the Latvian EU Presidency, emerged. Not fully satisfied with the debate at the Council, the document called upon the EU to take a stronger stance against the "disinformation campaigns produced by actors outside the EU which try to influence, challenge, and undermine our societies and influence EU policy in our neighborhood"[56].

In March, the pressure exerted by member states and the European Parliament culminated with the EU Council summit findings, which recognized the "need to challenge Russia's ongoing disinformation campaigns" and set a deadline for June for the High Representative to devise an Action Plan on strategic communication. "As a first step", it notes, a communication team should be established[57]. According to a diplomat, the bargaining process between national preferences "was a battle, and it's quite an achievement, that we've got all the EU leaders to speak out on 'Russia's disinformation campaign'. We wanted conclusions that spoke of 'Russian propaganda'. But some capitals didn't want to put 'Russian' and 'propaganda' in the same sentence".[58]

The East StratCom Task Force was established in April 2015 under the EEAS, and was comprised of nine members from the various EU member states. The central aim of the Task Force was to explain EU policies in the EaP region by communicating proactively about key policy areas, providing *ad hoc* information about topical issues, myth-busting, and supporting the EU in their efforts to strengthen the media in the eastern neighborhood. The team was expected to cooperate with other EU institutions, member states and a number of other partners, such as the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) as well as other non-governmental organizations in the member states and the eastern neighborhood. At the same time, the team had a narrow mandate due to the varying foreign policy preferences of each of the member states, and therefore had to proceed carefully. The Action Plan was particularly ambitious, given the size of the Task Force (9 members, most of whom were assisted by the member states, with some EEAS staff to support them), the budget of the unit (no additional funds, reliance on existing EEAS

[55] **Council of the EU** 2015. Conclusions on Ukraine, Foreign Affairs Council, 5755/15, 29 January.

[56] **Rettman** 2015b.

[57] **European Council** 2015a. Conclusions on External Relations, 19 March.

[58] **Rettman** 2015b.

budget), and the disagreements among the member states over the narrow mandate.[59]

Following these steps and a discussion in May, the EP adopted a resolution on the state of EU-Russia relations on 10 June 2015, which, against the backdrop of the upcoming June European Council, asserted that "the EU cannot envisage a return to 'business as usual'" and specified a list of actions to be carried out in order to combat disinformation about the EU. These actions included, developing the capabilities to monitor and adequately respond to the Russian propaganda, both in Russia and in the EU countries, and funding projects aimed at countering misinformation. More interestingly, it also suggested devising a "coordinated mechanism of transparency of and for the collection, monitoring and reporting of financial, political or technical assistance provided by Russia to political parties and other organizations within the EU" to assess its involvement and influence in the EU.[60] The European Council conclusions from June 26th did conclude that "mobilizing EU instruments to help counter hybrid threats" should be one of the areas for development[61]. The EP continued to address the issue of disinformation by devising reports on the strategic communication[62].

In June, the High Representative presented the Action Plan on Strategic Communication. The three main objectives of the EU Action plan were the following:
• Effective communication and promotion of EU policies in the eastern neighborhood;
• Strengthening the overall media environment in the eastern neighborhood and in EU member states, including support for media freedom and the strengthening of independent media;
• Improved EU capacity to forecast, address and respond to disinformation activities by external actors.[63]

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[59] **Panichi, J**. 2015. EU Splits in Russian media war. – Politico, 17 September. <http://politi.co/2bg5J3c> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[60] **European Parliament** 2015c. Resolution of 10 June 2015 on the state of EU-Russia relations. 2015/2001(INI).

[61] **European Council** 2015b. Conclusions. EUCO 22/15. Brussels, 25–26 June.

[62] **European Parliament** 2016. Draft Report on EU Strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties. Committee on Foreign Affairs, Rapporteur: Anna Elżbieta Fotyga. 2016/2030(INI). 2 June.

[63] **EEAS** 2015a. Questions and Answers about the EastStratCom Task Force. <http://bit.ly/1Snzome> (accessed February 26, 2016).

What is interesting about these goals is the fact that, compared to the draft version of the text leaked to the press[64], it did not include the promotion of values. This coincided with the more general recent trend of the EU, which was well reflected in the renewed European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), where EU interests took the center of the stage, and universal values were only listed as one interest among many others[65]. Another change in the final document was that it listed only the eastern neighborhood and EU member states as the targets of the policy, whereas in the draft version that remained open. Despite the fact that the support for independent media in Russia was also one of the aims mentioned elsewhere, Russia was not mentioned in this Action Plan. Finally, the raising of "public awareness" regarding disinformation activities in the member states was not explicitly mentioned in the final text. In general, the language of the Action Plan was focused more on the eastern neighborhood and less on the member states.

In accordance with its mandate from the Action Plan, the East StratCom team disseminated weekly public disinformation reviews to its subscribers and used a Twitter account[66] to continually reveal false claims and dispel myths that had appeared in the medias of either the EU member states or in the Eastern neighborhood countries. More specifically, the Task Force published two weekly newsletters. The objective of the Disinformation Review was to "show the European public the high amount of such disinformation attacks that target European audience every single day"[67]. It provided brief snippets of the disinformation appearing in the international media with an especial focus on online news sources. It then set out to disprove them. The review was compiled in cooperation with an extensive network of experts, think tanks and NGOs. However, the format of the review which simply listed the summary of the disinformation item, the link to the source and up to two sentences of "disproof" was unlikely to convince anyone in the Russian media sphere or influenced by it (should it reach their attention). Instead, it seemed to simply fulfill the task of enumerating Russia's claims, although only selectively. If the purpose of the review was to negate the disinformation, it should have focused more on publicizing the claims,

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[64] **EEAS** 2015b. Action Plan on Strategic Communication (unofficial version), Ref. Ares (2015)2608242 – 22/06/2015. <http://bit.ly/1OLWftD> (accessed February 26, 2016).

[65] **European Commission** 2015a. Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Joint Communication. JOIN(2015) 50 final, Brussels, 18 November.

[66] **EU Mythbusters**. <https://twitter.com/euvsdisinfo> (accessed August 25, 2016).

[67] **Delegation of the EU to Ukraine** 2015. Disinformation Review – new EU information product. 4 November. <http://bit.ly/1WvR6Kl> (accessed February 26, 2016).

and then disproving them to the wider public. Another endeavor was the Disinformation Digest which analyses the depiction that the Russian media paints of the world and of the independent media, while also focusing on claims made in the social media. While it provided interesting insights and illuminating analyses, the reach, and therefore also the effects of the endeavor were by and large read by professionals residing in the EU member states or in EU-minded EaP countries.[68]

The content published on the Twitter account included not only specific disinformation claims but also more general reviews and policy analyses about the Russian disinformation strategies. While it had been clearly stated by various policy-makers as well as the Action Plan that "counter-propaganda" was not the EU's aim, the approach taken in the social media, to mix sober news with satire, remains a questionable communication choice. The account was launched on November 5th, 2015 had slightly over 8,500 followers as of August 2016. Even if the tweets were shared and retweeted, its audience was still insignificant in comparison with the millions targeted by the disinformation. A complete analysis of the disinformation published in the tweets falls outside the scope of this article, but some obvious trends about the disinformation can still be summarized: the Russian campaign effectively interwove its political aims with everyday news reports. At the end of 2015, Russian media focused strongly on Turkey, and sought to associate it with ISIS, Ukraine, and with the civil war in Syria. After the New Year, special attention was paid to the events in Cologne and the upcoming Dutch referendum on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.

Falling beyond the scope of foreign policy but relevant in this context, another perspective of the EU's response was the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)[69]. It was raised by the Baltic States who had conflicts with the Russian media channels, which were registered in other EU countries but broadcast in the Baltics. The shortcomings of the Directive were revealed when Latvia and Lithuania banned certain Russian

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[68] **EEAS** 2016. EU vs Disinformation, <http://eeas.europa.eu/euvsdisinfo> (accessed February 28, 2016).

[69] Under the given Directive, the issue of the Country of Origin Principle of media services was pertinent. Specifically, media services are regulated according to the law of the member state where the provider has been registered. A member state who is imposing stricter rules regarding the content or the provider, can only address the issue with the respective member state of origin, not with the specific provider.

TV channels for the incitement of hatred[70]. This resulted in the European Commission's extensive discussion of the issue[71] and proposals for public input regarding the Directive[72]. The Directive provides regulations for the entire EU media landscape and such changes would run the risk of placing independent media under the influence of policy-makers. While the review of the Directive was planned in the EU already before the crisis in Ukraine, the pressure regarding the Country of Origin Principle was very clearly exerted by the member states. For example, the Latvian EU presidency's non-paper on the disinformation campaign called for the completion of "the evaluation process of relevant audiovisual legislation as soon as possible" and the preparation of the "interim report on possible circumvention of national media laws" in an effort to counter Russian disinformation campaigns[73]. In the autumn of 2015, Latvia released a "green card" proposal on the revision of the same Directive regarding the regulation of hate speech. It argued that the EU is "increasingly witnessing a worrying trend of mass media becoming a powerful tool for spreading hate speech, intolerance and propaganda" and this should not be disregarded during the review process. The document also gave three specific suggestions for discussion: first, to extend the geographical scope of the Directive to include non-EU media providers targeting EU audiences; second, to adopt a fast-track reaction procedure in response to the incitement of hatred by the media provider; and third, to allow member states to take measures regarding "unacceptable content" on grounds of *inter* alia public policy and public security.[74] As mentioned above, these suggestions were a challenge for the review of the Directive.

In addition to the initiatives at the EU level, another countermeasure was launched in Europe, as a result of the feasibility study funded by the Netherlands[75]. This initiative was led by the European Endowment for Democracy

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[70] **Kropaite, Z**. 2015. Lithuania bans Russian TV station. – EUObserver, 9 April. <http://bit.ly/2c44dlY> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[71] **Discussion Paper on the Application of Articles 3 and 4 AVMSD** 2014. Case Study: Suspension of some Russian-language channels in Latvia and Lithuania, Doc CC AVMSD (2014) 4 rev.

[72] **European Commission** 2015b. Consultation on Directive 2010/13/EU on audiovisual media services (AVMSD), section 5. Single Market.

[73] **Rettman** 2015b.

[74] **Saeima of the Republic of Latvia** 2015. Proposal for the "green card" on the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13. European Affairs Committee, 26 November.

[75] **Rettman, A**. 2015c. EU mulls response to Russia's information war. – EUObserver, 8 January, <http://bit.ly/1AQw2l5> (accessed February 20, 2016).

(EED)[76]. The study outlined five "building blocks" to strengthen Russian language media in the region: "a regional Russian language news hub" for sharing quality news; a "content factory" of quality documentaries and entertainment; a "center for media excellence" to coordinate market research, professional training, media monitoring and media literacy; a "basket fund" consisting of governmental and non-governmental funding; and, finally, a "multimedia distribution platform" with a global brand to bring all of the above together[77]. As such, it meets the expectations of those EU member states interested in the more widespread response[78].

The EED was funded partly by the European Commission (€12m for 2016–2018)[79] but also received additional financing from the member states sympathetic to the aims of the EED. For example, the donor conference organized to support EED's initiative for Russian media plurality in Warsaw brought together 35 European countries, with Poland, Latvia and the Netherlands announcing additional support to the EED[80]. Despite the fact that the majority of EU member states became involved with the EED[81], the notable abstainees included France and Italy. Although the lack of financial support cannot be equated with the lack of political will, the various disagreements between member states had the potential to undermine the project. In spite of the close connections to the EU, the EED was seen as an alternative project to the East StratCom and its activities, especially as some member states became disillusioned with the EU's solution. It is thus unclear at this point,

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[76] EED is a joint political project of the EU and its member states, outlined in the renewed European Neighborhood Policy in 2011. The main aim of EED is to support democratic transitions in the European neighborhood and beyond, through providing grants to various activists and organizations.

[77] **EED** 2015a. Bringing Plurality & Balance to Russian Language Media – Final Recommendations. <http://bit.ly/2beygEK> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[78] **Gotev, G**. 2015. Latvia proposes 'alternative' to Russian TV propaganda. EurActiv.com, 8 January. <http://bit.ly/2bCgV8t> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[79] **EED** 2015b. European Parliament commends EED work with overwhelming majority. <http://bit.ly/2bfRPJt> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[80] **EED** 2015c. Supporting Russian Media Plurality: EED's role in Warsaw Donor Conference. <http://bit.ly/2bg1iFO> (accessed February 20, 2016); **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands** 2015. The Netherlands to support independent Russian-language media, 19 November. <http://bit.ly/1QYA8kf> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[81] Aside of the European Union, the countries funding the EED are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Canada is supporting the EED in the framework of a specific agreement. (As of August 20, 2016).

whether the two initiatives would be able to complement each other and to what extent.

Process tracing of the evolution of the EU policy towards Russia's disinformation campaign presents a useful example of the opportunities and challenges in the field of Europeanization of foreign policy. On the one hand, the uploading of national policy preferences to the EU could be observed in the form of emergent non-papers, Presidential initiatives, unofficial lobbying and Council decisions. The fact that the non-paper was signed by four member states does not mean that the document lacked the support of other member states; it is simply indicative of the procedure necessary to initiate discussion. The European Council's decision from March 2015 should be seen as the culmination of a successful uploading of policy preferences by those member states concerned with Russia's disinformation campaign. The member states with diverse policy preferences did not reach the agreement through the coercion of the EU, but rather arrived at the result after a strenuous negotiation process, bargaining between members, and the necessity of ameliorating an external (Russian) influence. Taking into account the length of the EU's decision-making process, the agreements regarding disinformation were for the most part reached within a six-month period (January to June 2015), which is a remarkably short time frame. It can be argued that the common vision regarding the role of the EU in the world and the understanding of the EU level solution as the best option are indicators of a common identity. The institutional solutions reflected a very 'European' character in line with the shared norms and values, but also regarding the practices of the policy process.

On the other hand, there are questions as to whether the EU's response adequately corresponded to the expectations of the member states that prioritized the issue, and the 'goodness of fit' of the institutional solution. Given the sense of urgency of the matter, the EU's response only led to a compromise decision, which was further attenuated by the EU's less discrete "culture of transparency"[82]. The member states for whom the disinformation issue was especially salient, were not satisfied with the EU's response and instead sought alternative routes of cooperation with other like-minded actors. This, however, correlates with the conclusions that can be found in the Europeanization literature regarding the prevalence of national policy preferences (especially in the case of strong national foreign policy) over

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[82] **Gotev, G.; Jacobsen, H**. 2015. Diplomat: EU is losing the propaganda battle. – EurActiv. com, 18 March. <http://bit.ly/2c43KjB> (accessed February 26, 2016).

a weak convergence over a longer period of time. Finally, it might also be argued that the "European outcome" does not necessarily mean that Europeanization is taking place but simply that the member states with strong national preferences make use of every available arena to pursue their own particular agenda. However, this explanation fails to take into account the importance of participation in the European process and the effect of socialization on all levels.

The role of the EU institutions in the evolution of this particular policy response reflected the traditional division of tasks. The European Parliament, which does not have much leadership in the policy development process still had the capabilities of influencing the environment in which the policy was formulated; its political statements promoted a stronger message than any other EU institution could, and as such was a salient example of the Europeanization process. The Council of the EU represented the main forum for intergovernmental debate and policy guidance. The decisions made in the Council reflected the degree of Europeanization among the national as well as the European political elites, the willingness to reach a joint agreement, and the power of fellow member states to exert pressure or pull back. The European Commission and EEAS acted as coordinators between different actors. The EEAS provided the institutional framework for the East StratCom Task Force which produced, in cooperation with the Commission and in line with the Council instructions, the Action Plan for Strategic Communication.

Finally, the impact of external influence to the processes of Europeanization cannot be ignored. The Ukraine crisis evolved into a major military and diplomatic confrontation in Europe and influenced the EU decision-making process. The Russian disinformation campaign specifically precipitated the institutional modifications in the EU and shaped the policy preferences of the member states. Given the topicality of the disinformation campaign as a policy subject, the European response was considered inevitable; and taking into account the uniqueness of the situation, the complete unpredictability and lack of previous experience with the issue, it is evident that the EU response signifies the expansion of competences into new policy areas which affects both its member states as well as other peripheral institutions.

4. Conclusion

This article analyzed the evolution of the European Union's policy responses to the Russian disinformation campaign. While such campaign was long acknowledged in the European capitals, the reactions of the policy-makers

were slow to emerge. Never before had the EU and its policies been concerned with a hybrid attack that was targeted at the Union and its member states, and on such an unprecedented scale. The fact that the topic reached the EU's agenda and that the EU member states and institutions favored a European response signifies the expansion of the EU foreign policy competences and marks another small step in direction of the Europeanization of member states' foreign policy.

The institutional and political responses of the EU to the Russian disinformation campaign included the launch of a special East StratCom Task Force within the EEAS as a completely new institutional entity, the adoption of the Action Plan for Strategic Communication, and enhanced support for the European Endowment for Democracy. Process tracing the EU's actions illustrates the difficult process of foreign policy decision-making and the enhanced challenges that the EU faces in the new security environment. More specifically, the article asserted that the fight against disinformation can be analyzed in the context of the Europeanization of national foreign policy. Despite the EU's reluctant and, in the eyes of many, insufficient reactions, it is evident that various external (third countries) and internal (member states) pressures led to changes at the political, institutional, and procedural level, indicating the augmentation of the Europeanization processes.

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KREMLIN PROPAGANDA:
SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES BY OTHER MEANS

Yevhen Fedchenko

■

Abstract

This article traces the evolution of Russian propaganda and its role in active measures. Active measures were originally conceived during the Soviet era but still remain operative as they were recently deployed during the Russian occupation of Crimea and the war against Ukraine in Donbas. During these events active measures underwent something of a renaissance as there was the dramatic upsurge in propaganda usage and media manipulation. Fake media stories and forgeries have long played an integral part in the active measures that have been conducted by the Kremlin, which then amends its military capacity and diplomacy efforts to cover up the deceit. The manufacture and dissemination of fake news stories is carried out in a centralized and systematic fashion as the fabrications must be coherent and maintain alignment with the Kremlin's policies and talking points. It will be shown that the use of media-related active measures is not a new phenomenon and was widely utilized by the former Soviet Union as a way of actualizing its foreign policy by clandestine means. When examining more than 500 Russian propaganda pieces, which were debunked by the StopFake.org verification project, it becomes evident that the same of falsification and deception patterns that were common to the USSR already in the 1950's, are still present today. The only difference is the parasitic way in which the current Kremlin propaganda has seized on core liberal Western concepts, such as the promotion of freedom of speech, and then used this as a screen to allow it to deliver 'the other point of view'. Whereas before the Kremlin historically relied on traditional media, such as printed news to distribute its fake news stories, it now makes use of a much wider array of mediums such as the internet and social media.

What are active measures?

The Russian occupation of Crimea and the war against Ukraine in Donbas was an apogee in terms of propaganda usage, media manipulations, fake news stories, and forgeries propounded by the Kremlin. These are a just a part of the active measures conducted by Russia, which then amends its military capacity and diplomatic actions to conceal the deception. These actions are part of an overall strategy that has been termed hybrid war.

Peter Pomerantsev describes the concept of hybrid war:

> Described by scholars as 'hybrid', 'full-spectrum', 'non-linear', 'next-generation', or 'ambiguous'—the variations in the description indicate the slipperiness of the subject—these conflicts mix psychological, media, economic, cyber, and military operations without requiring a declaration of war[1].

The War in the Eastern Ukraine has been devastating and traumatic for the local populace but has had limited national impact, and received even less attention outside of Ukraine, especially since the ceasefire under the auspices of the Minsk agreements was signed. Yet this does not mean that the information war has ceased. As a component of hybrid war, information war is especially alarming because its influences are proliferating and it is having more of a global impact as an increasing number of countries find traces of Russian active measure occurring in their territory.

Information warfare and active measures have evolved since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ways in which media-related active measures were used separates the Soviet information war from contemporary Russian hybrid war. The Soviet Union considered these activities to mainly be part of covert operations that never were publicly declared, articulated or disclosed and could not be traced back to any Soviet government agencies. The present Russian government coopts these instruments of public opinion manipulation and makes them a visible part of the public discourse for domestic and foreign audiences.

President Putin has used a similar approach to openly describe the importance of the informational component of the military strategy of Russia. At the opening of RT's Spanish-language broadcasting facility in Argentina he stated: "The rapid progress of electronic media has made news reporting

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[1] <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/war-2015-china-russia-isis/422085/> (accessed February 9, 2016).

enormously important and turned it into a formidable weapon that enables the manipulation of public opinion"[2].

The Kremlin considers such manipulation to not only serve as an important instrument for conducting foreign policy, but also to serve as an instrument for conducting or supplementing military warfare. The Russian military doctrine that was adopted in December 2014 emphasizes the importance of information and information technologies:

> *11. There is a tendency towards shifting the military risks and military threats to the information space*
> *12.l) The use of information and communication technologies for the military-political purposes to take actions which run counter to international law, and which are aimed against sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity of states and posing threat to international peace, security, global and regional stability*
> *13.c) subversive information activities against the population, especially young citizens of the State, aimed at undermining historical, spiritual and patriotic traditions related to the defense of the Motherland.*[3]

An older version of the Military Doctrine from 2010 also mentioned (article 13d) of use of information war /…/ to pre-empt the use of the military force or to form positive public opinion after the use of military force[4].

Anatoliy Nogovitsyn, former Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, defines the role of information in hybrid war as follows:

> *The disorganization of the functioning of key military, industrial, and administrative facilities and systems of the enemy and also the information-psychological effect on his military-political leadership, troops, and population with the use of modern information technologies and means*[5].

During the opening of the RT Spanish broadcasting facility in Argentina on July 2014, President Putin also focused on the importance of media, especially electronic media (first of all television but also Internet):

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[2]   <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46762> (accessed January 15, 2016).

[3]   <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47334> (accessed February 05, 2016).

[4]   See <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461> (accessed January 15, 2016).

[5]   **Nogovitsyn, Anatoliy** 2009. At the Centre of Attention—Information Security. – Krasnaya Zvezda, 34, February 27, 2009, p. 1.

> *Intense media warfare has become a mark of the times, when certain nations attempt to monopolize the truth and use it in their own interests.*[6]

When Putin speaks of media warfare, he is talking about a war that is being conducted against Russia by unnamed countries. Although the Russian President does not specifically mention who is conducting this war, it is apparent that he means the West in general, and the United States and NATO in particular. This is also overtly stated in the Military Doctrine. This policy puts Moscow reactively in a defensive position and necessitates retaliation:

> *In <u>a speech to Russia's Academy of Military Sciences in January 2013</u>, Chief-of-Staff Valery Gerasimov complained that Russian knowledge of asymmetric warfare was "superficial." The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the United States in particular, had demonstrated their mastery of nonmilitary campaigns in the Arab Spring and Ukraine's pro-Western Orange Revolution in 2004, Gerasimov said. Such modesty is disingenuous. Disinformation and subversion as weapons of war are as old as catapults and cavalry. The Kremlin's advantage in the information age is that all of Russia's major media outlets are under its control, allowing it to hammer its audience with one, unified message. The Kremlin claim that it's in an "information war" with the West implies that there is vast conspiracy among myriad media in the United States and Europe, public and private, to produce the same lies about Russia.*[7]

Russia perfectly grasps the importance of propaganda and heavily invests money and human talent into organizations that broadcast to an international audience like RT (formerly known as Russia Today), Sputnik International (formerly known as the Voice of Russia), Ruptly, RIA (that still operate as a brand in Russian), TASS, Russia Insider, Russia Beyond the Headlines (RBTH) and a myriad of other sources of propaganda, fake news stories and falsifications. Some of these "media" organizations are well-known propaganda brands from the Cold War era, while others are quite new.

RT was created in 2005, immediately after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and was fully operational by the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008. Sputnik International was launched during the Euromaidan uprising in Kyiv.

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[6] <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46762> (accessed January 15, 2016).

[7] <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2016/02/07/russia-having-success-in-hybrid-war-against-germany/> (accessed February 21, 2016).

Both RT and Sputnik International have dropped the word "Russian" from their brand names, which is quite interesting but explainable. They do not work for the Russian market, their coverage is not primarily Russia, and they do not promote the nation branding of Russia as many have asserted. For example, Shawn Powers calls RT

> *a part of global engagement strategy that combines Russian and international media platforms to communicate and articulate Russian foreign policy. The most developed of these is Russia Today (RT), which is a Russian satellite television broadcasting system similar to Qatar's Al Jazeera or France 24.*[8]

The editor in chief of RT, Margarita Simonyan, offers an altogether different rationale for RT that is not at all connected to nation branding:

> *To some extent, if you are not equipped for broadcasting abroad – then it's like you do not have the army. When there is no war you do not need it. But when the war has already started you cannot create it in a week.*[9]

The website of Sputnik International states that their mission is "offer guidance in a multipolar world, while respecting every country's national interests, culture, history and traditions". The reality, however, is precisely the opposite, as the Kremlin "has systematically learnt to use the principles of liberal democracies against them in what we call here "the weaponization of information"[10].

In other words, the Kremlin is using these so called 'media' organizations to deny other societies their right to their own culture, history and traditions, and does so through the twisting of facts, the dissemination of fake news stories, and falsifications in order to undermine the policy making process or compromise certain core values and institutions:

> *Like RT, the German branch of Sputnik – named after the satellite that established the Soviet claim to supremacy in space almost 60 years ago – is part of the Rossiya Segodnya media empire. Its mandate is to broadcast Moscow's*

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[8] **Powers, S**. 2011. U.S. international broadcasting: An untapped resource for ethnic and domestic news organization. In Public Policy and Funding the News. Retrieved from < http://fundingthenews.usc.edu/related_research/4_Carnegie_USInternationalBroadcasting.pdf> (accessed February 05, 2016).

[9] <https://daily.afisha.ru/archive/gorod/archive/ministry-of-truth-simonyan/> (accessed February 24, 2016).

[10] <http://www.interpretermag.com/the-menace-of-unreality-how-the-kremlin-weaponizes-information-culture-and-money/> (accessed February 24, 2016).

worldview at Putin's behest. Dmitry Kiselyov, the Kremlin's chief propagan-
dist, serves as Sputnik's general director. The only Russian journalist on the
EU sanctions list against Moscow, he sees himself as being involved in an
"information war." In fact, he says, this is the "primary form of warfare"
today.[11]

The core of the Kremlin's propaganda, both inside and outside Russia, is a
post-modernist denial of everything. It is aimed at the total destruction of
the entire liberal concept of western society including democracy itself as
well as its constituent elements such as free media, fair elections, effective
governance, and the right of people to self-determination and self-govern-
ance. There is no new ideology contained in current Russian propaganda,
because Russia does not have a single, individual ideology. Instead, it
borrows a little from everything. In this way, the system produces a large
number of "small propagandas", each of them targeting a specific audience.
The more messages, the better as this effectively augments confusion. To
paraphrase Peter Pomerantsev, one could argue that the aim is not to provide
a sole, unified narrative, but to rather create many clashing narratives in order
to confuse different audiences with different messages:

> *Unlike in the Cold War, when Soviets largely supported leftist groups, a fluid*
> *approach to ideology now allows the Kremlin to simultaneously back far-left*
> *and far-right movements, greens, anti-globalists and financial elites. The aim*
> *is to exacerbate divides and create an echo chamber of Kremlin support.*[12]

Although Russian propaganda peaked during the war in Ukraine, it was not
something that came out of a vacuum. It was in fact a continuation of Soviet
propaganda, which never really disappeared, even after the collapse of the
Soviet Union. In reality the active measures that are now being used were
simply reviewed, rebuilt, transformed, and then applied towards contempo-
rary situations with increased efficiency.

The current Russian propaganda system is often compared to that of the
Soviets during the Cold War. This is because the objectives of the current
government are the same as they were then, thus modern propaganda borrows
and uses similar techniques from the KGB handbook. This makes many terms
easily recognizable. Phrases such as the "puppeteers from Washington", and

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[11] <http://www.interpretermag.com/the-menace-of-unreality-how-the-kremlin-weaponizes-
information-culture-and-money/> (accessed February 24, 2016).

[12] *Ibid.*

"foreign agents" are familiar, yet current propaganda also differs greatly in terms of quantity, quality and the mediums that it uses.

Ideology was a central element of the propaganda of the Soviet Union, which clashed with the values-based counter-propaganda coming from the West. The central role played by the communist ideology ultimately rendered Soviet propaganda weak and ineffective, and ultimately such ideological narratives only appealed to left-leaning political groups or countries.

The US Department of State's, Bureau of Public Affair's, "Special Report on Soviet active measures" from 1981, summarizes some of propaganda setbacks of the Soviets stating that: "Soviet use of Marxist-Leninist ideology to appeal to foreign groups often turns out to be an obstacle to the promotion of Soviet goals in some areas; it is now being deemphasized though not completely abandoned"[13].

In order to offset these setbacks, the Soviets adopted the concept of active measures (*aktivnyye meropriyatiya*) that refers to operations intended to "affect other nations policies, as distinct from espionage and counterintelligence. Some Soviet active measures included:

- *written or spoken disinformation;*
- *efforts to control media in foreign countries;*
- *use of Communist parties and front organizations;*
- *clandestine radio broadcasting;*
- *blackmail, personal and economic;*
- *political influence operations.*[14]

These methods are summarized by the Active Measures Working Group – the interagency taskforce, which was formed in 1981 in order to counter the effects of active measures. The organization was initially under the United States Department of State and then later became part of the United States Information Agency (USIA). In their annual reports produced from 1981 until 1989, the AMWG provided a detailed account of the use of active measures by Soviet Union.

A very important insight into active measures practices of the Soviet Union can also be gleaned from the books written by defectors from the Soviet Union or its satellite socialist states. These individuals often had

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[13] <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Forgery,%20Disinformation,%20Political%20Operations%20October%201981.pdf> (accessed January 28, 2016).

[14] *Ibid.*

worked inside the disinformation system and had a firsthand glance of its operations. Ladislav Bittman, Mihai Pacepa, Anatoliy Golitsyn, Stanislav Levchenko, and Vasili Mitrokhin were all intimately acquainted with the active measures practices of the Soviet Union and gave striking evidence.

Ladislav Bittman was a former StB Czechoslovak intelligence officer, who defected to the West in 1968. He summarizes some of the methods that were in used during the Soviet era:

> *Forgeries/.../ are classified into two major categories. The first category includes misleading information (disinformation) that contributes to poor policy decisions among government leaders. This type of fake usually does not require or receive widespread attention of the media. The second type, propagandistic forgery, seeks to mold public opinion in a target country. Propagandistic forgeries take a number of different forms: leaflets in the name of non-existent organizations, counterfeit pamphlets circulated to key individuals and groups, facsimiles and subtle alterations of official publications, reproduction and shading of entire issues of newspapers and magazines, fake personal letters, and phony bank statements. Even duplicate best-sellers have been offered to publishing houses.*[15]

Moscow's approach included the application of many instruments related to media manipulations, such as general control of the media in foreign countries, complete or partial forgery of media stories, the establishment of bogus media organizations abroad, and the exploitation of journalists who were recruited to serve as collaborators in order to influence the policies of their home nation.

The above description is illustrative because it enumerates exactly the same set of tools that is currently being used by the Kremlin in its deception and disinformation practices. Fake news and forgeries are essential components of active measures and are of especial interest. They will be discussed in greater detail later on.

Another key factor is the existence of a chain of command and the hierarchy that is necessary to produce fake news and forgeries. In order to find the mastermind behind this elaborate system it is worthwhile to take a closer look at how this system was managed in the past. According to the Active Measure Working group report,

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[15] **Bittman, L**. 1985. The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View. Pergamon Press, p. 96. [**Bittman** 1985]

Depending on its sensitivity and importance, approval for a forgery may be obtained from the KGB leadership, the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, or the Secretariat of the Central Committee itself. KGB specialists prepare the forgery under the supervision of the active measures section of the KGBs First Chief Directorate.[16]

According to the "Soviet Active Measures in The Post-Cold War' Era 1988–1991" Report, it was the International Information Department (IDD) of the CPSU Central Committee that was tasked with the manufacture of fake news and forgeries. An examination of its internal organizational chart could offer some guidance as to how the system might be organized today:

The IDD was divided into 6 sectors organized around geographical and functional lines. Each sector employed about half a dozen professionals, who determined the themes, arguments, and information used in Soviet foreign propaganda and the treatment of international affairs in the Soviet press. After these were decided upon, the IID and its successors would hold regular meetings to issue their guidance on international information issues to Novosti, TASS, Radio Moscow, Radio Peace and Progress, and other leading Soviet media.[17]

When past methods are compared to current operations, then it must be concluded that there does in fact exist an effective hierarchical system of management that coordinates the production of fake news and disseminates it, across multiple platforms, throughout the world. Without such a management system, it would be impossible to achieve the high level of cohesion between active measures, policy making, the military and the diplomatic corps, and to coordinate and obfuscate events such as the Crimean occupation, and the war in the Eastern Ukraine.

If the Soviet model of command is used as a template then the KGB would be replaced with the FSB and the SVR, who divide their responsibilities according to their spheres of competence and whether the Russian domestic audience or international audience respectively are being targeted. And the GRU, which is in charge of foreign military intelligence, must also

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[16] **Soviet Active Measures: Focus on Forgeries**. Foreign Affairs Note, United States Department of State Washington, D.C. April 1983, <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Department%20of%20State%20Note%20Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Focus%20on%20Forgeries%20April%201983.pdf> (accessed January 30, 2016). [**Soviet Active Measures** 1983]

[17] <http://intellit.muskingum.edu/russia_folder/pcw_era/sect_03.htm> (accessed February 01, 2016).

be deeply involved in the planning and conducting of active measures, especially as the Russian Ministry of Defense conducts its military operations. The International Department and the International Information Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party would be replaced by the Kremlin itself meaning that the Kremlin must currently direct and coordinate active measures. Newsweek quotes Ilya Ponomarev, an opposition Duma deputy:

> *That role is played by Putin's deputy chief of staff, Alexei Gromov, who calls in chief editors to coordinate the Kremlin line. Gromov distributes the orders to the mainstream media in Moscow, /.../ and his orders are as strict as any in the army.*[18]

Further pro proof of the Kremlin orchestrating this system of management comes from the text messages hacked by Anonymous International. The texts show that several high-ranking Kremlin officials working in the Presidential Administration, the Government and the ruling United Russia Party are involved in the planning and conducting of media-related active measures. These individuals include Vyacheslav Volodin, Timur Prokopenko, Arkadiy Dvorkovich, Robert Shlegel as well as others[19].

Just as the Soviet leadership, always insisted on the defensive character of their active measures, the current Russian leadership also justifies its actions in the same manner and invokes its moral superiority:

> *The KGB's active-measures doctrine improbably insisted that its influence operations were 'radically different in essence from the disinformation to which Western agencies resort in order to deceive public opinion': the KGB disinformation operations are progressive; they are designed to mislead not the working people but their enemies – the ruling circles of capitalism – in order to induce them to act in a certain way, or abstain from actions contrary to the interests of the USSR; they promote peace and social progress; they serve international détente; they are humane, creating the conditions for the noble struggle for humanity's bright future.*[20]

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[18] <http://europe.newsweek.com/pushing-kremlin-line-251587?rm=eu> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[19] <http://tsn.ua/special-projects/liar/> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[20] **Andrew, C**. 2006. The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the the Third World – Newly Revealed Secrets from the Mitrokhin Archive. Basic Books, p. 188. [**Andrew** 2006]

The same idea of moral superiority can be found in views of one of the public faces of contemporary Russian propaganda, Dmitry Kiselev, who

> *with typical brio, argued that East and West appeared to be trading places. In Russia we now take full advantage of freedom of speech, whereas in the West political correctness, or political expediency in the name of security, have become arguments against freedom of speech.*[21]

The ideas of freedom of speech, invoking the moral high ground in the information battle with the West, and offering access to alternative points of view via the Russian 'media' have become cornerstone concepts of Kremlin propaganda. This legacy was inherited from the Soviet past. In Putin's speech for the opening of the RT Spanish 24/7 broadcasting in Argentina in July 2014, he stated:

> *Your nation is now getting a reputable and, most importantly, reliable source of information on the events and developments in Russia and worldwide. The right to information is one of the most important and inalienable human rights.*[22]

The statements are however belied by the dissemination of more fake news disguised as real news. The individuals conducting these activities care very little about being caught lying as the audiences will have already consumed the material, thereby making it very difficult to disprove:

> *Although the fabricators are aware that once a document appears in print the supposed author will promptly deny its authenticity, the Soviets calculate that a denial will never entirely offset the damage from news stories based on the forgery*[23].

To make sure that fake news stories are taken at face value by the intended audiences, the publisher will create a composite story that is not completely false but rather combines some of factual information with complete fiction. This mixture of actual facts and mistruths, together with some irrelevant details to make 'news' looking more realistic creates stories from an alternative reality that aligns with the overarching goals of the Kremlin. The investigative journalist Andrei Soldatov describes it as follows: "Active measures

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[21] <http://europe.newsweek.com/pushing-kremlin-line-251587?rm=eu> (accessed February 20, 2016).

[22] <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46762> (accessed January 15, 2016).

[23] **Soviet Active Measures** 1983.

were based on 95 percent objective information to which something was added to turn the data into targeted information or disinformation.[24]"

Also important for a comparative perspective between the Russian and Soviet active measures is an evaluation of each their respective scales. The Soviet forgeries detected by the inter-agency Active Measures Working Group totaled only 4 cases in 1980, 7 in 1981, 9 in 1982, and 12 in 1983[25].

Although during the late Soviet period the number of forgeries increased from year to year, the output never came close to the levels of contemporary Russian active measures. In just 2 years, the number of fake news stories that were debunked by StopFake.org amount to more than 500 cases. Part of the reason for this disparity can be attributed to expense. According to the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at the National Defense University (NDU),

> *conducting more intense disinformation campaign was expensive for the Soviet Union, with estimated spending of about $3 to 4 billion per year in hard currency at the beginning of the 1980s. By the end of the decade, some insiders believed that the Soviet Union was spending three to five times that much.*[26]

In addition to extensive outlay, believability and deniability were also essential components of Soviet propaganda. Moreover in order to ensure that fake information appeared more credible and trustworthy, and to avoid direct responsibility, or if necessary, to go so far as to use it in a false flag operation Soviet propaganda would actively employ Communist proxy newspapers to deliver their propaganda messages. Ideally – non-Communist media would also propagate the message. Very often information would be attributed to newspapers such as The Morning Star (British socialist newspaper), L'Humanite (daily newspaper of French Communist party), and Rude Pravo (the newspaper of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia). After being printed in one or several of these papers, the Soviet propaganda outlets could then 'quote'.

Ladislav Bittman explains why it was important to do it this way:

> *to maintain an aura of authenticity, disinformation must first appear through a mass medium not openly identifiable as pro-Communist. A journalist-agent*

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[24] **Soldatov, A**. 2011. The New nobility of the KGB. Public Affairs, p. 184. [**Soldatov** 2011]

[25] <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-11.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2016).

[26] *Ibid.*

working for a reputable publication is usually supplied with disinformation and told how to write the story. In most cases, the initial appearance of sensational materials is enough to start a chain reaction of further publicity as other media outlets become interested in the subject. Local communist newspapers are left out of the game to act according to their ideological bias and editorial decision. Even the reaction of Pravda, /.../ does not provide the key for understanding the real purpose of the KGB Strategy.[27]

Manipulation of foreign media is a widespread technique of modern active measures as well. If Russian propaganda is unable to place their doctored stories in Western mainstream media, then they will simply invent fake citations.

In 2015 several Russian web-based media outlets (including the fake Kharkov News Agency, which is actually based in Russia) distorted an actual New York Times article by titling it: "Nazi Terrorist 'Death Squads' Exterminate Ethnic Russians in the Eastern Ukraine" The article falsely cited a nonexistent article from the New York Times about "the extermination of ethnic Russians in the Eastern Ukraine" by Ukrainian volunteer battalions. The actual New York Times article was about three Chechen battalions fighting alongside the Ukrainian army in the eastern part of the country[28].

On October 22nd, 2015 the Russia's Ministry of Defense television network Zvezda posted a false report on its website claiming that the "Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk accuses the leader of the Batkivshchyna political party, Yulia Tymoshenko, of sexual harassment." It was claimed that the original source for the story was an interview given by Yatsenyuk to a journalist of the Russian service of Radio France Internationale (RFI), Elena Servettaz. The RFI Russian service, however, immediately denied that it had made any such report and condemned Zvezda for both making up the sexual harassment story and involving RFI in its distorted coverage[29].

During the initial stages of Russia's intervention in Syria, the Russian website Ukraina.ru, which belongs to the MIA Rossiaya Segodnya International Information Agency, (formerly RIA Novosti) published a story written by a relatively unknown American author named Jack Smith. The story argued that Russia was an important player in Syria, and that

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[27] **Bittman** 1985, p. 89.

[28] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/russian-media-falsely-cite-new-york-times/> (accessed February 25, 2016).

[29] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/zvezda-falsely-cites-radio-france-internationale-for-sexual-harassment-report/> (accessed February 25, 2016)

Washington was obliged to treat it as an equal. The site presented the story as if it had been published in the prestigious Foreign Policy Magazine, whereas in fact, the cited article had only appeared on an obscure private web site called Foreign Policy Journal[30].

The documentary "Ukraine: Masks of revolution" by the French journalist Paul Moreira can be considered another example of the Kremlin security apparatus manipulating foreign media, however, in this particular instance it occurred without the journalist's prior knowledge or deliberate involvement. The film was commissioned and shown recently by the French commercial TV channel CANAL+, and included many factual mistakes and irregularities which unintentionally were in complete alignment with the Kremlin's narrative of events in Ukraine. According to Galya Ackerman, Executive Director of the Paris-based "European Forum-Ukraine", this is a good example of active measures, conducted in the classical Soviet tradition, wherein Western journalists are exploited (without their knowledge):

> It is one thing when documentary like this is shown on (Russian) NTV channel or spread by Sputnik International, but when it's broadcasted by (French) CANAL+ – that's quite another pair of shoes[31].

The Soviet legacy of exploiting journalists and their narratives was often taken a step further. In order to 'use' the foreign media to plant the desired fake stories, the USSR found that they would need to create and sustain their own alternative media. The Soviet government would use any means necessary to control, buy or gain access to journalists in foreign countries. Often this was done by simply supporting media establishments in other countries.

For example, according to the report "Soviet Active Measures in The Post-Cold War' Era 1988–1991", the Soviet Union helped to launch the Indian newspaper the Patriot "with KGB funds in order to spread Soviet propaganda and disinformation". This newspaper was later used to break one of the most infamous 'news item' in the history of Soviet active measures, by alleging that that the US government was involved in 'creating' AIDS as part of its biological warfare research and development. Later the same

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[30] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-using-foreign-policy-s-banner-to-tell-a-pro-russian-story/> (accessed February 26, 2016).

[31] <http://m.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/media/specoperaciya-la-francaise> (accessed February 5, 2016).

newspaper "falsely claimed that the U.S. was encouraging Turkey to seize northern Iraq[32]".

Another example of Soviet influence of a foreign media outlet is the German Magazine *Geheim*,which was founded by Michael Opperskalski in 1985. Although there is no evidence of a direct connection between Opperskalski and the Soviets, Herbert Romerstein (a member of the Active Measures Working Group) advances some troubling findings in his book "Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda, and Political Warfare". He quotes Hubertus Knabe, a leading German expert on Stasi activities, who "identified the publisher of Geheim with the code name 'Abraham' as Michael Opperskalski[33]". Opperskalsi closed his magazine in 1992 but then resumed publishing in 2002. He is now a regular contributor to RT."[34]

Another difference between the Soviet and Russian active measures is that the Kremlin now takes full advantage of the Internet and social media in order to disseminate their message. These platforms were not available in the Soviet era. Their advent now allows Russia to create and use anonymous sources to spread fake news stories that will later be picked up by mainstream media.

For example, on August 30, 2015 RT published a translated, anonymous post from the blog, Blauer Bote (Blue Courier), in which the writer summarized an article from the Kyiv Post. The original article was about an Azov Battalion children's training camp. Yet while the Kyiv Post article is neutral, the anonymous writer of the German blog deliberately exaggerated and subjectively radicalized the report in his recounting. The writer also included a collection of news stories on the controversial topic of Ukrainian far right nationalists. The exaggerated piece was then picked up by Russia Today. It was presented under the headline "Blauer Bote: Kiyv Newspaper Boasted of Hitler Youth Camps". – Moreover, RT erroneously described some of the material therein as opinion pieces originating from reputable German media outlets. The website, however, offers neither contact information nor the names of the writers[35].

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[32] <http://intellit.muskingum.edu/russia_folder/pcw_era/sect_09a.htm> (accessed February 24, 2016).

[33] **Waller, J. M**. (ed.) 2009. Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda, and Political Warfare. Institute of World Politics Press, p. 172.

[34] <https://www.rt.com/op-edge/188416-ukraine-special-status-cold-war/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[35] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/russian-and-separatist-media-continue-citing-anonymous-blogs-as-official-media/> (accessed February 24, 2016).

The current disinformation campaign is simply a continuation of the policies that began during the Soviet era and endured throughout the Perestroika and Glasnost era. In short, Soviet active measures never actually went away. During the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in 1986, USIA Director Charles Wick confronted Gorbachev personally about Soviet disinformation and Gorbachev responded by saying "no more lies, no more disinformation[36]".

According to A Report to Congress by the United States Information Agency "Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost" published in March 1988,

> *Since the December 1987 summit, state-controlled Soviet media have falsely claimed or suggested that: the United States manufactured the AIDS virus in a U.S. military facility at Fort Detrick, Maryland [Radio Moscow, Feb. 13, 1988]; the United States is manufacturing an ethnic weapon that kills only non-whites [TASS, Jan. 9, 1988; January 1988 Novosti Military Bulletin; Radio Moscow, Feb. 5, 19881; the FBI assassinated Rev. Martin Luther King [Literaturnaya Gazeta Jan. 20, 1988]; the head of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Commission conference in Geneva, Armando Valladares, was jailed in Cuba for bombing stores [Izvestia, Feb. 6, 1988]; 2 the CIA assassinated Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, Indian Prime minister Indira Gandhi, and attempted to assassinate Pope John Paul II [Moscow Television, Feb. 9, 1988].[37]*

The Active Measures Working group tasked with monitoring Soviet active measures ceased their activities in 1989. After this date there were no further annual reports summarizing the Soviet activities in this field.

But another Report to Congress titled, "Soviet Active Measures Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations" predicted that:

> *there is every reason to believe that the Soviet leadership will continue to make heavy investments of money and manpower in meddlesome and disruptive operations around the world. While Soviet active measures can be exposed, as they have often been in the past, the Soviets are becoming more sophisticated, especially in forgeries and political influence operations. Unless the targets of Soviet active measures take effective action to counter them, these activities will continue to trouble both industrialized and developing countries.[38]*

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[36] **Waller, J. M**. (ed.) 2007. The Public Diplomacy Reader. Lulu.com, p. 355. [**Waller** 2007]

[37] <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20 in%20the%20Era%20of%20Glasnot%20March%201988.pdf> (accessed February 24, 2016).

[38] <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Forgery,%20Disinformation,%20Political%20Operations%20October%201981.pdf> (accessed January 28, 2016).

The Perestroika historian Brian Crozier also identified a troubling feature of this interim period. During Gorbachev's Perestroika there were disturbing aspects of the Soviet government that the West simply overlooked in its excitement. He writes:

> there was, however, a hidden dimension to perestroika, which passed largely unnoticed by the Western media and by Western political leaders: the restructuring of the "active measures" apparatus. In contrast to the "restructuring" of the economy, the perestroika of the overt and covert propaganda apparatus of the Soviet Union was considerably strengthened and made more sophisticated under Gorbachev.[39]

Andrei Soldatov, an expert on Russian security and Russia's intelligence apparatus, also confirms that the Soviet Union continued their active measure operations into the 2000s:

> When the First Chief Directorate was renamed the Foreign Intelligence Service, its Section A was renamed the Section of Assistance Operations. In the early 1990s, the CIA had asked the foreign intelligence service to stop carrying out 'active measures' that undermined the national security of the United States. As a result, the section was given a new name, but its methods, structure, and employees were retained.[40]

Instead of being dismantled, the Soviet propaganda apparatus was carefully revitalized in order to make it more modern and more effective. Valentin Falin, the head of the Novosti Press Agency, and later the head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was one of the architects of this reform. It was he who envisioned the innovative methods for propaganda manufacture and dissemination which would later become actualized in the creation of RT and Sputnik International. Falin writes:

> Under capitalism information is the main commodity and you need to sell this commodity. If the government does this – it's doomed to fail. We need to create a state-public company subordinate to the Communist party Central Committee that will combine the Novosti Press agency APN, TASS, the State TV and the Radio Committee, the State Publishing Committee, the State

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[39] **Crozier, B**. 1996. The Other Side of Perestroika. The Hidden Dimension of the Gorbachev Era. – Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization, Vol. 4, No. 1 / Winter 1996. <https://www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/04-1_Crozier.PDF> (accessed February 01, 2016).

[40] **Soldatov** 2011, p. 184.

Cinema Comittee, and the Union of Journalists. The Central Committee should start its own TV channel, TV Pravda and also a global video news agency.[41]

Russian active measures and fake news in Ukraine

Peter Pomeratsev describes the influence of Russian propaganda on Ukraine as follows:

In the case of Russia's ongoing campaign in Ukraine, for example, hyper-intense Russian propaganda has cultivated unrest inside the country by sowing enmity among segments of Ukrainian society and confusing the West with waves of disinformation, while Russian proxy forces and covert troops launch just enough military offensives to ensure that the Ukrainian government looks weak. The point is not to occupy territory – Russia could easily annex rebel-held eastern Ukraine – but to destabilize Ukraine psychologically and advance a narrative of the country as a "failed state", thus destroying the will and support inside Ukraine and internationally for reforms that would make Kiev more independent from Moscow.[42]

Ben Nimo describes anatomy of Russian info-war against Ukraine with the concept of 4Ds:

Russia's narrative can be viewed as an offensive weapon: Its effect is to discredit the West and shift the blame for the Ukraine crisis onto Western shoulders. When it comes to defending Russia, different tactics are used. They can be summed up in four words: dismiss, distort, distract, dismay.[43]

To better understand the content of the media-related active measures, an examination of materials, researched by the fact-checking project Stopfake. org, which was launched in March 2014 by faculty, students and alumni of the Mohyla School of Journalism in Kyiv, Ukraine is instructive.

Since its inception the Stopfake team has been augmented by journalists, editors, programmers, translators, and others who are concerned about the proliferation of propaganda. The main purpose of this Project is to check

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[41] **Фалин, В**. Конфликты в Кремле. Сумерки богов по-русски. <http://mreadz.com/new/index.php?id=274462> (accessed February 2, 2016), c. 48.

[42] <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/12/war-2015-china-russia-isis/422085/> (accessed February 9, 2016).

[43] <http://www.cepolicy.org/publications/anatomy-info-war-how-russias-propaganda-machine-works-and-how-counter-it> (accessed February 05, 2016).

facts, verify information, and refute verifiable disinformation about the events in Ukraine that are being covered by the media. The StopFake team does not represents, nor supported by any particular political party, or commercial organization. This also includes the Ukrainian government. The project is solely focused on maintaining journalistic standards of distributing accurate information.

In its 2 years of its existence Stopfake.org has analyzed, fact-checked and debunked more than 500 stories from Russian media sources (this includes TV, print and internet media, as well as social media, both Government-controlled and private – which is essentially under quasi-governmental control).

The debunked stories can be divided into different types and categories depending on the themes, the means (text, photo, video, meme) and the target audience, i.e. whether it for the Russian domestic audience, the Ukrainian audience, the US/European, or the rest of the world/global audience. We also differentiate stories based on the platforms used to spread them.

By analyzing 500 items of debunked disinformation (fake news stories) we have been able to identify 18 major fake narratives themes that are commonly used by Russian propaganda. They are as follows:

1. *Coup d'état* and Western-backed junta
2. Ukraine as a 'fascist state'
3. Ukraine as a 'failed state'
4. Russia is not a part of the occupation/war
5. The Ukrainian army
6. Volunteer battalions
7. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to Russia
8. Territorial disintegration of Ukraine
9. 'Territorial claims' from neighboring countries
10. Fake legitimization of Crimea annexation and occupation of Donbass by foreign governments, international organizations or foreign media
11. War in Ukraine is actually conducted by the US, NATO or private contractors
12. Decline of Western support for Ukraine
13. International organizations manipulated
14. Ukraine and the EU
15. Disintegration of the EU, decay of the US and West in general
16. MH17
17. AIDS/ZIKA/ other disease stories
18. Ukraine/Turkey/Syria/ISIS

In order to gain a better perspective of the 18 main disinformation themes, it is also worthwhile to do a more detailed analysis of those current propaganda messages that echo the earlier Soviet propaganda patterns. The most common way of depicting post-Maidan Ukraine was to describe events in terms of a *coup d'état*, that is to say a Western-backed group (mostly US-backed junta) seizing power and implementing fascism as the defining ideology of emerging regime in Ukraine.

The *Coup d'état* and the Western-backed junta

The ouster of the president (Yanukovych) and his government was the most propaganda and manipulation prone events of the entire Maidan movement[44]. The Russian media characterized it as a *Coup d'état* or an illegal overthrow of a legitimate president. The *Ancient regime* leaders who were removed and then fled the country, were harbored in Russia where they were used for further propaganda purposes. While residing there, they had numerous appearances in the Russian media and were subsequently proclaimed as the "Ukrainian government in exile".

According to evidence gained from the text messages hacked by Anonymous International, the main disinformation theme characterizing the maiden movement as a US-backed junta of radicals and banderites, could actually be traced back to the Kremlin itself and Alexey Gromov in particular, who is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presidential Administration of Russia. The characterization was propagated and supplied to various media outlets by Timur Prokopenko, the head of the Kremlin internal affairs department[45].

This disinformation theme was picked up by all Russian mainstream media and social media and became a frame of reference for the depiction of Ukraine-related events over the next two years.

One author who was instrumental in creating this perception is Valentin Zorin. Zorin was one of the most influential propagandists from the Soviet era and is now in his 90's. He still occasionally works for the RIA and still publishes inflammatory articles. In one article that appeared in a government-owned outlet he decried the US government's complicity in the Ukrainian 'coup' stating:

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[44] <https://www.rt.com/news/159664-italy-protest-nazism-ukraine/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[45] <http://tsn.ua/special-projects/liar/> (accessed February 20, 2016).

From the very beginning, Washington DC was in charge of the coup d'état in Kiev and relied on extreme nationalistic forces, and banderites who had made oaths to Hitler and committed atrocities against Russians, Jews, and Poles[46].

Although this was written in 2014–2015, it is impossible to differentiate between these contemporary talking points and the ideological verbiage of the former Cold war era. The purpose of portraying the Euromaidan events as the upshot of US involvement, with Cold War terminology was to mobilize the Russian domestic audience, radicalize audiences in the Eastern and Southern Ukraine (which was planned by Kremlin to be transformed into wider Novorossia separatists' entity) and sow suspicion among Europeans and the rest of the world.

As Ladislav Bittman notes,

Anti-American propaganda campaigns are the easiest to carry out. A single press article containing sensational facts of a 'new American conspiracy' may be sufficient. Other papers become interested, the public is shocked, and government authorities in developing countries have a fresh opportunity to clamor against the imperialists while demonstrators hasten to break the American embassy windows.[47]

Soviet propaganda made use of precisely the same language and visuals in their depictions of US involvement in the potential breakup of the Soviet Union. Almost 30 years later depictions of the US meddling with Ukraine within Russia's exclusive sphere of influence are still present. For example, in early January of 1991 Soviet Television produced a 40-minute documentary titled "The Faces of Extremism" that showed

shots of terrorism in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, and Spain were mixed with film clips of U.S. military operations in Grenada, Panama, and Libya, followed by scenes of a rally held by Rukh (the democratic party in Ukraine], riots in Central Asia, fighting in Azerbaijan, and demonstrations in Lithuania. The narrator suggested that the U.S. government would soon try to organize underground political movements in Central Asia in order to cause the collapse of the Soviet Union.[48]

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[46] <http://ria.ru/coumns/20150526/1066579933.html#ixzz41BRM17eo> (accessed February 27, 2016)

[47] **Bittman** 1985, p. 23.

[48] <http://intellit.muskingum.edu/russia_folder/pcw_era/sect_09a.htm> (accessed February 24, 2016).

In 2014 the NTV channel produced a similar 'documentary' titled "Ordinary Fascism: Ukrainian Variant[49]", the intent of which was to create an analogous perception of the events in Ukraine among the Russian domestic audience, much as "The Faces of Extremism" did in the 1990s.

In both 'documentaries' the US government and western non-governmental institutions are accused of engaging in direct and indirect actions to disrupt the Soviet/Russian influence. For example, in 1991, according to the US Congressional Report, the Soviet Defense minister Yazov "joined in the anti-U.S. and anti-democratic chorus, accusing the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, which aids democratic groups worldwide, of trying to influence events in the USSR[50]".

This historic rhetoric is very similar to the rhetoric that the Kremlin now uses, which accuses organizations of being 'foreign agents'. Even in the case of StopFake.org when opponents want to denigrate the project, they immediately point to the donor support from the National Endowment for Democracy as evidence of US government and CIA involvement[51].

Just as the Soviet Union once did, Russia makes use of an overarching motif to connect the numerous fake news stories and pictures that it uses to characterize the events in Ukraine. It alleges that a Ukrainian junta, as the puppets of America (Washington DC, the White House), usurped power using 'undemocratic' procedures and forced the Ukrainian people into the role of lackeys for the US. Most of the fake stories encountered by the project still support this narrative strand in one form or another. It is encapsulated in fake photos such as the one titled "Kyiv Residents Kneel before Biden[52]", or the fake news story "Biden Proposes to Federalize Ukraine[53]", or another fake photo titled "Ukrainian Soldier Kisses the American Flag[54]".

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[49] <http://www.ntv.ru/video/964481/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[50] <http://intellit.muskingum.edu/russia_folder/pcw_era/sect_09a.htm> (accessed February 24, 2016).

[51] <http://tvzvezda.ru/news/vstrane_i_mire/content/201602132031-tzwp.htm> (accessed February 23, 2016).

[52] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/photo-fake-kyiv-residents-kneel-before-biden/> (accessed February 22, 2016).

[53] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-biden-proposes-to-federalize-ukraine/> (accessed February 22, 2016).

[54] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/photo-fake-ukrainian-soldier-kisses-american-flag/> (accessed February 22, 2016).

Ukraine as a fascist state

Russian propaganda depicts Ukraine as having been transformed into de facto fascist state as a result of the coup d'état. All necessary attributes of fascism such as anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia are exploited by the propaganda and are the core of the active measures deployed against Ukraine.

The 'fascist narrative' is one of the most important themes as it connects Ukrainian events with the World war II narrative of, which is a heroic chapter in former Soviet, and now Russian history. It has become the bedrock of the whole anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western propaganda effort and its main points have been used as pretexts to occupy Crimea and have been used to justify the aggression of Russian army in Eastern Ukraine.

The Report "Putin. War", prepared by the Russian opposition, explains why it was important for Kremlin to use the 'fascist narrative': "Rhetoric of war was projected to current political news. This exposed Ukrainian authorities as 'banderite' and 'Nazi' by Kremlin propaganda and Russia got involved in the same cause as in 1941–45 – struggle with fascists[55]".

WWII (or the Great Patriotic war as it's called in Russian historiography) has very strong associations for the people of Ukraine, especially for those who fought in it. Russian propaganda often exploited this association in order to further its aims. Fake reports concerning mistreatment of WWII veterans in Ukraine, such as the revocation of their benefits, bans on celebrations or gatherings, bans on the wearing of medals, and the demolition of war memorials were often circulated. There were even reports of some veterans being beaten. The main purpose of these distorted reports was to incite unrest and foster war mongering and the dissemination of hate speech.

On April 20th, 2015 Russia's private tabloid Lifenews TV channel falsely reported that the head of the Kharkiv regional council had forbade Second World War veterans from wearing St. George ribbons and flags (commemorating the Red Army's victory) at the forthcoming Victory Day's march on May 9th [56].

On September 3, 2015 Russian REN TV and Channel 5 falsely reported that unknown persons had destroyed memorial plaques commemorating Soviet soldiers in Kharkiv.

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[55] **Report "Putin. War"**. Edited by Illya Yashyn and Olga Shorina. <http://www.putin-itogi. ru/putin-voina/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[56] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/kharkiv-forbids-veterans-from-wearing-st-george-ribbons/> (accessed on February 27, 2016).

The news was accompanied by an amateur video uploaded to YouTube. The video shows two men dismantling the memorial plaques and taking them away to an undisclosed location. However, when the spokesperson for the Kharkiv city council was contacted it was in fact confirmed that the plaques had simply been removed for renovation[57].

On June 30th, 2015 the LifeNews TV channel used a video from the celebration of the anniversary of the Declaration of Ukrainian Independence in Kherson. At a small event in the city's center, young people gathered to read the Declaration aloud and to sing the national anthem. The manipulated report was titled "Nationalists Swear Allegiance to Hitler in Kherson[58]".

In April 2015 the Zvezda TV channel and REN TV published a false report about an unfinished concentration camp financed by a "pro-American" group that had been built to incarcerate those "accused of terrorism and separatism by the ruling regime in Ukraine." The report was based on footage taken by a war correspondent who was standing at the construction site of what was actually an uncompleted prison in the city of Zhdanovka, in the Donetsk region. The correspondent opines: "It is very convenient place to keep prisoners of war here, wouldn't you say? There is such an Eastern European Guantanamo[59]!"

On May 18th, 2015 the government-owned Russia 24 network dedicated a news program to focus exclusively on alleged anti-Semitism in Ukraine. "Vesti at 23:00" aired a report that was followed by a discussion entitled "The new exodus of Jews from Ukraine: Jewish organizations accuse Brussels of keeping the problem of neo-Nazism in Ukraine quiet". StopFake debunked this escalating Russian disinformation narrative and Vyacheslav Likhachev, the head of a prestigious Monitoring group for the rights of ethnic minorities at Association of the Jewish Organizations and Communities of Ukraine (VAAD) confirmed the falseness of the Ukrainian anti-Semitism and neo-Nazi claim[60].

Fascism is not a new invention, nor is it as prevalent as alleged, but it has certainly been one of the most exploited themes of Soviet active measures. The Russian government has used the term to smear \ policymakers in various

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[57] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-memorial-plaques-to-soviet-soldiers-destroyed-in-kharkiv/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[58] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-nationalists-swear-allegiance-to-hitler-in-kherson/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[59] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-concentration-camp-for-separatists-under-construction-in-donetsk-region/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

[60] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/jewish-monitoring-group-expert-debunks-russia-24-claim-about-neo-nazis-and-anti-semitism-in-ukraine/> (accessed February 27, 2016).

parts of the world, and has even used it put pressure on entire countries such as postwar Germany, Italy or Austria.

The Intelligence historian Christopher Andrew describes how a 'fascism'–themed narrative was used to undermine the reputation of Egyptian President Saddat:

> *(KGB) Service A's active measures against Sadat made much of his early enthusiasm for Adolf Hitler. Sadat himself acknowledged in his autobiography that, as a fourteen-year-old when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, he had been inspired by the way the Führer set out to 'rebuild his country'/.../ As late as 1953 he said publicly that he admired Hitler 'from the bottom of my heart'. The KGB claimed the credit for inspiring publications with titles such as 'Anwar Sadat: From Fascism to Zionism', which portrayed him as a former Nazi agent who had sold out to the CIA.*[61]

Ion Mihal Pacepa, a high-ranking defector from the Romanian security services, gives a detailed account of how the 'fascism' narrative was an instrumental component of active measure against the Catholic Church after WWII. The Soviets were relentless in "faulting the Catholic church for its role in the rise of Fascism". The same tool was also used to compromise, or as it was called within active measures procedures, 'to frame' Pope Pius XII, the Croatian Cardinal Stepinac and the Ukrainian Cardinal Slipyj who were characterized as 'Nazi collaborators'.[62]

If monikers such as US-backed junta and fascists are not enough to scare an audience who might not be avid followers of politics, Russian active measures effectively uses what is known as 'human interest stories'. Most of them will be about different diseases and the 'fact' that they were invented by the US government. The purpose of planting such a story is two-fold: first, to scare as many people as possible by playing on their most basic fears, and second – to blame the US for the spread of infections and fuel the new wave of anti-Americanism, which is by default the overall objective of Soviet/Russian active measures.

The classical example of this would be <u>Operation Infektion</u>, which sought to accuse the United States of deliberately creating the AIDS virus in a government laboratory and then spreading it[63].

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[61] **Andrew** 2006, p. 840.

[62] **Pacepa, I. M**. 2013. Disinformation. WND Books.

[63] <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Influence%20Activities%20Active%20Measures%20and%20Propaganda%20August%201987.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2016).

In 1983, shortly after its founding, the Indian newspaper The Patriot, broke a story blaming the U.S. military in creating the AIDS virus and releasing it as a weapon. This story appeared first in minor Soviet-controlled outlets. Then in 1985 it was picked up by the Soviet weekly newspaper, Literaturnaya Gazeta where it was published many other outlets:

> In 1987 alone, it appeared over 40 times in the Soviet-controlled press and was reprinted or rebroadcast in over 80 countries in 30 languages. The AIDS virus was terrifying and not well understood at the time, so this piece of Soviet disinformation was especially damaging to the U.S. image.[64]

The US government put a lot of pressure on Kremlin and Gorbachev personally to make sure that Soviet Union would stop disseminating such fake stories. All medical research cooperation between the US and USSR was suspended before Moscow finally dropped the story:

> The Soviets stopped using the AIDS disinformation story. It became clear, /.../, that they would back off when the cost of their lies became too much for them. As the new disinformation stories appeared, we pressured the Soviets on their failure to carry out Gorbachev's promise.[65]

But this story did not disappear entirely. It was recently revived in another form more recently when a tweet appeared saying that the Ukrainian army in Donbas was firing AIDS infused shells in order to spread it among the local population. This was compounded with accusations asserting that the ZIKA virus originated from US government facilities:

> An outspoken former chief Russian sanitary inspector has suggested that the United States could be infecting mosquitos with the Zika virus in the Black Sea area as a form of biological warfare against Russia. In comments to the BBC Russian Service on February 15, Gennady Onishchenko said that Russian scientists have identified a surge since 2012 in the kind of mosquito that carries the virus in Abkhazia, a breakaway Georgian region that borders Russia on the Black Sea coast. "This worries me because about 100 kilometers from the place where this mosquito now lives, right near our borders, there is a military microbiological laboratory of the army of the United States.[66]

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[64] <http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/inss/Strategic-Perspectives-11.pdf> (accessed February 10, 2016).

[65] **Waller** 2007, p. 355.

[66] <http://www.rferl.org/content/former-russian-health-chief-suggests-us-plotting-zika-attack/27555365.html> (accessed February 22, 2016).

On January 26th, 2016 the website Pravda.ru ran a news item claiming that 20 Ukrainian soldiers died and 200 were hospitalized with the deadly California flu virus outside the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv."Doctors have recorded an unknown virus causing extremely high temperatures which cannot be brought down with any medicine", – claimed DNR separatist spokesman Eduard Basurin. On January 22nd, the same Basurin announced at a press conference that Ukrainian soldiers had been admitted to a Kharkiv hospital suffering from a virus "that leaked from an American laboratory located in the village of Shelkostantsia".

None of these fake stories were accompanied by facts or photos and over a period of several days, the two stories gradually melded into each other, thereby gaining greater traction on the web and social media.

There was no mass illness or viral infection among Ukraine's armed forces nor did the Ukrainian Defense Ministry have any information about any such mass illness.[67]

Conclusion

Although Russian propaganda reached its apex during war in Ukraine, it must be kept in mind that it is not a new phenomenon and it is actually a continuation of Soviet propaganda that never truly disappeared even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In reality modern Russian propaganda is a rejuvenated, rebuilt and transformed version that has been applied to the contemporary situation with increased effectiveness. The contemporary Russian propaganda system and the Soviet system both share the same objectives. The former borrows the same techniques from the latter in its application of active measures. Yet they differ in quantity, quality and the instruments that are used.

By analyzing the more than 500 stories that StopFake has debunked over last two years, it was possible to identify 18 separate disinformation themes, originating from Russian state- and privately owned media. Many of them are variations of the Soviet paradigm, and are built on anti-Americanism, their own moral superiority and falsified historiography.

Most Russian journalists, editors, media managers or policymakers will deny the existence of propaganda or the existence of a vertical chain of command connecting their respective 'media' outlets to the Kremlin. Nor

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[67] <http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-20-soldiers-die-from-leaked-mysterious-virus/> (accessed February 20, 2016).

will they acknowledge the conduction of active measures. When Margarita Simonyan, the head RT (formerly Russia Today), was questioned as to why RT distorted information in their piece titled: "Putin Will Bring Down Western Economies"[68] she attributed it to incompetence and lazy journalism. Simonyan explained that usually the twisting or falsification of facts does not arise from evil intentions, but rather can be attributed to the publishing of information from a source without fact checking it first. Others media outlets then republish the story also without bothering to check the information:

> *There is a huge competition, everybody wants to be the first, quicker, more interesting. All this is done to get more audience. If you are the first to publish something – it will attract audience, that's why you are doing this. It's too long to verify information – someone might be quicker to publish it before you do.*[69]

Unfortunately, this is not a sufficient explanation for the hundreds and hundreds of fakes and forgeries coming from Russian media system. They are not results of bad journalism but the result of well-preserved and refurbished system of active Soviet measures used to manipulate media on a global scale and to supplement military and diplomatic efforts.

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PERCEPTION OF THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS WITHIN LATVIAN SOCIETY

Ieva Bērziņa

■

The battle of narratives was a significant aspect of the Ukrainian crisis because the interpretations of events by parties involved in the conflict were very different. This paper addresses issues related to the perception of stories reported by the Russian and Latvian media about the Ukrainian crisis. Latvia was chosen as a case study because it is a country with a pro-Western geopolitical orientation where Russian media content is also widely available. It is estimated that as of March 2016, 25% of Latvia's television audience were regular viewers of Russian television channels, including the First Baltic Channel, which is registered in Latvia but largely retranslates media content from Russia.[1] Latvia also has a considerable number of Russian speaking ethnic minorities (Russians, Belorussians, Ukrainians and others) that account for slightly less than 40% of the population. The theoretical component of this paper is based on scientific and doctrinal insights into the influencing of public opinion by media in the context of warfare. A combination of research methods was used to determine whose media narrative of the Ukrainian crisis – the Latvian or the Russian – has proven dominant in Latvian society. Qualitative content analysis was used to identify the main themes and messages regarding the Ukrainian crisis in the media. An online public opinion survey was used to ascertain the views of Latvian society in relation to the identified media stories. The research was carried out in November of 2015. One of the significant discoveries was that there is indeed a battle for public opinion taking place in Latvia with regard to the crisis in Ukraine because of the sharply opposing narratives that have been constructed by the Latvian and the Russian media. The views of Latvian speakers were mainly aligned with the Latvian media stories, whereas Russian speakers tended to agree with the narrative of the Russian media.

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Shaping public opinion as an element of warfare

The Ukraine crisis and the concomitant war in the southeast of the country is a visible manifestation of Russia's attempt to challenge the global dominance of the West. Russia has made use of diverse methods to encumber Ukraine's geopolitical turn to the West, including influencing domestic and international public opinion.[2] This is not surprising, as the shaping of public opinion has become an integral part of warfare in a media influenced world. J. Nye states: "In an information age it may be whose story wins is as important as whose army wins".[3] The current media environment is not actually a conditioner of, but rather an amplifier of, the vagaries of the human mind. According to the stereotype model of W. Lippmann, people perceive reality indirectly via notions previously constructed in their mind.[4] Thus human behaviour is primarily determined by an "image of reality" that can be developed in the human mind through the process of socialization, including media consumption.

This article focuses on two interconnected elements of the narrative battle – media and public opinion. The media is the primary means for governments and armies to disseminate narratives that will shape public opinion. Although the interaction between media content and public opinion is uncertain[5], without a doubt the media is the main sources of information for people who are distant from a conflict zone. Many countries have standardized the process of influencing public opinion in their military doctrines and theories, and the overall aims for influencing public opinion are similar – to gain support for one's own actions while countering those of the adversary.[6]

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[5] **McQuail, D**. 2006. On the Mediatization of War. The International Communication Gazette, Vol. 68, No. 2, pp. 107–118, p. 117. [**McQuail** 2006].

[6] **NATO** 2011. NATO Military Public Affairs Policy. – MC 0457/2. February, p. 17. <http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/mil-pol-pub-affairs-en.pdf> (accessed November 17, 2015). [hereinafter: **NATO** 2011]; **Ministry of Defence** 2007. Media Operations. – Joint Doctrine Publication 3–45. 1. September, p. V. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/43336/jdp3451.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2015). [**Ministry of Defence** 2007]; **Office of the Secretary of Defence** 2011. Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China. – Annual Report to Congress.

The catalyst for the battle of narratives in the Ukrainian crisis is the strategic importance of Ukraine for the great powers. Z. Brzezinski sees Ukraine as one of "the key post-Cold War Eurasian geopolitical pivots" serving an important role in the designs of major geopolitical players, particularly Russia.[7] Likewise, G. Friedman concludes that Russia may become indefensible if the West succeeds in dominating Ukraine[8]. Thus Ukraine's geopolitical shift towards the West created tensions in the international arena, leading to a struggle for public support among all players involved in the crisis.

When considering the tools and techniques used to shape public opinion, the Western approach is at the forefront. It has been used as a template to shape the informational and psychological domains used by authoritarian governments of China and Russia in their attempts to counterbalance the dominance of the West in the international hegemony. The Three Warfares concept[9] of China is based on the informational dissemination strategies that were used by the United States in the two Gulf Wars, and the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. In those wars, the interventions by NATO and the United States successfully built support for their military operations by undermining the international images of the leaders of the opposing states – Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic.[10] The Chinese approach is also based on the "methods of mass persuasion from the Western world, including political public relations, theories of mass communication, and individual and group psychology"[11]. Likewise, many Russian authors refer to the First Gulf War

[7]   **Brzezinski, Z**. 1997. The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives. New York: Basic Books, pp. 41, 46.

[8]   **Friedman, G**. 2009. The Next 100 Years: A Forecast for the 21st Century. New York: Doubleday, p. 70.

[9]   **Cheng, D**. 2012. Winning Without Fighting: Chinese Public Opinion Warfare and the Need for a Robust American Response. – The Heritage Foundation. 26 November. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2012/11/winning-without-fighting-chinese-public-opinion-warfare-and-the-need-for-a-robust-american-response> (accessed November 4, 2015) [**Cheng** 2012]; **Jackson, L**. 2015. Revisions of Reality: The Three Warfares–China's New Way of War. – Information at War: From China's Three Warfares to NATO Narratives. Legatum Institute. September <http://www.li.com/activities/publications/information-at-war-from-china-s-three-warfares-to-nato-s-narratives> (accessed November 4, 2015); **Lee, S**. 2014. China's 'Three Warfares': Origins, Applications, and Organizations. – The Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 198–221.

[10] **Cheng** 2012.

[11] **Walton, T. A**. 2012. China's Three Warfares. – Delex Special Report-3. 18 Jaunuary. <http://www.delex.com/data/files/Three%20Warfares.pdf> (accessed November 11, 2015), p. 7.

as an outstanding example of contemporary information and psychological warfare.[12]

In his analysis of the Persian Gulf War, R. Hiebert reached the conclusion that the successful public relations campaign, which was implemented on an unprecedented scale during the war, was a significant contributor to its success.[13] His observation that public opinion is a critical element of warfare, was confirmed by US military officials who consistently referred to "media warfare" during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.[14] The Iraq war of 2003 galvanized the emergence of a large number of books in the US and United Kingdom, which were rather critical of the increasing collaboration between the media, government, and military leaders of the Western countries.[15] The crisis in Ukraine shifted the focus away from assessing the Western democracies methods of shaping public opinion, towards a study of the Russian approach to influencing the information environment.[16]

In Russia, the idea of shaping public opinion for military purposes was developed within the framework of informational and psychological warfare and is understood as the "overt and covert informative impact of social, political, ethnic, and other systems with the purpose of gaining certain material benefits, to provide informative superiority over the adversary and

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[12] **Gordienko, D**. 2001. Iz opita lokalnix konfliktov. Moralno-psihologicheskaya ataka (Learning from the experience of local conflicts. Moral and psychological attack). – Na Stratzhe Rodini, No. 127, June 28, p. 5; **Klimenchenko, S**. 2000. Psihohologicheskaya voina: ot drevnosti do nashih dnei. Oruzhiye ubivayuscheye dux (Psychological warfare: from antiquity to the present day. The weapon that kills the spirit). – Na Stratzhe Zapoliarya, No. 010, February 2; **Oleinik, A**. 2009. Informacionno-psihologicheskiye voini (Information and psychological warfare). – Morskoi sbornik, No. 4, April, pp. 37–41.

[13] **Hiebert, R**. 1991. Public Relations as a Weapon of Modern Warfare. – Public Relations Review, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 107–116.

[14] **Hiebert, R**. 2003. Public Relations and Propaganda in Framing the Iraq War: a Preliminary Review. – Public Relations Review, Vol. 29, pp. 243–255, p. 244.

[15] **McQuail** 2006.

[16] **Pomerantsev, P., Weiss M**. 2014. The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money. – The Interpreter. 22 November. <http://www.interpretermag.com/the-menace-of-unreality-how-the-kremlin-weaponizes-information-culture-and-money/> (accessed April 19, 2016); **Nelson, E.; Orttung, R.; Livshen, A**. 2015. Measuring RT's Impact on Youtube. – Russian Analytical Digest, No. 177. 8 December. <http://www.stratcomcoe.org/russian-analytical-digest> (accessed April 19, 2016); **NATO StratCom COE** 2015. The Manipulative Techniques of the Russian Information Campaign Against Ukraine. <http://www.stratcomcoe.org/manipulative-techniques-russian-information-campaign-against-ukraine> (accessed April 19, 2016).

to cause him material, ideological and other damage"[17]. Information and psychological warfare are a set of tools used to influence the perceptions of people (their views, values, attitudes, behaviour, and other), as well as shape group norms, mass moods and mass consciousness in general.[18] Russian military doctrine emphasizes the growing importance of informative processes in the military sphere. The document states that the presence of military dangers and military threats in the information space is increasing.[19]

The Russian approach to shaping public opinion is quite straightforward in relation to manipulation. For example, according to Russian thinking, the media is essentially manipulative, because they offer an alternative version of reality that does not coincide with actual reality. This characterization of the media determines its special role in information and psychological warfare.[20] This is in contrast to the Western countries, which are concerned with the loss of credibility if there are identifiable attempts to manipulate the public or the media.[21] However, from the perspective of Russia, the Western states nevertheless manipulate the public. For example, in the view of V. Putin "the so called winners of the Cold War" have total control over the global media that allows them to present white as black, and black as white as needed.[22] Likewise, S. Chekinov and S. Bogdanov have advanced the idea that information operations finesse the public into accepting the need to "fight tyranny and restore democracy", but the "principal aim of the invasion is for the aggressor states to resolve their political, military, and economic problems".[23] This formulation indirectly refers to the initiatives of Western countries to promote democracy.

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[17] **Veprincev, V. B., Manoilo, A. V., Petrenko, A. I., Frolov, D. B**. 2011. Operacii informacionno-psihologochiskoi voini: kratkiy enciklopedicheskiy slovar-spravochnik (Operations of information and psychological warfare: a brief encyclopedic dictionary-manual). Moscow: Goryachaya liniya-Telekom., p. 74. [**Veprincev *et al*. 2011]

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] **Kremlin** 2014. Voeyannaya doktrina Rossiskoi Federacii (Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation). – Kremlin.ru. December 26, p. 4. <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf> (accessed November 18, 2015). [**Kremlin** 2014]

[20] **Veprincev *et al*. 2011, pp. 380–381.

[21] **NATO** 2011, p. 17.

[22] **Kremlin** 2014. Zasedaniye mezhdunarodnogo diskussiongo kluba „Valdai" (The meeting on the international discussion club „Valdai). – Kremlin.ru. October 24.
<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860> (accessed April 19, 2016).

[23] **Chekinov, S. G., Bogdanov, S. G**. 2013. The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War. – Military Thought, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 12–23, p. 19.

In the post-Cold War period, the crisis in Ukraine was one of the most salient instances of Russia's intensive counteractions in the information environment, as it systematically provided alternative versions of events from those promoted by the US and its allies. For example, one of the fundamental discrepancies between Russia and the West arises from prior events in Ukraine. Russia asserts that the democratization processes, or the so-called "colour revolutions" advocated by the Western countries, are a de facto threat to security, because they "create zones which are not controlled by any government".[24] Russia's new National Security Strategy now clearly states that the Ukrainian crisis was the result of the US and EU support for an unconstitutional coup d'etat.[25] Thus the Ukrainian crisis also evolved into a battle of narratives where Russia challenged the Western countries and the pro-Western Ukrainian government. The analysis of the narratives of the Ukrainian crisis in the Latvian media environment gives a more detailed insight into this battle and its effects on public opinion.

Method

The methodological aim of this paper is to measure the effects of the battle of narratives on Latvian society in relation to the Euromaidan protests and the Crimean annexation. The research was carried out in two steps. The first step was to identify and compare the main themes and messages used by the Latvian and Russian media to describe the Ukrainian crisis. In this study the term "media stories" is used to describe the narratives of the respective media organizations. The second part measures the degree to which these stories resonated with the views of the Latvian population. It must be emphasized that the impact of the media on the formation of opinion is beyond the scope of this paper. This study rather focuses on the dissemination of media stories within the society. It does not provide answers as to why people think the way they do. Consequently, the quantitative indicators of the transmission of certain themes and messages were not important for the achievement of the research goals. The assessment of the truthfulness of media stories is also

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[24] **Kremlin** 2015. Strategiya nacionalnoi bezopasnosti Rossiyskoi Federacii (National Security Strategy of Russian Federation). – Kremlin.ru. December 31, p. 5. <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/l8iXkR8XLAtxeilX7JK3XXy6Y0AsHD5v.pdf> (accessed April 19, 2016).

[25] *Ibid.*

beyond the scope of this paper, and the study is limited only to the identification of the phenomenon.

Conventional qualitative content analysis was used to ascertain the main themes and messages inherent to the Latvian and the Russian media stories concerning the crisis in Ukraine. This method makes use of the inductive approach wherein the study begins by observing the phenomenon, then discerns the patterns from the data, and finally defines them during the data analysis.[26] In this study phase, the essential components of media content were extracted and constructed based on some of the key points that were later applied to public opinion research. The sample to be analysed was limited to two news broadcasts – *Panorama* from the Latvian state television, and *Vremya* from Channel One Russia, which is rebroadcast in Latvia via the First Baltic Channel. The Latvian news show *Panorama* was chosen, as it is one of the most viewed public media news telecasts[27]. The Russian show *Vremya* was chosen, because First Baltic Channel is the most viewed television channel among Latvia's ethnic minorities[28]. The study analyzed 50 news stories (26 of *Panorama* and 24 of *Vremya*) about the events in Ukraine from the 29th of November 2013, when Ukraine refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU, until March 16th, 2014 when the referendum in Crimea took place.

A nationally representative quantitative survey to assess public opinion was carried out in November of 2015. Computer-assisted web interviews were the method used. The sample size of 1,005 respondents, aged 18 to 74 years, covered the entire geographical span of Latvia. The survey was comprised of nine questions related to perceptions of the Euromaidan protests and the Crimean annexation. In assessing the results, it should be taken into consideration that online surveys only query those people who have access to the internet. Overall, this demographic tends to be more politically educated and more socially active. Nevertheless, the sample was representative of the overall demographic of the Latvian society, and therefore indicates credible

[26] **Hsieh, H. F., Shannon, S. E**. 2005. Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. – Qualitative Health Research, Vol. 15, No. 9, pp. 1277–1288, p. 1286.

[27] **TNS** 2015. TV kanālu auditorijas un programmu TOP20 2015.gada oktobrī (TV channel audience and TOP20 programs in October 2015). – Media Studies, 09 November.
<http://www.tns.lv/?lang=lv&fullarticle=true&category=showuid&id=4868> (accessed November 19, 2015).

[28] **SKDS** 2014. Piederības sajūta Latvijai: mazākumtautību iedzīvotāju aptauja (A sense of belonging in Latvia: minority population survey). – May-June, p. 37. <http://providus.lv/article_files/2682/original/atskaite_piederiba_08_2014.pdf> (accessed November 19, 2015).

trends, albeit displaying slightly sharper results than other survey methods have shown. The survey was conducted by the research centre SKDS.

Two versions of the Euromaidan and the Crimean annexation

The content analysis of the *Panorama* and *Vremya* broadcasts was based on five categories of analysis. The categories and the key messages in relation to them in the Latvian and the Russian media are summarized in Table 1.

1. The goal of the Euromaidan

The Euromaidan began immediately after the Ukrainian government's unexpected refusal to sign the EU Association Agreement during the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius on 28–29 November 2013. On November 29th, 2013, *Panorama* reported that the Vilnius Summit was the last chance for Ukraine to sign the Association Agreement "with it becoming closer to Europe, not only economically, but perhaps also politically".[29] However, *Panorama* only turned its attention to Ukraine in January 2014 when the street riots turned deadly. At the time the Latvian media was focused on the collapse of the Zolitude shopping centre in Riga, which resulted in the deaths of 54 people and injuries to another 41 people. The event was followed by the fall of the government.

From the 18th to the 21st of February 2014, the violence peaked at the Euromaidan protest, with a loss of life of more than 70 people. On the 19th of February, *Panorama* compared the Euromaidan protests to the *Barricades* in Riga in 1991, when Latvia was fighting for its independence from the Soviet Union. The former leader of the Popular Front of Latvia, Dainis Īvāns, stated that the barricades in Ukraine, were analogous to the *Barricades* in Riga, and would decide the fate of Europe, European values and democracy. In his words "the Baltic governments know better than anyone the enemy that wants to destroy the Ukrainian nation", and stated that Russia must refrain from interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine.[30] On February 20th, 2013, the Euromaidan fatalities were mentioned at a rally held at the Ukrainian

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[29] **Panorama** 2013. Eiropa pagaidām paliek bez Ukrainas (Europe currently remains without Ukraine). – 29 November. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/29.11.2013-eiropa-pagaidam-paliek-bez-ukrainas.id21290/> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[30] **Panorama** 2014. Panorāma. – 19 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/19.02.2014-pano-rama.id25010/> (accessed November 21, 2015).

embassy in Riga. One participant admitted that her feelings were very much like those that had existed in Latvia during its independence movement.[31] In similar fashion a protester at the Euromaidan stated: "I am here to keep Ukraine from being bound by Russia's chains".[32] Hence *Panorama* drew parallels between the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine and the restoration of Latvian independence during the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Vremya devoted considerably more time to the Ukrainan crisis than did *Panorama*, and it reported on the Euromaidan extensively from the very beginning. According to the Russian media, the participants of the Euromaidan were motivated by a false hope that European integration would resolve all the problems of Ukraine.[33] *Vremya* also drew parallels with the protests that occurred during the collapse of the Soviet Union, but instead portrayed them as an illusion engendering false hope among the population and argued that they would result in a deterioration of living standards. To emphasize the protesters' misconceptions, a story was circulated asserting that the protesters had not actually read the agreement and did not understand it. According to *Vremya*, the protesters actually sought to leave the country and improve their individual living conditions, which was something the association agreement did not provide for.[34] Lithuania and the other Baltic nations were used as examples showing that EU integration had actually degraded their economies. Losses in the agricultural sector were used as an example. The same report also stated that Poland had lost 70% of its economy after joining the EU.[35]

The Russian *Vremya* argued that Western countries were interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs. *Vremya's*, description of Kiev's decision not to sign

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[31] **Panorama** 2014. Panorāma. – 20 February. < http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/20.02.2014-panorama.id25048/> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[32] **Panorama** 2014. Ukrainas galvaspilsētā trausls pamies (Fragile peace in Ukrainian capital). – 23 January. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/23.01.2014-ukrainas-galvaspilseta-trausls-pamiers.id23803/> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[33] **Vremya** 2013. Mitinguyschiye na Maidane obyavili o nachale obschenacionalnoi zabastovki (The Maidan protesters announce a nationwide strike). – 01 December.
<http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247381> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[34] **Vremya** 2013. Evropeiskiye emisari s tribumi Maidana prizivayut k nepovinoveniy vlasti (Euromaidan emisaries from the rostrum of the Maidan call for disobedience to authority). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247371> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[35] **Vremya** 2013. Resheniye Kiyeva otlozhit vopros o Evrointegracii vizvalo u Zapada buryu emociy (Kiev's decision to postpone the issue of European integration has caused a storm of emotions in the West). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247372> (accessed November 21, 2015).

the agreement was characterized as having caused a storm of emotions for the "superintendents of European integration"[36], which indicated that Ukraine was not independent in its decision making. The support of EU politicians for the Euromaidan was also interpreted as Western interference.[37] It was also mentioned that the agitation for European integration had been paid for by various European funds and state budgets.[38] From *Vremya*'s point of view, European integration was in the interests of the EU, and not in Ukraine's. The Russian economist and academic Alexander Nikonov stated that the main goal was to give nothing to Ukraine, to use it as a market and as a source of cheap labour.[39] In short, the Russian media focused on the economic aspects of European integration. It asserted that the objectives of the Euromaidan were the substantiation of the false hopes of the Ukrainian people, who believed that their individual living conditions would improve, and the mercenary economic interests of the EU.

2. Ukraine's strategic partnership

Unlike *Vremya*, *Panorama* did not question Ukraine's strategic partnership choices. From the *Panorama* telecasts it was evident that the primary goal of the EU association agreement was to support Ukraine in its pursuit of political reforms, which, according to the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barosso, would make it "a member of the European democratic community of nations".[40] The Director of the Centre for East European Policy Studies, Andis Kudors, asserted that the reforms were necessary for

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[36] **Vremya** 2013. Resheniye Kiyeva otlozhit vopros o Evrointegracii vizvalo u Zapada buryu emociy (Kiev's decision to postpone the issue of European integration has caused a storm of emotions in the West). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247372> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[37] **Vremya** 2013. Mitinguyschiye na Maidane obyavili o nachale obschenacionalnoi zabastovki (The protesters on Maidan announced a nationwide strike). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247381> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[38] **Vremya** 2013. Evropeiskiye emisari s tribumi Maidana prizivayut k nepovinoveniy vlasti (Euromaidan emisaries from the rostrum of the Maidan call for disobedience to authority). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247371> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[39] **Vremya** 2013. Resheniye Kiyeva otlozhit vopros o Evrointegracii vizvalo u Zapada buryu emociy (Kiev's decision to postpone the issue of European integration has caused a storm of emotions in the West). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247372> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[40] **Panorama** 2013. Eiropa pagaidām paliek bez Ukrainas (Europe currently remains without Ukraine). – 29 November. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/29.11.2013-eiropa-pagaidam-paliek-bez-ukrainas.id21290/> (accessed November 21, 2015).

Ukraine, and that the main premise of the Eastern Partnership Policy was about values, as Europe needed democratic and safe neighbours.[41] Thus, according to the Latvian media, Ukraine's strategic partnership with the EU was primarily based on political values. The association agreement with the EU would encourage the political reform process, which was necessary for the development of democracy in Ukraine.

Vremya focused on the economic aspects of cooperation and emphasized that Russia was a more favourable partner for Ukraine than the EU. It stressed that "the scale of Russian and Ukrainian economic relations is such that due to a simple customs conflict with Russia /…/ Ukraine has lost 25 thousand jobs a day"[42]. Consequently, *Vremya* forecast increasing unemployment in Ukraine if it were to distance itself from Russia.[43] It also emphasized that the EU would be unable to provide sufficient economic support for the needs of Ukraine. The promised European aid would only amount to 610 million euros, whereas the Ukraine actually needed 164 billion euros for European integration.[44] On February 2nd, 2014, *Vremya* reported that the opposition leaders Arseny Yatseniuk and Vitali Klitschko visited the 50th Munich Security Conference and met with the US Secretary of State, John Kerry, who promised the opposition financial support to the amount of 15 billion dollars which was equal to the amount that Russia's President Vladimir Putin had promised the government in power in December 2013.[45] In relation to Ukraine's strategic partnership, the Russian media promoted the idea that cooperation with Russia was beneficial to Ukraine's economy, while a partnership with the EU would be harmful.

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[41] **Panorama** 2014. Intervija ar Andi Kudoru (Interview with Andis Kudors). – 19 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/19.02.2014-intervija-ar-andi-kudoru.id25005/> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[42] **Vremya** 2013. Resheniye Kiyeva otlozhit vopros o Evrointegracii vizvalo u Zapada buryu emociy (Kiev's decision to postpone the issue of European integration has caused a storm of emotions in the West). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247372> (accessed November 21, 2015).

[43] *Ibid*.

[44] *Ibid*.

[45] **Vremya** 2014. Na Ukraine ekstremisti otkazivaytsa osvobozhdat zahvachenniye zdaniya, nesmotrya na ustupki Yanukovicha (In Ukraine, the extremists refuse to vacate occupied buildings, despite the concessions of Yanukovych). – 02 February. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/251492> (accessed November 24, 2015).

3. Responsibility for the Euromaidan violence

Panorama's perspective on the violence at the Euromaidan was that the responsibility lay with the Ukrainian government and the officials who ordered the violent suppression of the demonstration. This was stated by Latvian Foreign Minister, Edgars Rinkevičs, who also emphasized that the Euromaidan demonstration was peaceful when it started. In the same interview, he noted that the opposition and the government should address problems through dialogue, and admitted that there was a possibility for provocations at the demonstration.[46] On January 24th 2014, demonstrators picketed the Embassy of Ukraine in Riga in support of the Ukrainian people who were caught in the conflict. One participant of the protest stated that she supported freedom of speech, because it was unacceptable that people were being killed for saying what they did and didn't believe in. In their coverage of the event, *Panorama* also interviewed a Russian speaking man who voiced his disapproval of the methods used by the protesters in Euromaidan[47], thus showing the other side of the story, as well.

On the same day, *Panorama* reported on protesters occupying administration buildings in several cities.[48] The protesters' weapons, according to *Panorama*, were "big, long wooden sticks, truck tyres, and firecrackers", but the police "responded with tear gas and sound grenades"[49]. The Euromaidan participants interviewed said that people should be able to defend their rights, and that they were fighting against police arbitrariness and brutality.[50] *Panorama* also reported a statement by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vitaliy Zaharchenko, about the losses on the police side, but ended the story with the viewpoint of the "so-called National resistance headquarters" asserting

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[46] **Panorama** 2014. Panorāma. – 22 January. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/22.01.2014-panorama.id23768/> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[47] **Panorama** 2014. Akcija Rīgā par atbalstu Ukrainai (Action in Riga on assistance to Ukraine). – 24 January. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/24.01.2014-akcija-riiga-par-atbalstu-ukrainai.id23857/> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[48] **Panorama** 2014. Janukovičs sola reformēt valdību; nemieri (Yanukovich promises to reform the government; unrest). – 24 January. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/24.01.2014-janukovichs-sola-reformet-valdiibu-nemieri.id23852/> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[49] **Panorama** 2014. Janukovičs piedāvājis premjera krēslu opozīcijas līderim (Yanukovich offered the prime minister's chair to opposition leader). – 25 January. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/25.01.2014-janukovichs-piedavajis-premjera-kreslu-opoziicijas-liiderim.id23876/> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[50] *Ibid.*

that the information about police detention was a deliberate provocation.[51] In *Panorama*'s reporting of the memorial event to the Euromaidan fatalities, citizens of Kiev stated that it was a crime to give orders to armed units to shoot demonstrators who were wearing only raincoats and had only sticks in their hands.[52] As to the shooting by snipers that resulted in the largest number of fatalities, *Panorama* reported that "snipers were here, police used real battle bullets here"[53]. *Panorama*'s story placed the onus of responsibility on the government of Victor Yanukovich and its subordinate police, and the *Berkut* special task unit for the bloodshed during the Euromaidan.

From the beginning of the Euromaidan, *Vremya* characterized the demonstrations as aggressive. On December 1st 2013, it reported that opposition supporters had seized the City Hall and the House of Trade Unions buildings. Visually this message was supported with footage of people swathed in Ukrainian flags, breaking down doors, beating the windows, and causing mayhem.[54] *Vremya* emphasized that the police responded with force only after being physically attacked by the protesters, and that the police were more vulnerable than the crowd. For example, on December 1st, 2014, *Vremya* reported that the soldiers of the Special Forces had resorted to force only after protesters threw stones, bottles and burning logs at them.[55] The same pattern can be seen in the report on January 19th, 2014, when *Vremya* reported that what was being called a "peaceful popular assembly" was in fact an attack on police by young people in masks, armed with baseball bats, wooden shields and gas masks. According to *Vremya*, it was a planned provocation, and the "hooligans managed to deprive the police of at least five buses".[56]

On January 26th 2014, *Vremya* provided information about a turning point in the Euromaidan when a group of radicals separated from a peaceful rally, and undertook a "senseless and ruthless pogrom". *Vremya* termed it *Maidan 2.0*, which began with radical groups ignoring the calls for non-violence.

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[51] *Ibid.*

[52] **Panorama** 2014. Miliči pamet pilsētas centru, protestētāji paliek (Police is leaving the city center, protesters remain). – 21 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/21.02.2014-milichi-pamet-pilsetas-centru-protestetaji-paliek.id25078/> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] **Vremya** 2014. Mitinguyschiye na Maidane obyavili o nachale obschenacionalnoi zabastovki (The protesters on Maidan announced a nationwide strike). – 01 December. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/247381> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] **Vremya** 2014. V centre Kiyeva proizoshli ozhestochenniye stolknoveniya mezhdu mitinguyuschami i miliciyei (In the city center there have been violent clashes between protesters and police). – 19 January. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/250479> (accessed November 24, 2015).

The first victims of the aggressors were policemen whose faces and hands were burned to the bone by Molotov cocktails. *Vremya* supplemented the report with information about a training camp at the centre of the Euromaidan where "experienced instructors explained how to do this in the hot spots".[57] *Vremya* stressed that police have an imperative to suppress violent protests, and as reinforcement they interviewed two lawyers from Germany. The lawyers confirmed that in similar circumstances the reaction of the German police would also be extremely harsh.[58] But as to the snipers, *Vremya's* position was unclear. The former Chairman of the Security Service of Ukraine, Alexander Yakimenko, stated that the shooting took place from a building that was under the control of the Maidan commandant, Andrei Parubiy, and that the snipers had "supported an armed attack on the Interior Ministry's employees who were already demoralized and, who were in fact, fleeing".[59] *Vremya* maintained that radical and ultranationalist groups were primarily responsible for the Euromaidan violence, and that the police and the *Berkut* special unit were actually the victims.

4. The change of Government in Ukraine

As the Ukraine changed its government, *Panorama* focused on the course of events and did not question the legality of what was happening. From the *Panorama* broadcasts, it was clear that V. Yanukovich's legitimacy was invalidated after the violent reprisals were initated at the Euromaidan. As a result Yanukovich was portrayed as a criminal, and not the legitimate president of Ukraine. For example, on February 22nd 2014, Ostap Krivdik, the International Relations Secretary of the Self-defence Units, said that V. Yanukovich had left Kiev forever and would not come back, because he had killed people.[60] Likewise, the people interviewed during the commemoration

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[57] **Vremya** 2014. Ukrainskaya opoziciya ne prinimayet predlozheniy vlasti dazhe pered licom realnoi ugrozi razvala strani (Ukrainian opposition did not accept the offer of power, even in the face of a real threat of collapse of the country). – 26 January.
<http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/250972> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] **Vremya** 2014. Kto oni – politiki, zanyavshiye klycheviye mesta v novom pravitelstve Ukraini? (Who are they? The politicians taking key positions in the new government of the Ukraine?). – 16 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/254256> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[60] **Panorama** 2014. Opozicionāri pārņem prezidenta administrācijas ēku (Opposition takes over the presidential administration building). – 22 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/22.02.2014-opozicionari-parnjem-prezidenta-administracijas-eku.id25097/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

of the protest fatalities, alleged that V. Yanukovich must be punished for the murders and that it was necessary to change the entire government.[61] Another factor undermining V. Yanukovich was his suburban residence of Mezhigorye, which was opened to the public after he fled Kiev. Its opulence provided visual evidence of the scope of the corruption, and many of the Kiev residents who were interviewed concluded that it was built with taxpayers' money.[62] *Panorama* advanced the position that the Ukraine needed a government that would be comprised of the people who had organized the barricades, and that the ministers must be professionals with good reputations.[63]

From *Vremya*'s perspective, the change in government in the Ukraine was a scheme that the West had often implemented in foreign countries. The events had transpired despite an agreement being reached for a settlement of the crisis.[64] The agreement was concluded on February 21st 2014, between V. Yanukovich and the leaders of the parliamentary opposition with mediation by representatives of the EU. The political analyst Fyodor Lukyanov commented that when the events at the Euromaidan became chaotic, the West was quick to enact a program that they had applied in other countries such as Libya, Syria and Egypt.[65] Paul Craig Roberts, the American economist and blogger who is famous for his sharp criticism of US foreign policy, further expounded on the nature the West's involvement. In his interview with *Vremya* he stated: "The main problem of the crisis that Washington has provoked in Ukraine lies in the fact that over the last two decades, the US is trying to drag Ukraine in NATO, to place a military base on its territory."[66]

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[61] **Panorama** 2014. Kijevas Neatkarības laukumā piemin nogalinātos (Commemoration for the victims a in the Kiev Independence Square). – 24 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/24.02.2014-kijevas-neatkariibas-laukuma-piemin-nogalinatos.id25226/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[62] **Panorama** 2014. Politiskās elites izšķērdīgā greznība šokē tautu (The wasteful luxury of the political elite shocked the nation). – 23 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/23.02.2014-politiskas-elites-izshkjerdiiga-grezniiba-shoke-tautu.id25159/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[63] **Panorama** 2014. Gaida Ukrainas valdības apstiprināšanu (Ukraine is waiting for governmental approval). – 26 February. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/26.02.2014-gaida-ukrainas-valdiibas-apstiprinashanu.id25307/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[64] **Vremya** 2014. Verhovnaya Rada vozlozhila obyazannosti prezidenta Ukraini na spikera parlamenta Aleksandra Turchinova (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine assigned duties of the president to the parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchinov). – 23 February.
<http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/252828> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] **Vremya** 2014. V tom, chto politicheskiy krizis na Ukraine voshel v ostruy fazu, ne somnevayetsa nikto (No one doubts that the political crisis in the Ukraine has reached a critical phase). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/polit/253274> (accessed November 25, 2015).

On March 2^{nd,} 2014, the Chairman of the Coordination Council of the Sevastopol City Administration for Support Services in Sevastopol, Alexey Chaly, declared that what had taken place in Kiev on February 21st was in fact an unconstitutional coup. This was based on the fact that the transition to a parliamentary republic must follow certain procedures, and that these procedures had not been observed.[67] The same day *Vremya* also reported that, according to data from WCIOM public opinion research centre, 25% of the Russians who were polled held the opinion that what occurred in Kiev was a violent seizure of power and amounted to a coup.[68] The questionable legitimacy of the transition of governments in Kiev was also underscored by the fact that the Maidan movement was not representative of all people, but only those who were on the square. People in the south were of a different opinion[69], and therefore chose not to comply with the new government.[70] From the *Vremya* perspective, the change of government in Ukraine was a coup d'etat backed by the West.

5. Interpretation of the Crimean annexation

Pro-Russian activities were initiated in Crimea, and in other regions of the south, as a result of the change of government in Kiev. This resulted in tense relations between the Western countries and Russia. For example, *Panorama*'s report showed contradictory views from personnel at the US, British, and Russian Embassies. Western diplomats opined that Russia's involvement in Crimea was an illegal military operation, whereas the Russian ambassador stressed that it was self-defence.[71] *Panorama* reports offered viewers opposing assessments of the situation. On March 1st 2014, *Panorama*

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[67] **Vremya** 2014. Novosti iz Ukrainskix regionov napominayt svodki s fronta (News from the Ukrainian regions are reminiscent of reports from the front). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/253272> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[68] **Vremya** 2014. Za sobitiyami na Ukraine, sudya po oprosam, sledyat tri chetverti Rossiyan (According to polls three quarters of the Russian population are following the events in the Ukraine). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/social/253286> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[69] **Vremya** 2014. Situaciya v Kiyeve opisiviayetsa odnoi frazoi: bitva za vlast vo vremya bez-vlastiya (The situation in Kiev is described in one sentence: the battle for power in a time of anarchy). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/253273> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[70] **Vremya** 2014. Novosti iz Ukrainskix regionov napominayt svodki s fronta (News from the Ukrainian regions are reminiscent of reports from the front). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/253272> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[71] **Panorama** 2014. Okupācija vai pašaizsardzība (Occupation or self-defence). – 03 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/03.03.2014-okupacija-vai-pashaizsardziiba.id25511/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

reported a statement issued by senior Latvian officials stating that Latvia strongly supported the territorial integrity of the Ukraine, and categorically condemned any measures seeking to undermine the Ukraine's unity and its territorial integrity.[72] Reacting to Russia's military involvement in Ukraine, the former President of Latvia, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, declared that Russia's actions were an unjustified aggression against an independent, sovereign state.[73] The former Latvian Foreign Minister, Georgs Andrejevs, explained that Russia had enormous geopolitical interests in the Ukraine and therefore it would not hesitate to use its influence to defend those interests.[74]

On March 6th, 2014 *Panorama* reported that OSCE observers had been denied entry to Crimea. This was in contravention to legal norms and laws. The same report provided information about the Tatar community's call for UN peacekeeping forces to enter Crimea and that the Tatars would not take part in the referendum.[75] On March 15th 2014, *Panorama* reported on a demonstration in Moscow that supported Ukraine and condemned the war and annexation of Crimea. According to *Panorama*, there were many more participants at the anti-war demonstration than there were at the demonstration supporting the reunion of Crimea and Russia, which was taking place simultaneously.[76] On March 16th 2014, *Panorama* reported that Latvia refused to recognize the legality of the Crimean referendum.[77]

On February 2nd 2014 *Vremya* began reporting on potential separatism and the formation of self-defence units against extremism.[78] On February

[72] **Panorama** 2014. Panorāma. – 01 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/01.03.2014-panorama. id25410/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[73] **Panorama** 2014. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga par situāciju Ukrainā (Vaira Vike-Freiberga on the situation in Ukraine). – 02 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/02.03.2014-vaira-viikje-freiberga-par-situaciju-ukraina.id25448/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[74] **Panorama** 2014. Ukrainas iespējamie scenāriji var pārveidot Eiropu (Possible Ukrainian scenarious can transform Europe). – 02 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/02.03.2014-ukrainas-iespejamie-scenariji-var-parveidot-eiropu.id25443/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[75] **Panorama** 2014. Žurnālists S.Semjonovs par situāciju Krimā (Journalist S.Semjonovs about the situation in Ukraine). – 06 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/06.03.2014-zurnalists-s.semjonovs-par-situaciju-krima.id25679/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[76] **Panorama** 2014. Maskavā atbalsta Ukraina (Ukraine is being supprted in Moscow). – 15 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/15.03.2014-maskava-atbalsta-ukrainu.id26114/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[77] **Panorama** 2014. Panorāma. – 16 March. <http://ltv.lsm.lv/lv/raksts/16.03.2014-panorama. id26179/> (accessed November 25, 2015).

[78] **Vremya** 2014. Na Ukraine ekstremisti otkazivaytsa osvobozhdat zahvachenniye zdaniya, nesmotrya na ustupki Yanukovicha (In Ukraine, the extremists refuse to release the captured buildings, despite the concessions of Yanukovych). – 02 February. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/251492> (accessed November 24, 2015).

23rd 2014, *Vremya* reported that large anti-Maidan rallies were being held in Odessa and Luhansk, and that Crimean self-defence units were being given St. George ribbons and weapons training.[79] There were also reports of rallies in Russia to support their compatriots in Crimea. War veterans said that they were against the double standards of the West, where everything begins with democracy, but ends with the use of weapons like in Syria and Libya.[80] Other themes were also presented in the same report, such as the position that Russia was a peaceful country that never attacks, pre-emption of the *brown plague*, and that the secession of Ukraine and Belarussia from Russia was part of Hitler's plan to conquer Russia.[81] It was also argued that Crimea had always belonged to Russia and had only become part of the territory of Ukraine as a result of a misunderstanding.[82]

In response to the concerns of Western political leaders about the use of Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine, V. Putin drew attention to the provocative and criminal activities of Ukrainian ultra-nationalists, and emphasized that there was a real threat to the lives of Russian speaking citizens. It was therefore necessary for Russia to be ready to take all steps within the framework of international law.[83] According to *Vremya's*, coverage the people of Crimea enthusiastically embraced the news that Russia was ready to protect them.[84] For more than 20 years they had been waiting for a reunion with Russia, and even the Crimean Tatars supported the referendum and were of the opinion

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[79] **Vremya** 2014. Verhonaya Rada vozlozhila obyazannosti prezidenta Ukraini na Aleksandra Turchinova (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine assigned duties of the president to the parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchynov). – 23 February. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/252828> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[80] **Vremya** 2014. Akcii v podderzhku sootechestvinnikov v Krimu proshli v neskolkih gordax Rosii (Rallies in support of compatriots in Crimea were held in several cities in Russia). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/social/253287> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] **Vremya** 2014. Vopros „chya zdes zemlya" dlya Krima – istoriya davnaya (In Crimea, the question "whose land is it" has a long history). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/253275> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[83] **Vremya** 2014. Situacii vokrug Ukraini bil posvyaschen ryad vazhnih telefonnih razgovorov Vladimira Putina (The Ukraine situation was discussed in a number of important telephone conversations of Vladimir Putin). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/polit/253265> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[84] **Vremya** 2014. Zhiteli Krima s voodushevleiyem vosprinyali izvestiye, chto Rossiya gotova vstat na ih zaschitu (The inhabitants of Crimea are encouraged by the news that Russia is ready to come to their defense). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/253242> (accessed November 24, 2015).

that they must join with Russia.[85] Kosovo's declaration of independence was used to legitimize the Crimea referendum,[86] although it was admitted that the principles of international law were conflicting, and open to interpretation.[87] On March 16th 2014, *Vremya* reported that the referendum was well organized, it had experienced a high turnout, including in the areas populated by Crimean Tatars, and that international observers had not noticed any serious violations of law.[88]

Table 1. Coverage of the Ukrainian crisis in the Latvian and the Russian media.

Category of analysis	*Panorama* story	*Vremya* story
Goal of the Euromaidan	To gain independence from Russia and to strengthen ties with Europe through a commitment to European values and democracy. The Euromaidan is analogous to the *Barricades* in Riga in 1991.	Raising false hopes for the Ukrainian people that their individual living conditions will improve, as well as the one-sided economic interests of the EU.
Ukraine's strategic partnership	Strategic partnership with the EU will encourage political reforms and the development of democracy in Ukraine.	Strategic partnership with Russia is beneficial to the Ukrainian economy, unlike the partnership with the EU.
Responsibility for the Euromaidan violence	The government of V. Yanukovich, the police and the *Berkut* special task force unit. The snipers were from the police.	Radical and ultra-nationalist groups. The identity of the snipers is unclear.

[85] **Vremya** 2014. V Krimu gotovyatsa k referendumu, Kiev okazivayet protivodeistviye. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/253773> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[86] **Vremya** 2014. V tom, chto politicheskiy krizis na Ukraine voshol v ostruy fazu, ne somnevayetsa nikto (Nobody doubts that the political crisis in Ukraine is in the acute phase). – 02 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/polit/253274> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[87] **Vremya** 2014. Politologi i ekonomisti sravnivayut situaciy v Krimu s drugimi pohozhimi sluchayami v mirovoi istorii (Political scientists and economists compare the situation in Crimea with other similar cases throughout the history of the world). – 16 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/254250> (accessed November 24, 2015).

[88] **Vremya** 2014. Mezhdunarodniye nablydateli otmetili prekrasnuy organizaciy referenduma v Krimu (International observers noted the excellent organization of the referendum in Crimea). – 16 March. <http://www.1tv.ru/news/world/254260> (accessed November 24, 2015).

Table 1. Continuation

Category of analysis	*Panorama* story	*Vremya* story
The change of government in Ukraine	A logical outcome of the Euromaidan. The people demanded a change in government and V. Yanukovich's credibility was nullified by the killings during the Euromaidan and the use taxpayer's money to support his opulent lifestyle.	A violent coup backed by the West.
Interpretation of the Crimean annexation	Russian aggression against an independent state to retain influence in Ukraine. The Crimean annexation was a violation of international law.	Russia's involvement in Crimea was necessary to protect the Russian speaking population in Ukraine. The Crimean referendum was democratic and legal. Crimea has historically belonged to Russia and the people of Crimea supported the reunion with Russia.

The synopsis of the Ukrainian crisis narratives of *Panorama* and *Vremya* demonstrates that the Latvian and Russian medias constructed separate "realities". From the Latvian media perspective the essence of the crisis was about the Ukraine's efforts to gain independence from Russia, integrate into the EU, promote political reforms, and democratize. *Panorama* was critical of the Yanukovich government and supportive of the government that was established as a result of the Euromaidan. Regarding the annexation of the Crimea, *Panorama* reiterated the official positions of the Latvian government and the EU. In contrast to *Panorama*, *Vremya* placed the emphasis on economic issues asserting that a strategic partnership with Russia would more beneficial for the economy of Ukraine, and that the protesters had been manipulated with the false hopes that their living conditions would improve if Ukraine would form a strategic partnership with the EU. *Vremya* was neutral in relation to the Yanukovich government and blamed radicals and ultra-nationalists for the violence of the protests. The Russian media was very critical of the post-Euromaidan government, deeming it unconstitutional and accusing it of being backed by the Western countries, mainly the U.S. *Vremya* also justified the Crimea annexation stating that it was legal, and necessary.

Which narrative of the Ukrainian crisis prevailed in Latvia?

To determine the effect of the conflicting narratives on Latvian society, an opinion poll based off of each the categories of analysis, as enumerated in Table 1, was conducted. The respondents were asked nine questions in total. Each question reflected either the Latvian or Russian media perspective, which was determined by applying the media content analysis. The exception was the final question that addressed the attitude of the respondents towards the media in general. To assess the impact of the Latvian and Russian media narratives on Latvian society, it is assumed that the prevailing narrative was the one that gained the greatest public support.

The first question of the survey addressed the overall aim of the Euromaidan (Figure 1). The survey sought to find the extent to which Latvian society agreed with the idea expressed on *Panorama* that the goals of the Euromaidan protesters were similar to those of the participants in the *Barricades* in Latvia in 1991. In total, 40% of the respondents agreed (10% "definitely yes" and 30% "rather yes") with the narrative of the Latvian media, and 41% disagreed (21% "rather no" and 20% "definitely no"). 20% of the respondents had no opinion. When basing the data off of ethnicity, it becomes evident that 52% of Latvian speakers saw a parallel between the Euromaidan movement and the *Barricades* in Latvia in 1991 (13% "definitely yes" and 39% "somewhat yes"), while only 15% of the Russian speakers held a similar view (2% "definitely yes" and 13% "rather yes"). 68% of the Russian speakers interviewed disagreed with the statement in question (25% "rather no" and 43% "definitely no"). It can therefore be concluded that the perception of the *Barricades* in Latvia in 1991 as being analogous to the events in the Ukraine, was actually rather widespread in Latvia, albeit mainly among the Latvian speaking population. The fact that the majority of Russian speakers disagree, is evidence of a polarization of opinions among Latvian and Russian speakers in Latvia.

The second question studied the views of the respondents in relation to the geopolitical orientation of Ukraine from the perspective of economic benefits (Figure 2). When asked which strategic partnership would be more beneficial to the Ukrainian economy, 41% of respondents answered that cooperation with the EU would be better for the economy of Ukraine, while 33% were of the opinion that Russia would be a better strategic partner. 26%, however, could not answer the question. Although it is evident that the Latvian society supported the Latvian media narrative that Ukraine should be further integrated into the EU, nevertheless, just as was the case in the previous ques-

tion, there was a sharp polarization of opinions among Latvian and Russian speakers. 59% of Latvian speakers support Ukraine's partnership with the EU, while only 8% of Russian speakers express a similar view. And while, 66% of Russian speakers were of the opinion that Russia would be a better strategic partner for Ukraine, only 16% of Latvian speakers agreed with this.
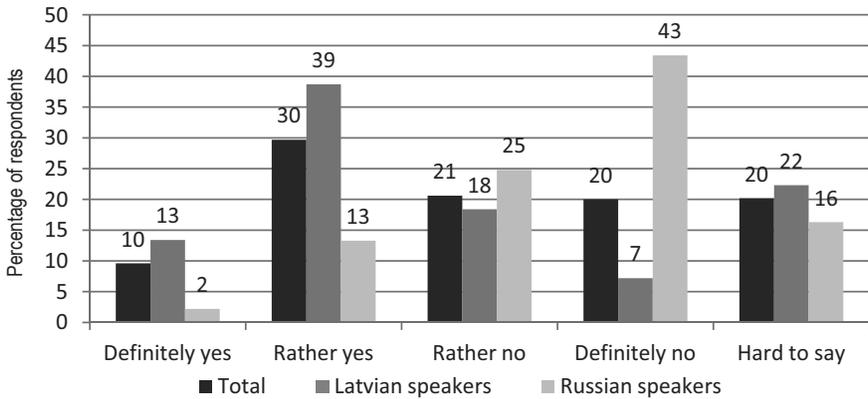
Source: SKDS 2015. Quantitative online survey.

Figure 1. Do you think that the objectives of the Euromaidan were similar those of the Latvian *Barricades* in 1991, when participants were fighting for freedom and human rights?
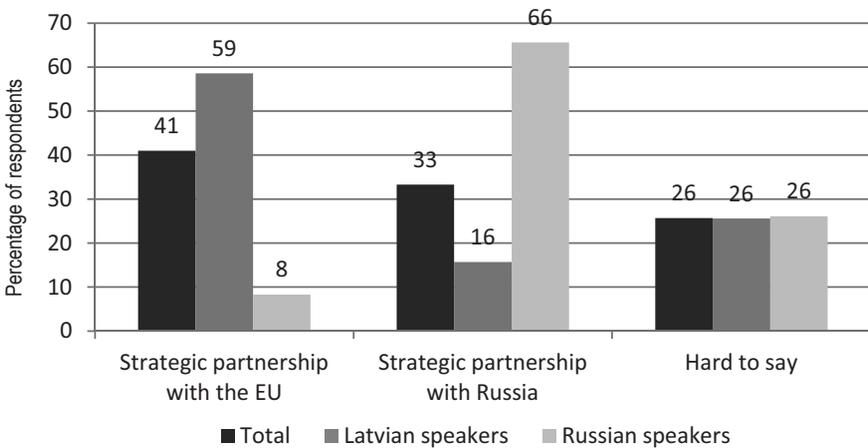
Source: SKDS 2015. Quantitative online survey.

**Figure 2**. Who would be more beneficial to the Ukrainian economy?

As to the party responsible for the violence at the Euromaidan, *Vremya*'s story dominated in Latvian society (Figure 3). Only 28% of the respondents agreed with *Panorama*'s position that the government of V. Yanukovich, its subordinate police, and the *Berkut* special task unit was responsible for the bloodshed. The opinions of the majority of the respondents – 44%, were aligned with the *Vremya* reports asserting that radicals and extremists were responsible for the violence at the Euromaidan. The overall trend of Latvian speakers expressing viewpoints similar to the *Panorama* stories, and Russian speakers sharing views similar to those disseminated by Vremya, could also detected in the answer patterns for this question. The view that V. Yanukovich was to blame for the violence was supported by 40% of Latvian speakers, but by only 6% of the Russian speakers. However, a relatively large proportion of Latvian speakers – 28%, and the majority – 74% of Russian speakers, supported the Russian media narrative asserting that the radicals and extremists were responsible for the violence. It is also important to stress that a very large proportion of respondents – 28% did not answer this question, which could mean that they were either confused by the contradictory media stories, or, perhaps, that the events in the Ukraine were not important enough for them to formulate a view on the issue, especially as it was such a complicated one.
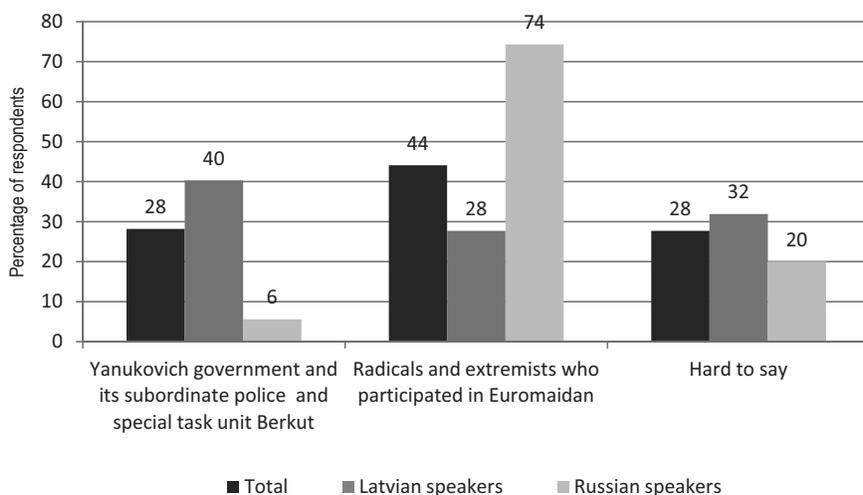
Source: SKDS 2015. Quantitative online survey.

Figure 3. Which group was responsible for the violence and bloodshed during the protests at the Euromaidan?

The respondent's answers to the questions concerning the change of government in Ukraine also indicated greater support for *Vremya's* version rather than for *Panorama's*. 56% of all respondents supported the view (22% "definitely yes" and 34% "rather yes") that the change of government, which took place as a result of the Euromaidan, should be regarded as a coup d'etat (Figure 4), which "by definition is illegal"[89]. This idea was not only supported by 79% (45% "definitely yes" and 34% "rather yes") of the Russian speakers, but also by 43% of the Latvian speakers (9% "definitely yes" and 34% "rather yes"). Only 32% of the Latvian speakers (23% "rather no" and 9% "definitely no") and 10% of the Russian speakers (6% "rather no" and 4% "definitely no") disagreed. A greater number of Latvian speakers had no opinion on this matter – 24%, compared to 11% of the Russian speakers. And despite the fact that a large proportion of Latvian speakers tend to be pro-Western (see Figure 2), many did not consider the change of government in Ukraine to be legitimate.
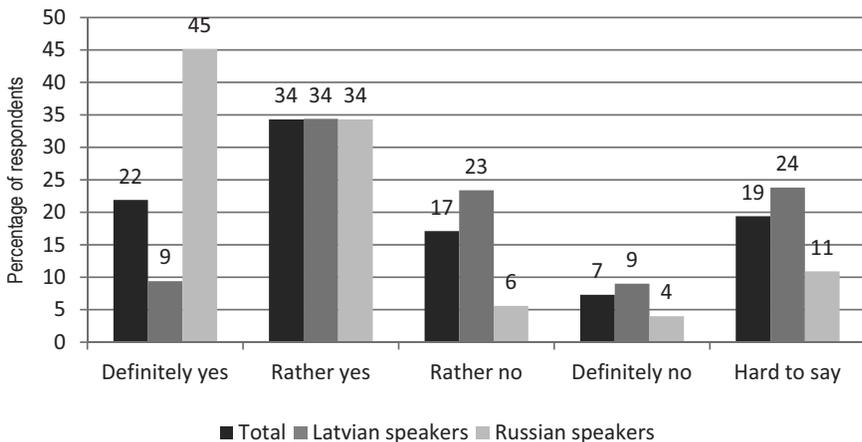

Source: SKDS 2015. Quantitative online survey.

Figure 4. The change of government in Ukraine resulting from the Euromaidan, should be regarded as a coup d'état.

The next four questions addressed various aspects of the Crimean annexation. The answers show that on these issues the views of respondents were more in accord with the *Panorama* position. However, the trend of Russian

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[89] **Luttwak, E**. 1979. Coup d'Etat: Practical Handbook. Cambridge, Massachusets: Harvard University Press, p. 172.

speakers expressing views similar to those of *Vremya* nevertheless persists. 58% of the respondents (43% "definitely wasn't" and 15% "rather wasn't") disagreed with the idea that the referendum on Crimea's accession to Russia was lawful and in accordance with international law (Figure 5). This view was expressed by 82% of Latvian speakers (62% "definitely wasn't" and 20% "rather wasn't"). 31% of the total number of respondents considered the Crimean referendum to be legal, and in accordance with international law (19% "definitely was" and 12% "rather wasn't") with 73% of the Russian speakers holding this view (48% "definitely was" and 25% "rather was"). A very sharp polarization of opinions can be identified with regard to the legitimacy of the Crimean referendum. As can be seen, the majority of the Latvian speaking and Russian speaking respondents selected answers that the referendum either "definitely wasn't" or "definitely was" legal. 11% of all respondents had no opinion in this regard. This is more than 50% less when compared with other questions in the survey (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). On this issue, the majority of respondents had clear and strong positions.
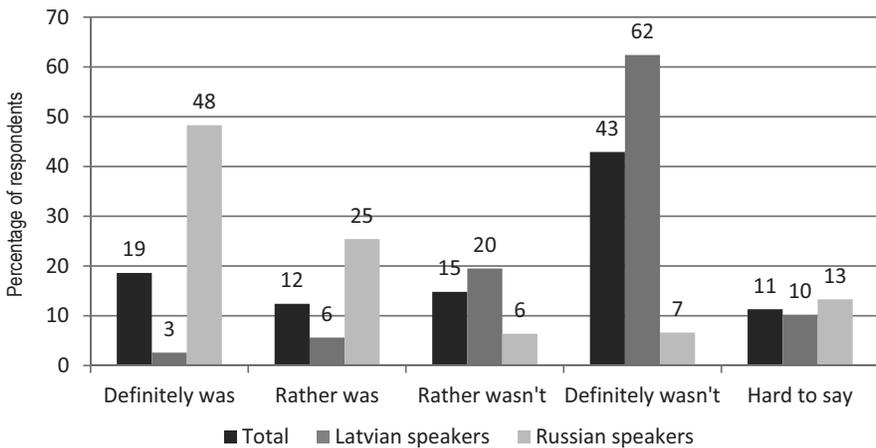
Source: SKDS 2015. Quantitative online survey.

Figure 5. The referendum on Crimea's accession to Russia was lawful and was in accordance with international law.

The distribution of answers in regards to the question of whether Crimea was an integral part of Ukraine followed a similar pattern. 55% of all respondents admitted that it was (35% "definitely is" and 20% "rather is"), but 34% disagreed (22% "definitely isn't" and 12% "rather isn't"). 77% of the Latvian speaking respondents were of the opinion that Crimea belonged to Ukraine (50% "definitely is" and 27 % "rather is"), but 75% of the Russian speakers

answered that they disagreed with this (53% "definitely isn't" and 22% "'rather isn't").

The position forwarded by the Russian media that Crimea had historically belonged to Russia seems to have been accepted by many Latvian speakers as well. The distribution of answers in support of each of the positions was almost equal with 43% of the respondents agreeing that Crimea historically belonged to Russia (25% "definitely is" and 18% "rather is"), 40% disagreeing (21% "definitely isn't" and 19% "rather isn't"), and 17% being unsure. 83% of the Russian speakers agreed with the statement (61% "definitely is" and 22% "rather is"), and 22% of the Latvian speakers also held a similar view (6% "definitely is" and 16% "rather is"). An indication that opinions of Latvian speakers were mixed on this issue was evidenced by the fact that only 29% of them were categorical in agreeing that Crimea "definitely isn't" when asked if Crimea had historically belonged to Russia. This is in contrast to the previous two questions about the Crimean referendum, where the clear majority of Latvian speakers chose answers that supported the most emphatic positions. As to Crimea historically belonging to Russia, 28% of the Latvian speakers answered that it "rather isn't", and for 20% it was hard to say. In comparison – only 11% of the Russian speakers found this question difficult to answer, which means that they held stronger views in this regard than the Latvian speakers.

The last question about the Crimean annexation examined the Latvian society's reaction to the argument that the event was justified by a need to protect the Russian speaking population (Figure 6). Only 27% of the respondents agreed (16% "absolutely agree" and 11% "rather agree") that the Ukraine's territorial integrity could be violated in order to protect the Russian speaking population. 62% of respondents disagreed with this (46% "absolutely disagree" and 16% "rather disagree"). 64% of the Russian speakers agreed with this statement (41% "absolutely agree" and 23% "rather agree"), which is slightly less than in other questions where, on average, more than 70% of Russian speaking respondents expressed views similar to those of the Russian media stories. Latvian speaking respondents had a clearly negative attitude towards the statement in question with 86% disagreeing (66% "absolutely disagree" and 20% "rather disagree"), while only 7% of Latvian speakers found it hard to answer this question. The data showed that the justification for Russia's involvement in other states to protect the Russian speaking population was largely rejected by Latvian society. Nor did this idea have broad support within the Russian speaking population, who otherwise tend to share the world-view promoted in the Russian media.
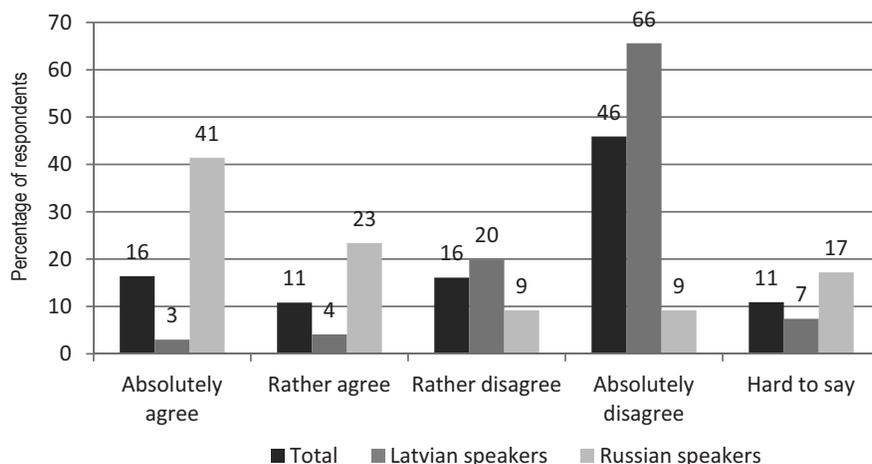
Source: SKDS 2015. Quantitative online survey.

Figure 6. Crimea's union with Russia was necessary to protect the Russian speaking population from ultra-national and radical groups.

Finally, the respondents were also asked which media provided the most objective information about the events in Ukraine: the Western, Latvian, Russian or Ukrainian (Figure 7). Interestingly enough, the majority of respondents 53% thought that it was "hard to say" meaning that none of the media was perceived as objective. In Latvia, the Western media was considered to be the most objective with 21% of the respondents validating it. The Latvian media was mentioned by 10%, while the Russian media was favoured by 9%. The Ukrainian media was supported by only 7%. There were also marked differences in the views of Latvian and Russian speakers on this issue. Latvian speakers considered the Western (26%) media to be the most impartial, followed by the Latvian media (15%), then the Ukrainian (10%), and finally the Russian (3%). This was somewhat inverted for the Russian speakers. In their view, the most objective information about the Ukraine crisis was provided by the Russian media (20%), followed by the Western (10%), but only 2% mentioned the Latvian and Ukrainian media as exemplars of providing impartial information about the Ukraine. There were more Russian speakers (66%) than Latvian speakers (45%) who disbelieved all media outlets. Thus it can be concluded that the contradictory media stories within the society diminished the credibility of all of the media outlets.
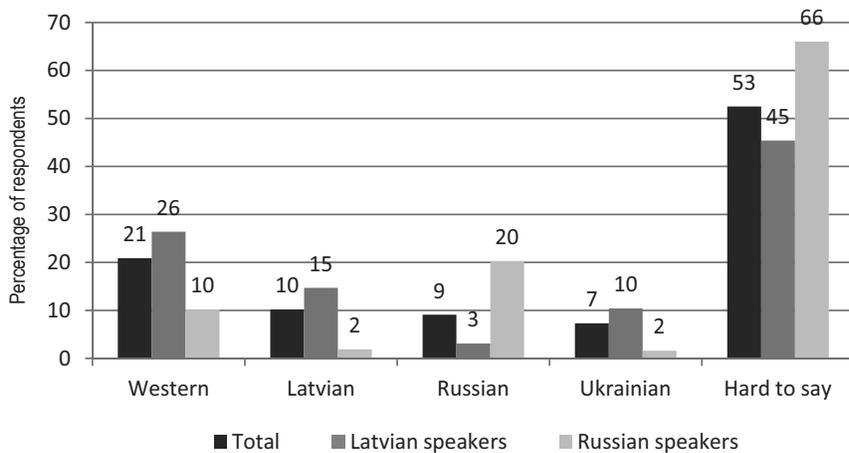
Source: SKDS. 2015. Quantitative online survey.

Figure 7. Which media provided the most objective information about the events in Ukraine?

By and large the results of the public opinion survey indicate that the views of the Latvian society regarding the crisis in the Ukraine mostly aligned with the position of the Latvian media. The strongest positive correlation of the views of Latvian society and the Latvian media narratives can be found in relation to the Crimea annexation. However, Latvian society also supported the Russian media narratives on the issues of the Euromaidan violence, and the change of government in the Ukraine. The survey also gives insight into the polarization of opinions among Latvian and Russian speakers. It is also important to stress that for many respondents it was hard to answer the questions, which means that the crisis in Ukraine is not always an important and clearly defined event for the respondents. The combination of media content analysis and public opinion survey gives a better understanding of perceptions than a focus on media content alone could. Narrowing the study only to media content does not provide an actual understanding of the battle of narratives. This is due to the fact that people tend to make their own conclusions and judgements based on their conceptions of the issues.

Conclusions

The chosen methodological approach of combining media content analysis and a public opinion survey was an effective means of gaining insight into the effects of public opinion warfare on Latvian society. Different and

contradictory themes and messages can be detected in the Latvian and the Russian media stories. This leads to the conclusion that information warfare was occurring in Latvia during the Ukrainian crisis.

The public opinion survey made it possible to measure, which media stories best coincided with the views of the overall population. For the most part, the majority of Latvians thought along the same lines as the Latvian media, but there was also considerable support for the Russian media narratives. The Latvian media narratives correspond largely with the views of the Latvian speaking population, whereas the views of Russian speakers were aligned with the Russian media position. In general, it can be said that the breadth of Russian media influence regarding the Ukrainian crisis in Latvia was determined by the size of the Russian speaking population. The Russian media stories had less purchase with the Latvian speaking audience. Considering the contradictory content of the Latvian and the Russian media, one of the most important consequences of the public opinion warfare in Latvia was the polarization of opinions among Latvian and Russian speakers.

The existence of contradictory views in Latvian society poses an indirect, albeit long-term problem for the Latvian government. The polarization of opinions makes it difficult to develop policies that are acceptable to majority of society. Latvia's condemnation of the Crimean annexation can be mentioned as one example. The official position of Latvia was in contravention to the view held by many Russian speakers, who considered the referendum on the Crimean annexation to be legal. Absence of public consent for a government's policies widens the gap between the state and the populace. The problem is not then just limited to effective governance, but may extend to national security if war is conducted by non-military means. Another long-term negative consequence of public opinion warfare is that if people are confronted with contradictory and unverified media stories, they will tend to disbelieve all media stories as a result. Consequently, if trust in the media, which is the main source of political information is undermined, then the government's ability to communicate with the populace becomes significantly more complicated.

To mitigate a polarization of opinions among Latvian and Russian speakers and to decrease the gap between the government and the populace, it is necessary to adopt a strategy of operating in a divided society. It is difficult for the Latvian government to counter Russia's narratives in relation to the crisis in Ukraine, but it is of paramount importance to address the issues within the Latvian society that are important for all the major social groups in a manner that demonstrates consistency between words and deeds. This

could be one of the most effective long-term methods for strengthening the relationship between the government and society in Latvia and reducing the impact of foreign influence.

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THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE AND THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Ain Riistan

■

1. Introduction: geopolitics and theopolitics[1]

In describing church-state relations, the concept of *symphonia* is used in Orthodox tradition. It refers to the loyal and mutual cooperation between these two distinctive institutions for the sake of the people, who are simultaneously members of the church and subjects or citizens of the state[2]. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) has addressed questions related to this concept in a document called "The Basis of the Social Concept"[3], officially approved by the Church in August 2000[4]. The leader of the committee was Patriarch Kirill (Gundiaev), who was the head of the Department for External Church Relations at that time[5]. This document lists sixteen areas of church-state co-operation. The first three are: (a) peace-making on international, interethnic and civic levels and promoting mutual understanding and co-operation among people, nations and states; (b) concern for the preservation of morality in society; (c) spiritual, cultural, moral and patriotic education and formation. This is followed by a list of areas in which the clergy and canonical church structures cannot support the state or cooperate with it. There are three of

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[4] **Kirill, Metropolitan** 14.10.2005. The Orthodox Church, State and Europe: A View from Russia. <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles5/KirillEurope.php> (23.02.2016).

[5] **Richters, Katja** 2013. The Post-Soviet Russian Orthodox Church. Politics, Culture and Greater Russia. London & New York: Routledge, p. 18. [**Richters** 2013].

these areas: (a) political struggle, election agitation, campaigns in support of particular political parties and public and political leaders; (b) waging civil war or aggressive external war; (c) direct participation in intelligence and any other activity that demands secrecy by law even in making one's confession or reporting to the church authorities.[6]

The crisis in Ukraine, initiated by the Kremlin, has put these principles to the test. Officials of the Russian state often claim that the Ukrainian crisis is a geopolitical one, in which the interests of great powers collide. How does the Russian Orthodox Church relate to the crisis from the perspective of church-state symphonia? The current paper describes the politics of the Moscow Patriarchate in its attempts to deal with the conflict between two Orthodox countries, in which the ROC is the biggest religious denomination and national religious identity in one of the countries, Ukraine, is being questioned. While the notion of geopolitics is quite familiar, the concept of *theopolitics* needs some preliminary explanation. This term is sometimes used in the U.S., where it denotes the fusion of Christianity, nationalism and politics, usually from the right-wing conservative side[7]. More generally one can, of course, speak of church politics or political Christianity[8], but theopolitics places an additional emphasis on the religious aspect of Christian politics and nationalism. The reader shall see the shape of the theopolitics of the Moscow Patriarchate emerging out of the need to maintain symphonia with the geopolitical interests of the Russian State.

2. Rhetoric from Moscow

In August 2014, amidst intense fighting in Ukraine, a document was posted on the website of the Department for Official Church Relations of the ROC. It was a letter from Patriarch Kirill to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. It was soon taken down, but the genie was out of the bottle already, and the text would not be easily forgotten. Some quotes are appropriate here:

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[6] **The Basis of the Social Concept**. <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/social-concepts/iii/> (23.02.2016).

[7] See, for example, **Anderson, Braden P**. 2010. Chosen Nation: Biblical Theopolitics and the Problem of American Christian Nationalism. Dissertations (2009–). Paper 64. <http://epublications.marquette.edu/dissertations_mu/64> (23.02.2016); **Hanson, Paul D**. 2008. "God is One, So Are We": A Theo-political Hermeneutic. <http://reflections.yale.edu/article/between-babel-and-beatitude/god-one-so-are-we-theo-political-hermeneutic#sthash.eAYAi8TL.dpuf> (23.02.2016).

[8] The concept of "Political Orthodoxy" is in use already, see **Kalaitzidis** 2014, p. 48.

As far back as last autumn when the present political crisis in Ukraine just begun, representatives of the Greek Catholic Church and schismatic communities, who appeared in the Kiev Maidan, openly preached hatred towards the Orthodox Church, calling to seize Orthodox shrines and to eradicate Orthodoxy from the territory of Ukraine. With the beginning of hostilities, the Uniates and schismatics, having been given arms, under the pretext of antiterrorist operation, began an outright aggression against the clergy of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the east of the country. /.../ We cannot ignore the fact that the conflict in Ukraine has an unambiguous religious cause underlying it. The Uniates and schismatics linked up with them to seek to gain the upper hand over canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine, while the Ukrainian Orthodox Church continues with patience and courage to take pastoral care of her suffering faithful in this very difficult situation. Most of the clergy who serve in places that have become arenas for hostilities have remained with their flock, sharing in all the terrors of civil war.[9]

The message was absolutely clear: the Russian Patriarch saw the conflict in Ukraine as a religious one. Furthermore, the term "civil war" was used, signalling that the ROC had already distanced itself from the hostilities[10]. The letter listed four occasions of attacks on the priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOCMP). In the context of the escalating conflict, it is actually no surprise that some nationalist-minded Ukrainians might have viewed a clergyman of the UOCMP as an agent of hostile Russia. At the same time the Patriarch makes no mention of numerous

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[9] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 15 августа 2014, 13:59. „Google" и архиепископ УПЦ КП Евстратий (Зоря) сохранили письмо Патриарха Кирилла (Гундяева) главе Константинопольской Патриархии, удаленное с сайта ОВЦС МП. <http://www.por-tal-credo.ru/site/index.php?act=news&type=archive&day=15&month=8&year=2014&id=109233> (23.02.2016). Now it is officially published again on the site of Department for Official Church Relations of ROC: **Kirill, Patriarch**. 14.08.2014, 19:55. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Calls Primates of Local Orthodox Churches to Raise their Voice in Defence of Orthodox Christians in the East of Ukraine. <https://mospat.ru/en/2014/08/14/news106782/> (23.02.2016).

[10] On February 17, 2015, the Patriarch officially declared the military conflict in Ukraine to be a civil war. See **Novitchkova, Alexandra; Tomak, Mariia**. April 2015. When God Becomes The Weapon. Persecution based on religious beliefs in the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Report prepared by the Center for Civil Liberties and International Partnership for Human Rights in the framework of the Civic Solidarity Platform, pp. 7–8. <http://iphronline.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/when_god_becomes_the_weapon_may2015.pdf> (23.02.2016) [**Novitchkova, Tomak** 2015]. Official statement in Russian on the ROC website: **Пресс-служба Патриарха Московского и всея Руси**. 17 февраля 2015 г. 15:19. Святейший Патриарх Кирилл: «Сегодня нет более важного вопроса, чем мир на Украинской земле» <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3996574.html> (23.02.2016).

persecutions of people of other faiths by separatists in Crimea and Donbass professing faith in the Moscow Patriarchate[11].

That this view was not only a passing thought of the Patriarch can be seen from the remarks made by the successor of Kirill in the post of the chairman of the Department of the External Church Relations Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) in an interview in the National Catholic Register. This interview was published on March 4, 2014, exactly two weeks before Crimea was officially incorporated into the Russian Federation:

> *In the present civic confrontation, the Greek Catholics have taken one side, entering into active cooperation with the Orthodox schismatic groups. The head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, together with the head of the so-called Kiev Patriarchate, paced the U.S. State Department offices, calling the American authorities to interfere in the situation and to put Ukraine in order. The Greek Catholics have in fact launched a crusade against Orthodoxy.*[12]

He reiterated his position in the same year in the Vatican on October 16. While giving a greeting address to the Synod of Bishops on the Family, he suddenly changed the topic to Ukraine:

> *Regrettably, the conflict in that country, which has already taken the lives of thousands, from the very beginning, has acquired a religious dimension. A significant role in its conception and development has been played by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. From the very first days of the conflict, the Greek Catholics identified with one of the sides of the confrontation. Contrary to the prevailing respect for canonical norms in relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, the Greek Catholics have entered into active cooperation with the Orthodox schismatic groups.*[13]

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[11] See **Freedom of Religion or Belief – Newsletters by Country or Entity. Ukraine 2014**. HRWF International <http://www.hrwf.net/images/forbnews/2014/Ukraine_2014.pdf> (23.02.2016); **Rohrback, Robin** (Ed.). 5 June 2014. Terrorists Kidnapped, Tortured and Threatened Believers in Donbas. Institute for Religious Freedom. <http://www.irf.in.ua/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=419:1&catid=34:ua&Itemid=61> (23.02.2016), and **Novitchkova, Tomak** 2015, pp. 11–20.

[12] **Pentin, Edward**. 04.03.2014. The Pan-Orthodox Council, Ukraine Crisis and Christian Unity. An interview with Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev of Volokolamsk, the chairman of the Russian Orthodox Department of External Church Relations. <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/the-pan-orthodox-council-ukraine-crisis-and-christian-unity/> (23.02.2016).

[13] **Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk**. 16.10.2014. Greeting Address by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk to the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Catholic Bishops on Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization. <https://mospat.ru/en/2014/10/16/news109624/> (23.02.2016).

These comments by two Church leaders are eerily similar to official statements by the Kremlin. One such statement will suffice as an example, since the Kremlin rhetoric is well known. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated the following at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly on September 27, 2014:

> *After they declared victory in the Cold War and the "end of history", the U.S. and EU have opted for expanding the geopolitical area under their control without taking into account the balance of legitimate interests of all peoples of Europe. /.../The U.S. and EU supported the coup d'etat in Ukraine and reverted to outright justification of any acts by the self-proclaimed Kiev authorities that opted for suppression by force of the part of the Ukrainian people that had rejected the attempts to impose the anti-constitutional way of life to the entire country and wanted to defend its rights to the native language, culture and history. /.../Russia is sincerely interested in the restoration of peace in the neighbouring country and this should be well understood by all who are even slightly acquainted with the history of the deep-rooted and fraternal ties between the two peoples.*[14]

The symmetry of these statements is quite remarkable. The official Russian position is that the events in Ukraine were initiated by the geopolitical interests of the U.S. and EU. Minister Lavrov spoke of "self-proclaimed Kiev authorities" but the general rhetoric has been much stronger: words like *Banderites*, *extremists*, *nationalists*, *fascists* and *Nazis* were commonly used[15]. In other words, it was the nationalists who took over Ukraine's legitimate government. According to the Patriarchate, on the other hand, it was a "crusade" against Orthodoxy by Greek Catholics (also called Uniates) and "schismatics" who were actively seeking the support of American authorities. So there is a conflict within a conflict: a theopolitical religious conflict inside a geopolitical nationalist conflict, according to the ROC. Both the Russian State and the ROC claim they are only interested in peace. With the special case of Crimea as an exception, Russia is not officially directly involved in the geopolitical conflict and neither is the ROC. Just as (Eastern) Ukrainians who do not agree with the decisions of Kiev suffer in the geopolitical conflict, the ROC suffers in the theopolitical conflict.

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[14] **Lavrov, Sergey**. September 27, 2014. STATEMENT by H.E. Mr. Sergey V. LAVROV, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/gadebate/pdf/RU_en.pdf> (23.02.2016).

[15] See, for example, the documentary that was released on the first anniversary of the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation: **Kondrashev, Andrey**. 15.03.2015. VIDEO. Crimea. The Way Home. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42-71RpRgI> (28.02.2016).

3. Theopolitics: the Moscow Patriarchate, the Uniates and schismatics

There is nothing new in blaming the Catholics as the source of Orthodox troubles; it has been going on more or less continuously for at least a quarter of a century already. It is based on the fact that the ROC considers Russia and most of the former Soviet Union as its canonical territory. The consequence is that the work of other Churches is often seen as "stealing of souls" and undermining Orthodoxy[16]. Similarly to the imperial ambition of the Russian state to be a major world power with its spheres of influence in the "near abroad" countries, the ROC aspires to be the leading Church of the Orthodox World. Here the historical rivalries between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarchate and more generally between Orthodoxy and Catholicism (as tradition is very important in Orthodoxy) come together in a complex manner with the political and demographic situation of today complicating the ROC's aspirations of hegemony.

The numbers are important here. The ROC is the biggest of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches; as of January 2010 it had approximately 30,142 parishes worldwide, whereas the next largest, the Romanian Orthodox Church, had 13,527 parishes at around the same time. Out of the more than 30,000 parishes belonging to the ROC, 12,444 were in Russia and 11,790 in Ukraine (UOCMP). So almost half of the Moscow Patriarchate's numbers come from Ukraine. If the Ukrainian churches were to leave the Moscow Patriarchate, the ROC would be comparable with the Romanian Church in size.[17] The fear of secession is a familiar one to the ROC. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and the former Republics of the USSR became independent, it was calculated that if the churches of Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Moldova, Central Asia and Ukraine left the Moscow Patriarchate, it would lose 60 per cent of its parishes[18]. The independent Ukraine became the biggest headache. In the mid-1980s all the Orthodox churches in Ukraine belonged under the unified Moscow Patriarchate. The unity, however, had been forced.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) has a complicated history. It was created by the Union of Brest in 1596 (hence the name Uniates). Its

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[16] See **Richters** 2013, pp. 36–56.

[17] **Richters** 2013, p. 112. The latest number from 2014 is 12,636 with 502 parishes in Crimea already subtracted: **Lunkin, Roman** 2014. Ukrainian Christian Congregations by Church Affiliation (2013–2014). – East-West Church & Ministry Report. Vol. 22, No. 3. <http://www.eastwestreport.org/pdfs/ew22-3.pdf> (28.02.2016). [**Lunkin** 2014].

[18] *Ibid*., p. 86.

followers accept the Pope in Rome as their highest authority, but celebrate the liturgy according to the Byzantine rite. In 1946, the UGCC was dissolved on Stalin's orders and merged into the ROC. Many of its priests were persecuted by Soviet powers. Under Gorbatchev's *perestroika* policy, the church was restored in 1988. As of 2014, the UGCC is estimated to have around 4.5 million members and 3,993 parishes.[19] Add to that 1,097 Latin-rite Roman Catholic Churches (RCC)[20] in Ukraine and the fact that the RCC in Russia (a church that was still in 1997 considered by Patriarch Aleksei II to be only the church of Poles and the diplomatic corps[21]) decided in 2002 to establish four dioceses in Russia[22] and we get an attitude of strong mistrust of Catholics.

Things got even worse for the ROC when the schismatics started to emerge. The success of the UGCC inspired another Orthodox group, and so in 1990 the restored Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) regained state recognition[23]. Yet another Orthodox Church was formed out of the UAOC that had firstly seceded from Moscow in 1921 and was shut down and persecuted after World War II. In June 1992, with the support of the president of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuck, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate (UOKP) was established[24]. Since the beginning both of these churches have stressed their identity as Ukrainian national churches. Because of this they have found acceptance in Ukrainian society. In 2014 the UAOC had 1,237 parishes (10 parishes subtracted) and the UOKP had 4,653 (without 44 in Crimea)[25].

From the very beginning, the Moscow Patriarchate, with the help of the UOCMP, tried to suppress these movements[26]. It has been one of the reasons

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[19] *Ibid*., p. 96, and **Wikipedia. Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church**. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Greek_Catholic_Church> (28.02.2016). A slightly different number 3910 (9 Crimean parishes already subtracted) is given by **Lunkin** 2014.

[20] **Lunkin** 2014. With 13 Crimean parishes subtracted.

[21] **Richters** 2013, p. 39.

[22] This infuriated Mertopolitan Kirill and led to a temporary break in relations between the ROC and RCC. **Fagan, Geraldine**. 12 February 2002. Russia-Special Report: Orthodox Indignant at Establishment of Catholic Dioceses. Keston News Service. <http://www.keston.org.uk/kns/2002/020212RU-01.htm> (28.02.2016).

[23] **Wikipedia. Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church**. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Autocephalous_Orthodox_Church> (28.02.2016).

[24] **Wikipedia. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate**.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukrainian_Orthodox_Church_of_the_Kyivan_Patriarchate> (28.02.2016).

[25] **Lunkin** 2014.

[26] A good overview is given by **Richters** 2013, pp. 96–127.

these churches have not been able to get canonical recognition from other Orthodox Churches, as in these matters a consensus is required (compare the situation with Russia vetoing the resolutions of the UN Security Council when the Ukrainian issue is at hand)[27]. To achieve its goals, the ROC has not hesitated to use political manipulation: during the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the presidential contest between Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych in 2010, the UOCMP openly supported the pro-Russian side[28]. At the same time, the other churches (especially UGCC and UOKP) have been actively supporting the pro-Western side. When Euromaidan happened, Yanukovych was ousted and Crimea annexed, most of the churches in Ukraine (including the UGCC, UAOC and UOKP) openly supported the Ukrainian government while the UOCMP decided to remain neutral this time[29]. The reasons for that were obvious: the UOCMP could no longer openly support the pro-Russian position, especially after the annexation of Crimea, since Russia was seen as an aggressor by the majority of Ukrainians, and, at the same time, the UOCMP wanted to maintain ties with Moscow and pro-Russian Ukrainians in the East.

In that light, it is no wonder that, since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, the popularity of the UOCMP has fallen considerably. There is an ongoing process of parishes leaving the UOCMP that has been nicknamed the "parade of cross-overs"[30]. According to the latest estimates, there are 70 parishes that have left UOCMP for UOKP[31]. This process is now openly supported by Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine which recently initiated a move to

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[27] See **UN Documents for Ukraine**.
<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/ukraine/> (01.03.2016).

[28] **Richters** 2013, pp. 115–124.

[29] **Lunkin, Roman** 2014. The Ukrainian Revolution and Christian Churches. – East-West Church & Ministry Report. Vol. 22, No. 3. <http://www.eastwestreport.org/pdfs/ew22-3.pdf> (01.03.2016); **Elliott, Mark R**. 2014. The Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis on Religious Life in Ukraine and Russia. – East-West Church & Ministry Report. Vol. 22, No. 3. <http://www.eastwestreport.org/pdfs/ew22-3.pdf> (01.03.2016), and **Marynovych, Myroslav** 2015. Ukrainian Churches and the Maidan. – **Hug, Adam** (Ed.). Traditional religion and political power: Examining the role of the church in Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova. Foreign Policy Centre, pp. 23–28. <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/1707.pdf> (26.03.2016).

[30] **Вагнер, Александра**. 17 марта 2015. "Патриарх предал свою Церковь". УПЦ МП массово покидают верующие. <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/26893910.html> (20.03.2016).

[31] **Симончук, Алексей**. 10.03.2016. Две УПЦ. Как война повлияла на крупнейшие конфессии в Украине. <http://news.liga.net/articles/politics/9479236-dve_upts_kak_voyna_povliyala_na_krupneyshie_konfessii_v_ukraine.htm?utm_source=email&utm_medium=rassilka&utm_campaign=newsvsenovosti> (20.03.2016).

change the law with the purpose of making these cross-overs easier[32]. This move follows the opinion of the general population: according to the latest sociological survey, 59% of Ukrainians consider themselves Orthodox, 32% consider themselves members of UOKP and only 27% indicate themselves to be members of UOCMP[33]. In view of this perspective, it is hardly surprising that the ROC has chosen to accuse the Uniates and schismatics. However, this tactic has had only moderate success thus far.

4. Recent developments

In the last two years, the Moscow Patriarchate has been especially active in foreign relations, trying to raise support for its position. Two main areas of interest here are relations with other Orthodox autocephalous churches, especially in view of the up-coming Pan-Orthodox Council to be held in Crete, Greece, in June 2016, and relations with the Roman Catholic Church.

The Pan-Orthodox Council is an event that has been in preparation since 1961 and the Ukrainian question has been in the minds of many as a potential area of conflict, since the idea of creating an autocephalous Ukrainian Church that would replace all the existing ones is very attractive in Ukraine, has some support abroad and is strongly opposed by Moscow[34]. In January 2016 a preparatory meeting of Church leaders was held in Chambesy, Switzerland, and the ROC came out with a victory: the Ukrainian issue will not be debated at the council[35]. However, this does not mean that the issue is settled. There is an ongoing debate in the framework of Orthodox canonical law about who has the right to make a decision about Ukraine: Constantinople or Moscow. Both sides have their arguments and it is worth

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[32] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 01 марта 2016, 17:34. В Верховную Раду Украины внесен законопроект, связанный с порядком смены религиозными общинами их канонической юрисдикции. <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=118803> (20.03.2016).

[33] **ЛІГА.net**. 13.01.2016, 16:49. В Украине прихожан УПЦ КП больше, чем УПЦ МП – опрос. <http://news.liga.net/news/society/8359087-v_ukraine_prikhozhan_upts_kp_bolshe_chem_upts_mp_opros.htm> (20.03.2016).

[34] **Gavrilyuk, Paul L**. 22 January 2106. The Future of Pan-Orthodox Council: To Be or Not To Be? – First Things. Web Exclusive. <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/01/the-future-pan-orthodox-council-to-be-or-not-to-be> (20.03.2016).

[35] **Interfax**. 27 January 2016, 16:23. Pan-Orthodox Council not to address Ukraine issue, transition to unified calendar. <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=12696> (20.03.2016).

noting that when Ukraine's president Poroshenko met with Patriarch Bartholomew in his official visit to Turkey (March 9–10, 2016), the Patriarch said:

> *You know that the Church of Constantinople is the Mother Church of the Ukrainian nation. We feel a spiritual bond between the Church of Constantinople and Ukraine.*[36]

To untrained ears it sounds innocent enough, but the phrases "Mother Church of the Ukrainian nation" and "spiritual bond between the Church of Constantinople and Ukraine" are theologically loaded and even unprecedented. They are a clear signal that Moscow has not yet won[37].

The relationship between the Moscow Patriarchate and Roman Catholic Church has been complicated. As the rhetoric outline above indicates, one of the controversial issues has been the very existence of the UGCC, the Uniates, in Ukraine, which is considered by the ROC to be its canonical territory. This February the events took an unexpected turn: Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill unexpectedly met in Cuba at Havana airport on February 12, 2016, while the Patriarch was visiting Cuba and the Pope was passing by on his trip to Mexico. The heads of the RCC and ROC had never met before and, after a two-hour private discussion, they signed a public declaration. Three points of this 30-point declaration are of interest here as they are explicitly about Ukraine:

> *25. It is our hope that our meeting may also contribute to reconciliation wherever tensions exist between Greek Catholics and Orthodox. It is today clear that the past method of "uniatism", understood as the union of one community to the other, separating it from its Church, is not the way to re-establish unity. Nonetheless, the ecclesial communities which emerged in these historical circumstances have the right to exist and to undertake all that is necessary to meet the spiritual needs of their faithful, while seeking to live in peace with their neighbours. Orthodox and Greek Catholics are in need of reconciliation and of mutually acceptable forms of co–existence.*

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[36] **President of Ukraine. Official Website. News**. 10 March 2016, 16:28. President: We are grateful to Ecumenical Patriarch for constantly supporting Ukraine. <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-mi-vdyachni-vselenskomu-patriarhu-za-postijnu-pidt-36837> (20.03.2016).

[37] **Тышкевич, Игорь**. 12.03.16, 13:30. Сценарии появления поместной церкви в Украине: результаты встречи Порошенко и Варфоломея. – Хвиля. <http://hvylya.net/analytics/politics/stsenarii-poyavleniya-pomestnoy-tserkvi-v-ukraine-rezultatyi-vstrechi-poroshenko-i-varfolomeya.html> (20.03.2016).

26. We deplore the hostility in Ukraine that has already caused many victims, inflicted innumerable wounds on peaceful inhabitants and thrown society into a deep economic and humanitarian crisis. We invite all the parts involved in the conflict to prudence, to social solidarity and to action aimed at constructing peace. We invite our Churches in Ukraine to work towards social harmony, to refrain from taking part in the confrontation, and to not support any further development of the conflict.

27. It is our hope that the schism between the Orthodox faithful in Ukraine may be overcome through existing canonical norms, that all the Orthodox Christians of Ukraine may live in peace and harmony, and that the Catholic communities in the country may contribute to this, in such a way that our Christian brotherhood may become increasingly evident.[38]

It is quite obvious that points 25 and 27 strike a compromise: the ROC will no longer press the issue of the Uniates and the RCC has agreed to support Moscow's claim to represent the only legitimate form of canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine, that is, the UOCMP. It is not surprising that the reaction of the UOKP issued three days later was bitter:

The abovementioned paragraphs [i.e. paragraphs 25–27] of the Declaration are seized by a spirit from the worst examples of secular diplomacy, full of equivocal connotations, biased opinions, and groundless assertions. /.../

For the Kyivan Patriarchate, it is unacceptable to practice the kind of diplomacy where decisions about Ukraine and Ukrainian ecclesiastical and public affairs are adopted without representatives of Ukraine, ignoring their thoughts and positions. The Munich Pact of 1938 and its bitter legacy testify that issues concerning us cannot be resolved without our participation.[39]

The mentioning of the Munich Pact signals that, according to the UOKP, the issue here is not only about theopolitics (agreements between two churches) but also of geopolitics: the Vatican as a state affirming the Russian aggression in Ukraine. The vagueness of point 26 of the joint declaration is seen as an agreement with the Russian position: that the conflict in Ukraine has nothing to do with Russian aggression – a position that is maintained by the Kremlin and the ROC (by declaring that there is a civil war in Ukraine,

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[38] **Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia**. Friday, 12 February 2016. <http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160212_dichiarazione-comune-kirill.html> (20.03.2016).

[39] **Прес-центр Київської Патріархії**. 27 February 2016, 14:22. Reaction to the Havana Declaration. Statement by the Press Centre of the Kyivan Patriarchate. <http://www.cerkva.info/en/publications/articles/8136-havana-decl-en.html> (21.03.2016).

the ROC basically follows the official line of the Kremlin because it says nothing about Russian involvement). Many members of the Verkhovna Rada publicly shared similar opinions, saying that Rome has "capitulated to Moscow"[40]. The general population was equally furious: on the night of March 14 somebody sawed off the hand holding a cross of the statue of Pope John Paul II in Drohobych, Lviv oblast[41]. President Poroshenko initiated a petition on February 22 to take away the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise from Patriarch Kirill (given to him in 2013). The order is awarded for distinguished services to the state and people of the Ukrainian nation. The statement reads: "It is unacceptable that the head of the church of the aggressor-state bears the honours of our country". To enable the president to take action, the petition has to gather 25,000 signatures in 90 days[42]. Even Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the head of the UGCC, criticized the declaration in an interview on February 14, saying also that point 26 is especially problematic:

> *Today, it is widely recognized that if soldiers were not sent from Russia onto Ukrainian soil and did not supply heavy weapons, if the Russian Orthodox Church, instead of blessing the idea of "Russkiy mir" (the Russian world), supported Ukraine gaining control over its own borders, there would be neither any annexation of Crimea nor would there be any war at all. /.../*
>
> *Undoubtedly, this text has caused deep disappointment among many faithful of our Church and among conscientious citizens of Ukraine. Today, many contacted me about this and said that they feel betrayed by the Vatican, disappointed by the half-truth nature of this document, and even see it as indirect support by the Apostolic See for Russian aggression against Ukraine. I can certainly understand those feelings.*[43]

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[40] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 16 февраля 2016, 21:59. Украинские парламентарии заявляют о «беспрецедентной капитуляции Рима перед Москвой».
<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=118504> (21.03.2016).

[41] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 15 марта 2016, 15:49. Неизвестные отпилили руку памятнику Папе Римскому в Украине.
<http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=119124> (21.03.2016).

[42] **ЕЛЕКТРОННІ ПЕТИЦІЇ. Офіційне інтернет-представництво Президента України**. 22.02.2016. Позбавити звання кавалера ордена Ярослава Мудрого 1 ступеня (присвоєного у 2013 році) патріарха російської церкви Кіріла.
<https://petition.president.gov.ua/petition/21210> (21.03.2016).

[43] **Fr. Yatsiv, Ihor**. 14 February 2016, 16:58. «Two Parallel Worlds» – An Interview with His Beatitude Sviatoslav. INFORMATION RESOURCE of Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.
<http://news.ugcc.ua/en/interview/two_parallel_worlds__an_interview_with_his_beatitude_sviatoslav_75970.html> (21.03.2016).

The fact that Shevchuk was openly critical of his superior was immediately seized by the ROC, who accused him of insubordination. The Pope answered quickly, stating that he has great respect for Shevchuk, who has the right to have a different opinion, and that he understands how Ukrainians might feel betrayed. He also said that the joint declaration as a document is debatable[44]. Soon after that he sent the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti to the region of Donbass, to report what can be done to help the Ukrainian people[45].

Meanwhile, Patriarch Kirill has had his own problems. Many conservatives have opposed the very fact that the Patriarch met with the Pope and they called themselves "brothers". This was seen as a betrayal of Orthodox faith and identity, a heresy of "ecumenism". The protest movement gathered momentum in March, with emotions running high. On March 6 the conference "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Havana Declaration – a victory or defeat?" gathered more than 400 people from Russia and abroad, most of them highly critical of the Patriarch.[46] Among other numerous protests on social media, a petition was addressed to high ranking officials of the Russian state, President Vladimir Putin and FSB director Alexander Bortnikov, among others. The letter states that the Havana Declaration is a direct threat to the national security of Russia, as it now gives the RCC, who was directly responsible for Euromaidan in Ukraine, a way to activate its work in Russia hand in hand with Western intelligence services. Once more the main threat is an understanding that the declaration denies Orthodoxy its true nature of being the only true Church and thus it destroys the fabric of the whole Russian Society[47]. Clearly, the rhetoric of blaming the Uniates has its setbacks.

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[44] **Fr. Chirovsky, Andriy**. February 18, 2016. Pope Francis calls Havana Joint Declaration debatable, understands Ukrainians might feel betrayed. – The Catholic World Report. <http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/4591/pope_francis_calls_havana_joint_declaration_debatable_understands_ukrainians_might_feel_betrayed.aspx> (21.03.2014).

[45] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 26 февраля 2016, 19:02. Апостольский нунций в Украине посетил прифронтовую зону Донецкой области. <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=118738> (21.03.2014).

[46] **Четверикова, Ольга**. 11 марта 2016. Русская Православная Церковь и Гаванская декларация – победа или поражение? – Завтра. <http://zavtra.ru/content/view/russkaya-pravoslavnaya-tserkov-i-gavanskaya-deklaratsiya---pobeda-ili-porazhenie-/> (21.03.2014).

[47] **Обращение православных граждан России к госвласти и иерархам РПЦ МП с требованием навести порядок**. 6 март 2016. Институт высокого коммунитаризма. <http://communitarian.ru/publikacii/tserkovnaya_analitika/obraschenie_pravoslavnyh_grazhdan_rossii_k_vysshim_organam_gosvlasti_i_cerkovnym_ierarham_s_trebovaniem_navesti_zakonnyy_poryadok_09032016/> (21.03.2016).

5. The "Russian World" and the Moscow Patriarchate

While Ukrainian nationalism is comparable to nationalism in other countries in Eastern Europe in the sense that it is primarily secular and based mainly on patriotism, culture and language and especially stresses the difference of Ukrainians from Russians, who claim that Ukrainians are "Little Russians"[48], Russian nationalism is a somewhat different story, as exemplified in the concept of the "Russian World".

The concept was originally worked out in the 1990s as an identity-based marketing brand to promote Russia's soft power, then backed by Vladimir Putin who used it for the first time already in 2001 in his speech before the first World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad[49]. In the 2000s the brand was backed up by several state-sponsored projects, most notably by the Russkiy Mir Foundation (2007) with its main goals to support learning of the Russian language, to popularize Russian culture and heritage, to reconnect Russian diaspora and to support people abroad who are interested in Russian language and culture[50]. The basic idea behind this concept is that of a civilizational space that is shared by Russians and Russian speaking people in Russia and all over the world. As such, it is a somewhat vague concept that can be used in different ways to promote different interests of Russia.[51] However, the fact that religion is an integral part of it and that interests do go beyond the mere promoting of Russian language and culture is seen in another example of President Putin using the term "Russian World" in a speech, that is in his address to State Duma on the occasion of the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Federation on March 18, 2014:

> *Everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptised. His spiritual feat of adopting Orthodoxy predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilisation and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus./.../*

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[48] For a detailed current overview see **Olszański, Tadeusz A**. 28.08.2015. Ukraine's wartime nationalism. – OSW Commentary Number 179. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary_179_0.pdf> (21.03.2016).

[49] **Laruelle, Marlene**. May 2015. The "Russian World". Russia's Soft Power and Geopolitical Imagination. Washington, D.C.: Center on Global Interests, pp. 3–6. <http://globalinterests.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/FINAL-CGI_Russian-World_Marlene-Laruelle.pdf> (21.03.2016) [**Laruelle** 2015].

[50] **The Russkiy Mir Foundation: Creation and Mission Statment**. <http://russkiymir.ru/en/fund/index.php> (21.03.2016).

[51] **Laruelle** 2015, pp. 1–3.

In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an inseparable part of Russia. This firm conviction is based on truth and justice and was passed from generation to generation, over time, under any circumstances, despite all the dramatic changes our country went through during the entire 20ᵗʰ century. /.../

I believe that the Europeans, first and foremost, the Germans, will also understand me. Let me remind you that in the course of political consultations on the unification of East and West Germany, at the expert, though very high level, some nations that were then and are now Germany's allies did not support the idea of unification. Our nation, however, unequivocally supported the sincere, unstoppable desire of the Germans for national unity. I am confident that you have not forgotten this, and I expect that the citizens of Germany will also support the aspiration of the Russians [in Russian original „русского мира", i.e. of the Russian world], of historical Russia, to restore unity.[52]

More important than the formal mention of the Russian world (changed into "the Russians" in the official translation) are the ideas expressed in that speech. The first excerpt of the speech lays out the foundations of the civilizational space of the Russian world. The second and third excerpt stress the emotional component that unites the people of the Russian World (or Russians) saying effectively that these emotions can be a legitimate basis of foreign policy.

These ideas were later echoed in the Declaration of Russian Identity that was adopted by the 18ᵗʰ Global Russian National Assembly on November 11, 2014. That document outlined four main points of Russian identity: (1) the concept of *Russian* is multi-ethnic and international, *i.e.* a person considering oneself a Russian may have a different ethnic background and he or she may live outside of Russia; (2) the idea is stressed that the acceptance of Russian identity by representatives of other nationalities was never the result of forceful assimilation of certain ethnic groups (russification), but the result of free personal choice of certain individuals; (3) the leading role of Orthodoxy cannot be denied by non-believers who still want to consider themselves Russians; (4) emotional solidarity with the history of Russia is required and pride for the Victory in 1945 is especially important. In conclusion:

[A] Russian is someone who considers themselves Russian; who has no other ethnic preferences; who speaks and thinks in the Russian language; who acknowledges Orthodox Christianity as the basis of the national spiritual culture; who feels solidarity with the fate of the Russian people.[53]

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[52] **Putin, Vladimir**. March 18, 2014. Address by President of the Russian Federation. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> (21.03.2016).

[53] **EuroMaidan Press**. 2014/11/14. Declaration of Russian Identity passed. <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/11/14/declaration-of-russian-identity-passed/> (26.03.2016).

This evident blending of Russian national identity with Orthodoxy is not accidental; it is the result of the consistent efforts of the Moscow Patriarchate, most notably of Patriarch Kirill personally. Just one example is sufficient here to illustrate his activities. On January 7, 2015, the Patriarch confessed in an interview with Dmitry Kiselyov on TV channel Russia-1 that it was he who suggested that the melody of the anthem of the Soviet Union (originally selected by Stalin) was to be restored as the national anthem of Russia (which did happen in 2000 with different lyrics):

> I recall a discussion in relation to our national anthem, about its music. I was invited to the channel Russia, it was, as they say nowadays, a talk show, I still was at that time the metropolitan attending such events, I said the following: "We have a coat of arms – the two-headed eagle, it is from the same medieval Russia, the symbol of Byzantine. We have a tricolour – it is the Russian Empire. We must have the Soviet period – let's keep the music. We should also have a new Russia – let's take modern lyrics." /.../ So I offered simple words: faith – ancient Russia; great power – the Russian Empire; justice – the revolution; solidarity – the Soviet era; and dignity – the new Russia.[54]

The Patriarch spoke as an identity builder who tried to create a positive image of Russian history, one that includes Orthodoxy as its basis and at the same time reconciles people with their difficult and complex history in a way to be proud of it. The most problematic elements from the Orthodox point of view were his positive assertions about the Soviet revolution and Soviet time. It is well known that "Bolshevik justice" meant severe repressions for the Church[55]. The same applies to the Soviet era, of which he said the following:

> Soviet period? Yes, of course, there were the camps and collectivization with the corresponding blood, there was the industrialization with the help of GULAG, but wasn't there also an enthusiasm, wasn't there solidarity? Wasn't there the virgin lands campaign? Weren't there Komsomol youth brigades? Weren't there many other things that are today being lamented by, say, older and older middle age people? Solidarity.[56]

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[54] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 08 января 2015. Патриарх Кирилл (Гундяев) признал, что это он предложил сохранить у нынешнего гимна РФ мелодию гимна СССР, которую в 1944 году выбрал лично Сталин. <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=111322> (26.03.2016). [**Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей.** 08 января 2015].

[55] **Elliott, Mark R**. 2014. Persecution of Christians in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet and Post-Soviet Union. – East-West Church & Ministry Report. Vol. 22, No. 3. <http://www.eastwestreport.org/43-english/e-20-2/343-persecution-of-christians-in-tsarist-russia-and-the-soviet-and-post-soviet-union> (01.03.2016).

[56] **Портал credo.ru. Лента новостей**. 08 января 2015.

The Patriarch's promotion of the Russian World is characterised by compromises: in order to promote Orthodoxy as a constituent part of Russian identity to the large segment of Russian population nostalgic of Soviet times[57], these times have to be glorified even by the Church that suffered at the hands of Soviet authorities. Nevertheless, in general, it has been a successful move.

6. The battles in Donbass and the Moscow Patriarchate

That the Moscow Patriarchate has succeeded in making itself invaluable to Russian identity rather too well is evident from one of the first drafts of the constitution of the Donetsk People's Republic (14.05.2014):

> *Preamble. We, the Supreme Council of the Donetsk People's Republic, feeling like an integral part of the Russian World as Russian civilization, the community of Russian and other peoples; thinking about the indivisibility of fate of the whole Russian World and still willing to remain its partakers; remaining dedicated to ideals and values of the Russian World and honouring the memory of our ancestors who shed blood for these ideals and values and passed to us the love and respect of our common Fatherland; confessing the Orthodox Faith (Christian Orthodox Catholic faith of Eastern Confession) of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and recognizing it as the cornerstone of the Russian World; also recognizing the historical responsibility and expressing the will of multi-ethnic people of the Donetsk People's Republic that was expressed in the decisions of the referendum of May, 11th 2014, /.../ proclaim the national sovereignty of the Donetsk People's Republic on all its territory and establishment of a sovereign independent state, based on the restoration of a unified cultural and civilizational space of the Russian World, on the basis of its traditional religious, social, cultural and moral values, with the prospect of becoming a part of Greater Russia as halo territories of the Russian World; and accept this constitution of the Donetsk People's Republic.*
>
> *Article 9.2. In Donetsk People's Republic the leading and dominant belief is the Orthodox faith (Christian Orthodox Catholic faith of Eastern Confession) professed by the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate).*
>
> *Article 9.3. The historic experience and role of the Orthodoxy of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) is recognized and respected, including as the systemic pillar of the Russian World.*[58]

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[57] See, for example, **White, Stephen** 2010. Soviet nostalgia and Russian politics. – Journal of Eurasian Studies 1, pp. 1–9.

[58] **Конституция Донецкой Народной Республики. Unoffical Draft**. Принята Верховным Советом Донецкой Народной Республики 14 мая 2014 года. Russian original is available at <http://garizo.blogspot.com.ee/2014/05/donetsk-he-constitution-of-peoples.html> (26.03.2016).

When this document became public, it had to be a kind of embarrassment as this draft was quickly replaced with the version that had the Preamble removed and article 9 changed:

> *Article 9.2. Religious associations are separated from the state and are equal before the law.*
>
> *Article 9.3. No religion and ideology is allowed to be made a state one and compulsory.*[59]

As was outlined above, the ROC sees the conflict in Ukraine as a religious one, but with one important specification: according to the ROC, the religious war is fought by the Uniates and schismatics against the churches of the UOCMP, while the wider conflict is just a civil war in which the ROC and the UOCMP remain neutral. Nevertheless, it is clear that the separatists' loyalty to the idea of the Russian World gives the conflict a distinct religious character in a much wider sense than the ROC is willing to admit.

The persecution of people of other faiths than the UOCMP Orthodoxy by the separatists is well documented[60]. Besides that, the separatists have uploaded several videos on social media, documenting their religious fervour. The most telling one is of artillery fire targeting the Donetsk airport that was held by the Ukrainians. The shots were initiated with a command: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit – Fire!"[61] When the miraculous icon of the Mother of God of Tikhvin was brought to Donetsk in 2014, the uploaded video had the following commentary: "Once upon a time this holy (icon) inspired the Russian soldiers in the field of the Battle of Borodino and in Sevastopol in the time of the Crimean War. Now she is called to help the Russians in the Novorossiya."[62] The icon was later taken to the frontline, too[63]. One has to remember that the home of the icon

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[59] **Конституция Донецкой Народной Республики**. 14.05.2014г. Официальный сайт Донецкой Народной Республики©. <http://dnr-online.ru/konstituciya-dnr/> (26.03.2016).

[60] See footnote 10 above.

[61] **Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа ОГОНЬ!!!** December 29, 2014. VIDEO. <https://www.facebook.com/putercaput/videos/754549181303178/> (28.09.2016).

[62] **В Донецк доставили Тихвинскую ополченную икону Божьей Матери**. 29 September 2014. VIDEO. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuVUEK39qCc> (28.03.2016).

[63] **Крестный ход с иконой Тихвинской Божией Матери**. 17. December 2014. VIDEO. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SqWZdm9gMg> (28.03.2016).

is the Tikhvin Monastery in Russia and that this icon is very famous[64]. It is impossible for this icon to appear in the hands of Donetsk separatists without high-level Church authorities allowing it. There are many documented cases of the UOCMP and the ROC priests' involvement in separatist army units, one of the UOCMP priests even oversaw a punitive unit in the basement of his church where a torture chamber was set up[65].

At least two groups with distinct Orthodox identity are fighting in Donbass: the Russian Orthodox Army and the Cossacks. "The Russian Orthodox Army of Donetsk Peoples' Republic" was initially formed as a paramilitary group in 2014 and it is now a part of Oplot Brigade. It has been involved in battles in Mariupol and Amvrosiivka Raion in June 2014, and in Karlivka in July 2014.[66] Journalist Patrick Lancaster, working in Donbass on the side of the separatists, filmed them in battles near Donetsk in December 2014[67]. The religious motivation of this group was initially especially high as can be seen in the film made on that occasion[68].

The Cossacks, an ethno-cultural group, have special ties with both the ROC and the President of the Russian Federation. The group claims to defend Orthodoxy and Russian World values, and its rhetoric has strong undertones of xenophobia and violence. They came into Ukraine already in April 2014[69] and they have been active ever since. The Cossacks have a history of taking part in conflicts that have taken place since the disintegration of the Soviet Union: in Transnistria in 1992, in Abkhazia in 1993, and in the two Russian-Chechen wars (1995–1995 and 1999–2009)[70]. They also found their own

[64] **Википедия. Тихвинская икона Божией Матери**.
<https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Тихвинская_икона_Божией_Матери> (28.03.2016).

[65] **Novitchkova, Tomak** 2015, pp. 10–11.

[66] **Проект "Стоптеррор".** Русская Православная Армия так называемой Донецкой Народной Республики. Ноябрь 17, 2015. <https://stopterror.in.ua/info/2015/11/russkaya-pravoslavnaya-armiya-tak-nazyvaemoj-donetskoj-narodnoj-respubliki/> (28.03.2016).

[67] **Lancaster, Patrick**. 9 December, 2014. VIDEO. Military actions in Donbass #1: Russian Orthodox Army Training, in battle, and firing D-30 artillery.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHXPzWo4e08> (28.03.2016).

[68] **Новороссия: Рождение Православной Армии**. July 4, 2014. VIDEO.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9D_UIBKZxU> (28.03.2016).

[69] **Novitchkova, Tomak** 2015, p. 8. There is a special **Synodal Committee for the Cooperation with Cossacks**. <http://www.skvk.org/> (28.03.2016); and also a **Council for Cossacks Affairs**. The Office of the President of the Russian Federation.
<http://www.skvk.org/o-sovete> (28.03.2016).

[70] **Rotar, Igor**. August 13, 2014. The Cossack Factor in Ukrainian War. – Eurasia Daily Monitor, Vol. 11, Issue 149. <http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=42747&no_cache=1#.VvmPtOJ97cs> (28.03.2016).

justification: in June 2014 the Supreme Ataman Vodolatsky proclaimed the Ukrainian oblasts of Luhansk and Donetsk to be the territory of the Cossack's historical Don Republic, which was illegally annexed in 1922 by the Council of People's Commissars and joined to Ukraine[71]. The attitude expressed in this statement is shared by many other Cossacks, being a source of tension between them and other pro-Russia separatists. Ataman Nikolai Kozitsyn, who visited Russia after the capture of Debaltseve in February 2015, gave an interview to Gazeta.Ru describing how he and 750 Cossacks helped to win the battle. He noted that 90% of the Cossacks were locals and that helped as the locals knew the landscape. In answer to the question about tensions between him and the leaders of Luhansk People's Republic, he stated that he does not aspire to be a statesman in Luhansk, and that he has his own mission:

> *Higher above me are only God and president Putin. Only they can be, I repeat, but I thank God for giving Russia such a president. Putin is saying today: they're our people living in Donbass, we will not leave them alone. I and my Cossacks will help the president in that.*[72]

In order to understand the situation, it is essential to know that while many Cossacks come from Russia, there are tens of thousands of individuals claiming to be ethnic Cossacks across the region, and many were indeed loyal to the Russian president already before the conflict. So Kozitsyn is also reported to say:

> *The Luhansk People's Republic is just a territory with no judicial state. I talk to the guys in [Donetsk and Luhansk], but they know that we are Cossacks in Cossack lands /.../ I've always said that we belong to Russia and should return these lands to Russia.*[73]

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[71] **УНИАН**. 19.06.2014. 15:22. Глава российского казачества: количество направленных из РФ в Украину боевиков никто не считает. <http://www.unian.net/politics/930649-glava-rossiyskogo-kazachestva-kolichestvo-napravlennyih-iz-rf-v-ukrainu-boevikov-nikto-ne-schitaet.html> (28.03.2016).

[72] **Ветров, Игорь**. 06.03.2015, 21:33. Надо мной только Господь Бог и Путин. – Газета.Ру <http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2015/03/06_a_6446745.shtml> (29.03.2016).

[73] **Barraby, Thomas**. 02/19/15 at 9:15 AM. Who Are The Cossack Fighters Who Spearheaded Rebels' Capture Of Debaltseve In Eastern Ukraine? – International Business Times. <http://www.ibtimes.com/who-are-cossack-fighters-who-spearheaded-rebels-capture-debaltseve-eastern-ukraine-1821514> (29.03.2016).

7. Conclusion

The theopolitics of the Moscow Patriarchate in the case of Ukraine involve at least three different but related factors. The first is plain Church politics – in the sense that the ROC has its ecclesial interests in Ukraine and is trying to maintain its influence there – especially as the existence of the UOCMP and its relatedness to the ROC is of crucial importance for the ROC's ambition to be the leading Orthodox Church in the World. It would be a severe blow to the ROC if all the different Ukrainian Orthodox Churches were to unite and form a single Ukrainian national Orthodox Church separated from Moscow (whatever its new official name). The possibilities, in principle, are there. Thus, it is quite understandable that the Moscow Patriarchate has created a parallel scenario within the Ukrainian conflict of being attacked by other Churches in Ukraine. Secondly, while the UOCMP is formally neutral in the conflict, the overall way the ROC pursues its agenda is so similar to the way the Kremlin acts that it is almost impossible to separate the geopolitics of the Russian state from the theopolitics of the Patriarchate at times. This is where the concept of theopolitics fits in: this fusion of the activities of the Kremlin and of the Patriarchate comes not only from their close cooperation but also from the cultural milieu which the ROC has been involved in creating – namely the third factor, Orthodox nationalism regarding the Russian world. It is precisely this factor of religious nationalism that has been the greatest success and the greatest problem in the case of Ukraine. Before the Maidan it was a success story: a pro-Russian government existed in Kiev, or at least a strong pro-Russian sentiment in the country, even in times when the government was not so friendly towards the Kremlin. There was the prominent idea that Ukrainians and Russians are basically the same Orthodox nation belonging to the Russian world. Of course, there were opposing Ukrainian nationalism and opposing national Orthodox Churches, but they were a problem to contain instead of actively fight. It is precisely here that the success of the ROC's policies is not so certain. Resistance to the idea of the Russian World has definitely grown much stronger over the last two years in Ukraine, even to the point that it can be said: Ukraine is no longer a part of the Russian world. But what is left for the Russian Orthodox Church if Ukraine is gone?

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WHAT IS MEMETIC WARFARE AND HOW DOES IT THREATEN DEMOCRATIC VALUES?

Dmytro Zolotukhin

∎

Russia will conquer Europe not with tanks and jets

On March 5, 2016, Jānis Sārts, director of NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, based in Riga, Latvia, told the *Observer* that Russia had a track record of funding extremist forces in Europe, and that he believed there is now evidence of Russia agitating in Germany against Merkel.

Insisting that he could talk only as an expert, and not as a spokesman for NATO, Sārts said:

> *[Russia] is establishing a network that can be controlled. You can use it as they have tried to do in Germany, combined with the legitimate issue of refugees, to undercut political processes in a very serious way. Angela Merkel has been a very adamant supporter of continued sanctions against Russia. If it was just punishment, that would be OK – but it is testing whether they can build on pre-existing problems and create a momentum where there is political change in Germany.*

As I've been monitoring the process of the promotion of Russian narratives in the European information space, this is at least the fourth affirmation of the fact that Russia is interfering in the internal affairs of European countries, a fact that is ignored by European society.

In October 2015, Jānis Sārts said[1] that NATO suspects that a third party, working in secret, is fomenting xenophobia in Europe. Information warfare experts have tried to find those behind the campaign, though it is obvious who would benefit from the weakness of Europe.

Many Ukrainian and German experts have assumed that the New Year's Eve sexual attacks on women on the Cologne railway station square were

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[1] **Dagens Nyheter** 2015. Nato: Främlingshatet kan gödas av främmande makt. Published 27.10.2015, <http://www.dn.se/nyheter/sverige/nato-framlingshatet-kan-godas-av-frammande-makt/> (accessed March 14, 2016).

planned and organized by the third party. And their main aim was to change[2] the attitude of Germans towards the migrants.

The alleged rape of a 13-year-old Russian-speaking girl in Berlin in the end of January 2016, supposedly by asylum-seekers, has fuelled[3] anti-migrant protests from Germany's large Russian community. They have demanded a change in the politics of Angela Merkel, and even her resignation[4].

Members of the Netherlands parliamentary party D66 have called for an inquiry[5] into the question of Russia's influence on Dutch policy because of the deep concern that has emerged in response to US-based investigations[6] on European parties being funded by Russia.

As I can see, the participants of almost every conference on propaganda issues are trying to define and figure out the narratives of Russian propaganda towards European countries. There are many of them, but the most efficient ones are very simple and widespread. They are based on the primary needs of every human being – safety and security. And to activate these needs in people, you have to persuade them that a real threat is imminent. This is how the Kremlin is using the refugee crisis to scare Europeans and cause them to be guided by fake ideas, such as "refugees attack, insult and rape women".

Memetic warfare

One of the contributors of the Defense Strategic Communications journal issued by NATO Stratcom COE, Jeff Giesea, defines[7] memetic warfare as "competition over narrative, ideas, and social control in a social-media

2   **BBC** 2016. Cologne sex attacks: Is Germany's attitude to migrants changing? Published 21 January 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35377196> (accessed March 14, 2016).

3   **Damien McGuinness** 2016. BBC News. Russia steps into Berlin 'rape' storm claiming German cover-up. Published 27 January 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-eu-35413134> (accessed March 14, 2016).

4   **Meduza, Репортаж «Медузы»** 2016. «Русский мир» пришел в Берлин Как история об «изнасилованной девочке» взбудоражила немецкую столицу. Published 25 January 2016, <https://meduza.io/feature/2016/01/25/russkiy-mir-prishel-v-berlin> (accessed March 14, 2016).

5   **Kees Verhoeven, Member of the Parlament of Netherlands** 2016. Published January 18, 2016, <https://twitter.com/KeesVee/status/689090609479561220> (accessed March 14, 2016).

6   **Peter Foster, Matthew Holehouse** 2016. The Telegraph. Russia accused of clandestine funding of European parties as US conducts major review of Vladimir Putin's strategy. Published January 16, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/12103602/America-to-investigate-Russian-meddling-in-EU.html> (accessed March 14, 2016).

7   **Jeff Giesea** 2016. It's time to embrace memetic warfare. – NATO Stratcom COE Academic journal Defence Strategic Communications, Vol. 1. Published February, 2016, <http://www.stratcom-coe.org/academic-journal-defence-strategic-communications-vol1> (accessed March 14, 2016).

battlefield. One might think of it as a subset of 'information operations' tailored to social media. Information operations involve the collection and dissemination of information to establish a competitive advantage over an opponent".

In Giesea's opinion "memetic warfare could also be viewed as a 'digital native' version of psychological warfare, more commonly known as propaganda. If propaganda and public diplomacy are conventional forms of memetic warfare, then trolling and PSYOPs are guerrilla versions".

Giesea also says that this methodology is being actively used in political campaigns. This is true. The most interesting recent cases of spreading memes to change a political situation are, for example, the Twitter hashtags #MakeDonaldDrumpfAgain[8], when American comedian John Oliver launched an anti-Trump campaign, or #BundyEroticFanFic[9], when American actors tried to prevent the glorification of farmers who used their guns to fight for their land (which was a perfect illustration of how the USA was built).

However, in my humble opinion, memetics is a far broader issue then a social media management method.

Vladimir Vernadsky, the first president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, is considered the founding father of the noosphere[10] theory. This is the environment which encompasses the whole conscious intellectual activity of mankind. It is believed that a third-party unceremonious intervention in this environment, which is not fully studied and understood, carries a great danger. Just like human intervention in the processes of nature is a serious threat to the ecological environment.

Implantation of ideas is an ancient practice of humanity. Perhaps only for this reason was religion created, not to mention things like hypnosis, NLP or "black PR". The main charm of implanted ideas is that the "object of the implanting" considers these ideas as his own. And that's why they have such a devastating effect. After all, people are often willing to die, and more often – to kill, for their beliefs. This destructive force is shown in Christopher Nolan's film *Inception*.

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[8] **The Guardian** 2016. John Oliver launches anti-Trump campaign: #MakeDonaldDrumpfAgain. Published March 1, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/mar/01/john-oliver-last-week-tonight-donald-trump-hbo-drumpf> (accessed March 14, 2016).

[9] **Brian Ries** 2016. Mashable. Steamy #BundyEroticFanFic imagines what happens in militias after dark. Published January 7, 2016, <http://mashable.com/2016/01/07/bundyeroticfanfic-hashtag-tweets/#_Rp1pTh5nEqO>, (accessed March 14, 2016).

[10] The **noosphere** (/ˈnoʊ.əsfɪər/; sometimes **noösphere**) is the sphere of human thought. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noosphere> (accessed March 14, 2016).

Memetics is a theory of mental content based on an analogy with Darwinian evolution, originating from the popularization of Richard Dawkins'[11] 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*[12]. The meme, analogous to a gene, was conceived as a "unit of culture" (an idea, belief, pattern of behaviour, etc.) which is "hosted" in the minds of one or more individuals, and which can reproduce itself, thereby jumping from mind to mind. Thus what would otherwise be regarded as one individual influencing another to adopt a belief is seen as an idea-replicator reproducing itself in a new host. As with genetics, particularly under a Dawkinsian interpretation, a meme's success may be due to its contribution to the effectiveness of its host.

Naturally, the most "powerful" and adapted to the environment memes survive. This fact brings us to the idea that if we can shift an organism's genetic material by manipulating environmental conditions in the biosphere, then we can also change the noosphere, introducing new leading ideas beneficial to us, which will change people's behavior.

Richard Dawkins himself says: "Strictly speaking, the idea of parallels in the evolution of language and of living organisms was first expressed by Charles Darwin in the 14th chapter of his *Origin of Species*."

Weaponization of information space

While investigating the use of memetic technology in the modern world, I came across the phrase "memetic weapon" in Irina Lebedeva's (a Russian anti-American publicist) article[13] on the website of "Strategic Culture Foundation" (Russia). Back in December 2011, Lebedeva says that Gene Sharp (known for his "colored revolutions") and his colleagues participated in the development of memes, with an aim to achieve regime change in Russia.

For example, the author says that one such "combat" meme was the phrase "The party of crooks and thieves". This refers to the ruling Russian political

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[11] **Clinton Richard Dawkins** (born 26 March 1941) is an English ethologist, evolutionary biologist, and writer. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Dawkins> (accessed March 14, 2016).

[12] **The Selfish Gene** is a book on evolution by Richard Dawkins, published in 1976. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Selfish_Gene> (accessed March 14, 2016).

[13] **Ирина ЛЕБЕДЕВА** 2011. Меметическое оружие, или Вашингтонский демократизационный шаблон. Published December 10, 2011. <http://www.fondsk.ru/news/2011/12/10/memeticheskoe-oruzhie-ili-vashingtonskij-demokratizacionnyj-shablon-11775.html> (accessed March 14, 2016).

force "United Russia". This meme was very actively broadcasted by Aleksey Navalny during his presidential campaign.

Obviously, in modern society, memes have been used as a weapon to incite hatred in Russia and Ukraine. Since 2011 Russian information space has been propagating the idea of "European decaying values and Russian spiritual buckles". The story[14] of Irina Bergseth, when she accused her Norwegian husband, his relatives and Norwegian authorities of pedophilia, became the basis for this idea.

From 2011–2013, Russian media and internet connected homosexuality and pedophilia very closely with Europe. This was mainly due to the homophobic feelings and views among the majority of Russian people. In fact, Russian political and media establishment have been indirectly encouraging homophobic tensions in Russian society. This became a basis for the hatred of anything connected to European countries and their values.

Since the second half of 2013, subjects of fear, disgust and aversion have been tightly linked to homosexuality and pedophilia using online media. A majority also perceived it as inherent attributes of "European values".

Then, after this, the information space gradually focused on the European choice in Ukraine. The associative chain lined up (one of them) very clearly: "Ukraine wants to integrate into Europe and in Europe they have "European values", which consist of pedophilia, homosexuality and incest. That is why Ukraine is for incest and homosexuality".

The same technology was used for the Crimea annexation. Russian professionals in communications, public relations and non-governmental organizations used enormous financial resources from the Russian budget to create the perception that everything connected with Maidan was caused by ultra-right nationalists and neo-Nazis who were paid by American and European governments to weaken Russia.

One of the key points in the Crimea annexation story was the meme about the "friendship train". In February 2014, Igor Moseychuk, former representative of one of the right-wing organizations (now in jail for corruption) said on TV that his counterparts would come to Crimea "to teach locals how to be faithful to their Motherland". This meme, passed from mouth to mouth among the Russian-speaking people in Crimea, nurtured precisely the theme of fear, which is one of the most powerful drivers of behavior. Almost every Crimean was frightened by this news.

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[14] **Norway News** 2011. Russian boy torn between three countries. Published September 21, 2011. <http://www.norwaynews.com/en/~view.php?72U3454RL94824v285Tgf844RJ388bW K76FCp253Jci8> (accessed March 14, 2016).

Actually this was a repetition of an old story about another "train" of right-wing activists that went to Crimea 23 years ago. In 1992 the main organizer of the "friendship train" was the UNSO – an ultra-right organization of Ukrainian nationalists, which had close connections with Dmytro Korchynskiy, who often appeared in the information space during Euromaidan and even declared war on Russia when the situation in Crimea started. In 1992 they could not even get to the peninsula, because they were stopped on the border of the region. But, in 1992, there was no mass propaganda on TV nor social media with its current level of development to "roll hysteria" around the need to "defend against the Nazis". Although it took 23 years, the power of traditional and social media have made this small incident as significant as the attack on Pearl Harbor or the Battle of Tsushima.

Constructive and destructive memes

Jeff Giesea, in his article for Defense Strategic Communications journal, says: "memetic warfare can be offensive, defensive, or predictive. It can be deployed independently or in conjunction with cyber, hybrid, or conventional efforts."

I believe that, in the broadest sense, memes can be *constructive* and *destructive*. Destructive memes, such as "fascists" and "banderovtsy" (for Ukrainian nationalists), "gayropa" (for European norms of tolerance), "crucified boy" and "Liza – the raped girl" (for spreading the unreal threat), are made to incite hatred among people, based on the security needs from the perceived threats. And these memes are crafted to deepen the fear of those they are aimed at (Europeans, refugees, Ukrainians).

Constructive memes are made mostly naturally. They are born in the information space themselves; people just start to use them. In Ukraine constructive memes are: the "Heavenly Hundred" (for those who gave their lives on Maidan for the freedom of Ukrainian people), and the "Cyborgs" (for Ukrainian volunteers and soldiers who died defending the Donetsk airport from terrorists and Russian Special Forces' attacks).

The most famous European meme is "Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood", but, as we see, it lost its power long ago.

Their constructive role is very significant. For example, the "legend" says that the "Heavenly Hundred" is watching us not only to defend us from the enemies, but also to prevent us from giving and taking bribes. This seems childish, but this story is still spreading in Ukrainian social media, saying that the Heavenly Hundred will punish you if you misbehave while building a new country.

Although research has not been done on the subject, in my opinion, constructive memes are much more efficient than destructive ones, and more than that – constructive memes, if they are accepted by society, do not need any resources for spreading them in media, because they have very high virality.

The place of memetic warfare in modern society

As we know, Strategic Communications subdivisions were made by NATO and the European Parliament to counter the threat of Russian propaganda spreading. But, let's face the truth, they still cannot find their place and mission in the modern European information space. The overwhelming majority of their statements are made as "independent experts", not as representatives of the EU or NATO. Almost every message from them is accompanied by a disclaimer.

On the other hand, they have made a huge effort in launching this discussion in the Western world and bringing some terms and definitions to it. For example, the definition of "narrative" and "master-narrative" is very widespread. Experts all over the world are trying to figure out what narratives Russia is spreading and what counter-narratives Europe has to defend the territory of its senses.

Actually, it could be said that the memes and the narratives are the same, but memes have more obvious and objective features to describe and explain them. A new project of the Concept of Information Security of Ukraine has another term to express it: *strategic content* (along with "strategic communications").

Thus, memes have power that far exceeds social media. They contain answers to questions like: "Why should we defend our Motherland?", "Why should we not give or take bribes?", "Why do we have to be tolerant of other nations, races, genders or views?", "Why should we care about who is managing our country and how he or she is doing this?"

These are some of the most significant and important questions for not only Ukrainian society, but for any community that intends to develop in a democratic way. And that's why memetics and the possibility of purposefully developing constructive memes is the biggest interest of the Institute for Postinformation Society.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Тымчук, Д., Карин, Ю., Машовец, К., Гусаров, В. **Вторжение в Украину: Хроника российской агрессии Брайт Стар Паблишинг**, Киев 2016, 240 pp, ISBN 978-966-2665-85-7

The current monograph, written in the Russian language by four Ukrainian officers, *Вторжение в Украину: Хроника российской агрессии* (*Invasion in Ukraine: Chronicles of Russia's Aggression*) from the "non-governmental" organization *Center for Military and Political Studies,* which is located in Kyiv ("Information Resistance")[1], belongs to the field of Russian military and information operations studies.

Obviously, the quantity of articles or other studies that in some way are dedicated to or connected with questions about the Russian hybrid war, the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the Russian information war are quite remarkable[2]. It is essential, however, to note that in those papers and books a profound analysis, which is based not only on open sources, but on information that was collected by a group of people from the non-governmental organization "Information Resistance" since Russia occupied Crimea in February–March 2014, is not given

This book is written by Ukrainian military and information operation experts, and it is a very important and profound analysis of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, e.g. the military, but also the psychological and information operations. Ideas presented in this book are fresh, interesting and in general the book gives a very good overview of the conflict in the Donbass. It is well structured and written in good and very clear way.

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[1]   Information Resistance, <http://sprotyv.info/en/about-us> (last access 30 August 2016).

[2]   See e.g., **Sazonov, V.; Müür, K.; Mölder, H** (eds.) 2016. Russian Information Warfare against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces: April–December 2014. Combined Analysis. NATO Strategic Communication Centre of Excellence, Riga; **Müür, K.; Mölder, H.; Sazonov, V.; Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt, P**. 2016. Russian Information Operations against the Ukrainian State and Defence Forces: April–December 2014 in Online News. – Journal of Baltic Security, Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 28–71; **Pabriks, A; Kudors, A**. (eds.) 2015. The War in Ukraine: Lessons for Europe. The Centre for East European Policy Studies. Rīga: University of Latvia Press; **Howard, C.; Puhkov, R**. (eds.) 2014. Brothers Armed. Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine. Minneapolis: East View Press; **Darczewska, J**. 2014. The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare: the Crimean operation, a case study. – Point of View, No. 42 (May 2014), Warsaw: Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpia.

The book *Invasion in Ukraine: Chronicles of Russia's Aggression* consists of the following four chapters: Chapter 1: *Stages of Russian aggression and tactics of actions (Этапы российской агрессии и тактика действий),* Chapter 2: *Russo-terroristic armed forces in the Donbass: structure, strength, weaponry (Российско-террористические войска на Донбассе: структура, численность, вооружение),* Chapter 3: *Weapon of Russian aggression (Оружие российской агрессии),* Chapter 4: *Special features of Russia's information war (Особенности информационной войны России).*

It could be mentioned here that the first three chapters (pp. 6–208) form one big section or unity – these chapters are dealing with Russian aggression, weaponry, tactics, different periods of aggression, weapons, the equipment of Russian and pro-Russian forces, the development of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and other question related to the military conflict in the Donbass.

The last chapter of book, *Special features of Russia's information war* (pp. 209–240), gives profound overview of the Russian information war in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, this book has no references or footnotes, which is the biggest flaw. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned here that it is written in quite a scientific, analytical way and based on interesting sources. It should also be mentioned that this study has no general conclusion, no bibliography, and no indices. A general conclusion would help the reader to get a short overview of the book's content. Indices would allow to find important information, e.g. names, terms, etc. more easily.

To sum up, we are dealing with a necessary and very useful new study dedicated to the Russian hybrid aggression in Ukraine. As a final comment, I would add that I believe LTCol. ret. Dmitry Tymchuk, LTCol ret. Yuriy Karin, Col. Konstantin Mashovets and Col. ret. Vyacheslav Gusarov from the NGO *Information Resistance* have been very successful in analyzing the Russian hybrid war and information operations against Ukraine.

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