

APPROACHES TO THE SPREAD OF RUSSIAN NARRATIVES AND DISINFORMATION ABOUT UKRAINE: ANALYSIS AND POSSIBLE COUNTERMEASURES

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The spread of propaganda and disinformation continues to be part of Russia's strategy of warfare. The Kremlin is not going to slow down its information operations, increasing the infrastructure for distributing fake information around the world. As an authoritarian state of Russia, it is difficult to use the tools of "soft influence" in their classical sense, however, due to sufficient material resources and appeals to historical ties, it manages to deploy and maintain channels of media, academic and military-political dissemination of pro-Russian narratives. Currently, they are characterized by greater power and resilience in the countries of the Global South, especially African and Latin American states. However, in the West, the Kremlin has not stopped using its own IPSOs, although they are brought to the public mainly under the guise of clone sites, paid politicians or media networks created for a certain event (e.g. elections).

The specificity of the Russian style of spreading narratives is based on the "flow of lies" approach. Moscow continues to adhere to it in this period, in order to form a negative image of Ukraine as a failed state. To support this core narrative, a number of other fake theses are created and tested, which sometimes contradict each other. Quite often, such ideas are adapted to the regional characteristics of the audience, and their repetition occurs for a long time. Thus, the Russian Federation conveys the thesis that "Ukraine is a puppet in the hands of the West, whose resources it seeks to use to weaken or destroy Russia" to the countries of the Global South; the thesis that "Ukraine is a corrupt state and sells weapons provided by the West on the black market" – to European states. To such disinformation is added another one, which Russia is trying to build on the basis of current events. As a result, in the first half of 2024 we have seen the discrediting of V.Zelensky's legitimacy, the effectiveness of the Peace Summit, the accusation of Ukraine of terrorist attacks or even war crimes.

Obviously, against the background of further confrontation between the parties, Russia will try even more to confuse the causal nature of the war and to withdraw from itself the status

of "guilty". And against the background of continuing election campaigns in the world, it will demonize political forces that seek to support Ukraine as a party of war. A wide network of channels of Russian influence, the possibility of social networks and AI, together with a sufficient material base for conducting information operations, will require Ukraine to find asymmetric ways to confront the Russian Federation.

Introduction

The Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, starting with the conflict in the Donbas, continuing with a full-scale military invasion in February 2022, remains a huge field of information struggle.

At the beginning of a full-scale invasion, a number of experts and observers supported the idea that Ukraine was winning the information confrontation. Headlines with similar theses were approved by influential world politicians¹. Particularly effective were the Ukrainian information campaigns aimed at Western audiences. The leaders of a number of Western states made decisions to expel Russian diplomats, ban and block Russian media. In early March 2022 on the territory of the European Union, the RT and Sputnik signal were blocked², the United States took similar steps. And Ukraine managed to form a broad coalition of allied states.

However, even defeated in the European theatre of information warfare, the Russian Federation has not abandoned the use of propaganda and disinformation. It has even increased the dissemination of its own narratives in other parts of the world. If earlier the key geography of Russian influence was the countries of the West, since 2022 it is increasingly active in the space of the Global South. Thus, according to the African Center for Strategic Studies, Russia continues to be the main supplier of disinformation in Africa. The state was the donor of 80 recorded propaganda campaigns that affected more than 22 countries and reached a multimillion audience of users. In 2023, Russian propaganda accounted for about 40% of all other similar campaigns on the continent³.

In 2023, RT Arabic was one of the three most popular media in 6 countries (Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAE and Iraq)⁴. In addition, studies show that the number of

¹ Demus A., Holynska Kh., Marcinek Kh. The Nightingale Versus the Bear: What persuasion research reveals about Ukraine's and Russia's Messaging on the War. *RAND*. 2023. 59p.

Taranenko A. Characteristics of Russian propaganda in Latin America with regard to Russian aggression against Ukraine: Case of Brazil. *EMPIRIO: Political Science. Political Science and International Relations*. №1. 2024. P. 55-62.

Undermining Ukraine: How Russia widened its global information war in 2023. *Atlantic Council*. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/undermining-ukraine-how-russia-widened-its-global-information-war-in-2023/>

² Драпак М. Як протидіяти російським інформаційним впливам на українців у ЄС? URL: <https://analytics.intsecurity.org/russia-information-influence-eu/>

³ Mapping a surge of disinformation in Africa. *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*. URL: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-a-surge-of-disinformation-in-africa/>

⁴ V.Konstantynova, Y.Chomogor. Russia's information influence on the Middle East and Africa in the context of Russian war against Ukraine. URL: <https://analytics.intsecurity.org/en/russian-influence-middle-east-africa/>

subscribers to the RT-Arabic and Sputnik-Arabic pages on Telegram in the first year of a full-scale invasion increased 2.2 times and 1.6 times, respectively. Also reported an increase in interaction with media data content⁵.

The influence of Russian media in the Latin American region is recognized as powerful. The Reuters Institute at Oxford University recently determined that RT en Español is more successful than any other RT service, including English, Arabic, German and French. This fact should be considered taking into account the fact that the Arab network is also very popular. In addition, RT en Español was one of the most widely circulated domains on Twitter (X) in discussions about the Russia-Ukraine war in Spanish⁶.

Having started a full-scale war, the Russian Federation was attracted by the support of countries such as Belarus, Iran, and the DPRK. Now their media infrastructure is used to spread pro-Russian narratives and justify their own participation in the war on the side of the Russian Federation. Partnership with China also opens for Russia an additional platform of influence on the countries of the Global South. The representatives of the Belarusian and Russian Associations of Journalists participate in the initiative "The Belt and Road" within the framework of the media part of which about 70 countries and almost 90 creative associations are involved⁷. Some other cases of creating such alliances are known. Links to Russian media, or the use of Russian vocabulary, can often be found in Chinese media and social networks. Therefore, the Chinese media Global Times in one of its materials for April 2024 wrote that «many observers associate the terrorist attack in the Crocus City Hall shopping center with a hybrid war as part of the Russia-Ukraine conflict»⁸.

The transition of the Russia-Ukraine war to a long phase creates additional risks on the information front. Key war crimes are becoming distant in time, which will increasingly provoke Russia to deconstruct the causal relationships of the Russia-Ukraine war, just as it did until 2022 with the sequence of implementation of the Minsk agreements.

And given the fact that the world community's attention to the crimes of Russian aggression is decreasing, especially against the background of other resonant events, there will be more opportunities for ignoring the objective reality and facts, ignoring the sequence of events that corresponds to the Russian strategy of "flow of lies". At the same time, when the war on the front line is limited by geographical boundaries, the information war knows no borders.

⁵ Sleibi A. Wartime Opportunities: The Sway of Russian Disinformation on the MENA Region. *Mediterranean Yearbook.2023: Strategic Sector. Culture&Society. 2023. P. 312-317*

⁶ Taranenko A. Characteristics of Russian propaganda in Latin America with regard to Russian aggression against Ukraine: Case of Brazil. *EMPIRIO:Political Science. Political Science and International Relations. №1. 2024. P. 55-62.*

⁷ Антиросийская пропаганда в Армении уже дала определенные плоды: Гукасян. *Sputnik Армения*. URL: <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20231121/antirossiyskaya-propaganda-v-armenii-uzhe-dala-opredelennye-plody-gukasyan-68919275.html>

⁸ An Young. Chinese state social media echo Russian propaganda on concert hall attack. *Voice of America*. URL: <https://www.voanews.com/a/chinese-state-social-media-echo-russian-propaganda-on-concert-hall-attack/7554888.html>

The actions of the Russian Federation in the information theatre of war are particularly dangerous, because they are aimed at defeating the consciousness and beliefs of large masses of the population. Their goal is not only the undermining of Ukrainian statehood as such, but also the levelling of fundamental human and democratic values, the idea of a census of history and universally recognized norms of international law, which would allow legitimizing the war and expanding the boundaries of Russian imperialism.

In this connection, it seems necessary to analyze approaches to the dissemination of Russian narratives about Ukraine, and possible countermeasures, especially considering the fact of the duration of confrontation and constant transformations of the information environment.

Approaches to the spread of Russian narratives

In the new Concept of foreign policy of 2023, the Russian Federation refused to use the "soft power" approach in the process of international cooperation, which it mentioned in the documents of 2013 and 2016⁹. Therefore, analyzing the channels of dissemination of Russian narratives, we did not include the whole range of public diplomacy tools, such as cultural, sports or gastronomic – which can be most clearly attributed to soft components. In addition, the analysis of their use by Russia as an authoritarian state requires a deeper understanding. But among those tools that were tracked, we can distinguish **media, academic and political**.

The Russian Federation thoroughly and deeply mastered the sphere of **media influence**. Since 2008, it has been developing its **own network of foreign broadcasting**, known today as Russia Today, and in 2014 strengthened it by creating the Sputnik channel. Although as of 2024, more and more well-known are the facts about their propaganda nature, the influence of media data in the information space of the countries of the Global South cannot be neglected. Despite the ban of the European Commission, in the EU you can easily access the sites of Russian state publications, and it is not always necessary to use virtual private networks (VPNs). And in Serbia, RT even began broadcasting in Serbian at the end of 2022, which is available in other EU countries¹⁰.

Nevertheless, adapting to the conditions of sanctions and observing additional decisions to block other Russian resources¹¹, the Russian Federation has resorted to **deploying a wide network of fake sites of leading Western and Ukrainian media**. Experts from the EEAS Strategic Communication Division, together with several private media initiatives, were able to identify that starting in the summer 2022 an information campaign was conducted to create fake sites of well-known national publications and disseminate Russian propaganda on their

⁹ Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации . *МИД Российской Федерации*. URL: <https://www.mid.ru/ru/detail-material-page/1860586/>

¹⁰ Tuhina Gjeraqina. Two years into EU ban, Russia's Today and Sputnik are still accessible across the EU. Radio Free Europe. Radio Liberty. URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-rt-sputnik-eu-access-bans-propaganda-ukraine-war/32803929.html>

¹¹ Костіна І. ЄС затвердив заборону ще чотирьох пропагандистських ресурсів РФ. Європейська Правда. URL: <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2024/05/17/7186194/>

behalf through cross-references in social networks. Thus, nine cases of copying German publications were tracked, including Der Spiegel, T-Online, Bild, Neues Deutschland. Clones of the British media (The Guardian) were also discovered; French media (Le Monde, Le Parisien, Le Figaro and 20 Minutes); as well as clones of the Reuters (USA) and Delfi (Baltic countries) networks¹².

And since mid-2023, the American information space has been tracking the emergence of a number of **websites that mimic the appearance of traditional American media**, under the names The New York News Daily, the Chicago Chronicle, D.C. Weekly, but instead are Russian products, with the task of disseminating Russian narratives in a stream of articles about culture, politics and crime¹³. In April 2024 Microsoft reported that it was recording an increase in the activity of the aforementioned sites¹⁴.

Since trust in Russian media in Western countries has been undermined, Russia is trying to act undercover. It resorts to **registering new web pages that should not be clearly affiliated with Russia**. In February 2024 the French public service Viginum Agency reported the discovery of the Portal Combat propaganda network, which includes 193 sites with a low amount of copyright material. Key network activity is concentrated around sites called *pravda.(domain-country).com*. In addition to sites in German, Polish and French in the period March/April 2024, the *pravda* network has intensified activities in about 20 countries. The preferred sources referred to by these media are Russian sites TASS, RIA, Tsargrad, etc. And on the EUvsDisinfo website, they are the key sources containing misinformation in Polish and French¹⁵.

Information and analytical agencies owned by oligarchs close to the Russian government or non-systemic elements of Russian politics also constitute the infrastructure of Russian propaganda. Companies affiliated with Y.Prigozhin carried out various subversive activities in Africa, both through the tools of providing analytical services, the army of trolls, and through the creation of popular content (e.g. movies)¹⁶. After the death of the Wagner leader, the Russian state machine tries to put under its control the influence network created in Africa, subordinating it to the Africa Initiative news agency, which has a connection with the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate) and is controlled by Artem Kureev¹⁷. Similar agencies are the

¹² In Europe and the South Caucasus, the Kremlin leans on energy blackmail and scare tactics. *Atlantic Council*. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/kremlin-info-ops-in-europe-and-the-caucasus/>

¹³ Mayers L. Spate of the Mock New Sites With Russian Ties Pop Up in U.S. *The New York Times*. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/07/business/media/russia-us-news-sites.html>

¹⁴ Microsoft finds Russian influence operations targeting U.S. election have begun. *Reuters*. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/microsoft-finds-russian-influence-operations-targeting-us-election-have-slowly-2024-04-17/>

¹⁵ Russian disinformation network “Pravda” grew bigger in the EU, even after its uncovering. *European Digital Media Observatory*. URL: <https://edmo.eu/publications/russian-disinformation-network-pravda-grew-bigger-in-the-eu-even-after-its-uncovering/>

¹⁶ Kucherenko A. Information-psychological operations of Russia in the “Global South”. URL: <https://analytics.intsecurity.org/en/psychological-operations-russia-global-south/>

¹⁷ Mapping a surge of disinformation in Africa. *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*. URL: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/mapping-a-surge-of-disinformation-in-africa/>

media group "Tsargrad TV", as well as the recently blocked in the EU media "The Voice of Europe", whose activities are attributed to V. Medvedchuk and A. Marechevskyi, who fell under the sanctions of the Czech government for this¹⁸.

Another media approach to spreading Russian narratives is **spreading propaganda under the guise of fighting disinformation**. An example of this tool is a video bridge between Sputnik networks in Moscow – Minsk – Astana – Yerevan – Tashkent – Tbilisi on the topic «Digital proxy wars: how social networks manipulate the consciousness of citizens»¹⁹.

The academic plane of the spread of Russian narratives concerns primarily **pro-Kremlin Russian and foreign intellectuals** who are popular in anti-Western circles (Aleksandr Dugin, Luke Michel, Kemi Seba, Nathalie Yamb)²⁰. This also includes the case that Tamara Yevtushenko, head of the Department of Russia at the Institute of International Relations of the National University of La Plata in Buenos Aires, teaches Russian at the Foreign Service Institute of the Nation (Argentina) and supports pro-Russian propaganda²¹. Or the Russosphere information campaign aimed at the French-speaking African public, which was coordinated by the Belgian Luc Michel. He also had connections with A. Dugin and the Russian youth movement Nashi²².

Moscow today seeks not only to provide scholarships to foreigners to study in Russia since 2014. it **develops a network of "Russian universities"** abroad. The first such joint institution began to operate in China, and since 2024. media reports appear about the opening of a similar branch in the United Arab Emirates²³. The purpose of the distribution of such educational institutions seems obvious, especially if you pay attention to the study of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, which refers to the allocation of funds by the 161st Special Purpose Specialist Training Center of the Russian Federation (GRU Unit 29155) to pay scholarships to students from the Balkans, Africa and other regions where exchanges with Russian educational institutions are stored²⁴.

The key political mouthpieces of the Kremlin are **Russian diplomats**. They are usually marked by high professional training, perfect command of the language of the host country. Russian diplomats are frequent guests of influential Latin American media, reports from

¹⁸ Russian influence scandal rocks EU. *Politico*. URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/voice-of-europe-russia-influence-scandal-election/>

¹⁹ Антироссийская пропаганда в Армении уже дала определенные плоды: Гукасян. *Sputnik Армения*. URL: <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20231121/antirossiyskaya-propaganda-v-armenii-uzhe-dala-opredelennye-plody-gukasyan-68919275.html>

²⁰ Kucherenko A. Information-psychological operations of Russia in the "Global South". URL: <https://analytics.intsecurity.org/en/psychological-operations-russia-global-south/>

²¹ Тамара Евтушенко: Чем сильнее в Аргентине демонизируют Россию, тем больше у нее защитников. *Украина.ру*. URL: <https://ukraina.ru/20230703/1047765301.html>

²² Атанесян Г. За Африку и Путина: обнаружена новая пророссийская и антифранцузская кампания в соцсетях. *BBC News Русская служба*. URL: <https://nv.ua/world/geopolitics/kak-rossiya-diskreditiruet-ukrainu-v-afrike-internet-proekt-russosphere-novosti-ukrainy-50301407.html>

²³ The Inception of the Russian University in the UAE. *Asia Education Review*. URL: <https://www.asiaeducationreview.com/others/news/the-inception-of-the-russian-university-in-the-uae-nwid-1217.html>

²⁴ Walting J. Danylyuk O.V. Reynolds N. The Threat from Russia's Unconventional Warfare Beyond Ukraine, 2022–24. RUSI Special Report. 2024. URL: <https://static.rusi.org/SR-Russian-Unconventional-Weapons-final-web.pdf>

which are widely broadcast by other local media. In 2023, Brazilian news websites published 176 articles quoting Russian Ambassador Aleksey Labetsky²⁵.

Apart from its own political figures, Russia does not put efforts into trying to form a **loyal circle of politicians in other states**. Known was the case of the opening of criminal proceedings by law enforcement agencies of Latvia against Tatyana Zhdanok – MEP, who was accused of having links with the Russian FSB since 2004²⁶. Germany has also launched an investigation into Petr Bystron, a member of Alternative for Germany, regarding his possible ties with the Russian Federation²⁷. Political figures such as Viktor Orban, Marie Le Pen, Sahra Wagenknecht do not hide their sympathy for Russia²⁸.

A powerful source for the spread of Russian narratives, in particular on the African continent, remains the Wagner group, which the Russian Federation will transform into the **African Corps** from 2023²⁹. Structures of this company since 2017 deployed a much wider network of influence in the region, which was not limited to performing exclusively military functions. It consists in gaining control over mineral deposits, financing cultural and economic projects, influencing the information space. By supporting individual authoritarian leaders of African states, Russia is trying to form in the political circles of such countries the idea that loyalty to the Russian Federation and its paramilitary structures is the only way to remain in power. And any attempts to cooperate with democratic states will lead to a new redistribution of spheres of influence and instability, so the intervention of Russian mercenaries in the internal affairs of the country or manifestations of their excessive cruelty are perceived as "necessary evil"³⁰.

Specificity of Russian disinformation about Ukraine

The Russia-Ukraine information confrontation leads to the fact that both states are systematically working not only to create their own image, but also to form a stable system of ideas about the opponent. In view of this, we can see that **the fundamental narrative of Russian propaganda against our state is the coverage of Ukraine as a "failed state"**. The formation of such perception is global in nature. However, for different audiences, it is broadcast through distinctive narratives. Thus, the thesis that "*Ukraine is a legitimate part of*

²⁵In Latin America, Russia's ambassadors and state media tailor anti-Ukraine content to the local context. *Atlantic Council*. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/in-latin-america-russias-ambassadors-and-state-media-tailor-anti-ukraine-content-to-the-local-context/>

²⁶Latvia Starts Criminal Case Against EU Lawmaker Suspected of Russian Espionage. *Voice of America*. URL: <https://www.voanews.com/a/latvia-starts-criminal-case-against-eu-lawmaker-suspected-of-russian-espionage-/7530722.html>

²⁷ Russia paid Pro-Kremlin lawmakers to influence EU elections, says Belgium. *Financial Time*. URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/8bb921fa-57b3-44aa-80d6-b35794a523db>

²⁸ After Prigozhin, Russia clamps down online. *Atlantic Council*. URL: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/after-prigozhin-russia-clamps-down-online/>

²⁹ Minde N. Russia's African Corps more than old wine in new bottle. *Institute for Security Studies*. URL: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/russias-africa-corps-more-than-old-wine-in-a-new-bottle>

³⁰ Mohamedu K. The Wagner Group, Russia's Foreign Policy and Sub-Saharan Africa. *Geneva Centre for Security Policy*. URL: <https://dam.gcsp.ch/files/doc/geneva-paper-32-2024>

the Russian sphere of influence" is produced mainly among the Western public. *"The Ukrainian people – this is only part of the great Russian people"* – is a narrative for the audiences of the countries of the former USSR. *"Ukraine is only a puppet in the hands of the West (USA, NATO)"* – is a thesis that works mainly for the countries of the Global South, developing countries³¹. The spread of this misinformation is marked by constancy and repetition.

Another common narrative is that *"the supply of weapons to Ukraine pushes the world to the Third World War"*, and among states that have experience or are in a state of armed conflict, Russian propaganda says that *"the Ukrainian authorities sell weapons provided by the West on the black market"*.

Drawing attention to the specifics of Russian narratives in specific regions, we notice that discrediting Ukraine in **the countries of the Global South** is based on anti-Western sentiments. The public is presented with the idea that:

- *Ukraine is a tool that the West seeks to use to weaken Russia.*
- *Achieving peace is impossible, because the West does not allow Ukraine to conduct real peace negotiations with the participation of the Russian Federation.*
- *Ukraine receives disproportionate attention and assistance, although in other parts of the world the population suffers from conflicts³².*
- *Western countries seek to occupy the territory of Ukraine to use its resources for their own useful purposes³³.*
- *According to Russian narratives, it is "the West, hiding behind the war in Ukraine, that leads to a food crisis, due to the blocking of Russian grain supplies".*

The credibility of such war theses is reinforced by the fact that Russian media are trying to position themselves as sources of unbiased information that are independent of Western media and local media controlled by state structures³⁴.

Among the population of countries that **in the past were part of the USSR**, anti-Western rhetoric is also supplemented by the thesis that:

- *The Ukrainian authorities do not express the will of the Ukrainian people, separated from the people.*

³¹ Шеховцов А. Матрица нарративов: как понимать и расшифровывать российскую пропаганду. *Re.Russia*. URL: <https://re-russia.net/analytics/055/>

³² Ukraine in major international online media & social media. March 2024. Brand Ukraine.

URL:https://brandukraine.org.ua/documents/152/Ukraine_in_Major_International_News_Media_Social_media_March_2024.pdf

³³ Britain, with Zelensky's support, seeks territorial gains in the Black Sea. EUvsDisinfo.

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/britain-with-zelenskyy-s-support-seeks-territorial-gains-in-the-black-sea>

³⁴ Sleibi A. Wartime Opportunities: The Sway of Russian Disinformation on the MENA Region. *Mediterranean Yearbook. 2023: Strategic Sector. Culture&Society*. 2023. P. 312-317

- More actively speculate on the subject of mobilization with statements that *«mobilization occurs forcibly with the use of violence against conscripts³⁵»*.
- *War and instability in Ukraine provoked cooperation with Western states, which are now ready to fight to the last Ukrainian³⁶*.

Also, on the territory of these states there is a campaign to discredit Western foundations and non-governmental organizations³⁷. By the way, similar campaigns against the Ukrainian organization "Prosvita" can be traced in the countries of Latin America.

Even despite the activation of the European Union in the fight against disinformation, Russian attempts to influence the minds of Europeans do not stop. Nevertheless, both the approach and the group of narratives directed to **the countries of Europe** are different from the above. Trying to reach the Western public, Russia often acts in a veiled manner, and among the most common theses we can meet:

- *Ukraine is an extremely corrupt state.*
- *Sanctions weaken Europe's economy.*
- *Mercenaries from Western countries fight in Ukraine and die.* Moreover, the citizenship of a mercenary is adjusted to each specific country. For the United States – it's American mercenaries, Poland – Polish³⁸, France – French³⁹.

Besides, in 2024, which is the "year of elections in the world", it is in the countries of the West that the Russian Federation is most actively trying to promote narratives that those political forces that advocate the cessation of armed support for Ukraine are parties of "peace", and those who seek to support Ukraine armed – are parties of "war".

Analyzing the specifics of Russian disinformation, it is also worth highlighting **the most ambitious propaganda campaigns that can be seen in the first half of 2024**. One of the **first Russian IPSOs in 2024** was the spread of the story about the *downed plane Il-76 with allegedly Ukrainian prisoners on board*, and there are several versions of which country's military shot down the plane. Also, the leading theme of the first half of 2024 were attempts to *discredit the legitimacy of the authority of V. Zelenskyy*. Of course, Russian propagandists

³⁵ Ukraine government is forcibly sending people to the frontline as no one goes to war voluntarily anymore. *EUVsDisinfo*. URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/pendukraine-government-is-forcibly-sending-people-to-the-frontline-as-no-one-goes-to-war-voluntarily-anymore/>

³⁶ Ukrainians driven to slaughter like cannon fodder in US' proxy war against Russia. *EUVsDisinfo*. URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/ukrainians-driven-to-slaughter-like-cannon-fodder-in-us-proxy-war-against-russia/>

³⁷ Шаныгин И. Антироссийская деятельность западных неправительственных организаций в Казахстане. *Русские в Казахстане*. URL: <https://russianskz.info/politics/14288-antirossijskaja-dejatelnost-zapadnyh-nepravitelstvennyh-organizacij-v-kazahstane.html>

³⁸ The Russian Army captured a former Polish soldier fighting as a mercenary. *EUVsDisinfo*. URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/the-russian-army-captured-a-former-polish-soldier-fighting-as-a-mercenary/>

³⁹ The names of French mercenaries killed in the Kharkiv attack have been published. *EUVsDisinfo*. URL: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/the-names-of-french-mercenaries-killed-in-the-kharkiv-attack-have-been-published/>

did not bypass the *Global Peace Summit* – about two months before its holding, the Russian Federation actively filled the media, in particular the countries of the Global South, with theses that could compromise the event. Ukraine was also credited with *involvement in large-scale terrorist attacks and assassinations of political leaders (Crocus City Hall, the assassination attempt on R. Fico)*. Thus, we see that the Russian Federation can resort to a full-fledged construction of the IPSO, or it will try to involve Ukraine in any high-profile world events. Therefore, in such circumstances, it is necessary to be ready to act in advance. The response of Ukraine to such reproaches should not should not leave room for half-tones.

Conclusions and possible countermeasures

Observing the peculiarities of the instrumental and cognitive dimensions of Russian propaganda, we can conclude that the war on the information front will not slow down. The actions of the Russian Federation in different parts of the world through obvious or hidden networks of influence show a desire to scale propaganda. Moreover, the use of social networks and artificial intelligence will continue to simplify the production and distribution of disinformation content. However, the Kremlin will not neglect the possibilities for forming a network of loyal figures. Besides, despite their seemingly biased and archaic nature, Moscow continues to spread a number of ideas that it promoted earlier. Over the past three years, new tactical narratives have emerged, reinforcing long-standing strategic ones. Thus, Ukraine will have to continue to wage an asymmetric information struggle and continue to work on destroying stereotypes about itself. Under these conditions, if it is impossible to rely on significant material resources to disseminate reliable information about the war, it is advisable for the Ukrainian authorities to pay attention to:

1. Formation of a holistic image of Ukraine. That is, the creation of one clear narrative understandable to all authorities and the population, which is our state in the international arena, and the subordination of its address variations to a certain fundamental basis.
2. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, like a number of other conflicts in the world, is unique in its nature, so unnecessary comparisons or analogies with other armed conflicts should be avoided in the information space. It is difficult to predict the positive effect of such comparisons, but they become a good basis for creating manipulative content and divisions between societies.
3. Intensification of work with Ukrainians abroad. This group includes the Ukrainian diaspora, refugees and the student community studying under exchange programs. At the same time, Ukraine should propose such formats that would arouse interest among both Ukrainians and their foreign friends. An example of this can be festival-type events that would combine important social topics (e.g. ecological) with popular art, organized together with foreign partners.

4. Deployment of activities to strengthen and increase the recognition of experts from the circle of foreign Ukrainians among the local media of their countries of residence. This step is one of the ways to counter the Russian networks of purchased experts.
5. Ukraine has a unique experience in tracking and countering disinformation influences, using both traditional and popular content. The knowledge of our experts should be promoted as a valuable product for governments of other countries, the creation of joint media products.
6. Deepening the level of analysis and understanding of the policies of the countries of the Global South. In order for Ukraine to become interested in the countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, it is worth encouraging interest among Ukrainians in these states, especially at the expert and professional levels. It is imperative for these countries to show the added value of joint projects in various fields, as well as the interest of Ukrainian society and authorities in common human challenges and problems, even despite the war.

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