

# Kremlin Watch Reader 2016

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## Kremlin Watch Team

Kremlin Watch is a strategic program of the European Values Think-Tank, which aims to unravel and confront instruments of Russian influence and disinformation operations focused against liberal-democratic system.

*The Kremlin Watch Team monitors on weekly basis scientific publications in the field of disinformation and hostile Russian influence. The following reader brings you the most interesting analyses in this area, which we read in the year 2016. The reader can serve as a tool for acquiring a broader view on the subject, though of course, it is not complete or exhaustive.*

## 1. Russian hybrid warfare and its methods and impacts

### **EUobserver - Russian Propaganda Wins Hearts and Minds EU**

<https://euobserver.com/foreign/129237>

According to recent surveys by the American research centre the Pew, opinions on public life in some EU countries are to a significant degree influenced by pro-Kremlin media and organisations. As an example serves Greece, where we can find more sympathizers with Russia than with the European Union, but also France, where nearly half the population blames Kiev for starting the conflict in Ukraine.

One of the reasons why the pro-Kremlin media are so successful is their massive PR budget, which, according to the Russian Federation itself, is about 643 million Euro. At the same time, every year there are new media arising under the Russian rule and the propaganda is becoming more sophisticated, as it can, among other things, combine information with entertainment. Needless to say, the Russian propaganda's greatest impact is on its domestic scene where, for example, according to the Pew, 61% of the respondents consider the dissolution of the Soviet Union a mistake.

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### **Information at War: From China's Three Warfares to NATO's Narratives**

<http://www.li.com/activities/publications/information-at-war-from-china-s-three-warfares-to-nato-s-narratives>

Is it possible, due to the technological progress that Russia and China could win in a confrontation with NATO or with the USA? This article looks for help to the Chinese "Three Warfares" doctrine, the aim of which is to weaken international organisations, change national borders and subvert the world media. All of which without firing a single shot.

The main tool of the Chinese doctrine is to create a narrative and to blame the enemy. According to China, the US reduces China's sphere of influence. In addition to that, China considers the US responsible for falling of the Chinese stock market. Misrepresenting the situation and using tools offered by information technology is also widely used in Russia. Ben Nimmo says that "Russia and China sees the information warfare as a permanent activity which is to be used despite the absence of imminent conflict." In the case of Crimea and the example of "little green men", it has been clearly shown that though misinformation does not last forever, it does last for a sufficient time in order to achieve the objective.

## **Chatham House - Russia's 'New' Tools for Confronting the West Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power**

(<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-03-21-russias-new-tools-giles.pdf>)

Chatham House published an extensive study on the new tactics of Kremlin and on what is called Russian "hybrid warfare." It concludes that the methods and techniques that Russia showed in the conflict in Ukraine have their roots in traditional Soviet methods. As in the past, military planners and policy makers must now consider not only potential military threat from Kremlin, but also a real threat of the Kremlin's subversion, destabilisation efforts and active measures.

Russian military forces but also the state's capacity for information war have developed rapidly over the past few years. An unprecedented demonstration of this transformation can be observed especially since 2008. This includes the development of military capabilities and also the development of the Russian informational policy, which is particularly successful on the Internet.

According to Chatham House, the West has a false notion of how to best counter this campaign – especially the idea that a successful measure lies in disproving every obvious disinformation. Russian disinformation campaign in the West is described as a failure, given that Russian stories are not credible. The West is mistaken in what it thinks about the nature and meaning of Russian disinformation and it does not understand its goals.

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## **The Atlantic Council - DISTRACT DECEIVE DESTROY: Putin at War in Syria**

(<http://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/distract-deceive-destroy/assets/download/ddd-report.pdf>)

An analysis of open source and social media intelligence revealed that the Russian strikes in Syria were not primarily targeting ISIS. Subsequent research also revealed evidence of the use of cluster munitions and bombs that destroyed civilian targets. Almost six months of Russian air strikes caused only peripheral damage to ISIS. The strikes also had a limited effect on the al-Qaeda linked Nusra Front. In fact, the main beneficiary of the Russian air strikes was Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The main losers were the more moderate rebels against Assad, including those backed by the West. *The Atlantic Council* exposes the false claims Kremlin made in order to cover the targets chosen and the weapons used to strike them, but also to mask the real purpose of the campaign and the achieved strategic effect. Far from being a partner in the fight against ISIS, Russia in fact acted as a party to the civil war in Syria, fighting for Assad.

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## **Chatham House – Agents of the Russian World Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood**

([https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-04-14-agents-russian-world-lutsevych-embargoed.pdf?dm\\_i=1TY5%2C45KJB%2CLAB9R3%2CF3T97%2C1](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-04-14-agents-russian-world-lutsevych-embargoed.pdf?dm_i=1TY5%2C45KJB%2CLAB9R3%2CF3T97%2C1))

Chatham House published a text on non-state actors, which are supported by Kremlin and used as a tool to achieve the geopolitical ambitions in the post-Soviet space. This article describes the impact of the activities of these actors, focusing on the situation in Ukraine. In addition, it outlines how the Russian soft power could develop in the future, and how to offset their impact by supporting democratic elements.

According to Chatham House, Russia tries to maintain its influence in the post-Soviet space, especially in countries such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, which since the dissolution of the Soviet Union aspire to join the EU and NATO. Russia has been restoring its position of power since the beginning of the century and it uses a number of tools to prevent such strengthening of relations. It uses e.g. economic levers, energy supplies, trade war, military force, propaganda and disinformation. Kremlin is seeking allies that promote anti-Americanism, conservative orthodox and Eurasian values. Of these, it creates a network of groups which support the so-called “Russian world,” and by the presence of which Kremlin justifies its increasing assertiveness in the post-Soviet space and beyond. Even though it is talking about its “soft power,” in fact, its main instrument is “soft pressure,” which is supposed to ensure superiority in the region. Kremlin’s pseudo-NGOs undermine social cohesion of neighbouring countries by consolidation of pro-Russian forces, ethnic geopolitics and vilifying of national identities. One of the ways they destabilize the Western society is by using paramilitary groups and aggressive propaganda. Kremlin non-profit organisations also create an alternative discourse whose aim is to confuse political elites and impair their judgement.

The combination of pro-Kremlin groups, vast resources of the Russian state administration and security apparatus, with the support of the Russian Orthodox Church, pro-Kremlin political elites, culture and media, is according to Chatham House a serious threat to the political transition and the development of civil society in the region. The crisis in Ukraine showed the ability of Russian non-state actors to incite conflict.

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### **Political Capital Institute – Russia and the European Far Left**

<http://www.statecraft.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Peter%20Kreko%20Far%20Left%20definitive.pdf>

Péter Krekó and Lóránt Györi from the Political Capital Institute pointed out in their study that radical right-wing groups are not the only ones who tend to support the current Russian regime. Despite Russia’s promotion of conservative and traditional values, radical left-wing political parties in Europe often advocate for Russian foreign policy and for the decisions of President Vladimir Putin. The authors present several proposals on how to face this phenomenon. According to them, it is essential for the investigative journalists, political leaders and security services to admit that these “networks of comrades” include both the diplomatic dimension and the dimension of the secret services. They also say that “it is important for politicians to point out these pro-Russian links of the radical left-wing parties, to question the credibility of these parties through political debates and campaigns.”

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### **The German Marshall Fund of the United States – Isolation and Propaganda: The Rots and Instruments of Russia's Disinformation Campaign**

<http://www.gmfus.org/publications/isolation-and-propaganda-roots-and-instruments-russia%E2%80%99s-disinformation-campaign>

Although options are limited, the European Union and its Member states should respond to the challenges that are posed by the Kremlin’s disinformation campaign. It is important to maintain contact with Russian society. One way to do this would be to facilitate the issuance of visas for Russian citizens, in order to establish a positive agenda. It is also necessary to prepare for the fact that the president who

comes after Vladimir Putin might be even more nationalistic and aggressive, and therefore to adapt long-term strategies to that. Another key step is maintaining the policy of sanctions against Russia. EU Member states must continue in taking a firm stance, in order to maintain its credibility. Appropriate response also involves a constant exposing of Russian propaganda with the help of appropriate media and detecting lies. Finally, the EU should come up with a serious offer for its eastern neighbours, including the perspective of membership. If reform efforts in Ukraine succeed, the effects could spread into Russia and other post-Soviet countries.

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**The Finnish Institute of International Affairs - Fog of Falsehood: Russian Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine**

([http://www.fii.fi/en/publication/588/fog\\_of\\_falsehood/](http://www.fii.fi/en/publication/588/fog_of_falsehood/))

This thorough article consists of case studies in eight European countries. The authors investigated the extent to which domestic media are influenced by Russia circulated meta-narratives. Most of the media, with only a few exceptions, did not start to hold the Russian view on the Ukrainian crisis and maintained sufficient distance from it. However, what proved to be problematic was the terminology. Journalists often underestimate the importance of using accurate and validated terms.

Russian deception techniques should not be underestimated, however, it is good to remember that their success is dependent on the vulnerability of their targets. If the public awareness about the conflict in Ukraine were managed to be raised, as well as the willingness of politicians to seek information from experts, many mistakes and missed opportunities could be prevented.

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**The Atlantic Council - Europe Still in Denial as Russia Ushers in the Age of Hybrid Hostilities**

(<http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/europe-still-in-denial-as-russia-ushers-in-the-age-of-hybrid-hostilities>)

The upcoming discussion of the EU leaders regarding the tightening of the sanctions regime against the Russian Federation reflects an alarming inability to recognize the new security situation on the continent of Europe. Although the official statement of the European Union talks about the need to continue the sanctions, it did not prevent countries such as France from welcoming ministers of the Russian government on its territory to whom the sanctions apply, Germany from increasing its dependence on Russian energy supplies, Spain from servicing Russian warships and Greece from inviting Vladimir Putin to the country.

This ambiguous approach encourages Russia in escalation of the hybrid warfare against the European Union because the Russian strategy is based on the assumption that modern Europe is unwilling to confront Russia over the geopolitical aspirations and it would rather retreat than invest in promoting its own principles. Unless this changes, the results for the continent will be disastrous, says Peter Dickinson.

## 2. Case studies and reports from individual countries

### **Non-Linear Warfare in Ukraine: The Critical Role of Information Operations and Special Operations**

(<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/non-linear-warfare-in-ukraine-the-critical-role-of-information-operations-and-special-operations>)

The article examines the way the hybrid warfare is waged by Russia in Ukraine and determines which components were the most critical to the success of Russia. It concludes that the most important factors in the unconventional war were sophisticated information operations and the effective use and deployment of special forces.

Russia has shown how non-linear warfare can effectively conceal the use of conventional forces. The author therefore recommends that relevant actors, namely politicians, strategists and military analysts, not only deepen their knowledge of hybrid warfare, but also to develop and implement practical steps against hybrid warfare at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

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### **Prague Security Studies Institute - Pro-Russian disinformation campaign in the Czech Republic and Slovakia**

([http://www.pssi.cz/download/docs/253\\_is-pro-russian-campaign.pdf](http://www.pssi.cz/download/docs/253_is-pro-russian-campaign.pdf))

The United States of America want to rule the world. They provoke conflicts and colour revolutions across the continents and they are responsible for international terrorism. They are doing everything they can to prevent their own economic collapse. Countries of the European Union and NATO actively cooperate with them. Ukraine is ruled by fascists who are mere puppets of the USA. World media are biased, controlled by the economic elite and they spread anti-Russian propaganda. A future full of wars and American terror is awaiting us. This can only be prevented by Russia allying with China, which represent moral authority. This is how the common ideas about the world are summed up in pro-Russian propagandistic media in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

There are several dozens of these kinds of web sites, informal groups and communities on social networks, but also printed periodicals in the Czech Republic, and that is even though we do not have a big Russian minority. Most of these do not acknowledge any links to Kremlin. In addition to their argumentation, they have in common the use of a very rich language that triggers boisterous emotions in the readers. Often they are supported by public figures who give them credibility and visibility but whose origins, financial and organizational structure are very opaque. The messages which they offer to the Czech public are usually a mixture of facts, half-truths and outright lies. How can we defend against disinformation?

We do not yet fully understand contemporary forms of propaganda and its overall impact on the public. Therefore, it would be appropriate to map in detail its impact on public opinion through polls, surveys and studies. Considering the sources of propaganda themselves, it is necessary to explore many issues,

e.g. how many of these sources actually exist, what their origin is, what key figures and organizations support them, and whether there are ulterior motives for their actions. In the long-term, it would be appropriate to adapt education to this phenomenon, for example in the form of an information campaign, or by creating textbooks of media literacy and critical thinking skills that would help from an early age to recognize facts from propaganda. It is crucial to publicly rebut the most common false arguments of pro-Russian websites. Information security should be given the status of an academic science and its own department at universities, and gain the attention of thin-tanks and government agencies which should with their analytical dispositions support the research methods.

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### **Bertelsmann Stiftung (GER) and Institute of Public Affairs (PL) – Frayed Partnership: German public opinion on Russia**

[\(http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/frayed-partnership/\)](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/frayed-partnership/)

Up to 64% of Germans do not consider Russia under Vladimir Putin's rule a reliable partner. Only 18% believe that relations between the two countries are good. A clear majority of Germans consider unfortunate the degree of dependence of the German energy sector on Russia. According to the survey, however, the distrust of Germans in Russia does not mirror how they view the Russians themselves; on the contrary, the perception of Russians by the majority of the society has slightly improved since the last survey. Only 31% of Germans would approve sending the army to defend the eastern wing of NATO.

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### **NATO StratCom COE - Internet Trolling as a hybrid warfare tool: the case of Latvia**

<http://www.stratcomcoe.org/internet-trolling-hybrid-warfare-tool-case-latvia-0>

Trolling is still an important part of the mechanism that influences the public in NATO member and partner states. What can the mass media and government institutions do to counter this technique of information warfare? Thorough verification of the factual accuracy of the texts, raising the public media literacy and critical thinking, identifying the sources of disinformation, creation of unifying narratives, ridiculing rather than disputing and learning from the previous experience of other countries are the fundamentals, according to StratCom COE.

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### **Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies - Eyes Wide Shut: Russian soft power gaining strength in Serbia – goals, instruments and effects**

[https://www.ceas-serbia.org/images/2016/05/CEAS - Eyes Wide Shut - Russian soft power gaining strength in Serbia - Executive summary.pdf](https://www.ceas-serbia.org/images/2016/05/CEAS_-_Eyes_Wide_Shut_-_Russian_soft_power_gaining_strength_in_Serbia_-_Executive_summary.pdf)

Along with the preparations to react to the developments of Kiev Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea and war in Eastern Ukraine, Russia has started to take interest in the region of Western Balkans.

The rise of activity of various organisations that openly call for the strengthening of cooperation with Russia and abandoning the orientation to the EU is especially noticeable in Serbia. These organisations are given a disproportionately large attention in media and are able to establish themselves as proponents of legitimate opinions in the public debate. Their influence is already evident in the public opinion, for example, that of young people. Those, even though they prefer western lifestyle, when the

foreign policy is concerned they support strengthening of relations with Russia and, for example, placement of military bases on Serbian territory. They usually also support the Russian foreign policy.

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### **Center for European Policy Analysis - The Russian Cyber Threat: Views from Estonia**

(<http://cepa.org/The-Russian-Cyber-Threat-Views-from-Estonia>)

NATO faces cyber threats on a daily basis. Russia is carrying out operations the long-term goal of which is weakening, or preferably disintegration, of the EU and NATO.

Russia also has an interest in the existence of politically divided, economically weak and generally vulnerable societies and states in its vicinity that will be easier to influence.

Cyberspace operations can be used for the very purpose of influencing - through propaganda that undermines the trust between the citizens and the state and causes confusion and discontent.

When encountering this threat, there are countermeasures on a personal, institutional, national and international level, however, their effective use depends on a functional strategy based on deterrence.

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### **Aldrimer.no – Analysis: Sweden is under attack**

(<https://www.aldrimer.no/analysis-sweden-is-under-attack/>)

According to the analysis, the intensity and frequency of cyber attacks against Sweden has grown considerably in recent months. Even though it has not been officially confirmed that the attacks come from Russia, Swedish officials, distinguished experts and Swedish security forces believe that at least in some cases Russia is responsible.

If the attacks continue to grow, the debate will start in Sweden whether it should be treated as a civil matter or a military threat. Lately, Sweden has been facing a series of Russian provocations that are most likely testing how far Russia can go.

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### **European Values – Lie That Got out of Control. The Lisa Case: How the Kremlin Crashed with False Propaganda**

([http://www.evropskehodnoty.cz/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/KW\\_Le%C5%BE-p%C5%99%C3%ADpad-Lisa2.pdf](http://www.evropskehodnoty.cz/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/KW_Le%C5%BE-p%C5%99%C3%ADpad-Lisa2.pdf))

The fabricated story of an allegedly raped thirteen-year-old girl in Berlin captured the attention of the Russian community in Germany and Russian media and more. It backlashed on the German national level where it had a similar effect as the documentary on the events of August 1968 in the Czech Republic broadcasted by channel Rossia 1. However, this case was more complicated due to Russian media actively interfering with the internal affairs of Germany. Regardless of the results of the investigation by the German authorities, this story continues to live its own life in Russian media. The results of the investigation and apology of the girl herself are presented in Russian media only as an effort to sweep the case under the rug. This disinformation campaign had even some tangible effects - provoked demonstrations occurred in Germany. The result was a diplomatic quarrel on the level of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Germany and Russia.

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## **Yle Kioski - This is How Pro-Russia Trolls Manipulate Finns Online**

<http://kioski.yle.fi/omat/troll-piece-2-english>

In the context of the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine, we can observe the increase of new profiles on Finnish social networks and discussion forums. It is a long-term effort to manipulate the public opinion in the online discussion forums through the pro-Russian trolls that are often difficult to expose due to professionally made profiles and sophisticated practices of the entire process.

Every day, these people receive a list of current topics on which they post as many insights and comments, which favour the current Russian policy, as they can. Mass threats, public insults and psychological pressure on the Finnish citizens that are critical to the current Russian policy and express their opinions are also a part of their agenda. Not to forget the fact that the Russian embassy which retweets the troll posts, deletes inconvenient comments or has shared the video "I'm a Russian Occupant" in the past is also the part of the process.

### 3. Situation and Propaganda in the Russian Federation

#### **Small Wars Journal - Nine Lessons of Russian Propaganda**

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/nine-lessons-of-russian-propaganda>

Russian propaganda, as a strongly opportunistic mechanism, seeks new opportunities to develop and function through the spreading of chaos. There is a great emphasis on creating a strong first opinion in breaking news for the future expansion. The first impression can strongly influence many people and is given high relevance even after, for example, it turns out that the news wasn't completely true.

However, we cannot forget the fact that the propaganda is predominantly aimed at the domestic audience. It tries to undermine the authority and credibility of the part of the internet not yet controlled by the Russian government and "pollutes" the information space by hoaxes and falsehoods that are supposed to evoke the feeling that no truth exists.

Whether it is domestic Russian propaganda or propaganda aimed at the EU states, one thing is sure. The more the West will respect the laws, create a prosperous contrast with contemporary Russia and support the Russian public in the fight against poverty and corruption, the less critical the view of Russians on the contemporary EU and USA will be.

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#### **Denis Volkov – Why Russians stopped loving America: The West's squandered opportunities and Moscow's propaganda powerhouse**

<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2016/04/25/opinion-why-russians-stopped-loving-america>

Anti-Americanism in Russia has been slowly growing since the 90s, however, at the turn of the millennium, the state decided to cultivate and grow it in order to defend its foreign policy ambitions. Major Russian media under the government control have made this goal much easier to achieve. Russian media interpretation of conflicts in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria as a result of western interference gives the Russian interventions more legitimacy in the eyes of the Russian public.

According to Volkov, it is possible that the Russian perception of the West will improve after the lifting of the sanctions but the suspicion of hidden hostility against Russia and general distrust towards the USA will probably still remain in Russia for a long time.

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#### **Euromaidan Press – A Guide to Russian Propaganda**

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/05/05/a-guide-to-russian-propaganda-part-1-propaganda-prepares-russia-for-war/>

The Ukrainian initiative Euromaidan Press has compiled a list of seven strategies that the Russian state uses to influence the domestic public. The essential prerequisite for effective propaganda is the limitation of critical thinking.

Presenting Vladimir Putin as the only possible leader and creating the image of an external enemy that is, at the same time, responsible for Russia's problems are effective ways to consolidate the society. According to Euromaidan Press, the fear of global war with the West is nurtured in the minds of Russians which helps to keep peace in the society, despite the unenviable economic situation.

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### **Open Democracy - The "Moscow Consensus": Constructing autocracy in post-Soviet Eurasia**

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/david-lewis/moscow-consensus-constructing-autocracy-in-post-soviet-eurasia>)

An authoritarian form of government is an accepted reality in many post-Soviet states. These states have created, shared and connected their ideas on the outside world, governance, politics and society. The distinctive common element of these regimes is the discourse dictatorship backed by cleverly controlled television broadcasting and public relations projects with a goal of silencing the opposition and creating a generally accepted narrative. Part of this control is the control of production, persecution of journalists and reduction of the influence of alternative opinions, if possible, without resorting to violence.

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### **European Initiative – Liberal Academy Tbilisi – Threats of Russian Hard and Soft Power in Georgia**

[http://www.ei-lat.ge/images/doc/threats%20of%20russian%20soft%20and%20hard%20power.pdf?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=kremlin\\_watch\\_monitor](http://www.ei-lat.ge/images/doc/threats%20of%20russian%20soft%20and%20hard%20power.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=kremlin_watch_monitor))

A significant part of the Georgian population is not content with the performance of the government and the sympathies for the opposition party are not particularly high either. Together with social-economic difficulties, the country is becoming a fertile ground for the pro-Russian media and NGOs which represent an important part of the Russian systemic efforts to influence Georgia's foreign policy inclinations. Therefore, it is important that certain measures are taken, especially in the areas like a constructive election environment, support to the independent media including the Russian-speaking ones, monitoring and auditing of party financing, prevention of radical confrontation or polarization of the public, financial transparency standards for the civil society organisations or representation of ethnic minorities.

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### **European Council on Foreign Relations - Spain versus Russia's kleptocracy**

[http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\\_spain\\_versus\\_russias\\_kleptocracy\\_7017?utm\\_content=buffer85648&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_spain_versus_russias_kleptocracy_7017?utm_content=buffer85648&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer))

In January, a Spanish judge has asked for an international arrest warrant on several Russian officials for their alleged links to organised crime. Among them were, for example, general Nikolai Aulov and members of parliament V. Reznik and I. Sobolevsky. They are charged with aiding Gennady Petrov, leader of Russian gang operating in Spain, in hiding from police authorities. In this case, Spain points out the connection between the Russian political scene and organised crime. The Russian view is unsurprisingly deeply critical. For example, the Head of The Investigative Committee of Russia

Alexander Bastrykin believes that similar investigations and international law are generally part of hybrid warfare led against Russia. Investigations such as this one are some of the most effective tools for the support of decriminalisation of Russian political system and, therefore, the EU should address this phenomenon.

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### **European Values and Semantic Visions - How Russian Propaganda Portrays European Leaders**

[http://www.europeanvalues.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/How-Russian-Propaganda-Portrays-European-Leaders\\_v41.pdf](http://www.europeanvalues.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/How-Russian-Propaganda-Portrays-European-Leaders_v41.pdf)

Instead of the representatives of the European Union, the leaders of the big European states, especially the German Chancellor and the French President, are perceived by the Russian-speaking media as the voices of Europe worthy of dealing with the Russian President Vladimir Putin. The most respected adversary is with no doubt Angela Merkel. By number of mentions in the Russian-speaking media as well as by her share of space in important topics and areas she many times exceeds Jean-Claude Juncker, Donald Tusk, Federica Mogherini, but also the other Heads of States. The Kremlin disinformation campaign works very hard to portray the European leaders accordingly to their inclination to support Russia. The more favourable those personalities are to Vladimir Putin's regime, the stronger voice in the international community they have according to the Russian-speaking outlets. This phenomenon leads to a large overrepresentation of Central European leaders like Miloš Zeman, Viktor Orbán or Robert Fico in the Russian media space. Together with Matteo Renzi, those politicians are Russian-speaking media favourites, some of them disproportionately to the weight backed by their population or even to the competencies and powers they have on their domestic scene.

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## 4. How to Face the Russian Disinformation Campaign

### The Next Phase of Russian Information Warfare

(<http://www.stratcomcoe.org/next-phase-russian-information-warfare-keir-giles> )

However beneficial the current efforts to counter the disinformation campaign might be, it is often forgotten that the Russian propaganda is constantly evolving and adapting to the new environment which leads to the West falling behind in the effective countermeasures to the future activity. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse the very core of the information war for which it is, among other things, characteristic to control the information itself. One of the examples of the development of information war is the situation regarding the “troll farm” in St. Petersburg. This institution came into the spotlight of investigative journalists, while the Russian government allowed deeper insight into its inner workings. However, this step has only been a manoeuvre in order to divert attention from other bigger organisations engaged in the same activities. The West is also mainly dealing with the technical aspects of the information warfare but not with the bigger picture of this issue. This will help the Western countries to prepare for various cyber activities but not for other dimensions of information warfare combining cyber, kinetic and electronic elements. The Western countries should, among other things, analyse the available documents, future changes in Russian politics and tactics and combine this knowledge with informed opinions of the experts on Russia which could give them a chance to predict the potential changes and new steps in the information war.

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### Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia’s Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It

(<http://www.stopfake.org/en/anatomy-of-an-info-war-how-russia-s-propaganda-machine-works-and-how-to-counter-it/>)

Ben Nimmo has published an analysis of Russian propaganda which is, according to Nimmo, very sophisticated but it also consists of repetitive and predictable phases. The analysis describes the ways in which the Kremlin responds to criticism. In addition, Nimmo describes the tactics used by the Kremlin along with their own narrative in order to attack and undermine the West and cover Russia’s responsibility for certain developments. This tactic used by the Kremlin and the pro-Kremlin media is called “Tactics of Rebuttal: The 4D Approach”: dismiss, distort, distract, dismay. In the conclusion of the analysis, Nimmo describes a way how the West can fight against the Kremlin’s practices. He recommends the creation of a compelling narrative, identification of Russian information warfare tactics, prediction of attacks and their nature and exposure of the network of pro-Kremlin websites and their sympathisers.

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### The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money

([http://www.interpretermag.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The\\_Menace\\_of\\_Unreality\\_Final.pdf](http://www.interpretermag.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The_Menace_of_Unreality_Final.pdf))

The analysis presents recommendations which might, according to the author, pose a challenge for the Kremlin. On a state level, the following measures are recommended: enlivening EU and US public diplomacy, developing military abilities to defend states against “limited warfare” or establishing TV stations for Russian-speaking population both within and outside Russia.

Amongst other recommendations are those which might serve as an inspiration for civil and public structures with lesser budgets. One of these recommendations is, for example, a foundation of an international organization which would incorporate media and experts with a view to delimit and create a joint set of definitions. These definitions would form an effective evaluation system able to prove the falsity of disinformation. The next item is creating a disinformation list with names of media and personalities whose aim is deliberate disinformation. In addition, positions of so-called contra-disinformation publishers should be created. Media, influential journalists, think-tanks and other organisations and institutions of this sort should pay more attention to the raising of public awareness. The last recommendation is to expose disinformation on the internet more systematically and intensively through the agency of targeted online campaigns.

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#### **Federal Academy for Security Policy - The Lisa Case: STRATCOM Lessons for European states**

[https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working\\_paper\\_2016\\_11.pdf?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=kremlin\\_watch\\_monitor](https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working_paper_2016_11.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=kremlin_watch_monitor)

In January 2016, news media reported that a German girl of Russian origin had allegedly been raped by several migrants in Berlin. Since the German government was structurally unable to swiftly react to the unfounded allegations, the case received disproportionate national and international attention. Russian immigrants even marched to the German Chancellery to protest. **If a German national STRATCOM team had existed, the case could have been detected as a potentially impactful story in the very beginning. After clearly realising that this case is of national importance, it would have called for additional police resources, and it would have publicly spread the outcomes of police investigation reports.** STRATCOM teams should be established within the Ministries of the Interior in every state so that the foreign policy, national security as well as communication and media experts could work alongside homeland security professionals, and be free of diplomatic self-censorship. These bodies should directly connect strategic communications work to the heads of state at all levels. Policy makers must keep in mind that intelligence gathering mostly works for military purposes but hardly for any real-time engagement with the public. Hence the public battle for the hearts and minds might be lost.

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#### **The Polish Institute of International Affairs - "In the Area or Out of Business:" Building Resilience to Hybrid Attacks**

[http://www.pism.pl/publications/journals/The\\_Polish\\_Quarterly\\_of\\_International\\_Affairs/2016/1](http://www.pism.pl/publications/journals/The_Polish_Quarterly_of_International_Affairs/2016/1)

Even though Article 5 is NATO's ultimate security guarantee, it is only the very last in a long chain of measures that need to be functioning in order to respond to today's most probable and lethal threats. The Alliance has spent the last two years implementing the agreed Readiness Action Plan and reassuring eastern members not only with rhetoric, but also by taking more action and putting more troops on the eastern border. This is all what one would expect a political-military alliance to do when it is threatened. The evolution of NATO's posture towards Russia has proven to NATO members, and, arguably, to their adversaries, that the Alliance still has a mission.

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### **Russia Studies Centre - "Putin's Cyberwar: Russia's Statecraft in the Fifth Domain"**

(<http://www.stratcomcoe.org/afoxall-putins-cyberwar-russias-statecraft-fifth-domain>)

Russia is the only country so far which has combined cybernetic and conventional warfare. As far as Kremlin is concerned, hackers are, apart from soldiers and spies, simply another weapon. If the West is to deal with this situation, it has to establish a zero tolerance policy towards any cyber attacks and resist them strictly, systematically and legally at the same time. Not only will this reaction send a clear signal, but it will also reduce these activities to a large extent.

It is necessary for Western states to agree on a joint strategy for cybernetic security. Failing that, our defence system will contain important gaps. Western governments should start investing more significant resources in programmes providing cybersecurity education for prominent individuals and institutions, which is important mainly because of the success which has the Russian cybernetic attacks already achieved, for example by phishing (fraudulent emails).

Last but not least, civil and military scenario planning must take place and consider scenarios during which there is, for example, limited access to the internet. Meanwhile, the infrastructure of internet coverage should gain at least such level of protection as other strategically important areas.

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### **Open Democracy – Do not ignore the left! Connections between Europe's radical left and Russia**

([https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/peter-kreko-lorant-gyori/don-t-ignore-left-connections-between-europe-s-radical-left-and-ru?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=kremlin\\_watch\\_monitor](https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/peter-kreko-lorant-gyori/don-t-ignore-left-connections-between-europe-s-radical-left-and-ru?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=kremlin_watch_monitor))

*While the connections between the Kremlin and European far right parties are widely known, the radical left in Europe is being mostly ignored, when it comes to its relations with Vladimir Putin's regime. Although most European leftist parties often call for neutrality and peace, some of them actively legitimise the Russian state's actions, and the Kremlin does not hide its sympathies towards them. At the same time, their domestic support keeps increasing. The reasons for the inclination of the radical left towards the Kremlin can be explained, for example, by their shared selective anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, and anti-Americanism, as well as by the attraction to the state-controlled economy. The personal links and infrastructure established by the KGB during the Soviet era should be revealed; which is why more intensive integration of intelligence services in the EU would be helpful, just as much as highlighting the pro-Russian connections of radical left parties on the political level.*

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### **OSCE Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media - Propaganda and Freedom of the Media**

([http://www.osce.org/fom/203926?download=true&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=kremlin\\_watch\\_monitor](http://www.osce.org/fom/203926?download=true&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=kremlin_watch_monitor))

The non-paper defines the "propaganda for war and hatred" which demands legal action with appropriate measures in accordance with international human rights law, and presents several recommendations for governments, the judiciary and civil society, and media organizations on how to respond to its challenges, such as:

- Enforcing media pluralism and generally condemning propaganda as inappropriate speech in a democratic nation and the profession of journalism.
  - Abolition of government-run media and support of public service media with high professional standards.
  - Developing international and intercultural dialogue, such as the dialogue among journalists, other intellectuals, advancing media education, promoting democracy as based on peace, freedom of expression and diversity.
  - Empowering activities of national and international human rights and media freedom mechanisms, specialized self-regulatory and co-regulatory bodies, professional organizations and independent monitoring institutions.
  - Putting efforts into educational programmes on media and internet literacy.
  - Media self-regulation, where it is effective, should remain the most appropriate way to address professional issues, including responses to propaganda for war, hatred and discrimination.
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**National Defence Academy in Latvia - The solution to Russian propaganda is not EU or NATO propaganda but advanced social science to understand and mitigate its effect in targeted populations**

[http://www.stratcomcoe.org/steve-tatham-solution-russian-propaganda-not-eu-or-nato-propaganda-advanced-social-science?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=kremlin\\_watch\\_monitor](http://www.stratcomcoe.org/steve-tatham-solution-russian-propaganda-not-eu-or-nato-propaganda-advanced-social-science?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=kremlin_watch_monitor)

Countering of Russian disinformation campaign can only be successful if we manage to correctly understand the target audiences of the propaganda machinery. There are many angles of how to do that but the research of target audience is often criticised for being insufficient despite being necessary to determine the particular solution which could be used. There is already some progress being made, especially in the case of NATO StratCom team activity. In future, among other things it is important to conduct public opinion polls and research concerning the mentality and thinking of specific social groups, to initiate deeper cooperation of the EU, NATO and the Western countries in the area of financing of social research and to further stress the professionalization of the staff working in institutions like the EU and NATO in order to react more swiftly to current situations and problems.

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**European Union Institute for Security Studies - EU strategic communications: With a view to counteracting propaganda**

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/578008/EXPO\\_IDA\(2016\)578008\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/578008/EXPO_IDA(2016)578008_EN.pdf)

Even though the success rate of Russian “soft power” across Europe seems to be arguable and for example the Russian narrative about the Ukrainian conflict did not gain much acceptance, Russia still managed to influence a significant number of European elites and its stance towards Russia and Ukraine, namely by deepening the dissatisfaction with the European integration process. What can the European Union do to boost its efforts to face Russian strategic communication? The budget allocated to communication is impractically fragmented between various EU bodies and institutions with different authorities and is oftentimes appropriated for small, uncoordinated and sometimes even unprofessionally designed projects. Therefore, it would be desirable to consolidate these activities and



their budget and maybe even create an instrument designated exclusively for external communication under the supervision of the High Representative. The EU should also be able to employ regional analytics and media operators with crucial skills for the substance and credibility of strategic communication. The work of EEAS East StratCom Task Force could be extended and translated into more languages. Teams for swift intervention might be useful as well – these teams would be able to quickly establish communication lines for crucial political issues or developing crises.

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### **House of Commons Defence Committee - Russia: Implications for UK defence and security**

(<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmdfence/107/107.pdf>)

In the recent past, Russia has demonstrated its readiness to conduct military aggression against countries in various regions. It has also proven its ability to provoke confusion, doubts and fear in other countries, NATO members included. In view of the fact that Russia claims that these methods are successful and even so far unopposed, it is probable that Russians will continue to use these practices to reach their “legitimate status” in the international scene. A lot of these activities directly disrupt the international order, however, unconfident and halfway answers will neither gain Russia’s respect nor improve relations with it or enable to create a suitable atmosphere for strengthening joint European defence. The United Kingdom and NATO must provide significant and firm answers to current Russian policy. Russia must be assured that if it were to attack one of NATO member states, the Article 5 would be activated. It also has to know for certain that NATO has functional measures in case Russia tried to circumvent the conditions for its activation in any way.

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### **European Values - Full-Scale Democratic Response to Hostile Disinformation Operations: 50 Measures to Oust Kremlin Hostile Disinformation Influence out of Europe**

(<http://www.europeanvalues.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Full-Scale-Democratic-Response-to-Hostile-Disinformation-Operations-1.pdf>)

An aggressive disinformation effort by the Russian Federation and its allies has been very visible within EU member states since 2013 - the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis. The Kremlin uses this vehicle as part of its hybrid warfare to achieve its strategic objective to disrupt the internal cohesion of NATO, the EU and its willingness to react to aggressive policies of the Russian Federation. There are four clusters of steps which need to be taken:

1. Firmly put hostile disinformation efforts on the foreign & security policy agenda.
  2. Publicly challenge supporters of Kremlin-sponsored disinformation efforts, especially among politicians and public figures.
  3. Disclose disinformation campaigns substance and vehicles.
  4. Systematically build resilience within free societies.
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The European Values Think-Tank is a non-governmental policy institute defending liberal democracy.

Our vision is that of a free, safe and prosperous Czech Republic within Central Europe that is an integral part of the West.

We help to face aggressive regimes, radicalisation within the society, the spread of authoritarian tendencies and extremist ideologies including Islamism.

We provide decision-makers with expert recommendations and we systematically watch and evaluate their performance. We consider active citizens, accountable politicians, political parties that fulfil their role, as well as cohesive society that shares the values of individual freedom, human dignity and equal rights to be the principle elements of a functioning liberal democracy.

Since 2005, as a non-governmental and a non-profitable organisation which is not linked to any political party, we have pursued research and educational activities. In addition to publishing analytical papers and commentaries for the media, we organise conferences, seminars and training sessions for both experts and the wider public. Our events provide a platform for dialogue amongst politicians, experts, journalists, businesspeople and students.

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