



# Russia's Web of Lies





All over the world, there are outlets which, under the guise of journalistic or expert platforms, push Russian propaganda. In this report, we DISCLOSE those controlled and used by Russian intelligence and security services to further the Kremlin's geopolitical agenda.

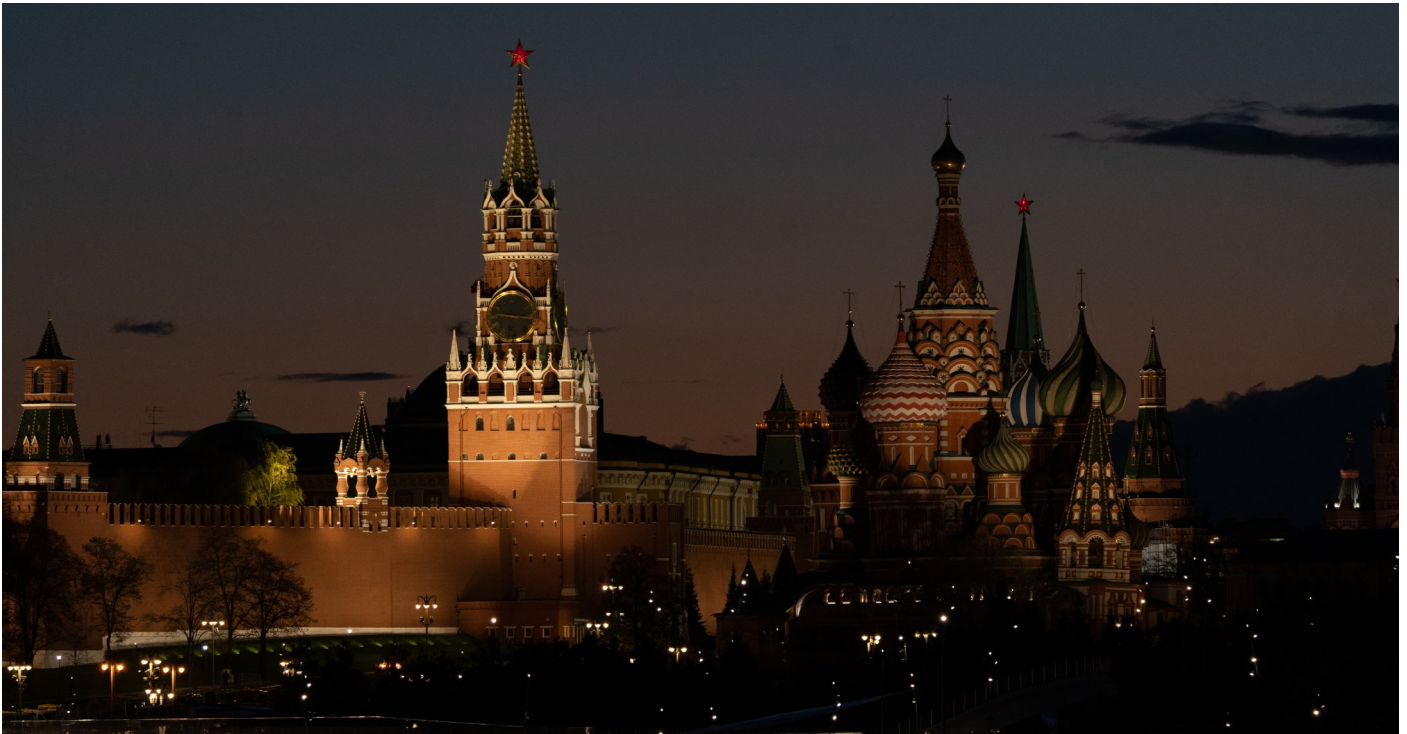
The psychological-information efforts of the Russian Federation are strictly subordinated to the pursuit of the Kremlin regime's strategic interests. Hence, their planning, execution and supervision are entrusted to the intelligence and security services. These are not services in the sense of the Western world where they serve as agencies that provide information support and ensure state security while being subjected to the control of democratic authorities, but a vast, oppressive, criminal state security apparatus whose main task is to consolidate the regime. They operate in a continuous wartime readiness. They also have at least a century of experience in the implementation of intelligence activities, including disinformation, deception, manipulation and propaganda.

**In their most general form, psychological-information operations are based on:**

- white propaganda. It is when we are dealing with an identified broadcaster who does not hide their origin and character. White propaganda outlets are primarily government mass media, as well as political, state, religious or other institutions, think tanks and foundations that have been officially established to carry out such activities and do not conceal their intentions and ideology. Their primary task is to build credibility with their audience.
- grey propaganda. It is the type of propaganda when the mass media proliferate information without mentioning its source or sources of information that are or may be incorrectly identified. "Grey PR" is used to confuse an opponent and cast doubt on their truthfulness, credibility, competence, honesty, etc. An excellent example of the grey PR tools are social media accounts and websites that promote disinformation.



- black propaganda. It is characterized by the use of a false source of communication behind which hides the real author of disinformation, rumors, hearsay, myths, fabricated letters, graffiti and leaflets, or presented as creations of 'underground' or 'opposition' organizations. In the case of the outlets described in this report, these include, for example, News Front, South Front, Strategic Culture Foundation, New Eastern Outlook, Oriental Review, InfoRos. These outlets publish materials produced by the Russian secret services, whose authorship is attributed to fictitious or genuine organizations and citizens located in the targeted country. An example of such activities generally carried out by the secret services is the creation of networks of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are established in accordance with the laws of the country in which they operate. In fact, they are involved in undermining the prestige and credibility of law enforcement and the armed forces, buying media, nominating candidates for elections and infiltrating the elected government and local government bodies, all under the guise of 'defending democratic values'.



The Western community is subjected to continuous hostile influence by Russia. The tools of exercising this influence include media outlets and platforms, think tanks, organizations, etc. created, run or controlled by the Russian intelligence and security services ecosystem. Their communications and activities are carried out in many foreign languages - especially English - and their names, logos, the look and feel of their websites, their location outside Russia, and the involvement in their activities of people of Western origin (be it real or fake) allow them to pose as entities participating in a fair, independent, knowledge-based and authoritative public debate that meets democratic standards. In fact, these entities shape and influence that debate in accordance with the Kremlin's interests, by consistently infesting the information space of the free world.

The image features a grid background with a warm orange-brown color. In the top left, a black triangle points downwards, containing the word "SPUTNIK" in orange, bold, sans-serif capital letters. In the center, the words "TELLING THE UNTOLD" are written in black, bold, sans-serif capital letters. On the right side, there is a dark silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, holding a mobile phone to their ear.

**SPUTNIK**

## **TELLING THE UNTOLD**

Sputnik ([sputnikglobe.com](http://sputnikglobe.com), [sputnik.com](http://sputnik.com)) is the Russian news agency, radio network and website established by decree of V. Putin in 2014 and owned by the state media holding company Rossiya Segodnya. Sputnik is an agency targeting foreign audiences. The [sputnik.com](http://sputnik.com) website publishes information in more than 30 languages. The radio service runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The available audio material contains more than 1,000 hours of recordings.

Sputnik has an important function in Russia's system of information warfare with the West. It is used to disseminate disinformation and propaganda to audiences outside Russia in order to influence public opinion, which serves to create conditions conducive to execution of the Russian Federation's foreign policy objectives. Sputnik's mission and goals are aptly reflected in a statement by Dmitry Kiselyov - director general of the state news agency Rossiya Segodnya - who said in 2013 that 'objectivity is a myth [...] if we are talking about editorial policy, then of course, I would like it to be associated with love for Russia'. Sputnik often uses information from sources controlled by Russian intelligence. Articles published by the agency include links to such sites as News Front and New Eastern Outlook.

In addition, in 2020, it was revealed that malware was being distributed via Twitter posts containing the URL to articles published by the Spanish-language Sputnik website. The aim of this operation was to manipulate the online activity of uninformed users in order to broaden the impact of opinions regarding doubts about the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. Moreover, Sputnik's editorial board employs as journalists people who have carried out undesirable activities in Western countries. For example, since 13 December 2015, Leonid Sviridov, who was expelled from Poland in 2015 at the request of the Internal Security Agency, has been working as a columnist for the Sputnik Polska agency. His expulsion from Poland was due to his activities, which went beyond journalism and were associated with information warfare. Earlier, in 2006, the Czech Foreign Ministry revoked Swiridov's accreditation as a journalist. He was also expelled from the territory of the Republic of Belarus where he had headed the correspondence center of the All-Russian State Television and Radio Company.



Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine at the end of February 2022, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that Sputnik would be removed from the European Union, along with RT and their subsidiaries. Social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube have blocked Sputnik and RT content for their EU users. Microsoft and Apple Inc. removed the Sputnik and RT apps from the Microsoft Store and App Store, while YouTube blocked Sputnik and RT globally on 11 March 2022.

**SPUTNIK** Polska ▾

## Podolyak: Można było urządzić czystki, zlikwidować prorosyjskich obywateli

18:25 04.04.2023



Mykhaylo Podolyak

© RT

**Mykhaylo Podolyak, doradca szefa kancelarii Wołodymyra Zełenskiego, oświadczył, że władze będą eksterminować prorosyjskich obywateli.**

**SPUTNIK** International ▾

## Cholera Pathogens Found in Odessa May Be Associated With US Biolabs

Yesterday



CC BY-SA 4.0 / J.N. Eske / Biohazard chemical cabinet

**MOSCOW (Sputnik) - The causative agents of cholera detected in the Odessa and Nikolayev regions may be directly related to US laboratories on the territory of Ukraine, Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma Irina Yarovaya said on Monday.**

**RT (formerly Russia Today)** is a state-controlled Russian international television network funded by the Russian government. It runs pay-TV and free-to-air channels targeted to non-Russian viewers, and also provides online content in Russian, English, Spanish, French, German and Arabic. RT is the brand name of TV-Novosti, an autonomous non-profit organization founded by Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti in April 2005.



During the economic crisis in December 2008, the Russian government under Prime Minister Vladimir Putin placed ANO 'TV-Novosti' on the list of major organizations of strategic importance to Russia. RT operates as a multilingual service with channels in five languages: the original English-language channel was launched in 2005, the Arabic-language channel in 2007, Spanish in 2009, German in 2014 and French in 2017, while RT America (2010-2022), RT UK (2014-2022) and other regional channels also produce local content. RT is the parent company of the Ruptly video news agency, which owns the Redfish video channel and the Maffick digital media company. RT is the main propaganda channel of the Russian government and its foreign policy.

Academics, experts and news reporters (including some current and former RT reporters) have identified the station as a vehicle for spreading disinformation and conspiracy theories. UK media regulator OFCOM has repeatedly found that RT has breached rules on impartiality, including a number of instances where RT broadcast 'misleading' content. In 2012, the editor-in-chief of RT Margarita Simonyan compared the channel to the Russian Ministry of Defense. Referring to the Russian-Georgian war, she stated that RT's aim is to wage information warfare with the entire Western world". In September 2017, RT America was required to register as a foreign agent in the United States Department of Justice under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.



RT broadcasting has been banned in Ukraine in 2014 following the annexation of Crimea by Russia; Latvia and Lithuania have introduced similar bans in 2020. Germany has banned RT DE in February 2022. After Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Poland, and subsequently the entire European Union and Canada announced that they also formally banned RT broadcasting, while independent service providers in more than 10 countries suspended RT broadcasting, the operation of social media sites and then blocked external links to the RT website and restricted access to RT content. Microsoft has removed RT from its app shop and lowered RT's ranking in the search results in Bing, while Apple removed the RT app from all countries except Russia.

It should be emphasized that, as in the USSR era, media are used for intelligence activities. Daniel Lange, a former employee of RT DE (formerly RT Deutsch), the German-language branch of RT, said he was ordered by the RT DE management to spy on Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny while Navalny was recovering in a Berlin hospital after he was assassinated by Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) using chemical weapons. He was tasked with not preparing a documentary feature, but simply providing information 'for analytical purposes'. The journalist was then asked to take pictures of the Bundeswehr hospital where, according to RT DE management, Navalny could actually be found. Lange was then asked to enter the Charite clinic on the pretext of visiting a doctor and to see how close he could get to the ward where Navalny was staying. He was advised to go to the intensive care unit, pretending to be a friend of Yulia Navalny or an employee of the Cinema for Peace Foundation. Lange declined the assignment, noting that he was 'not a secret agent'. However, another RT worker agreed to try to get into the clinic, but his six attempts were unsuccessful. Shortly afterwards, Lange was instructed to find Navalny's comrades-in-arms, Leonid Volkov and Maria Pevchikh in Berlin, and set up surveillance over them. In addition, RT employs diplomats, such as Aidar Aganin transferred from the Russian diplomatic service to RT Arabic.

The image shows the letters 'RT' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letters are positioned on a solid, bright green rectangular background. The 'R' and 'T' are connected at the top.



**Strategic Culture Foundation (strategic-culture.org)** – a pseudo-scientific platform run by the Russian think-tank of the same name. Funded from the federal budget of the Russian Federation, it carries out tasks for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. It is controlled by the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation. Targeted mainly at an English-speaking audience.

Disinformation, propaganda and conspiracy theories published by the Strategic Culture Foundation aim to undermine democracy, polarize the society and undermine citizens' trust in state authorities, the judiciary, the media and each other. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it spread the anti-vaccination narrative and conspiracy theories. The material published currently focuses on presenting the Russian point of view on world events, including the lie-ridden picture of the war against Ukraine, the weakening position of the West and the alleged drive towards conflict with Russia.

Example titles of so-called 'articles':

- „Odessa Massacre 9 Years On... West’s Shameful Silence”
- „From King Charle’s Coronation to the Birth of Europe’s Fourth Reich”
- „How German Chancellor Angela Merkel Subjected Germany to the U.S.”
- „Assassination Bid on Putin to Provoke Furious Escalation... from Whom?”

## SOUTH FRONT ANALYSIS & INTELLIGENCE



**SouthFront (southfront.org)** – run by supposedly 'independent experts and volunteers' - outlet focusing on security, foreign policy and military issues. Carries out tasks for the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.

Involved, among other things, in justifying the illegal annexation of Crimea, undermining the results of the 2020 US presidential election, and currently focused on presenting the Russian version of the causes and course of the war against Ukraine.

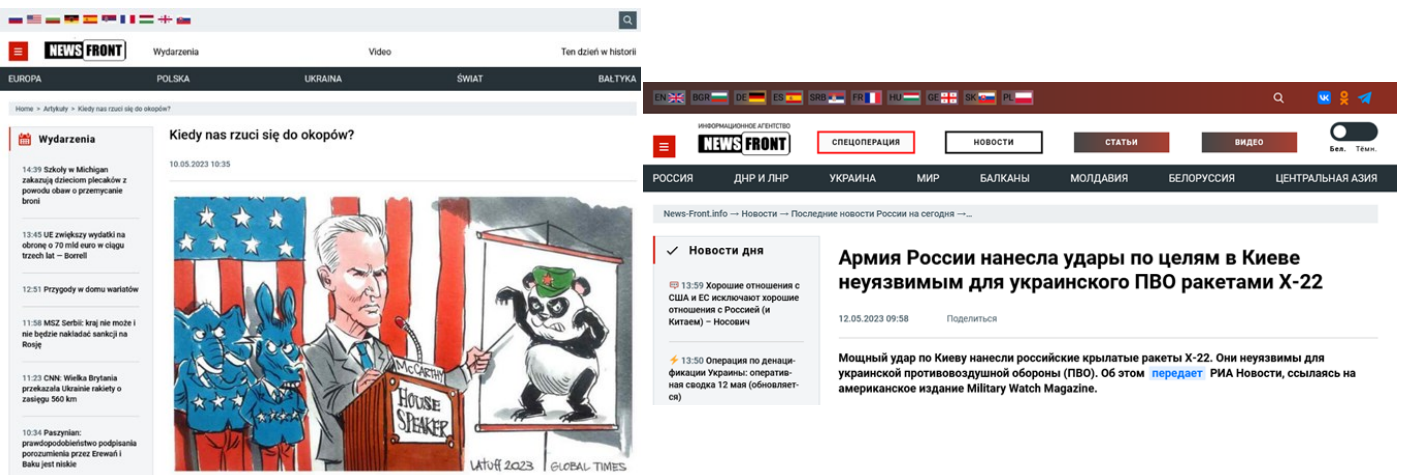




**NewsFront (news-front.info)** – a news website registered in Russian-occupied Crimea, targeting an audience in the EU and the US. Carries out tasks for the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation. In the past, it repeatedly and deceitfully attacked Western societies that allegedly 'unfairly' attack Russia. It provides propaganda support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



In the past, it was involved in efforts to bolster anti-immigrant German nationalism and to undermine the effectiveness of vaccines and restrictions against the Covid-19 pandemic. It is currently spreading Russian propaganda aimed at the war against Ukraine or undermining public confidence in the governments of democratic states. It is run in 11 languages, so that content is provided according to the origin of the readers.



**Center for Research on Globalization (globalresearch.ca)** – a website registered in Canada, posing as an 'independent media and research organization', providing information not available in other media. It runs a French-language version (mondialisation.ca) and a YouTube channel (@GlobalResarchTV).

Focused on spreading conspiracy theories, among others about the sponsorship of Arab terrorism by Western countries and Israel, Holocaust denial, denial of the Covid-19 pandemic or support for anti-vaccine movements. The aim is to undermine public confidence in governments and public institutions.



**New Eastern Outlook (journal-neo.org)** – run by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, this pseudo-academic outlet eagerly spreads disinformation and propaganda about the Middle East, Asia and Africa. It creates new and reinforces existing anti-Western views and attitudes in the aforementioned regions. It led an extensive anti-vaccine campaign during the Covid-19 pandemic.



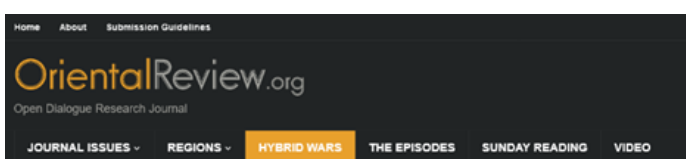
The way the materials are edited suggests they are prepared by 'experts'. This serves to make the reader believe in the narratives it promotes. The articles focus on presenting the Russian point of view on both regional and global events, including the war against Ukraine.





**Oriental Review (orientalreview.org)** – founded in 2010, linked to the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, a website dedicated to political developments in the Eurasia region. Medium linked to the **Strategic Culture Foundation**.

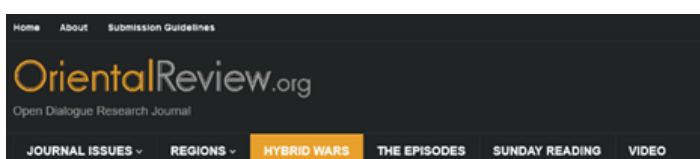
In its materials, it promotes narratives justifying Russian aggression against Ukraine, conspiracy theories about cases of poisoning of Putin's opponents and denying climate change. It publicizes marginal events (e.g. protests by a few people or statements by conspiracy theorists), presenting them as initiatives enjoying the support of the majority of the society.



## HYBRID WARS, RUSSIA, UNITED STATES

### How And Why Russia Has Come To Be Such A Military Powerhouse

Written by Eric ZUESSE on 13/05/2023



## HYBRID WARS, PHENOMENON OF TERRORISM, RUSSIA, UKRAINE, UNITED STATES

### Kiev's Worldwide Terrorist Campaign Is Indistinguishable From Al Qaeda Or ISIS'

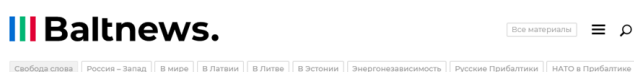
Written by Andrew KORYBKO on 10/05/2023



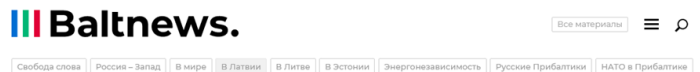
**BaltNews (baltnews.com)** – a news website focused on the political events in the Baltic States. It is owned by the Federal State United Enterprise - International News Agency 'ROSSIJA SIEGOD-NIA' (along with media outlets such as Sputnik and RT), headed by Dmitry Kiselyov - an individual sanctioned by the EU for supporting activities that undermine the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

The medium has versions dedicated for Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The main purpose of establishment of that medium was to carry out disinformation operations among Russian-speaking citizens of the Baltic States on both regional and international issues. The website is also used to promote pro-Russian politicians and commentators.

Among other things, the published materials escalated the narratives criticizing the diversification of raw material supplies, concerning the 'rise of fascist' and anti-Russian attitudes in the Baltics, and undermining the activities of governments during the Covid-19 pandemic and the migration crisis.



**Из переписки с  
иноагентами: как молодые  
дипломаты России  
использовали "Медузу"\***



**Цинично и жестоко! Как  
Латвия "защищается" от  
нелегальных мигрантов**

06 мая 2023 | 12:15

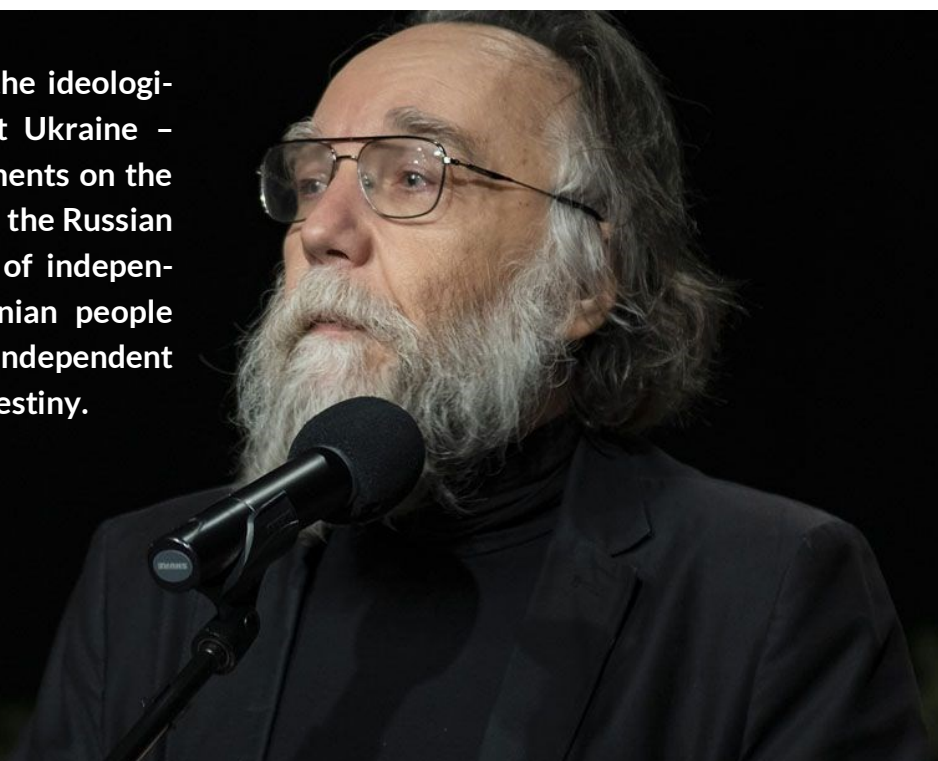


**Geopolitika (geopolitica.ru)** – a medium run by Russian nationalists, targeting an audience with far-right and anti-democratic views in the EU and US, as well as Arab states. Posts are published in thirteen languages. One of the main authors is Aleksandr Dugin - one of Russia's main ideologues of the so-called 'Russkiy Mir', preaching the theory of Russia's confrontation with the West, a promoter of President Putin's authoritarian rule and an enthusiast of the domestic and foreign policies he pursues.

The posted articles criticize democracy and liberalism, accusing NATO and the US of seeking war with Russia, which would lead to the destruction of the societies there. The main objective is to create new and reinforce the existing anti-Western and anti-American attitudes among readers. The authors refer to nationalist slogans and broadly defined 'Russian messianism' in their works, aiming to radicalize the audience. The materials fit in with the idea of so-called Duginism - the bipolar division of the world, the eternal confrontation with the West and Russia's power position in the world.



The authors' texts provided the ideological basis for the war against Ukraine – their material included statements on the need to integrate Ukraine into the Russian cultural sphere, the absence of independent character of the Ukrainian people and the threat from an independent Ukraine to Russia's Eurasian destiny.



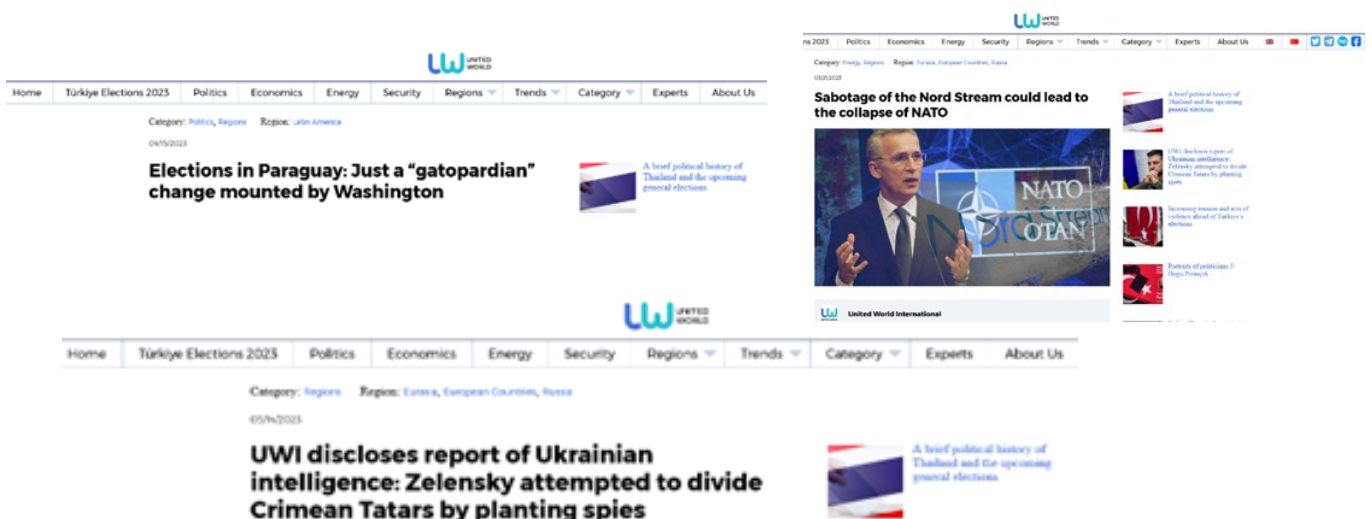


**Orosz Hírek (oroszhirek.hu)** – Hungarian-language news outlet (translated as: Russian News). The articles cover current news from Russia and the world, particularly the war against Ukraine, the US and the EU. The website supports the anti-EU and anti-Ukrainian news presented in the official messages of the Kremlin media.

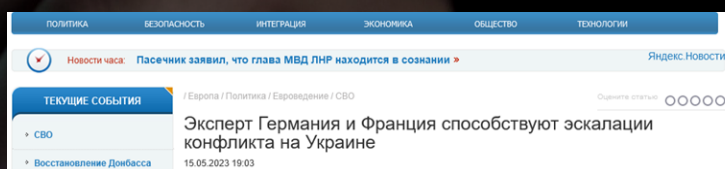
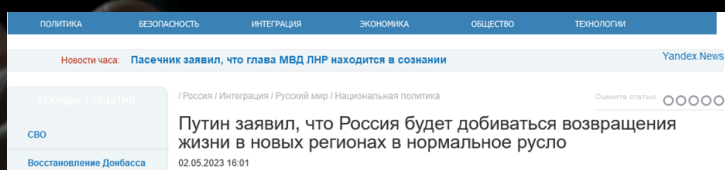


**United World International (uwidata.com)** – a Yevgeny Prigozhin-linked site created as part of Project Lakhta, which aimed to interfere in the US presidential election. It presents itself as an independent think-tank, but it promotes the Russian concept of geopolitical thought, i.e. Russia's rivalry with the West which encompasses the entire world. It hires pro-Russian journalists, particularly those from countries in the Middle East and South America.

This outlet is built in a professional manner and covers many subject areas: politics, energy, economics or security. The information it posts correlates with the strategic interests of the Russian Federation - building political and economic influence in the Middle East, Asia, South America and Africa. The use of non-Russian columnists helps to create a false perception that there is a big community of societies sharing the Kremlin's narrative on the need to build a new global security system including Russia's position.



**InfoRos (inforos.ru)** – a news agency probably run by Unit 54777 of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU). The website uses a network of more than 1,000 websites and social media accounts to promote the narratives created in the Russian infosphere. InfoRos' impact on foreign audiences is exerted through other entities within the disinformation system created by the Kremlin.



The agency focuses on influencing the local communities of the Russian Federation so that they present a position consistent with the Kremlin policies. A network of dependent websites allows relevant narratives to be introduced, depending on the current needs of the center of power, hence the current information focuses on the war against Ukraine and broad criticism of the West.



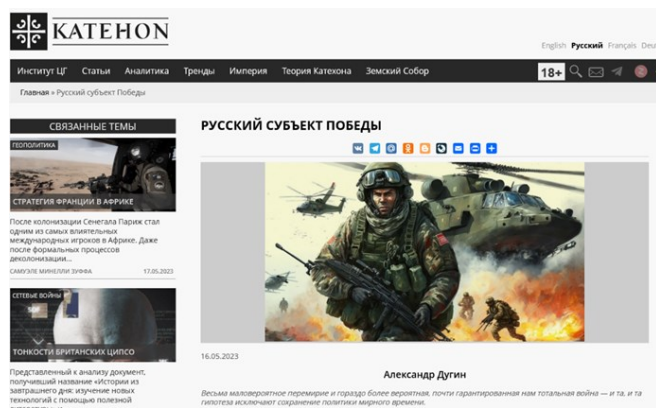
**Katehon (katehon.com)** – a website run by the far-right Tsargrad Institute, whose main task is to disseminate A. Dugin's geopolitical ideas and Russian messianism. It is funded by Konstantin Malofeev - an oligarch linked to V. Putin and responsible for supporting Russian terrorists operating in the Donbas. The name alludes to the New Testament notion of a force holding back the coming of the Antichrist, like A. Dugin used to describe Russia.

A medium aimed at the extremely conservative Western audience. Publications portray the collective West as fascists, racists or anti-Semites hostile to Russia as it defends traditional values and protects the world from the influence of 'imperialism'. Materials are often constructed so as to make the reader fearful or anxious. Information presented in the past included claims of Pope Francis' links to an international Zionist conspiracy, US and French responsibility for Covid-19, which was alleged to be a weapon against the Chinese economy. The current material focuses primarily on justifying the war against Ukraine and criticizing Western states.



Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the members of the supervisory board of this think-tank are individuals with links to the presidential administration and security authorities:

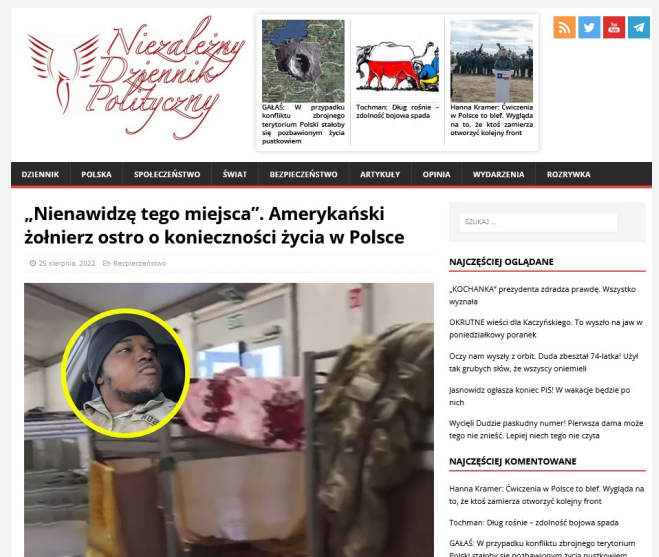
- Leonid Reshetnikov, Lieutenant General of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation. From 2009 to 2017, by decree of President Medvedev, he served as director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Research (RISI) in Moscow while also serving as a member of the Scientific Council of the Security Council of the Russian Federation,
- Aleksandr Makarov, Lieutenant General of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation,
- Sergey Glazyev, Russian economist and politician, PhD in economics, currently member of the Board of Directors (Minister) for Integration and Macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission. Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation (30 July 2012 - 9 October 2019). According to Olga Lautman of the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington, Glazyev is a 'sleepwalker' who has repeatedly proposed the West to be destroyed.



**Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny (dziennik-polityczny.com):** a Polish-language disinformation website operating since 2014 that acts as a content aggregator, i.e. it compiles the most important information from media or thematic groups in one place. The content published by the NDP is mainly copied from other sources, its own publications are classic examples of disinformation material, and the language is highly emotive - often copying texts from tabloids.



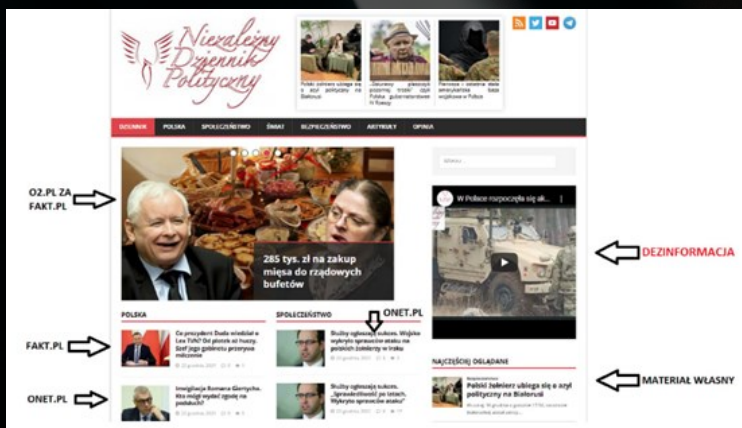
To lend credibility to its message, the NDP copies articles from major Polish news outlets such as: Onet, Fakt, Gazeta Wyborcza, O2, TVP Info, Super Express and OKO.press. This procedure takes place without the consent of the editors of these entities. The texts used by the editors are often prepared and manipulated to fit in with Russian propaganda efforts against Poland. The editor-in-chief of the website, journalists, the moderator of the NDP Facebook group - they all use other people's images and are active on social media. The 'Editor-in-chief' of Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny 'Adam Kamiński' is a non-existent person, as is another journalist listed there, 'Wojciech Brożek'. The photo used by 'Kamiński' is that of Lithuanian orthopedic doctor Andrius Žukauskas, who has nothing to do with the website. The 'Wojciech Brożek' account, on the other hand, features a photograph of the American financier Todd Graber.



Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny has repeatedly been identified as a disseminator of disinformation, particularly on military topics. Disinformation materials attacking US troops in Poland, but also Polish commanders and the defense capabilities of the Polish Army, became a feature of the website.



These media are encapsulated by another layer of publications - websites that consciously spread given narratives, despite knowledge of their origin and the goals, pursued by reinforcing them in the society, such as: Kresy.pl, Wolna-Polska.pl, WirtualniaPolonia.com, Obserwator Polityczny (official partner of the Russkij Mir Foundation in Poland) and others. They focus primarily on building hatred against Ukrainians and Americans, pretending to be good, 'patriotic' sources of news. A significant role is played by social media newsgroups and blogger platforms, such as: Neon24, as well as blogs on WordPress (e.g.: Dziennik Gajowego Maruchy, known for spreading Kremlin propaganda). In contrast to the Polish mainstream media, one is much more likely to see Sputnik cited there. In the chain of distribution of harmful content, these are key links, as they make it possible to avoid being classified as state propaganda of the Kremlin in the initial stages of its distribution.



The second layer also includes online forums. There are several forums where some users regularly post disinformation and propaganda content, quite often from the aforementioned NDP: the local forums of Orzysz and Tomaszów Lubelski. This choice is not dictated by chance: there are American soldiers stationed in Orzysz as part of the Enhanced Forward Presence, Tomaszów Lubelski is less than 100 kilometers from Lviv and the Ukrainian training ground; there is also a Territorial Defense Forces unit there. Yet another type of outlets through which agitation for the Kremlin takes place, are esoteric sites, spreading conspiracy theories and anti-American content at the same time. All sorts of 'alternative information sources' are popular among 'conspiracists', offering a whole spectrum of messages: from those 'independent' from the government and the EU, to those providing free speech, uncensored, i.e. allowing e.g.: incitement to racial or ethnic hatred, and conveying the 'revealed truth', hidden from Poles by the government, Jews, Freemasons, aliens, reptilians, Egyptian pyramids or revealed in magical prophecies.

In addition, a Trojan virus was linked to the website, through which users' hardware statistics were collected and thus content recipients were profiled. An analysis of the IP number shows that the outlet may be operating in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Perhaps an intermediary server was placed there to hide the identity of the author.