

The information battle:

How governments in the former Soviet Union promote their agendas and attack their opponents abroad



Edited by Adam Hug

The Foreign Policy Centre



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London, SE11 5RR
www.fpc.org.uk
events@fpc.org.uk

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The non-governmental sector: Pro-Russia tools masquerading as independent voices

Melissa Hooper

Introduction

There has already been much discussion in the Russia-watching world about the tools Russia uses to spread its influence, and it is quite an arsenal.¹⁸³ They include a worldwide media programme with an annual budget of over US\$300 million, the use of social media trolls and co-option of tiny media outlets to generate false grassroots 'movements' and stories consistent with Kremlin messaging, sometimes adopted by unsuspecting Europeans and Americans, that target minority communities said to threaten national 'values' to the point that they spur physical threats, as well as garden variety hacking and outright buying of influence.¹⁸⁴ One of the most-discussed has been Russia's support to disruptive political parties in Europe,¹⁸⁵ including those on the far-right (Front National)¹⁸⁶ and centre right (sections of the Republicans)¹⁸⁷ in France, radical right and far right parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany¹⁸⁸, Liga Nord in Italy,¹⁸⁹ Jobbik¹⁹⁰ and Viktor Orbán's Fidesz in Hungary¹⁹¹, and the far-left (Syriza¹⁹² and Golden Dawn¹⁹³ in Greece, Podemos¹⁹⁴ in Spain, as well as a number of Green parties throughout Europe¹⁹⁵). However, support to political parties is just one piece of a larger network of interconnected technologies and tools. These tools rest on the foundation of a worldwide media program with an annual budget of over US\$300 million,¹⁹⁶ set to broadcast in 30 languages,¹⁹⁷ conducted through RT, Rossiya Segodnya, and Russia Beyond the Headlines, including a Youtube channel, print, and TV media in English, Arabic, Spanish, German, and French, as well as Russian, that peddles disinformation,¹⁹⁸ half- or partial-truths,¹⁹⁹ false stories,²⁰⁰ and weaponises false media narratives²⁰¹ especially about minority populations such as migrants²⁰² or LGBT communities²⁰³. Their online vitriol targeting minority communities, sometimes unwittingly adopted by the mainstream media,²⁰⁴ can lead to offline physical threats.

An important component in the Kremlin's corrupt networks of false messaging are what look like legitimate grassroots-developed journalistic outfits and NGOs²⁰⁵ that support Russia's anti-refugee and pro-nationalist and

¹⁸³ Keir Giles, Philip Hanson, Roderic Lyne, James Nixey, James Sherr, Andrew Wood, The Russian Challenge, Chatham House, June 2015, http://www.academia.edu/19557277/Russias_Toolkit.

¹⁸⁴ For more information on various strategies the Russian government uses, see Melissa Hooper, Issue Brief: Six Ways (Other Than Hacking) that Russia is Exploiting Divisions and the Rise of Xenophobia in Europe, Human Rights First, January 2017, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/russian-influence-europe>.

¹⁸⁵ Antonis Klapsis, An Unholy Alliance: The European Far Right and Putin's Russia, Wilfried Marten's Centre for European Studies, 2015, <http://www.martenscentre.eu/publications/far-right-political-parties-in-europe-and-putins-russia>.

¹⁸⁶ Helene Fouquet, Gregory Viscusi, Henry Meyer, LePen Struggling to Fund French Race As Russian Bank Fails, Bloomberg Politics, December 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-12-22/le-pen-struggling-to-fund-french-race-after-russian-backer-fails>.

¹⁸⁷ Marlene LaRuelle, France: Mainstreaming Russian Influence, in The Kremlin's Trojan Horses, Atlantic Council, November 2016, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/The_Kremlins_Trojan_Horses_web_1213_second_edition.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ Melanie Amann & Pavel Lokshin, German Populists Forge Ties with Russia, Spiegel Online, April 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-populists-forge-deeper-ties-with-russia-a-1089562.html>.

¹⁸⁹ Peter Foster & Matthew Holehouse, Russia accused of clandestine funding of European parties, as U.S. conducts major review of Vladimir Putin's strategy, The Telegraph, January 2016, <http://bit.ly/1nrAYtz>

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Dániel Hegedűs, The Kremlin's Influence in Hungary, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), DGAPkompakt, February 2016, <https://dgap.org/en/think-tank/publications/dgapanalyse-compact/kremlins-influence-hungary>

¹⁹² Henry Stanek, Is Russia's Alliance with Greece a Threat to NATO?, The National Interest, July 2016 <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-alliance-greece-threat-nato-16998>.

¹⁹³ Gabrielle Trault-Farber, Russian, European Far-Right Parties Converge in St Petersburg, The Moscow Times, March 2015, <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/russian-european-far-right-parties-converge-in-st-petersburg-45010>.

¹⁹⁴ Briefing, Russia's European Supporters: In the Kremlin's Pocket, The Economist, February 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21643222-who-backs-putin-and-why-kremlins-pocket>.

¹⁹⁵ RT, RT's 2016 budget announced, down from 2015, MSM too stumped to spin?, RT, May 2016, <https://www.rt.com/op-edge/318181-rt-budget-down-msm/>; See also Brookings Institution, Brookings Hosts Vice-President Joe Biden for Remarks on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict, May 2015, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/20150527_biden_transcript.pdf

¹⁹⁶ RT, RT's 2016 budget announced, down from 2015, *ibid*

¹⁹⁷ Miriam Elder, Russia Has A New Propaganda Outlet And It's Everything You Thought It Would Be, Stop Fake, November 2014, <http://www.stopfake.org/en/russia-has-a-new-propaganda-outlet-and-it-s-everything-you-thought-it-would-be/>.

¹⁹⁸ Intelligence Community Assessment, Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections, January 2017. https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.

¹⁹⁹ Christopher Paul & Miriam Matthews, The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model, Rand Corporation, 2016, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE198/RAND_PE198.pdf.

²⁰⁰ Neil MacFarquhar, A Powerful Russian Weapon: The Spread of False Stories, New York Times, August 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/29/world/europe/russia-sweden-disinformation.html?_r=0.

²⁰¹ Christopher Paul & Miriam Matthews, The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model, Rand Corporation, 2016, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE198/RAND_PE198.pdf.

²⁰² Daniel Boffey, Russia 'stoking refugee unrest in Germany to topple Angela Merkel', The Guardian, March 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/05/russia-refugee-germany-angela-merkel-migration-vladimir-putin>.

²⁰³ Péter Krekó, Lóránt Győri, Katya Dunajeva, Russia is Weaponizing culture in CEE by creating a traditionalist 'counter culture', December 2016 <http://bit.ly/2hFTfl2>

²⁰⁴ Natasha Bertrand, It looks like Russia hired internet trolls to pose as pro-Trump Americans, Daily KOS, July 2016 <http://bit.ly/2g6LEeD>

²⁰⁵ Ivana Smolenova, The Pro-Russian Disinformation Campaign in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Prague Security Studies Institute, June 2015, http://www.pssi.cz/download/docs/253_is-pro-russian-campaign.pdf.

authoritarian messaging – but are actually government-linked organisations²⁰⁶ that act as if they were real foundations,²⁰⁷ think tanks,²⁰⁸ or civic interest groups²⁰⁹. However, these organisations exist to echo back, seemingly using an independent voice, the strategic messages placed by the Kremlin that target minority communities in service of sowing conflict and countering democratic visions of human rights. Some of these ‘non-governmental’ organisations are formed around Orthodox religions,²¹⁰ conservative Christian values,²¹¹ or Russian language²¹² and culture²¹³. Some even include paramilitary²¹⁴ support to far-right activists²¹⁵ and training for youth²¹⁶ to ‘provide protection’ against the scary foreign influence of migrants and refugees. Interestingly enough, the foreign influence deemed a threat are people fleeing violence that is itself supported and fomented by Russia, as it has supported Assad’s brutal war in Syria.

The faux civil society groups funded by the Kremlin and its agents include organisations that engage in observation (though not actual monitoring²¹⁷) of elections, legal cases, and demonstrations, to protect the sovereignty of the state (instead of rights to fair elections, trials or freedom of speech). They include associations,²¹⁸ conferences²¹⁹ and forums,²²⁰ some of which bring together separatist movements²²¹ or conservative far-right movements²²² and parties together in Russia to share ideas, and some of which bring westerners to interact with anti-western ideologies²²³ in the hope that the pro-Russia ideas will catch on. All share a disdain for what they perceive as western concepts of individual rights, democratic processes, and protections for minority groups such as migrants, Muslims and LGBTQ groups. These organisations do not work alone to foment narratives about the danger of minority groups or lack of security in democracies. Their work is buttressed by other tools, such as hacker collectives²²⁴ that strategically release information to foment fear, and economic incentives to influence key policy-makers; a tool that allows non-governmental entities to collaborate in affecting policy with Russian sympathisers in

²⁰⁶ Vladka Vojtkova, Vit Novotny, Hubertus Schmid-Schmidfelden, Kristina Potapova, The Bear in Sheep’s Clothing: Russia’s Government-Funded Organizations in the EU, Wilfried Marten’s Centre for European Studies, July 2016, <http://www.martenscentre.eu/publications/bear-sheeps-clothing-russias-government-funded-organisations-eu>.

²⁰⁷ Elisabeth Braw, The Kremlin’s Influence Game, in World Affairs Journal, March 2015, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/elisabeth-braw/kremlin%E2%80%99s-influence-game>

²⁰⁸ Natalya Kanevskaya, How the Kremlin Wields its Soft Power in France, RFE/RL, June 2014 <http://www.rferl.org/a/russia-soft-power-france/25433946.html>

²⁰⁹ Vladka Vojtkova, Vit Novotny, Hubertus Schmid-Schmidfelden, Kristina Potapova, The Bear in Sheep’s Clothing: Russia’s Government-Funded Organizations in the EU, Wilfried Marten’s Centre for European Studies, July 2016, <http://www.martenscentre.eu/publications/bear-sheeps-clothing-russias-government-funded-organisations-eu>.

²¹⁰ Andrew Higgins, In Expanding Russian Influence, Faith Combines With Firepower, New York Times, September 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/world/europe/russia-orthodox-church.html>.

²¹¹ Mall Hellam, Russia In Europe: the reactionary values agenda, Open Estonia Foundation, 2016, https://oef.org/ee/fileadmin/user_upload/Russia_in_Europe_Executive_Summary_of_Research_Reports_final_ENG.pdf.

²¹² Transcript: Putin says Russia will protect the rights of Russians abroad, Washington Post, March 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-putin-says-russia-will-protect-the-rights-of-russians-abroad/2014/03/18/432a1e60-ae99-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html.

²¹³ Vera Zakem, Paul Saunders, Daniel Antoun, Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia’s Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the former Soviet Union, CNA Corporation, November 2015, https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DOP-2015-U-011689-1Rev.pdf.

²¹⁴ Arthur de Liedekerke, The rise of paramilitary groups in Central and Eastern Europe, New Eastern Europe, January 2016, <http://neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1862-the-rise-of-paramilitary-groups-in-central-and-eastern-europe>.

²¹⁵ John R. Schindler, Putin’s Support for Europe’s Far-Right Just Turned Lethal, Observer, October 2016, <http://observer.com/2016/10/putins-support-for-europes-far-right-just-turned-lethal/>

²¹⁶ Jakub Janda and Ondrij Kunda, Mechanisms of Influence of the Russian Federation into Internal Affairs of the Czech Republic, European Values Think Tank, September 2016, <http://bit.ly/2njn1n0>

²¹⁷ NED Forum Think Democracy, How Dictators Use Zombie Elections Monitors to Stay in Power, Buzzfeed, October 2014, <https://www.buzzfeed.com/thinkdemocracy/how-dictators-use-zombie-election-monitors-to-stay-uo7i>.

²¹⁸ BBC Ukraine Crisis, Europe far-right parties meet in St Petersburg, Russia, BBC, March 2015, <http://bbc.in/1CJHroj>

²¹⁹ Tony Paterson, Putin’s far-right ambition: Think tank reveals how Russian President is wooing – and funding – populist parties across Europe to gain influence in the EU, Independent, November 2014 <http://ind.pn/1LDsLND>

²²⁰ Daniel W. Drezner, Is there value in Valdai?, Washington Post, October 2016, <http://wapo.st/2nAkRTS>

²²¹ Casey Michel, US and EU Separatist Groups To Gather on Moscow’s Dime, The Diplomat, July 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/us-and-eu-separatist-groups-to-gather-on-moscows-dime/>

²²² BBC Ukraine Crisis, Europe far-right parties meet in St Petersburg, Russia, BBC, March 2015, <http://bbc.in/1CJHroj>

²²³ Tony Paterson, Putin’s far-right ambition: Think tank reveals how Russian President is wooing – and funding – populist parties across Europe to gain influence in the EU, Independent, November 2014, <http://ind.pn/1LDsLND>

²²⁴ Owen Matthews, Russia’s Greatest Weapon May Be Its Hackers, Newsweek, May 2015 <http://europe.newsweek.com/russias-greatest-weapon-may-be-its-hackers-326974?rm=eu>

the Governments or Parliaments of the Czech Republic²²⁵, Hungary²²⁶, Estonia²²⁷, Latvia²²⁸, Lithuania²²⁹ and Bulgaria²³⁰.

NGOs can also be used for intelligence-gathering. In 2013, Yury Zaytsev, the head of the Russian Center for Science and Culture, was investigated for spying.²³¹ The Center had been setting up all-expense paid trips²³² for young professional Americans, including young advisors to politicians, apparently as an effort to cultivate them as intelligence assets. Other investigations have turned up outsized donations from NGOs to pro-Russian political parties,²³³ or suspicions that the organisation is a listening post.²³⁴

How GONGOs, zombies and fake NGOs promote ideologies harmful to human rights

The Russian government uses think tanks and foundations that either it has funded, or Russian-government-associated oligarchs have funded, to spread false messages that target minorities in achieving their goals of (1) presenting the EU as unsafe; (2) presenting democracy as a failed experiment; and (3) urging the need for an alternative to democracy – often proposed as the Eurasianist ideology of Alexander Dugin. Specifically, these think tanks and foundations disseminate messages that migrants and Muslims are overwhelming the EU, are taking resources that should be spent on the ‘rightful’ citizens of the nation, or that the EU and its democracy are a degraded institution because it is too accepting of LGBTQ communities. The harm in this approach is that, unlike the democracy-promotion agenda of the west, it is based on little or no scientific evidence or analysis, and it targets minority communities in ways that can predictably lead to violence and harm being committed against these communities.

Russian use of non-governmental tools to spread anti-Western messaging often takes the form of NGO ‘experts’ that legitimise destabilising messages, or legitimise Russian-slanted forums (such as a single French ‘expert’ presenting at the Dialogue of Civilizations). The messages they legitimise often point out weaknesses in Western policies and push them to an overwrought conclusion. For example, they argue that the West cannot guarantee the safety of citizens due to infiltration by too many threatening migrants, or the idea that the EU cannot deliver on its economic promises, making it a worthless endeavour for those eyeing membership (Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Serbia). Three specific strains of this argument are prominent.

First, false NGOs and associations posit that Russia, the leader of the Russian cultural world, must act to protect its compatriots from threats.²³⁵ This philosophy comes straight from the fascist theory of Eurasianism²³⁶ put forth by Putin’s advisor Alexander Dugin,²³⁷ who believes that the Eurasian world of compatriots must unite against the West. These compatriots can be of Russian heritage²³⁸ (such as Germans from Russia or Russlanddeutsche²³⁹),

²²⁵ Gregory Feifer and Brian Whitmore, The Velvet Surrender, New Republic, September 2010 <https://newrepublic.com/article/77397/russian-aggression-the-velvet-surrender-vladimir-putin-vaclav-klaus-czech-republic>

²²⁶ Dániel Hegedűs, The Kremlin’s Influence in Hungary, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), February 2016, <https://dgap.org/en/think-tank/publications/dgapanalyse-compact/kremlins-influence-hungary>; Neil MacFarquhar, How Russians Pay to Play in Other Countries, New York Times, December 2016, <http://nyti.ms/2mFq18Z>; Damien Sharkov, Far-Right MEP Accused of Acting as Russian Spy, Newsweek, September 2014, <http://europe.newsweek.com/far-right-mep-accused-acting-russian-spy-273444?rm=eu>

²²⁷ Stratfor, A Political Scandal in Estonia and Russian Influence in the Baltics, December 2010 <https://www.stratfor.com/sample/analysis/political-scandal-estonia-and-russian-influence-baltics>

²²⁸ Mikhail Bushuev, Latvian voter overshadowed by Russian questions, Deutsche Welle, October 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/latvian-vote-overshadowed-by-russian-questions/a-17971632>.

²²⁹ Steven Lee Myers, Lithuanian Parliament Removes Country’s President After Casting Votes on Three Charges, New York Times, 7 April 2004, <http://nyti.ms/2nzXctu>

²³⁰ Dmatar Bechev, Russia’s Influence in Bulgaria, New Direction The Foundation for European Reform, 2016, http://europeanreform.org/files/ND-report-RussiasInfluenceInBulgaria-preview-lo-res_FV.pdf; John R. Haines, The Suffocating Symbiosis: Russia Seeks Trojan Horses Inside Fractious Bulgaria’s Political Corral, Foreign Policy Research Institute, August 2016, <http://www.fpri.org/article/2016/08/suffocating-symbiosis-russia-seeks-trojan-horses-inside-fractious-bulgarias-political-coral/>

²³¹ Sari Horwitz, Head of DC Based Russian Cultural Center Being Investigated as Possible Spy, Washington Post, 23 October 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/head-of-dc-based-russian-cultural-center-being-investigated-as-possible-spy/2013/10/23/63a0bb54-3c02-11e3-a94f-b58017bfee6c_story.html?utm_term=.1c7cb4827e5d.

²³² Molly Redden, FBI Probing Whether Russia Used Cultural Junkets to Recruit American Intelligence Assets, Mother Jones, October 2013, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/10/fbi-investigating-yury-zaytsev-russian-diplomat-spy/>.

²³³ Stratfor, A Political Scandal in Estonia and Russian Influence in the Baltics, December 2010, <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/political-scandal-estonia-and-russian-influence-baltics>.

²³⁴ Jacqueline Grapin, Perspectives: Russia boosts its influence in France, European Affairs, July 2016, <http://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/ei-blog/286-european-affairs/ea-july-2016/2174-perspectives-russia-boosts-its-influence-in-france>.

²³⁵ Transcript: Putin Says Russia Will Protect the Rights of Russians Abroad, Washington Post, March, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-putin-says-russia-will-protect-the-rights-of-russians-abroad/2014/03/18/432a1e60-ae99-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html?utm_term=.ed7dc0a9c69e.

²³⁶ Charles Clover, The Unlikely Origins of Russia’s Manifest Destiny, Foreign Policy, July 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/27/geopolitics-russia-mackinder-eurasia-heartland-dugin-ukraine-urasianism-manifest-destiny-putin/>.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Damiir Magusic & Agnia Grigas, Putin’s Compatriots, The American Interest, October 2016, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/10/23/putins-compatriots/>.

²³⁹ Melanie Amann, Markus Becker, Benjamin Bidder, Hubert Gude, Konstantin von Hammerstein, Alexej Hock, Christiane Hoffmann, Martin Knobbe, Peter Maxwell, Peter Müller, Gordon Repinski, Sven Röbel, Anna Sadovnikova, Matthias Schepp, Jörg Schindler, Christoph Schult, Russia’s Propaganda Campaign Against Germany, Spiegel, February 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/putin-wages-hybrid-war-on-germany-and-west-a-1075483.html>.

Russian speakers²⁴⁰ (in Crimea or the Baltics²⁴¹), or even Slavs (Serbia)²⁴². The theory has also been used to offer protection to peacekeepers²⁴³ in the perceived Russian sphere of influence (Georgia in 2008), or those that simply agree with Russia's ideas. It relies on a distorted view of the 'responsibility to protect' language²⁴⁴ that was used to justify the US bombing of Kosovo in 1999, and further distorts the principle from one that aims to protect against crimes against humanity to one that sanctions military involvement²⁴⁵ to protect against discrimination and alleged language rights violations.²⁴⁶ Russia urges these groups to see the West as antagonistic and migrants or refugees as enemies who are offered benefits that they are not provided.²⁴⁷ Russia has established paramilitary organisations sometimes registered as NGOs (for example in Slovakia²⁴⁸, Ukraine²⁴⁹, Serbia²⁵⁰, the Baltics²⁵¹), allegedly so Russian compatriots can protect themselves, since European governments will not do so.

Second, Russia seeks to create an infrastructure of groups that support 'sovereign democracy'²⁵² and state security at the expense of individual rights, portraying universal human rights as a Western 'perspective'.²⁵³ Russia argues that minority groups are given protections despite their threatening²⁵⁴ (migrant, Muslim, LGBT) ways of life, at the risk and expense of other citizens. This view buttresses the increasing nationalism²⁵⁵ seen in places like Germany, France, Hungary, Poland and indeed the United States and United Kingdom – some of which in Europe is also supported by Russia through the funding of far-right and far-left political parties. As set out above Russia has been documented as providing some kind of support – either financial, information-based, or other in-kind support, to both far-right parties – such as the Front National in France, Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, and Freedom Party in Austria, and far-left parties such as Syriza in Greece, socialist parties in Bulgaria and Moldova, and Green parties in Europe; it also has supported separatist movements in places as diverse as Spain, Ireland and the US states of Texas and California.²⁵⁶ These nationalist groups urge their governments to return to a prior, theoretically safer, time in their history – including a return to greater power to the nationalist and fascist government or movement.

Third, Russia claims leadership in the community that seeks to protect 'traditional values'²⁵⁷ domestically and internationally. It has introduced at least four resolutions²⁵⁸ in support of 'family values' and against LGBTQ rights, in the UN Human Rights Council, and passed one in 2016.²⁵⁹ Russian religious right NGOs worked to contribute to these resolutions, providing a false veneer of legitimacy as 'experts',²⁶⁰ since the information they provide is not based on scientific studies conducted through a peer-reviewed process, and are often merely opinions, not facts. They also

²⁴⁰ David Herszenhorn, Putin Vows to 'Actively Defend' Russians Living Abroad, Atlantic Council, July 2014, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/putin-vows-to-actively-defend-russians-living-abroad>.

²⁴¹ Agnia Grigas, Compatriot Games: Russian-Speaking Minorities in the Baltic States, World Politics Review, October 2014, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/14240/compatriot-games-russian-speaking-minorities-in-the-baltic-states>.

²⁴² The Global Politics, The Pan-Slavism and Tsarist Russia's Balkan Policy, December 2016, <http://global-politics.eu/2016/12/21/pan-slavism-tsarist-russias-balkan-policy/>.

²⁴³ Julia Ioffe, Russia and Georgia, Three Years Later, New Yorker, August 2011, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/russia-and-georgia-three-years-later>.

²⁴⁴ Derek Averre & Lance Davies, Russia, humanitarian intervention, and the Responsibility to Protect: the case of Syria, Chatham House Royal Institute of International Affairs, July 2015, vol.9, n.4, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/ia/russia-humanitarian-intervention-and-responsibility-protect-case-syria>.

²⁴⁵ Agnia Grigas, Compatriot Games: Russian-Speaking Minorities in the Baltic States, World Politics Review, October 2014, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/14240/compatriot-games-russian-speaking-minorities-in-the-baltic-states>.

²⁴⁶ Sarah de Geest, Russian Intervention in Ukraine: R2P Limits and reclaiming the Concept and Narrative, Human Security Centre, April 2015, <http://www.hscentre.org/russia-and-eurasia/russian-intervention-ukraine-r2p-limits-reclaiming-concept-narrative/>.

²⁴⁷ News and Events, Guy Mettan's book on the reasons for Western Russophobia was published, Endowment for St Andrew the First-Called Foundation, May 2016, <http://www.st-andrew-foundation.org/en/2016/05/12/russkij-izdana-kniga-gi-mettana-o-prichinax-zapadnoj-rusofobii/>.

²⁴⁸ Authur de Liedekerke, The rise of paramilitary groups in Central and Eastern Europe, New Eastern Europe, January 2016, <http://neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1862-the-rise-of-paramilitary-groups-in-central-and-eastern-europe>.

²⁴⁹ Aleksandr Gostev & Robert Coalson, Russia's Paramilitary Mercenaries Emerge From The Shadows, RFE/RL, December 2016, <http://www.rferl.org/a/russia-paramilitary-mercenaries-emerge-from-the-shadows-syria-ukraine/28180321.html>.

²⁵⁰ Damir Marusic, Did Moscow Botch A Coup in Montenegro?, The American Interest, October 2016, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/10/30/did-moscow-botch-a-coup-in-montenegro/>.

²⁵¹ Agnia Grigas, Compatriot Games: Russian-Speaking Minorities in the Baltic States, World Politics Review, October 2014, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/14240/compatriot-games-russian-speaking-minorities-in-the-baltic-states>.

²⁵² David Clark, Putin is Exporting Sovereign Democracy to New Allies, Financial Times, December 2016, <http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/2016/12/20/putin-is-exporting-sovereign-democracy-to-new-em-allies/>.

²⁵³ Sarah Fisher, Sovereign Democracy: Russia's response to the color revolutions, The University of Louisville's Institutional Repository, May 2014, <http://ir.library.louisville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1062&context=honors>.

²⁵⁴ David Trilling, Russia Poll: Migration Likeliest Threat to National Security, Eurasianet, July 2013, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/67279>.

²⁵⁵ Owen Jones, Putin is a human rights-abusing oligarch. The British left must speak out, The Guardian, January 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/26/vladimir-putin-russia-oligarch-british-left-speak-out>.

²⁵⁶ Melissa Hooper, Issue Brief: Six Ways (Other Than Hacking) that Russia is Exploiting Divisions and the Rise of Xenophobia in Europe, Human Rights First, January 2017, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/russian-influence-europe>.

²⁵⁷ Melissa Hooper, Russia's 'Traditional Values' Leadership, in Sharing Worst Practice: How countries and institutions in the former Soviet Union help create legal tools of repression, Foreign Policy Centre, June 2016, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/russias-traditional-values-leadership>.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*

²⁵⁹ Peter Montgomery, International Backlash: The Religious Right at the UN, Political Research Associates, November 2016, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2016/11/14/international-backlash-the-religious-right-at-the-un/#sthash.13vhPLlo.dpbb>.

²⁶⁰ Mall Hellam, Russia In Europe: the reactionary values agenda, Open Estonia Foundation, 2016, https://oef.org.ee/fileadmin/user_upload/Russia_in_Europe_Executive_Summary_of_Research_Reports_final_ENG.pdf.

organised the religious right as an international political bloc,²⁶¹ and argued that the US and EU have denigrated their morals because they recognise and accept the rights of LGBTIQ communities.²⁶²

It is important to note that the dissemination of false ideas and stories by Russian-funded outlets and NGOs is different from lazy journalism²⁶³ that fails to fact-check information before publishing it. These organisations are strategically used as an arm of Russian foreign policy in that they are provided funding from Russia and they disseminate specific and calculated forms of messaging that emphasise false failures or weaknesses of the West, with the goal of destabilising democratic societies.

Example one: The Vladimir Yakunin network

Vladimir Yakunin, formerly the chair of Russian Railways, is a close associate and former fellow-KGB associate of Vladimir Putin's, and is under sanctions in the United States as a result.²⁶⁴ He has developed high-profile organisations, including exchange programmes, discussion forums and values-based organisations, in at least five European states: Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France and Greece, and has close ties to the US religious right. It was Yakunin's payments – through his NGO²⁶⁵ – to politician Edgar Savisaar that provided the basis for Estonia's investigation into Savisaar's acceptance of bribes in 2015.²⁶⁶ Yakunin helped pay for the religious-right World Congress of Families Moscow Conference in 2014, amid controversy over Russia's invasion of Crimea, and he has funded a variety of Orthodox charities supporting the 'traditional values' movement.²⁶⁷ Yakunin is on the Board of Trustees of Russkiy Mir, one of the Russian government's global aid organisations that²⁶⁸ funds programmes for Russian compatriots globally. He has close ties with Konstantin Kosachev, head of the biggest Russian international aid organisation, Rossotrudnichestvo.²⁶⁹ Yakunin's network deserves suspicion as a dissemination point for Kremlin ideologies with links to cases of alleged corruption such as Savisaar.

Yakunin's network includes the St. Andrew the First Called Foundation, established in Geneva in 2013, the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, established in Berlin in 2016,²⁷⁰ and the World Public Dialogue of Civilizations, originally established in Vienna²⁷¹ but now taken over by an associate, Walter Schwimmer (also involved in the Berlin organisation). All three follow the same ideological line, disseminating reports and presenting conferences supporting the idea that democracy is 'failing' due to its acceptance of LGBT rights and of migrants, such that a new – authoritarian and Eurasianist – model must be developed (with a reference to Putin advisor Alexander Dugin) that would be better able to ensure national security. Yakunin also has an Endowment in Geneva intended to provide funding to this NGO empire.²⁷²

In Paris, Yakunin and Assemblée Nationale member Thierry Mariani jointly lead the conservative Dialogue Franco-Russe,²⁷³ whose stated aim is cooperation between the two countries. Members include prominent conservative and establishment figures such as former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and companies such as Airbus, Alstom, and Bouygues.²⁷⁴ Mariani, through the Dialogue, invited (and paid for) a group of Assemblée Nationale members to travel to Moscow and Crimea in July 2015, despite warnings that they were being exploited.²⁷⁵

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Giorgi Lomsadze, A 'Family' Gathering Commemorates an Anti-Gay Riot, Coda Story, May 2016, <https://codastory.com/lgbt-crisis/world-council-families>.

²⁶³ David Rutz, 5 Times the Washington Post Failed at Fact-Checking, Washington Free Beacon, March 2015, <http://freebeacon.com/politics/5-times-the-washington-post-failed-at-fact-checking/>.

²⁶⁴ US Department of the Treasury Resource Center, Ukraine-related Designations, March 2014, https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20140320_33.aspx.

²⁶⁵ News, KAPO declassifies Savisaar files, ERR.ee, December 2010, <http://news.err.ee/v/politics/36650917-4ee3-42db-a1b9-d0308976ea20>.

²⁶⁶ Ott Ummelas, Estonian Police Detain Kremlin Ally in Bribery Investigation, Bloomberg, September 2015, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-22/estonian-police-detains-kremlin-ally-in-bribery-investigation>.

²⁶⁷ Hannah Levintova, How US Evangelicals Helped Create Russia's Anti-Gay Movement, Mother Jones, February 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-russia-gay-rights>.

²⁶⁸ Russkiy Mir Foundation, Vladimir Yakunin Leaves JSC 'Russian Railways', August 2015, <http://www.ruskiymir.ru/en/news/194530/>.

²⁶⁹ Russkiy Mir Foundation Information Service, Head of Rossotrudnichestvo Participates in Dialogue of Civilizations, September 2014, <http://ruskiymir.ru/en/news/151794/>.

²⁷⁰ Ben Knight, Putin associate opens Russia-friendly think tank in Berlin, July 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/putin-associate-opens-russia-friendly-think-tank-in-berlin/a-19372110>.

²⁷¹ Lukas Wehnert, Stand up to Western Top Dogs, Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, September 2016, <https://doc-research.org/en/aboutus/stand-western-top-dogs/>.

²⁷² Dialogue of Civilizations Endowment Fund, About the Foundation, last visited March 2017, <http://dofc-foundation.org/about/>.

²⁷³ Association Dialogue Franco-Russe, Events Calendar, last visited 4 March 2017, <http://dialoguefrancorusse.com/en/>.

²⁷⁴ Claire Demesmay, 'There are Always Two Sides to the Truth': French Susceptibility to Russian Propaganda, German Council on Foreign Relations, DGAPkompakt, Number 4, February 2016, <https://dgap.org/en/article/getFullPDF/27570>

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

These organisations serve to spread eurosceptic, anti-LGBT, and anti-migrant views throughout the capitals of Europe.²⁷⁶ The Berlin think tank reportedly will serve as a headquarters of a worldwide network aimed at making 'Russia's view of the world popular'.²⁷⁷ The World Public Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute hosts a network of those that 'share the values of the Foundation' in each of the 43 states in the European Union.²⁷⁸ His Paris organisation's influence was cited, alongside the new Orthodox Church (discussed below),²⁷⁹ as a reason for the uptick in pro-Russian sentiment among French politicians.

Yakunin's World Public Forum also organises the Rhodes Forum annually in Greece as a platform for conservative researchers, scientists, politicians to discuss 'alternative models' to democracy.²⁸⁰ The 2016 Forum included the Prime Ministers of Hungary and Slovakia, Victor Orban and Robert Fico, and the Czech President Milos Zeman.²⁸¹

Yakunin is also a major funder of religious right propaganda against LGBTQ communities. His wife, Natalya, is President of the Sanctity of Motherhood organisation²⁸² - a 'pro-family movement' which aims to instill the 'image of a traditional family with three and more children as the social norm'.²⁸³ He is one of the leading members of the World Congress of Families, an American organisation²⁸⁴ that holds an international conference each year to strategise around implementation of far-right religious policies globally. In 2014, the conference was supposed to be held in Moscow, but some US organisations pulled out,²⁸⁵ appalled at Russia's invasion of Crimea. The conference was held under a different name - with funding from Vladimir Yakunin and Konstantin Malofeev²⁸⁶ and the participation of at least five²⁸⁷ US organisations. Leaders of WCF²⁸⁸ include Bryan Fischer, Pat Buchanan, Franklin Graham, Jack Hanick (formerly of Fox News) from the US, and Vladimir Yakunin, Konstantin Malofeev, Natalia Yakunina, Yelena Mizulina (Duma member who introduced both the anti-LGBT propaganda law in 2013 and the recently-passed law decriminalising domestic violence) and Alexei Komov (director of external affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church) from Russia.

Yakunin's network is one to watch, not least because he is a true believer in Kremlin propaganda. In a June 2016 interview conducted through his St. Andrew the First Called Foundation, Yakunin echoed the view that the Kremlin is only defending itself in developing media and foundation-based propaganda, stating that "The Kremlin is properly counteracting anti-Russian propaganda," with its actions.

Example two: The French network

In addition to Yakunin's Dialogue Franco-Russe, which has developed solid links between the Kremlin and politicians and businesses, several new Russian-funded organisations have been established in Paris to spread Russia's favoured anti-human rights ideologies. This is a worrying trend in light of France's presidential election this year with pro-Russia candidates and parties having a chance to gain power. Recent construction of a huge Russian Orthodox Church in Paris is also causing a stir.

The Institute for Democracy and Cooperation (IDC) modelled on the US NGO Freedom House, was created in 2008 to 'help citizens understand Russia's position on human rights and democracy'.²⁸⁹ The organisation defends the idea of 'managed democracy' and human rights based on traditional values, subjugated to national interests. The Paris

²⁷⁶ Endowment for St Andrew the First-Called Foundation, About the Foundation, last visited March 2017, <http://www.st-andrew-foundation.org/en/about-found/>.

²⁷⁷ Ben Knight, Putin associate opens Russia-friendly think tank in Berlin, July 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/putin-associate-opens-russia-friendly-think-tank-in-berlin/a-19372110>.

²⁷⁸ Anna Lindh Foundation, ALF Network of Networks, last visited March 2017, <http://www.annalindhfoundation.org/network-of-networks>.

²⁷⁹ Claire Demesmay, 'There are Always Two Sides to the Truth': French Susceptibility to Russian Propaganda, German Council on Foreign Relations, DGAPkompakt, Number 4, February 2016, <https://dgap.org/en/article/getFullPDF/27570>; Erasmus, A new Orthodox church next to the Eiffel Tower boosts Russian soft power, The Economist, December 2016, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/erasmus/2016/12/ecclesiastical-diplomacy>

²⁸⁰ Lukas Wehnert, Stand up to Western Top Dogs, Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, September 2016, <https://doc-research.org/en/aboutus/stand-western-top-dogs/>.

²⁸¹ Dialogue of Civilizations Rhodes Forum, The Chaos of Multiplicity: An Urgent Call for Dialogue, The Rhodes Forum 2016, last visited March 2017, <https://doc-research.org/forum/>.

²⁸² Istoki Endowment Fund, All-Russian Programme 'Sanctity of Motherhood', last visited March 2017, <http://istoki-foundation.org/en/program/all-russian-programme-sanctity-of-motherhood/>.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Cole Parke, Natural Deception: Conned by the World Congress of Families, Political Research Associates, January 2015, <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2015/01/21/natural-deception-conned-by-the-world-congress-of-families/#sthash.sXAKGi5l.672oifz.dpbs>.

²⁸⁵ Hannah Levintova, Did Anti-Gay Evangelists Skirt US Sanctions on Russia?, Mother Jones, September 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/09/world-congress-families-russia-conference-sanctions>.

²⁸⁶ Giorgi Lomsadze, A 'Family' Gathering Commemorates an Anti-Gay Riot, Coda Story, May 2016, <https://codastory.com/lgbt-crisis/world-council-families>.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Hannah Levintova, The World Congress of Families' Russian Network, Mother Jones, February 2014, <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/02/world-congress-families-us-evangelical-russia-family-tree>.

²⁸⁹ Olga Khvostunova, The Propaganda of the Putin Era, April 2013, Institute of Modern Russia, <http://imrussia.org/en/politics/443?start=1>.

office, l'Institute de la Democratie et de la Cooperacion, is headed by Natalya Narochnitskaya,²⁹⁰ a former Duma member for the ultranationalist Rodina (Fatherland) party. It invites representatives of the Catholic and radical right to its conferences, legitimising their fringe views.²⁹¹ The IDC NGOs have been described by Andrey Makarychev as 'propaganda platforms rather than... intellectual think tanks'.²⁹²

The Alliance France-Europe-Russie (AAFER) is chaired by Fabrice Sorlin, a former far-right National Front party candidate, and head of the far-right nationalist Dies Irae²⁹³, which has been accused of racist and anti-Semitic behaviour. The organisation has stated in the past that it is dedicated to 'uniting the Anglo-Saxon world (sic) based on shared 'Christian values.'²⁹⁴ Sorlin, along with Brian Brown from the United States (see below) collaborates with the conservative religious movement in Russia, specifically with Yelena Mizulina, Vladimir Yakunin and Konstantin Malofeev of the World Congress of Families to promote 'Christian values'.²⁹⁵

Vladimir Potanin, owner of Norilsk Nickel, is an active Russian Orthodox promoter who finances the Russian Orthodox (Church) University. Potanin was also awarded contracts by Putin to build and operate Olympic facilities for the 2014 Sochi Olympics. His Potanin Foundation supports cultural exchanges, a French-Russia bilateral training programme for youth, and student fellowships.²⁹⁶

The Eurasian Observatory for Democracy in Elections is both a think tank²⁹⁷ and a faux election monitoring organisation.²⁹⁸ It is considered a 'shadow' or 'faux' election-monitoring organisation because it appears to have been created solely for the purpose of 'monitoring' the Crimean referendum; its monitors (whose identities were not made public) were apparently chosen based on their ideological views and not on their expertise on election issues; and because its report failed to consider issues of threats and intimidation against voters, and an abnormally forshortened time period for information dissemination prior to the vote.²⁹⁹ It has connections to France's Front National, and follows closely the ideology of Alexander Dugin. It disseminates pro-Russian media regarding the failings of the US and Europe and the strength of Russia's Duginist ideology. The organisation sent a Front National representative to observe (and approve) the Crimean referendum on joining Russia.³⁰⁰

The new Kremlin-funded Royal Orthodox Church, just steps away from the Eiffel Tower, serves several strategic goals. It has been called an intelligence listening post³⁰¹, located next to the apartment of the Secretary General of Defence, with other ministries nearby. By adding cultural services inside the building, the Russian Embassy designated it a diplomatic location, preventing French investigation of its activities.³⁰² (Similar concerns have been raised regarding the Russian Orthodox Church in Strasbourg, conveniently located close to the European Parliament).³⁰³

Russian Compatriot Policy operates in France through the Russian Center for Science and Culture which provides cultural programmes to dual nationals, whom they refer to as 'binationals'.³⁰⁴ The Conseil de coordination du Forum des Russes de France also offers trips to Russia for French young people³⁰⁵ – presumably with an eye toward developing their sympathies or gaining intelligence.

²⁹⁰ The Institute of Democracy and Cooperation, About IDC, last visited March 2017, <http://www.idc-europe.org/en>.

²⁹¹ Van Herpen, Marcel. 2016. Putin's Propaganda Machine. Pp 242-266. Rowman & Littlefield.

²⁹² Makarychev, Andrey S. 2009. In Quest of Political Subjectivity: Russia's 'Normative Offensive' and the Triple Politicisation of Norms, Readings in European Security vol. 5. Center for European Policy Studies.

²⁹³ Right Wing Watch, Globalizing Homophobia: How the American Right Supports and Defends Russia's Anti-Gay Crackdown, In Focus, February 2014, <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/report/globalizing-homophobia-how-the-american-right-supports-and-defends-russias-anti-gay-crackdown/>.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Vladimir Potanin Foundation, 2016-The New Philosophy of Philanthropy, last visited March 2017, <http://english.fondpotanin.ru/>.

²⁹⁷ EODE-Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections, EODE Think Tank, last visited March 2017, <http://www.eode.org/category/eode-think-tank/>.

²⁹⁸ EODE-Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections, EODE Elections, last visited March 2017, <http://www.eode.org/category/eode-international-elections-monitoring/>.

²⁹⁹ Anton Shekhovtsov, Pro-Russian extremists observe the illegitimate Crimean 'referendum', Anton Shekhovtsov's blog, 17 March 2014, <http://anton-shekhovtsov.blogspot.com/2014/03/pro-russian-extremists-observe.html>.

³⁰⁰ Van Herpen, Marcel. 2016. Putin's Propaganda Machine. Pp, 242-266. Rowman & Littlefield.

³⁰¹ Jacqueline Grapin, Perspectives: Russia boosts its influence in France, European Affairs, European Institute, July 2016, <http://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/ei-blog/286-european-affairs/ea-july-2016/2174-perspectives-russia-boosts-its-influence-in-france>.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

Finally the World Without Nazism is a global organisation funded by Russian ex-politician Boris Shpigel,³⁰⁶ who is close to, and gets funding from, the Kremlin. It is registered in France, though it operates throughout the EU, particularly in the Nordic and Baltic states, and the US, to foment disruption associated with ideologies that the EU is unsafe and democracy deteriorating.³⁰⁷

Conclusion

In the last few years, we have learned much about the Russian government's view of 'foreign influence' through its development and application of foreign agent laws restricting relationships between NGOs and media and foreign individuals and governments. Russia's concern has always been based on its view that whoever provides funding to an entity controls the messages it puts out. While this has not been true of US and European government funding – by and large, as long as recipients were not committing human rights violations themselves, their messages were not restricted – we now see that when Russia wields its development funding (and the funding of its oligarch partners) as a foreign policy tool in support of foundations and think tanks, it expects to and does control the narratives and messages put out. Indeed, it finely hones those messages as part of a global strategy aimed at combating universal application of human rights standards and to present Western democracy as a failed experiment that must be replaced.

The ideologies supported and fomented by these Russian-agents acting as 'independent' non-governmental organisations are not only human rights-violating, they threaten the security of the states where they operate, and regional security in the EU and NATO. By stirring up hatred of migrants and refugees, Russia urges a denial of assistance and services to communities in dire need, contributing to the growth of violent extremism as communities lose hope. By fomenting anti-LGBTQ hatred, and anti-Muslim hatred, Russia contributes to an increase in xenophobic crimes committed against these groups – and perceived members of these groups – all over Europe. The US and Europe must initiate strategies to combat this messaging, and the tools that drive it, in order to preserve not only democratic governance, but also human rights values themselves.

Recommendations

Enforce existing transparency regulations that require the filing of annual reports by NGOs and media outlets in countries like France, Germany and the Baltics. European NGOs report that Russian-funded NGOs working in their regions simply do not comply with local rules and laws requiring that they make their donors public and provide annual reports. If organisations are not filing the reports where required, the state or EU regulatory agency should develop a mechanism to make follow-up requests and even apply sanctions or fines for lack of transparency. Reports should be publicly available under NGO transparency rules.

The European Parliament has aimed to make the EU Registry of Lobbying Organizations a mandatory registry for several years, the registry is currently voluntary. It should do so. It should also require disclosure of receipt of government funding as part of the registry. The EU and its member states should know when a foreign-funded organisation is behind the policy proposals being put forth by a foundation or think tank.

The EU and US intelligence entities should coordinate their research and investigation of these ties. This is in recognition of the fact that Russian-funded foundations and think tanks are not intended to function legally, so often they will not willingly comply with local regulations. In these situations, an investigative mechanism must exist to identify the sources of their funding and policies. This also means the US should partner with the EU to support large-scale journalistic investigation groups, under the model of the cross-border Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) or the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists that investigated and analysed the Panama Papers.

While ideally, US and EU cooperation on these issues would yield the most effective responses to support transparency and the greatest support for human rights-protecting organisations, as populist factions creep into governmental positions across a number of Western democracies, the best strategy now may be for intelligence agencies and/or civil society organisations and journalists themselves to take on the task of exposing the funding sources and links of faux think tanks and foundations. Indeed, doing so may be one bulwark against the rise of xenophobic and populist attitudes that threaten to crowd out the culture of human rights protection on both sides of the Atlantic.

³⁰⁶ Sanita Jemberga, Mikk Salu, Šarūnas Černiauskas, The Kremlin's millions, and its support of pro-Russian activists in the Baltic, October 2015, <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2015/10/07/the-kremlins-millions-and-its-support-of-pro-russian-activists-in-the-baltics/>.

³⁰⁷ Sanita Jemberga, Mikk Salu and Šarūnas Černiauskas, The Kremlin's millions, and its support of pro-Russian activists in the Baltics, Foreign Policy News, October 2015, <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2015/10/07/the-kremlins-millions-and-its-support-of-pro-russian-activists-in-the-baltics/>

The information battle: How governments in the former Soviet Union promote their agendas and attack their opponents abroad

The information battle examines the ways in which the governments of former Soviet Union (FSU) countries look to shape international narratives about themselves by using media, social media, advertising and supportive organisations to promote their worldview and exert pressure on the people, institutions and ideas that oppose them. The essay collection looks at the impact of this influence both within the region and increasingly across the world.

The publication contains contributions by: Natalia Antelava, Coda Story; Ana Dvali and Revaz Koiava, Caucasian House; Arzu Geybulla; Richard Giragosian, Regional Studies Center; Melissa Hooper, Human Rights First; Adam Hug (ed.), Foreign Policy Centre; Rasto Kuzel, Memo 98; Dr David Lewis, University of Exeter; Ben Nimmo, Atlantic Council; and Dr Justin Schlosberg, Birkbeck, University of London.

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The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC)
Unit 1.9, First Floor, The Foundry
17 Oval Way, Vauxhall
London, SE11 5RR
www.fpc.org.uk
events@fpc.org.uk

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