

Russian Disinformation and Propaganda: Old Strategy in a New Cover?

Irina Arabidze

Irina Arabidze is a graduate student of international affairs on a Fulbright Scholarship at Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government and Public Service. Irina earned a BA in public relations from the Georgian Technical University in the country of Georgia in 2006 and an MA in international relations and European studies from the Central European University in Hungary in 2007. Irina has also worked with several international organizations in Georgia. Most recently, she was part of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM).

Abstract

This paper examines the Russian disinformation and propaganda campaign directed against the West. The research investigates whether the Russian Federation is using the old KGB playbook in its modern anti-Western operations. The paper traces the origins of the existing disinformation tactics and then compares them to Russia's current *modus operandi*. In this process, the paper identifies similarities in past and current Russian practices. This paper argues that the baseline of today's approaches is rooted in the old and well-tested KGB methods and concludes that these methods have been updated to utilize the 21st-century media landscape and new technology.

Introduction

This paper will examine the Russian disinformation and propaganda campaign directed against the West. The research will investigate whether the Russian Federation is using the old KGB playbook in its modern anti-Western operations. It will focus on tracing the origins of the existing disinformation tactics in order to compare them to Russia's current *modus operandi*. This paper argues that the baseline of today's approaches is rooted in the old and well-tested KGB methods of operation and concludes that these methods have been updated to utilize the 21st-century media landscape and new technology.

Soviet "Active Measures"

The roots of the Soviet active measures can be traced back to the tsarist Russia's secret police *Okhrana*. The agency, known for its acts of violence, was notorious for using heavy-handed tactics to target domestic opposition groups and subvert the work of émigré organizations active against the tsarist regime in Europe.¹ Once the Bolsheviks took power in Russia during the 1917 revolution, *Okhrana* was replaced by the Soviet secret police, later known as the KGB (*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*, or Committee for State Security). The KGB adopted the methods that were successfully employed by the *Okhrana*, only increasing the degree of ruthlessness in its operations.² In the Soviet vocabulary, the term "active measures" came to denote:

manipulation and media control, written and oral disinformation, use of foreign communist parties and front organizations, clandestine radio broadcasting, manipulation of the economy, kidnappings, paramilitary operations, support of guerrilla groups and terrorist organizations [...] and political assassinations.³

These wide variety of techniques were used by Soviet diplomats and intelligence operatives to target the policies and actions of foreign governments.⁴

Active measures constituted an integral part of the Soviet Union's conduct of foreign policy. This paper concentrates specifically on disinformation and propaganda, which can be defined as "the manipulative use of slogans, arguments, disinformation, and carefully selected true information...to try to influence the attitudes and actions of foreign publics and governments."⁵

Disinformation and propaganda activities organized by the Soviet KGB were classified into what the agency called "black," "grey," and "white" active measure campaigns.⁶ As the terms indicate, the actions ranged from covert, to semi-overt, to fully overt activities respectively. The covert measures, such as forgeries – aimed at fully concealing traces of Soviet meddling – and media manipulation were major tools in the hands of the Soviet KGB.⁷ The agency tried to plant false stories in credible media outlets to make them believable and then regurgitated the news to

¹ For a detailed overview of the agency's methods and techniques, see: Hingley, *The Russian Secret Police*.

² Volkman, "Midnight in Lubyanka," 195-205.

³ Boghardt, "Operation Infektion," 1.

⁴ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*.

⁵ United States Information Agency, "Soviet Active Measures."

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ For an overview of Soviet covert operations, see: Andrew and Gordievsky, *Instructions from the Centre*. Additional archival material is available at: Wilson Center, "Vassiliev Notebooks," and "Mitrokhin Archive." See also: Bukovski Archives, "Ideology and Politics."

give it bigger publicity.⁸ As the U.S. State Department's disinformation bulletin warned its readers in 1981: "Moscow seeks to disrupt relations between states, discredit opponents of the USSR and undermine foreign leaders, institutions, and values."⁹

Several campaigns are well remembered as some of the KGB's most successful disinformation operations. Among the famous cases are operations such as blaming the United States for the AIDS epidemic, spreading rumors about the FBI's and CIA's involvement in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, as well as attempts to portray the government of the Federal Republic of Germany as the re-embodiment of the Third Reich.¹⁰

While the "black" active measures tried to fully conceal Soviet involvement, the work of the Soviet affiliated organizations, which fit into the "grey" active measures, was semi-overt. These organizations included communist parties in allied countries, international and local front organizations under Soviet control, and nongovernmental organizations receiving covert funding from the KGB.¹¹ They all toed the Soviet line but denied a direct connection with the KGB. According to a U.S. State Department bulletin, "The Soviets are adept at making their policies appear to be compatible or parallel with the interests of peace, environmental, and other groups active in western and developing societies."¹²

The "grey" active measures were particularly handy under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking,"¹³ where the weakening of the Soviet Union led its authorities to adopt a policy of conciliation with the United States. The KGB worked to dampen military competition with the U.S. by promoting the idea of a non-nuclear world, disarmament, and "non-offensive defense," using official channels as well as affiliate organizations.¹⁴

The agents of influence – prominent foreign nationals who could influence public opinion – were particularly valuable in the "grey" active measures work. They were hard to identify and were seen as "loyal patriots of their respective countries... simply expressing their own personal opinions."¹⁵ Journalists, as well as public figures and government officials, were best placed to carry out the job. Soviet use of agents of influence can be traced back to the 1920s. One author examines a detailed account of the "involvement of many prominent Western intellectuals with the Soviet Union, including Theodore Dreiser, G.B. Shaw, Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland," and others.¹⁶ The names of journalists Walter Duranty and Herbert Matthews are especially well known for their grossly biased reporting about the Soviet Union and Castro's regime in Cuba. Duranty, who was reporting for *The New York Times*, claimed that "any report of a famine in Russia is today an exaggeration or malignant propaganda,"¹⁷ while the regime simultaneously engineered a famine in Ukraine that claimed up to seven million lives.¹⁸ Groups later demanded that Duranty's Pulitzer Prize be revoked.¹⁹

Lastly, the overt active measures included the Soviet state media and other official channels of communication. Most notably, all Soviet representations abroad were tasked with supporting the Kremlin's narrative. The "white" active measures allowed the Soviet officials to

⁸ United States Department of State, "Forgery, disinformation," 1-3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰ Boghardt, "Operation Infektion," 2.

¹¹ United States Information Agency, "Soviet Active Measures."

¹² United States Department of State, "Forgery, disinformation," 1.

¹³ For background, see: Holloway, "Gorbachev's New Thinking."

¹⁴ United States Information Agency, "Soviet Active Measures."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Stern, *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union*, 2.

¹⁷ Beichman, "Pulitzer-Winning Lies," June 12, 2003.

¹⁸ The Library of Congress, "Ukraine Famine," August 31, 2016.

¹⁹ Krushelnycky, "Ukrainians want pro-Stalin writer stripped of Pulitzer," May 3, 2003.

freely promote pre-agreed-upon messages to influence foreign audiences.²⁰ When comparing Western and Soviet intelligence practices, one author notes that Soviet services put much stronger emphasis on deception practices than Western agencies, which were more focused on information collection.²¹

The initial U.S. response to Soviet disinformation was “anything but centralized, integrated, and timely,” and there were no open attempts to publicly expose Soviet active measures up until the 1980s.²² Still, the Active Measures Working Group at the U.S. State Department is credited with revealing a number of Soviet disinformation and propaganda campaigns and these revelations helped educate the public.²³ Meanwhile, the overt U.S. response to the ideological dimension of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation was channeled through the United States Information Agency (USIA), which was established in 1953 with a mission “to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions, and their counterparts abroad.”²⁴ The agency was a response to Russia’s Communist Information Bureau, Cominform, created by Stalin in 1947 to coordinate messaging between communist parties and to target the U.S. presence in Europe.²⁵

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S.-Russian confrontation characteristic to the Cold War was temporarily relegated to history. Despite a chaotic beginning, the Russian Federation was seen as a state that was embarking on a path of liberal reforms, and in due time, would develop a full-fledged partnership with the West. However, this positive outlook gradually changed with Vladimir Putin’s rise to power. The prospect of meaningful cooperation between the two countries gave way to increasing Russian hostility toward the West. The worsening of the U.S.-Russian relations was accompanied by an increase in Russia’s disinformation and propaganda activities against the West. The tensions culminated with the Russian invasion of two former-Soviet states – Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.²⁶ Some authors partly attribute Russia’s returning interest in disinformation and propaganda to its failure to project a favorable narrative on the world stage during the Russia-Georgia war.²⁷ Whether it was the inability to skew the Western media reporting or to develop a broader strategy to confront the West, terms such as “hybrid warfare” and “asymmetric war” became popular Western ways of describing Russia’s new way of waging war.²⁸

Russia’s Active Measures Today

In an article published in February 2013, Chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov articulated the Russian view of the frequently invoked concept of “hybrid warfare.”²⁹ Gerasimov focused on the Arab Spring and threats emanating from social media, but also discussed Western NGOs and civil society organizations, which the Kremlin has long derided as

²⁰ United States Information Agency, “Soviet Active Measures.”

²¹ Boghardt, “Operation Infektion,” 1.

²² Ibid., 12.

²³ See Schoen and Lamb, “Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications,” 1-155.

²⁴ U.S. Information Agency, “An Overview.” For a broad overview of USIA work, see: Cull, *The Cold War*.

²⁵ Rutenberg, “RT, Sputnik,” September 13, 2017.

²⁶ For an overview, see: Cornell and Starr ed., *The Guns of August 2008*; Yekelchik, *The Conflict in Ukraine*.

²⁷ See Thomas, “Russian Information Warfare,” 265-301; Giles, “Russia’s ‘New’ Tools,” March 21, 2016.

²⁸ For a discussion on hybrid warfare and asymmetric war, see: Chivvis, “Understanding Russian ‘Hybrid Warfare,’” May 11, 2017;

Holmes, “Putin’s Asymmetrical War,” May 5, 2014.

²⁹ Gerasimov, “The Value of Science,” February 26, 2013.

engines of “color revolutions”³⁰ in the former Soviet republics.³¹ Gerasimov argued that non-military measures, such as economic and political pressure, would take up large segments of the confrontation with Russia’s adversaries that, most notably, included the United States. As one publication put it, “the important point [in Gerasimov’s article] is that while the West considers these nonmilitary measures as ways of avoiding war, Russia considers these measures as war.”³²

So how does Russia employ its disinformation techniques today, and what damage does it do to Western societies? A number of publications note that, similar to past practices, Russian influence is spread in three distinct ways: state-to-people, people-to-people, and state-to-state.³³ Currently, state-to-state relations and traditional diplomacy are secondary when it comes to active measure campaigns, which are promoted by using state-to-people and people-to-people communication methods instead.³⁴

As a number of observers note, the Kremlin has benefited from freedom of information in the West. Easy access to the Western public is used “not to persuade (as in classic public diplomacy) or earn credibility, but to sow confusion via conspiracy theories and proliferate falsehoods.”³⁵ Currently, *RT* (formerly *Russia Today*) and *Sputnik*, which incorporates former platforms of the *Voice of Russia* and *RIA Novosti*, are the Kremlin’s leading media outlets; they are used to promote the narrative which supports Russian interests and helps spread disinformation. As one *New York Times* journalist argues, what has changed is not the validity of the stories that Russia has to tell, but the access and means through which Russia is able to get its message across.³⁶

The state-funded *RT*, which models itself on Western-style reporting, initially aimed to promote a positive image of Russia.³⁷ Later, the station refocused on the United States, and has since used American advertising firms to promote its mission.³⁸ It now aims to question conventional wisdom and wants to promote alternative versions of “truth” to obscure the line between reality and falsehood. Since *RT* claims to back stories that are underreported or “hidden” from Western audiences, even the attempts to discredit its reports have helped to validate its stories.³⁹

At times, the pro-Kremlin outlets report downright lies. An often-cited case involves a chemical plant explosion hoax in Louisiana, where fake online accounts reported a non-existent explosion purportedly linked to ISIS.⁴⁰ As *The New York Times* explains:

The Columbian Chemicals hoax was not some simple prank by a bored sadist. It was a highly coordinated disinformation campaign, involving dozens of fake accounts that posted hundreds of tweets for hours, targeting a list of figures precisely chosen to generate maximum attention.⁴¹

³⁰ The term was initially used in reference to the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia in 2003, the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in 2004, and the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Russia has viewed these and similar movements as Western-backed projects that threaten Russian power and influence. See: Burke, “Russia and the ‘Color Revolution,’” May 28, 2018.

³¹ See: Finkel and Brudny, “Russia and the Colour Revolutions,” 15-36.

³² Bartles, “Getting Gerasimov Right,” 34.

³³ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger, “Trolling for Trump,” November 6, 2016.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Pomerantsev and Weiss, “Menace of Unreality,” 6.

³⁶ Rutenberg, “RT, Sputnik,” September 13, 2017.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Chen, “The Agency,” June 2, 2015.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Reports from *CNN*, *Louisiana TV*, newspapers, and videos on YouTube were faked to give the news more credibility, while locals received text messages warning them about the incident.⁴² The chemical plant management had to issue an official statement to deny the reports.⁴³ The case underscored how new media could be used to sow chaos and fear in communities. Subsequently, a discussion ensued about what kinds of tools could be used to avoid similar incidents on a larger scale.

Another prominent case involving the dissemination of a falsehood is the so-called “Lisa case” – a report about a 13-year old Russian-German teenager who allegedly became a victim of kidnapping and rape at the hands of Arab refugees in Berlin.⁴⁴ Despite the fact that the truth was revealed shortly after the news was spread (German police confirmed that the girl had stayed at a male friend’s house and lied about her whereabouts), the Russian media actively promoted the news and the story soon gained a life of its own.⁴⁵ Media reports prompted a demonstration by ethnic Russians in Germany who demanded justice. The situation escalated to diplomatic tensions after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov twice commented on the case, deploring the inaction of the German law enforcement agencies.⁴⁶ The head of Germany’s domestic security agency argued that “Russia was using KGB-style ‘old measures’” to misinform the population and destabilize the country.⁴⁷ Russia has also targeted German Chancellor Angela Merkel with an active measure campaign due to dissatisfaction over her tough stance against Russia’s hostile policies.⁴⁸ Author Anton Shekhovtsov reminds readers that at the onset of the Cold War, the KGB used similar active measure techniques to exploit internal tensions within West Germany.⁴⁹ Sensing the public’s unease with what was perceived as leniency toward former Nazis, the KGB ordered its operatives to paint swastikas on synagogues. This heightened fears of Nazi resurgence and increased suspicion toward West Germany’s NATO membership.⁵⁰

A similar case to the one in Germany unfolded in Lithuania, where German troops under NATO command stationed in the country became the target of disinformation. A fake letter sent to the Lithuanian Parliamentary Speaker’s office accused German soldiers of raping a 15-year old Lithuanian girl in foster care.⁵¹ The story was immediately flagged as a Russian ploy to undermine NATO, and because of that it gained much less traction compared to the “Lisa case” in Germany.⁵²

The dissemination of falsehoods is only one way Russia misinforms the public; Russia’s state-funded *RT* usually uses a mixture of techniques. Often, reports contain a considerable amount of true information, while disinformation is mixed with entertainment, making it harder to spot the deception.⁵³ Additionally, *RT* and *Sputnik* platforms are used to promote Kremlin messages to grey sources or unsuspecting users, who then spread the reports further on social media and other networks. These grey outlets are usually “conspiracy websites, data dump websites [such as WikiLeaks and DC Leaks], and seemingly credible news aggregators that amplify disinformation and misinformation.”⁵⁴

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Birla Carbon, “Statement on Hoax,” September 11, 2014.

⁴⁴ NATO Review Magazine, “The Lisa case.”

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ DW, “Russia wants explanation,” January 26, 2016.

⁴⁷ Rinke and Carrel, “German-Russian ties,” February 1, 2016.

⁴⁸ Shuster, “Russia has launched a fake news war,” August 9, 2017.

⁴⁹ Shekhovtsov, *Tango Noir*, 1277.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Reuters, “Lithuania looking for source of false accusation,” February 17, 2017.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Rutenberg, “RT, Sputnik,” September 13, 2017.

⁵⁴ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger, “Trolling for Trump,” November 6, 2016.

Promoting Messages on an Industrial Scale

Another tool that Russia uses to attack and discredit undesirable persons and ideas is the army of internet “trolls” and controlled accounts. Internet trolls can be defined as online haters with a broad agenda, who not only want to bully a handful of individuals but want to involve a larger segment of society in an argument.⁵⁵

A journalistic investigation, which detailed the work of Russia’s Internet Research Agency, revealed that the agency employs hundreds of workers who push pre-agreed upon messages online 24 hours a day.⁵⁶ Russia has “industrialized the art of trolling,” where its invisible manipulators labor to deceive the public and promote the pro-Russian point of view.⁵⁷ Together with fake users, Russia employs automated accounts – or the so-called “bots” – to disseminate identical messages in large numbers at short intervals.⁵⁸ When many users discuss the same topics, Twitter and Facebook classify them as trends, which show what themes are leading the debate online on a given day or longer. Russian-linked bots create an illusion that the topics favorable to the Kremlin are dominating the conversation. One publication terms this technique a “firehose of falsehood” due to numerous channels being used “and a shameless willingness to disseminate partial truths or outright fictions.”⁵⁹ The authors suggest that the high volume of messages also helps to drown out competing points of view online, which, at times, may increase the credibility of Kremlin supported messages.⁶⁰ Others argue that the ability to create trends online influences even those who are not using social networks, since media representatives watch these trends and pick up online discussions in their news reports.⁶¹

Different Themes in Russian Messaging

The content that Russia is pushing online can be clustered around three different themes: *political messages*, *social issues*, and *financial propaganda*.⁶² Political messages aim to damage democratic governance by weakening trust in elections and alleging political corruption in Western governments and institutions.⁶³ The most prominent and widely publicized case of political messaging is connected with the interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Based on a declassified report on the topic, the U.S. intelligence community clearly sees a Russian hand in the process. As the report states, the influence campaign included “overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or ‘trolls.’”⁶⁴ Despite this clear-cut assessment from the U.S. intelligence community, Russian President Vladimir Putin denies official government responsibility for the U.S. election meddling. However, he has historically compared hackers to artists who could be driven to help their country’s vital national interests of their own volition. “If [hackers] are patriotically minded, they start making their contributions – which are right, from their point of view – to the fight

⁵⁵ Williams, “What is an internet troll?” June 12, 2012.

⁵⁶ Adrian Chen, “The Agency,” June 2, 2015.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Shane, “The Fake Americans,” September 7, 2017.

⁵⁹ Paul and Matthews, “The Russian ‘Firehose of Falsehood,’” 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁶¹ Palma, “Trolls, Bots, ‘Useful Idiots,’” September 21, 2017.

⁶² Weisburd, Watts, and Berger, “Trolling for Trump,” November 6, 2016.

⁶³ For a detailed overview, see: The Economist, “Russian disinformation,” February 22, 2018.

⁶⁴ Intelligence Community Assessment, “Assessing Russian Activities,” January 6, 2017.

against those who say bad things about Russia,”⁶⁵ Putin told the media. Despite the Kremlin’s regular denials, this sounded to some like a partial acknowledgment of a covert Russian involvement.

Political messages became particularly influential as Russia compounded the effort with cyber-attacks to undermine democratic governance and compromise political leaders.⁶⁶ The U.S. was not the first country to experience Russia’s cyber-attacks. Russia first tested its strength in former Soviet spaces – Estonia in 2007 and Georgia in 2008. The message to those observing the unfolding events was simple: “Russia could paralyze the country without invading it.”⁶⁷ In an attack carried out against Estonia, government agencies, banks, and media outlets experienced major disruptions. Even cash machines, e-mail networks, and news delivery services ran into intermittent breakdowns.⁶⁸ In Georgia, the attacks on government web-pages came in the midst of an unfolding military invasion from the Russian Federation, where “many of the same techniques and computers involved against Estonia a year earlier resurfaced against Georgia.”⁶⁹ Russia built on these practices and further honed its skills in Ukraine, where power cuts and attacks on businesses were traced to the Kremlin.⁷⁰

Due to increasing instances of cybercrime, the U.S. feared attacks on its power grids and telephone networks, but paid less attention to methods that could undermine the election process.⁷¹ Following the 2016 hack of the Democratic National Convention servers, this outlook changed and the discussion now revolves around how to stop similar attacks from happening in the future.⁷² In a recent development, Facebook, Google, and Twitter came under fire from the Senate and House Intelligence Committees for serving as a vehicle for Russian misinformation.⁷³ A number of senators argued that the business model of social networks, which favors generating and sharing viral content, helps media manipulators get their message across. At the time of these hearings, Facebook had already removed over 80,000 fake Russian-linked ads, since those who purchased the ads hid behind phony accounts.⁷⁴

The U.S. is not the only country Russia has attacked to disrupt the democratic process. On the European front, recent examples include meddling in the Brexit vote, interference in the French elections, and attempts to thwart Montenegro’s NATO bid. Starting with Brexit, Russia actively supported the ultra-nationalist UK Independence Party (UKIP) – which led the anti-EU movement in Great Britain – and Russia-linked online platforms that actively promoted anti-EU sentiments.⁷⁵ Apart from this, media outlets also reported the breakdown of a voter registration website ahead of the vote. A committee of British MPs suspected Russian and Chinese efforts behind the incident.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, the French Presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron’s campaign experienced a major e-mail hack on the day before the election was held. Moscow again became the top suspect as Macron’s rival, Marine Le Pen, was openly favored by the

⁶⁵ Higgins, “Maybe Private Russian Hackers Meddled in Election,” June 1, 2017.

⁶⁶ For a timeline of Russian cyber-attacks, see: Windrem, “Timeline,” December 18, 2016.

⁶⁷ Lipton, Sanger, and Shane, “The Perfect Weapon,” December 13, 2016.

⁶⁸ McGuinness, “How a cyber attack transformed Estonia,” April 27, 2017.

⁶⁹ Smith, “Russian Cyber Strategy,” January 14, 2015.

⁷⁰ “Experts suspect Russia,” June 22, 2017; “Ukraine power cut,” January 11, 2017; “Russia behind cyber-attack,” July 2, 2017.

⁷¹ Lipton, Sanger, and Shane, “The Perfect Weapon,” December 13, 2016.

⁷² “4 Ways The U.S. Could Fight,” September 5, 2017; see: Fried and Polyakova, “Democratic Defense Against Disinformation,” March 5, 2018.

⁷³ Fandos, Kang, and Isaac, “House Intelligence Committee,” November 1, 2017.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Castle, “Facebook and Twitter to aid inquiry,” November 28, 2017; Kirkpatrick, “Signs of Russian Meddling,” November 15, 2017.

⁷⁶ Syal, “Brexit: foreign states,” April 12, 2017.

Kremlin.⁷⁷ The developments in Montenegro went far beyond a disinformation campaign. A coup plot widely publicized by the media reportedly included a plan to incite unrest, which would lead to a seizure of Montenegro's parliament and installation of a new regime that would reverse Montenegro's upcoming NATO membership.⁷⁸

Together with the cases of political meddling described above, Russia also uses social issues to promote chaos and feed anti-government sentiments. This method can be employed by amplifying societal tensions "to undermine the fabric of society."⁷⁹ As one commentator explained, "The tried and tested way of active measures is to use an adversary's existing weaknesses against himself, to drive wedges into pre-existing cracks."⁸⁰

Compared to limited access during the Soviet period, today's online reach makes the job of fueling tensions a much easier endeavor for the Kremlin. The existing discontent and confrontational attitudes can be amplified online by simply showing users the content that confirms their beliefs.⁸¹ This can lead to deepening of divisions and may result in the weakening of the target country. Michael McFaul, former U.S. Ambassador to Russia, explains: "They think that [fueling divisions] leads to polarization, [which] leads to arguments among ourselves and it takes us off the world stage."⁸²

It has now been revealed that among the 3,000 ads Russia's Internet Research Agency purchased from Facebook, at least some were geographically targeted to Ferguson, MO, and Baltimore, MD, where large protests took place following police shootings of black men.⁸³ A separate investigation conducted by Russia's *RBC* magazine claimed that the infamous Internet Research Agency hired around 100 American activists to stage more than 40 rallies in the United States during the past two years.⁸⁴ The activists, who had genuine concerns over developments in their hometowns, were used by the Russian-run agency to exacerbate divisions and mistrust following the incident. The participants in these rallies apparently had no knowledge that they were being paid by a Russian organization.⁸⁵ In a separate development, one popular U.S.-based social media user, who routinely worked on fueling the societal divide by spreading anti-immigrant messages, was recently traced back to the same Internet Research Agency in Moscow. The user, whose tweets had been featured in prominent Western media outlets, had nearly 70,000 followers. The account has now been deleted, but it is said to have been one of over 2,750 fake Twitter accounts under the Russia-sponsored agency.⁸⁶ In a similar story, one account known by the name "Blacktivist" with a 400,000-large following – now deactivated by Facebook – was dedicated to sharing tweets about police brutality and is believed to have been directed from abroad.⁸⁷

In a recent development, a spike in online activity followed violence in Charlottesville, VA, where accounts that were used to spread disinformation during past U.S. elections now disseminated far-right extremist messages.⁸⁸ In an attempt to tackle the problem, Facebook now promises more transparency and accountability. As Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said when commenting on the interference cases: "I wish I could tell you we're going to be able to stop all

⁷⁷ Auchard and Felix, "French candidate Macron claims massive hack," May 5, 2017.

⁷⁸ Higgins, "Finger Pointed at Russians," November 26, 2016.

⁷⁹ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger, "Trolling for Trump," November 6, 2016.

⁸⁰ "Two Twitter personalities," November 3, 2017.

⁸¹ Sydell, "How Russian Propaganda Spreads," October 29, 2017.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Byers, "Russian-bought Black Lives Matter ad," September 28, 2017.

⁸⁴ "RBK Investigation: How a 'troll factory' worked," October 17, 2017.

⁸⁵ Meduza, "Russian journalists publish massive investigation," October 17, 2017.

⁸⁶ "Two Twitter personalities," November 3, 2017.

⁸⁷ Sydell, "How Russian Propaganda Spreads," October 29, 2017.

⁸⁸ Arnsdorf, "Pro-Russian Bots," August 23, 2017.

interference, but that wouldn't be realistic....We can't prevent all governments from all interference. But we can make it harder. We can make it a lot harder. And that's what we're going to do."⁸⁹

Finally, another tool in Russia's disinformation messaging is financial propaganda, which helps disrupt Western markets. The methods range from promoting fake market scares to undermining Western businesses and their leaders.⁹⁰ In one example, social media reports caused Disney's stock to temporarily plummet following fake reports that Disneyland Paris had been evacuated due to a bomb scare.⁹¹ *RT* and *Sputnik* actively promoted the news, intensifying the panic.⁹²

Russia's "Useful Idiots"

The term "useful idiots" goes back to the early years of communism. Western supporters of communist causes, who were not always aware that they were being exploited, were in fact used by the Soviet Union to promote its interests. Peace movements of the early 1980s are one such example.⁹³ Today, the same term is often used to describe radical groups operating in the West who wittingly or unwittingly help Moscow sow discord in their respective societies. Examples are plentiful. One publication recalls American white supremacist Richard Spencer's frequent appearances on *RT* and *Sputnik*.⁹⁴ As the publication argues, Spencer and others like him are a "new version of the useful idiots" as "these activists serve a bigger purpose, to help promote the narrative of the West in chaos – and thereby also boost the idea of Russia as the alternative global power."⁹⁵ Together with radical groups, Russia also targets agents of influence among Western policy experts in order to promote the desired narrative. Some are given favorable access, while others get positions in Russian companies and "become de-facto communications representatives of the Kremlin."⁹⁶

In a departure from Soviet-time practices, Russia no longer supports a particular ideological leaning, since it favors every ideology that can be used to disrupt societal cohesion. As a result, Russia is supporting any initiative that can "exacerbate divides and create an echo chamber of Kremlin support."⁹⁷ Russia-backed groups range from far-left to far-right and include anti-globalists, white supremacists, environmentalists and greens, the Orthodox Church, NGOs, financial elites, and others. Eclecticism is the new way forward for Moscow.⁹⁸ As one Russian Eurasianist ideologue put it, "Acknowledging the civilizational nature of the conflict between Russia and the West, we aim at destroying the West in its current form as a civilization. Therefore, having recourse to the use of the existing networks, we should give priority to those that are themselves directed at the destruction of the modern European civilizational identity."⁹⁹

As already noted, the Soviet-era support to groups with similar communist ideologies has given way to backing of cardinally opposed ideological movements. To take one example from French politics, Russian President Vladimir Putin has embraced both far-right presidential

⁸⁹ Lucas, "The Next Big Focus," September 22, 2017.

⁹⁰ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger, "Trolling for Trump," November 6, 2016.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Rothman, "When Useful Idiots Were Useful," February 21, 2018.

⁹⁴ Jardine, "Russia's New Useful Idiots?," October 5, 2017.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Pomerantsev and Weiss, "Menace of Unreality," 6.

⁹⁸ Wilson, "Russia's 'Nudge' Propaganda," September 15, 2015.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

candidate Marine Le Pen and far-left populist Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Le Pen, who actively supports Moscow, travelled to Russia ahead of French elections and received €9 million from a Russia-linked bank, following her endorsement of the referendum results in the Russian annexation of Crimea.¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Mélenchon, whose policy outlook is strongly anti-American, is also known for his contempt of the European Union and his opposition to sanctions against Russia over the annexation of Crimea. This makes him another natural ally for the Kremlin.¹⁰¹ Russia is now able to find friends in multiple settings. As one publication put it: “The far right is ideologically attracted to Putin for his authoritarianism and his championing of ultra-conservative, Christian values. The far left sees in him a welcome pushback against American power.”¹⁰²

Russian support for different radical groups comes in different forms, and because of that, it is not always easy to track every Kremlin-sponsored endeavor. For example, Russia appears to have also backed European environmentalist groups, which push for policies favorable to Moscow. As the *Financial Times* explains, it was surprising to observe a sudden rise in the anti-fracking environmental movement across Europe, particularly in countries such as Bulgaria and Ukraine, who “had shown little prior concern for the environment but are heavily dependent on Russia for energy supplies.”¹⁰³ Russia attempted to use environmental concerns to keep Europe dependent on its natural resources. Also, Russia directed these movements to campaign against those alternative pipelines that it viewed as damaging to its energy interests in Europe.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

The existing research shows that Russia’s modern propaganda and disinformation campaigns are rooted in former KGB traditions. As in the past, Russia now works to misinform the public and weaken confidence in democratic institutions. It aims to sow discord in Western societies and nudge Western policies in a direction that benefits Russia’s foreign policy objectives. However, the methods employed to achieve these goals have undergone considerable change due to the advent of new technology and altered views on the importance of ideology. With the help of well-funded governmental news outlets, Russia promotes messages that are either entirely fictional or are aimed at confusing the audience by obscuring the line between truth and fiction. Social media networks allow Kremlin operatives to attack unfavorable ideas, promote topics that drive a wedge in democratic societies, and push users to question Western values and democratic practices. Cyber-attacks and cyber-espionage further help shake trust in political leaders and institutions. Meanwhile, different from Soviet practices, Russia is no longer confined to a single ideology. Radical groups on all fronts compete for Russian attention and funding as Moscow tries to portray the Western societies in disarray.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, policy makers believed that the long-standing hostility between the United States and Russia would give way to partnership and cooperation. As a result, the agencies responsible for countering Soviet active measures were downsized or abolished. Once Russia returned to the international arena as a destabilizing force, however, it swiftly revived the old propaganda and disinformation practices against the United

¹⁰⁰ Gatehouse, “Marine Le Pen,” April 3, 2017.

¹⁰¹ Symons, “The big winner,” April 19, 2017.

¹⁰² Nougayrède, “Spectre of Russian influence,” April 12, 2017.

¹⁰³ Johnson, “Russia’s Quiet War,” June 20, 2014; Higgins, “Russian Money,” November 30, 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

States with some notable successes. The U.S. has yet to fully re-engage. An important development to this end came in February as the U.S. Justice Department's special counsel indicted thirteen Russian nationals and three Russian companies including the Internet Research Agency, which "had a strategic goal to sow discord in the US political system."¹⁰⁵ The document shed light on Russian attempts to interfere with the U.S. elections and estimated that the monthly budget for the activities stood as high as \$1.25 million by September 2016.¹⁰⁶ This 37-page document, thus far, represents the most detailed legal account of Russia's modern-day campaign against the U.S.

Meanwhile, following the above revelations, the U.S. State Department announced a new program with the funding of \$40 million to counter Russian interference in the 2018 U.S. midterm elections.¹⁰⁷ The State Department has been criticized for being slow in appropriating the funds allocated for this purpose.¹⁰⁸ The current budget represents a major change from the initial \$120 million approved by Congress in 2016.¹⁰⁹

The United States' ability to raise awareness and refocus resources on actively countering Russian attempts to meddle in American domestic affairs will be an important determinant of how influential the Russian campaign will be in the future. It is unlikely that the Russian appetite for using active techniques against adversaries will automatically fade, but with well-targeted efforts to counter these disruptive actions, it will be possible to reverse the negative trend.

Bibliography

"4 Ways the U.S. Could Fight Future Election Interference." *NPR* (Washington, D.C.), September 5, 2017:

<https://www.npr.org/2017/09/05/547654525/4-ways-the-u-s-could-fight-future-election-interference>.

Andrew, Christopher and Oleg Gordievsky. *Instructions from the Centre: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975-1985*. Great Britain: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991.

Arnsdorf, Isaac. "Pro-Russian Bots Take Up the Right-Wing Cause After Charlottesville." *ProPublica* (New York, NY), August 23, 2017:

<https://www.propublica.org/article/pro-russian-bots-take-up-the-right-wing-cause-after-charlottesville>.

"Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections." Intelligence Community Assessment, January 6, 2017:

https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.

Auchard, Eric and Bate Felix. "French candidate Macron claims massive hack as emails leaked." *Reuters* (London, England), May 5, 2017: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-election-macron-leaks/french-candidate-macron-claims-massive-hack-as-emails-leaked-idUSKBN1812AZ>.

Bartles, Charles K. "Getting Gerasimov Right." *Military Review*. January/February, (2016): 30-38.

¹⁰⁵ United States V. Internet Research Agency, 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰⁷ Dorell, "State Department launches \$40 million initiative," February 26, 2018.

¹⁰⁸ Toosi, "Tillerson spurns \$80 million," August 2, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Harris, "State Dept. Was Granted \$120 Million," March 4, 2018.

- Beichman, Arnold. "Pulitzer-Winning Lies." *Weekly Standard* (Washington, D.C.), June 12, 2003: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/pulitzer-winning-lies/article/4040>.
- Bethania, Palma. "Trolls, Bots, 'Useful Idiots' Attack New Committee Aimed at Exposing Russian Propaganda Campaigns." *Snopes*. September 21, 2017: <https://www.snopes.com/2017/09/21/kremlin-trolls-bots-useful-idiots-russian-propaganda>.
- Boghardt, Thomas. "Operation Infektion: Soviet Bloc Intelligence and Its AIDS Disinformation Campaign." *Studies in Intelligence* 53, no. 4, (December 2009): 1-22. <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol53no4/pdf/U-%20Boghardt-AIDS-Made%20in%20the%20USA-17Dec.pdf>.
- Bukovski Archives. "Ideology and Politics of Soviet Communist Party (KPSS)." Accessed May 9, 2018. <http://bukovsky-archives.net>.
- Burke, Arleigh A. *Russia and the "Color Revolution."* Report (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 28, 2014): <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russia-and-color-revolution>.
- Byers, Dylan. "Russian-bought Black Lives Matter ad on Facebook targeted Baltimore and Ferguson." *CNN* (Atlanta, GA), September 28, 2017: <http://money.cnn.com/2017/09/27/media/facebook-black-lives-matter-targeting/index.html>.
- Castle, Stephen. "Facebook and Twitter Promise to Aid Inquiry on Russian Brexit Meddling." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), November 28, 2017: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/world/europe/uk-facebook-brexite-russia.html>.
- Chen, Adrian. "The Agency." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), June 2, 2015: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/magazine/the-agency.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur>.
- Chivvis, Christopher S. *Understanding Russian 'Hybrid Warfare': And What Can Be Done About It.* Report (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, May 11, 2017): <https://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT468.html>.
- Cornell, Svante E. and S. Frederick Starr, ed. *The Guns of August 2008.* New York: The Central Asia Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, 2009.
- Cull, Nicholas. *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American propaganda and public diplomacy, 1945-1989.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Dorell, Oren. "State Department launches \$40 million initiative to counter Russia election meddling." *USA Today* (McLean, VA), February 26, 2018: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/02/26/state-dept-launch-new-effort-counter-russian-election-meddling/371906002>.
- "Experts Suspect Russia Is Using Ukraine As A Cyberwar Testing Ground." *NPR* (Washington, D.C.), June 22, 2017: <https://www.npr.org/2017/06/22/533951389/experts-suspect-russia-is-using-ukraine-as-a-cyberwar-testing-ground>.
- Fandos, Nicholas, Cecilia Kang, and Mike Isaac. "House Intelligence Committee Releases Incendiary Russian Social Media Ads." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), November 1, 2017: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/01/us/politics/russia-technology-facebook.html?_r=0.

- Fedrigon, Timothy L. "Statement on Hoax Regarding Toxic Gas Release from Birla Carbon's Columbian Chemicals Plant Near Centerville, Louisiana." *Aditya Birla Group*, September 11, 2014: <https://birlacarbon.com/statement-hoax-regarding-toxic-gas-release-birla-carbons-columbian-chemicals-plant-near-centerville-louisiana>.
- Finkel, Evgeny and Yitzhak M. Brudny. "Russia and the colour revolutions." *Democratization* 19, no. 1 (2012): 15-36.
- "Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations." Special Report No.101, *United States Department of State*, July 1982:
<http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Department%20of%20State%20report%20Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Update%20July%201982.pdf>.
- "Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations." Special Report No. 88. *United States Department of State*, October 1981:
<http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Forgery,%20Disinformation,%20Political%20Operations%20October%201981.pdf>.
- Fried, Daniel and Alina Polyakova. *Democratic Defense Against Disinformation*. Report (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, March 5, 2018):
http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Democratic_Defense_Against_Disinformation_FINAL.pdf.
- Gardiner, Harris. "State Dept. Was Granted \$120 Million to Fight Russian Meddling. It Has Spent \$0." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), March 4, 2018:
<https://mobile.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/world/europe/state-department-russia-global-engagement-center.html?referer=http%3A%2F%2Fm.facebook.com>.
- Gatehouse, Gabriel. "Marine Le Pen: Who's funding France's far right?" *BBC* (London, U.K.). April 3, 2017: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39478066>.
- Gerasimov, Valery. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight." *VPK*, February 26, 2013:
<https://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>.
- Higgins, Andrew. "Finger Pointed at Russians in Alleged Coup Plot in Montenegro." *New York Times* (New York, NY), November 26, 2016:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/26/world/europe/finger-pointed-at-russians-in-alleged-coup-plot-in-montenegro.html>.
- Higgins, Andrew. "Maybe Private Russian Hackers Meddled in Election, Putin Says." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), June 1, 2017:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/world/europe/vladimir-putin-donald-trump-hacking.html>.
- Higgins, Andrew. "Russian Money Suspected Behind Fracking Protests." *New York Times* (New York, NY), November 30, 2014:
https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/01/world/russian-money-suspected-behind-fracking-protests.html?_r=0.
- Hingley, Ronald. *The Russian Secret Police: Muscovite, Imperial Russian, and Soviet Political Security Operations*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971.
- Holloway, David. "Gorbachev's New Thinking." *Foreign Affairs* (New York, NY). America and the World 1988 Issue: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/1989-02-01/gorbachevs-new-thinking>.
- Holmes, Kim R. "Putin's Asymmetrical War on the West." *Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.), May 5, 2014: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/05/putins-asymmetrical-war-on-the-west>.

- Jardine, Bradley. "Russia's New Useful Idiots?" *Coda Story* (New York, NY), October 5, 2017: <https://codastory.com/disinformation-crisis/foreign-proxies/russia-s-new-useful-idiots>.
- Johnson, Keith. "Russia's Quiet War Against European Fracking." *Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.), June 20, 2014: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/06/20/russias-quiet-war-against-european-fracking>.
- Keir, Giles. *Russia's 'New' Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power*. Report (London, U.K.: Chatham House, March 21, 2016). <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/russias-new-tools-confronting-west>.
- Kirkpatrick, David D. "Signs of Russian Meddling in Brexit Referendum." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), November 15, 2017: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/15/world/europe/russia-brexit-twitter-facebook.html?_r=0.
- Krushelnicky, Askold. "Ukrainians want pro-Stalin writer stripped of Pulitzer." *The Guardian* (London, U.K.), May 3, 2003: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/may/04/russia.usa>.
- Lipton, Eric, David E. Sanger and Scott Shane. "The Perfect Weapon: How Russian Cyberpower Invaded the U.S." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), December 13, 2016: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/13/us/politics/russia-hack-election-dnc.html>.
- "The 'Lisa case': Germany as a target of Russian disinformation." *NATO Review Magazine*: <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2016/Also-in-2016/lisa-case-germany-target-russian-disinformation/EN/index.htm>.
- "Lithuania looking for source of false accusation of rape by German troops." *Reuters* (London, U.K.), February 17, 2017: <https://in.reuters.com/article/lithuania-nato/lithuania-looking-for-source-of-false-accusation-of-rape-by-german-troops-idINKBN15W1LA>.
- Lucas, Ryan. "The Next Big Focus In The Russia Investigations: Social Media." *NPR* (Washington, D.C.), September 22, 2017: <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/22/552726960/the-next-big-focus-in-the-russia-investigations-social-media>.
- McGuinness, Damien. "How a cyber attack transformed Estonia." *BBC* (London, U.K.), April 27, 2017: <http://www.bbc.com/news/39655415>.
- Nougayrède, Natalie. "Spectre of Russian influence looms large over French election." *The Guardian* (London, U.K.), April 12, 2017: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/12/russian-influence-looms-over-french-election>.
- Paul, Christopher and Miriam Matthews. *The Russian "Firehose of Falsehood" Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It*. Report (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016): <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE198.html>.
- Pomerantsev, Peter and Michael Weiss. "Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money." *Institute of Modern Russia*, November 17, 2014.
- "RBK Investigation: How a 'troll factory' worked on elections in the U.S." *RBK*, October 17, 2017: <https://www.rbc.ru/magazine/2017/11/59e0c17d9a79470e05a9e6c1>.
- Rinke, Andreas and Paul Carrel. "German-Russian ties feel Cold War-style chill over rape case." *Reuters* (London, U.K.), February 1, 2016: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-russia/german-russian-ties-feel-cold-war-style-chill-over-rape-case-idUSKCN0VA31O>.

- Rothman, Noah. "When Useful Idiots Were Useful." *Commentary Magazine*, February 21, 2018: <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/american-society/useful-idiots-useful-russia-meddling>.
- "Russian disinformation distorts American and European democracy." *The Economist* (London, U.K.), February 22, 2018: <https://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21737297-mueller-indictment-reveals-some-kremlins-tactics-russian-disinformation-distorts>.
- "Russian journalists publish massive investigation into St. Petersburg troll factory's U.S. operations." *Meduza*, October 17, 2017: <https://meduza.io/en/news/2017/10/17/russian-journalists-publish-massive-investigation-into-st-petersburg-troll-factory-s-u-s-operations>.
- "Russia behind cyber-attack, says Ukraine's security service." *BBC* (London, U.K.), July 2, 2017: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40471310>.
- "Russia wants explanation over Germany's handling of 'teen rape' case." *DW* (Berlin, Germany), January 26, 2016: <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-wants-explanation-over-germanys-handling-of-teen-rape-case/a-19005535>.
- Rutenberg, Jim. "RT, Sputnik and Russia's New Theory of War." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), September 13, 2017: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/magazine/rt-sputnik-and-russias-new-theory-of-war.html>.
- Schoen, Fletcher and Christopher J. Lamb. "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference." *Institute for National Strategic Studies*, Strategic Perspectives 11, (2012): 1-155.
- Shane, Scott. "The Fake Americans Russia Created to Influence the Election." *The New York Times* (New York, NY), September 7, 2017: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/07/us/politics/russia-facebook-twitter-election.html?_r=1.
- Shekhovtsov, Anton. *Tango Noir: Russia and the Western Far Fight*. Kindle edition. London: Routledge, 2017.
- Shultz, Richard H. and Roy Godson. *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984.
- Shuster, Simon. "Russia has launched a fake news war on Europe. Now Germany is fighting back." *Time*, August 9, 2017: <http://time.com/4889471/germany-election-russia-fake-news-angela-merkel>.
- Smith, David J. "Russian Cyber Strategy and the War Against Georgia." *Atlantic Council* (blog) (Washington, D.C.), January 14, 2015: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/russian-cyber-policy-and-the-war-against-georgia>.
- Stern, Ludmila. *Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union, 1920-40*. USA and Canada: Routledge, 2007.
- Syal, Rajeev. "Brexit: foreign states may have interfered in vote, report says." *The Guardian* (London, U.K.), April 12, 2017: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/12/foreign-states-may-have-interfered-in-brexit-vote-report-says>.
- Sydell, Laura. "How Russian Propaganda Spreads On Social Media." *NPR* (Washington, D.C.), October 29, 2017: <https://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2017/10/29/560461835/how-russian-propaganda-spreads-on-social-media>.

- Symons, Emma-Kate. "The big winner in the French election will be Vladimir Putin." *Quartz Media*. April 19, 2017: <https://qz.com/961177/french-election-2017-marine-lepen-and-emmanuel-macron-lead-but-the-big-winner-in-the-french-election-will-be-vladimir-putin>.
- Thomas, Timothy L. "Russian Information Warfare Theory: The Consequences of August 2008." in Stephen J. Blank and Richard Weitz (eds) *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald*, 265-301. Report (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010).
- Toosi, Nahal. "Tillerson spurns \$80 million to counter ISIS, Russian propaganda." *Politico* (Arlington, VA), August 2, 2017: <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/08/02/tillerson-isis-russia-propaganda-241218>.
- "Two popular conservative Twitter personalities were just outed as Russian trolls." *Daily News Philly* (Philadelphia, PA), November 3, 2017: <http://www.philly.com/philly/news/politics/presidential/russia-fake-twitter-facebook-posts-accounts-trump-election-jenna-abrams-20171103.html>.
- "Ukraine Famine Revelations from the Russian Archives." *The Library of Congress*, August 31, 2016: <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/ukra.html>.
- "Ukraine power cut 'was cyber-attack.'" *BBC* (London, U.K.), January 11, 2017: <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-38573074>.
- United States of America V. Internet Research Agency LLC et. al., Criminal No..18 U.S.C. §§ 2, 371, 1349, 1028A: <https://www.justice.gov/file/1035477/download>.
- United States Information Agency. "An Overview": <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/overview.pdf>.
- United States Information Agency. "Soviet Active Measures in the 'Post-Cold War' Era 1988-1991." A Report Prepared at the Request of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations by the United States Information Agency, June 1992. Compiled by J. Ransom Clark: http://intellit.muskingum.edu/russia_folder/pcw_era/index.htm.
- Volkman, Ernest. "Feliks Dzerzhinsky, Jan Berzin: Midnight in Lubyanka" in *Spies: The Secret Agents Who Changed the Course of History*, 195-205. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994.
- Weisburd, Andrew, Clint Watts, and JM Berger. "Trolling for Trump: How Russia is trying to destroy our democracy." *War on the Rocks*. November 6, 2016: <https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/trolling-for-trump-how-russia-is-trying-to-destroy-our-democracy>.
- Williams, Zoe. "What is an internet troll?" *The Guardian* (London, U.K.), 12 June, 2012: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/jun/12/what-is-an-internet-troll>.
- Wilson, Andrew. "Russia's 'Nudge' Propaganda." *Stop Fake*. September 15, 2015: <https://www.stopfake.org/en/andrew-wilson-russia-s-nudge-propaganda>.
- Wilson Center. *Mitrokhin Archive*: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/52/mitrokhin-archive>.
- Wilson Center. *Vassiliev Notebooks*: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/86/vassiliev-notebooks>.
- Windrem, Robert. "Timeline: Ten Years of Russian Cyber Attacks on Other Nations." *NBC News* (New York, NY), December 18, 2016: <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/hacking-in-america/timeline-ten-years-russian-cyber-attacks-other-nations-n697111>.

Irina Arabidze

Yekelchyk, Serhy. *The conflict in Ukraine What Everyone Needs to Know*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.