Russian Soft Power & Influence Operations Against the West

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The views and opinions expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, Air University or Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation.
Overview

• Russian Narrative: Coping with the Loss of Empire
• Russian Soft Power: Iron Fist in a Velvet Glove
• Why Should We Care?
  &
• What Can We Do?
Russia: Post-colonial AND Post-imperial

Russia Did Not Lose the Cold War... but Moscow Lost an Empire
"Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and co-patriots found themselves outside Russian territory."  

Vladimir Putin, “State of the Nation,” April 2005 (official Kremlin translation)
David Satter
It Was a Long Time Ago, and It Never Happened Anyway
Russia and the Communist Past
“...the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals and policies.”

Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*

“. . . complex of instruments and methods to achieve foreign policy objectives without the use of weapons, which include information and other means.”

Unfortunately, these means are used to cultivate and provoke extremism, separatism, nationalism, manipulation of public opinion, [and] direct intervention in the internal politics of sovereign governments.”

“However, the activity of ‘pseudo-NGOs’ [and] other structures which, with outside support, have the aim to destabilize the situation in this or that country, is unacceptable.”

Quoted in Marcel H. Van Herpen, *Putin’s Propaganda Machine*
"The events in Ukraine are a national tragedy. . . . The Arab Spring has come to the capital of a European state."

Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Int’l Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council

"...you don’t even know whether it is better to talk with the governments of some of these states or with their American protectors and sponsors."

V. Putin, regarding the clash with Ukraine
Ethnic Russian population, by region

Kiev city 13.1%

Sevastopol city 71.6%

Crimea 58.3%

Source: Ukraine’s 2001 Census (the most recent available)

The Wall Street Journal
“The essence of hybrid, or non-linear war is to wage war without ever announcing it officially. This is why it represents such a challenge for NATO, the quintessentially 20th-century security alliance. . . . Tanks don’t prevent cyber-attacks; you can’t respond to a propaganda campaign with a cruise missile.”

“President Putin & Foreign Minister Lavrov are not burdened with the truth. They don’t have a roomful of journalists checking on them... they use information like they do artillery—lots of it, continuously.”

-U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges

Hybrid Warfare = Combination of multiple conventional and unconventional tools of warfare

- Special forces
- Irregular forces
- Regular military forces
- Economic warfare
- Cyber attacks
- Diplomacy
- Information warfare propaganda
- Support of local unrest
“We fully support our country’s foreign policy.”
Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief, RT
Liz Wahl resigned from RT on the air

"We are lying every single day at RT. There are a million different ways to lie, and I really learned that at RT."

Sara Firth resigned as RT’s London correspondent
NGO Finds Link Between Neo-Nazism in Eastern Europe and NATO Expansion

The administrator-general of the Eurasian Observatory for Democracy & Elections (EODE) Luc Michel said that the glorification of Fascism and neo-Nazism accompanies every stage of NATO expansion to the East. "MOSCOW [Sputnik], Alexander Moscow — Sputnik between the lines of history and reality."

Holodomor Hoax: Joseph Stalin's Crime That Never Took Place

Playing into the hands of Ukrainian nationalists, a monument to the so-called Ukrainian "Holodomor," one 20th century's most famous myths and vitriolic pieces of anti-Soviet Propaganda, has been erected in the US capital.

Remarkably, the roots of the "Holodomor" ("deliberate starvation") myth lie in the longstanding Cold War standoff between Soviet Russia and the West. After the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, infamous Nazi collaborators — members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and their paramilitary UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) units —
"On an average working day, the Russians are to post on news articles 50 times. Each blogger is to maintain six Facebook accounts publishing at least three posts a day. . . On Twitter, the bloggers are expected to manage 10 accounts with up to 2,000 followers and tweet 50 times a day."

Max Seddon in *Buzzfeed*
“Information war is now the main type of war, preparing the way for military action.”

Dmitry Kiselyov, head of Rossiya Segodnya, quoted by Peter Pomerantsov, in “Inside Putin’s Information War”, Politico, Jan 2015

“[The Russian media is] yet another weapon, yet another unit of the Armed Forces.”

“Political commentator Yulia Latynina said Russia wants to see the destruction of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ‘Only this will allow Putin to achieve the desired result, to show Obama how he, Putin, a real man, succeeded where Obama was disgraced,’ she said in her program Saturday night on Ekho Moskvy radio.”
Why Should We Care? What Can We Do?
Russian interference looms over European elections

BY MORGAN CHALFANT - 04/21/17 06:04 AM EDT

The Great Debate

Russia having success in hybrid war against Germany

By Lucian Kim | February 7, 2016

Who Will “Break” First? Russia or the West?
CAN FANCY BEAR BE STOPPED? THE CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER OF RUSSIAN INFO OPS

JOSHUA FOUST

SEPTEMBER 29, 2016

Russia is engaged in an unprecedented, sophisticated attack on the American political system. Defeating it won’t be easy.
"Fake News"?

Friends, please remember that if you see a whopper of a Wikileaks in next two days - it's probably a fake.

When Western audiences were not armed with this prior awareness, and as a result began to question in their own minds whether they had their facts straight, Russian disinformation objectives were achieved.

Keir Giles, *The Next Phase of Russian Information Warfare*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official list of “undesirables”</th>
<th>Based</th>
<th>Groups put on a July 2015 “patriotic stop list” for possible “undesirable” designation</th>
<th>Based</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Modern Russia</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Open Society Foundations</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
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<td>Open Russia</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>National Endowment for Democracy</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>Open Russia (Civic movement)</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>International Republican Institute</td>
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<td>International Republican Institute</td>
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<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
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<td>Media Development Investment Fund</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>MacArthur Foundation*</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
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<td>National Democratic Institute</td>
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<td>Freedom House</td>
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<td>U.S. Russia Foundation</td>
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<td>Charles Stewart Mott Foundation</td>
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<td>National Endowment for Democracy</td>
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<td>Ukrainian World Congress</td>
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Note: The “patriotic stop list” is a list of foreign NGOs that Russia’s Federation Council recommended be investigated for possible “undesirable” designation. It is unofficial and not legally binding.

*Voluntarily closed Moscow branch in 2015.

Source: Russia’s Ministry of Justice, Vedomosti
An outwardly strong but internally brittle, personalized and unstable regime.

"To forgive the terrorists is up to God, but to send them to him is up to me."
“Suddenly there's a sense that Vladimir Putin's regime feels threatened. But . . . the regime is very dangerous when it feels threatened. Because everybody knows how 2011-12 ended: with a harsh crackdown on dissent followed by a military adventure in Ukraine.”

Brian Whitmore, Radio Free Europe, 30 Mar 17
Percentage of Ethnic Russians Living in the Baltic (NATO) States
Russia Walks the Line Between War and Peace in the Baltics

March 19, 2017  ·  Joel Harding

Lithuania fears Russian propaganda is prelude to eventual invasion

The Kremlin’s attempts to rewrite history are seen as threats by Baltic states similar to its justification for annexing Crimea

Moscow switches from unfriendly rhetoric to state-sponsored lies

Vladimir Sazonov for StopFake.org

Re: Baltica: Baltic Russian-language news sites Baltnews linked to Kremlin’s global propaganda network

2017-04-07  ·  BNS/TBT Staff
“We also know from history that where there is enough tension, war can break out without its truly being willed by either side.”

Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*
All too often, the view of Russia does not correspond to reality: information on Russia is either distorted or incomplete or just nonsense.

Margarita Simonyan