

U.S. UKRAINE FOUNDA TION

Key Messages of Russia's Disinformation Campaign

Kateryna Smagliy, July 8, 2019

- 1) glorification of Russia as the world's leading defender of "true" Christianity, morality, family and other conservative values; exploitation of religious sentiment, especially among Orthodox believers;
- 2) criticism of the West for the "loss of its moral compass" and "degeneracy"; mocking Western concepts of human rights and (pseudo)democracy; accusing the West of hypocrisy and double standards;
- 3) revisionism of Russian/Soviet history and whitewashing of Soviet leaders, including Joseph Stalin; denial of Moscow's responsibility for mass crimes committed against the Russian people as well as other nations of the USSR and abroad, particularly the 1932-33 genocide against Ukrainians; glorification of Russia's role in the World War Second victory over Nazi Germany and silencing the role of other nations in this success;
- 4) denial of Russia's responsibility for international aggression, including the war in Georgia in 2008 and the subsequent occupation of parts of its territory, de-facto occupation of parts of Moldova, and the ongoing undeclared war against Ukraine which has so far resulted in the illegal annexation of Crimea and the military occupation of Ukraine's eastern territories;
- 5) dehumanizing Ukrainians; bashing Ukraine's culture and language; promoting narratives of fascist revival and anti-Semitism in Ukraine; misrepresenting Ukraine's current government as a Western puppet committed to neo-Nazi ideologies; discrediting Ukraine's post-Euromaidan reforms as incompetent; portraying Ukraine as a "failed" and "corrupt" state that is not worthy of Western support;
- 6) blaming the West for the Cold War and portraying Western sanctions against Russia as a return to a "morally bankrupt" and "unjust" "Cold War mentality";
- 7) hyperbolic focus on Ukraine's economic and political troubles, which are misrepresented as inherent societal failures; support for anti-establishment groups and radical rightist and leftist ideologies in Europe and North America which are often misrepresented as legitimate voices speaking on behalf of whole societies;
- 8) criticism of Western institutions for their seeming inability to react to new global challenges, such as international terrorism and migration, in order to undermine their credibility and standing;
- 9) obstruction of European integration; revival of divisive lines within Europe based on ethnicity, culture, religion, and history; support for separatism in targeted Western states.

Methods of Spreading:

Television, think-tanks, conferences, academic narratives, school textbooks, museum exhibits, movie propaganda.