

DOI 10.33099/2618-1614-2024-25-2-58-64

UDC 355.451:327.88[(470+571):(477)]

V. V. Namestnik,

*Candidate of Science in Public Administration,
the National Defence University of Ukraine,*

M. S. Klunnyk,

PhD Student, the National Defence University of Ukraine

Russian information operations against Ukraine in 2022–2023: conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned

Russian propaganda utilizes both classical media (television, newspapers, radio) and modern media (YouTube channels, messengers, social networks) to promote its information agenda. The systematic dissemination of narratives, their clear targeting of specific audiences, and the multifaceted approach to the choice of propaganda tools and tactics indicate a deliberate information and psychological impact on Ukrainian society, and hence the conduct of information operations. This article is devoted to the analysis of Russian information operations conducted during 2022–2023, which served as information support for the Russian-Ukrainian war. The key narratives of Russian propaganda, the tactics, and channels of its dissemination, as well as the key groups of actors are analysed.

Key words: information technologies, information operations, psychological operations, information warfare, disinformation, propaganda.

Introduction. Even before the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in 2014, the Russian Federation waged an aggressive information war against Ukraine. Its purpose was to manipulate public opinion, sow discord, and legitimize its actions. The aggressive information operations conducted by Russia against Ukraine preceded the full-scale invasion in 2022. Numerous studies have documented Russia's systematic efforts in creating disinformation, propagandistic narratives, and exploiting vulnerabilities in social media for their dissemination.

With the full-scale invasion in February 2022, the information war intensified significantly. Social media platforms became a distinct battleground. Traditional Russian media outlets, such as RT and Sputnik, which reached millions worldwide through digital platforms, actively propagated the Kremlin's agenda. The systematic dissemination of narratives, their clear targeting toward specific audiences, and the multifaceted approach to selecting tools and propaganda tactics all indicate a purposeful information-psychological influence on Ukrainian society. Consequently, this points to the execution of information operations.

This article aims to semantically analyse Russian information operations during 2022–2023. It involves synthesizing the origins of key narratives, tactics, and propaganda tools, as well as identifying critical actors employed by Russia to exert informational influence on various target audiences. Considering this analysis will contribute to developing effective mechanisms to counter Russian propaganda and disinformation.

Statistics and analytics

Based on the results of USAID research «Ukrainian media use and trust in 2023», the number of people using the internet daily continues to steadily increase each year. In 2023, this figure reached 89%, with 98% of individuals aged 18–35 reporting daily internet usage. Among the surveyed population, 84% were aware that misinformation occasionally appears in the media. The percentage of people who had encountered common Russian propaganda narratives varied between 26% and 56%. Additionally, approximately 40% of respondents discussed these narratives with friends and family. Only 38% of those aware of misinformation considered it as an urgent issue [1].

For comparison, according to a UNESCO survey conducted across 16 countries, 56% of internet users primarily obtain news from social media. Furthermore, 68% of respondents identified fake news as the most prevalent content on social platforms. In contrast to the Ukrainian audience, 85% of foreign respondents expressed concern regarding the impact of propaganda, particularly on the political situation in their respective countries [2].

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report highlights misinformation and harmful content generated by artificial intelligence as a key risk. In the risk forecast for the next two years, the spread of misinformation and harmful information is at the top position, likewise in the ten-year forecast, it ranks fifth [3].

Considering the intensity of Russian propaganda within the Ukrainian information space, we can conclude that the adversary's destructive information influence poses a significant threat to Ukrainian society.

Main propaganda narratives

The most overarching element of Russian information operations is the narrative. By «narrative,» we refer to a communication tool that embodies fundamental ideas, reflects and defines the basic principles of existence and paths of development, and characterizes the nature and direction of specific phenomena or events.

To promote narratives, the following elements are utilized:

- messages: these are individual theses used by adversaries to shape public opinion.
- manipulations: distorted or out-of-context facts/statements employed to «approve» propagandistic messages.
- fakes: the simplest propaganda elements – untrue information presented in any form (visual, textual, audio) – often used to saturate the information space and divert attention.

Analytical research results [4–6] demonstrate the systematic nature of Russian propaganda, observed both within the Ukrainian information space and in the information environments of other countries. As part of this study, we will provide examples of the most prevalent Russian propaganda narratives, their objectives, and the methods used to disseminate them within the context of influencing three key target audiences: Ukrainians, Russians, and EU citizens.

One of the most widespread Russian propaganda narratives is the portrayal of «Nazism in Ukraine.» This narrative has been in use since 2014, particularly in the context of questioning the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government formed after the Revolution of Dignity. When announcing the so-called «special military operation,» the Russian president also emphasized the «need for de-Nazification and demilitarization» of Ukraine. Russian information operations consistently employ this foundational narrative.

The purpose of disseminating this narrative in Ukraine is to create allocation within Ukrainian society based on attitudes toward the homeland – specifically, levels of patriotism or nationalism. In Russian information operations, pro-Ukrainian views, patriotism, or nationalism are equated with Nazism or fascism.

The dissemination of this narrative in Eastern European countries aims to achieve several objectives: discrediting Ukraine on the international stage by portraying Ukraine negatively, Russia seeks to undermine its reputation and legitimacy; shaping public sentiment against Ukrainians the narrative aims to create a negative perception of Ukrainians, fostering discord and mistrust; reducing international support for Ukraine by promoting this narrative, Russia aims to weaken international backing for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity; justifying Russian armed aggression – the narrative serves as a pretext for Russia's actions.

For the Russian target audience, the narrative is designed to garner support for the government, particularly by combining it with the narrative of «heroic Russian victory over Nazism during World War II.» Notably, the «resurgence of Nazism» narrative has been used in other armed conflicts initiated by Russia.

Additionally, it's worth considering the perspective of American historian Timothy Snyder. According to Snyder, «... today's Russia meets most of the criteria that scholars tend to apply. It has a cult around a single leader, Vladimir Putin. It has a cult of the dead, organized around World War II. It has a myth of a past golden age of imperial greatness, to be restored by a war of healing violence – the murderous war on Ukraine. ... The Kremlin defines Ukraine as an artificial state, whose Jewish president proves it cannot be real. After the elimination of a small elite, the thinking goes, the inchoate masses would happily accept Russian dominion. Today it is Russia that is denying Ukrainian food to the world, threatening famine in the global south ...» [7].

A significant portion of Russian information operations during the Russian-Ukrainian war is aimed at framing *events on the frontlines* «in the right context.» This involves deploying numerous narratives that resonate with the notion of a «second army in the world.» Within these narratives, Russia employs techniques of intimidation, manipulation, and distortion of facts. Since the onset of the full-scale invasion, Russia has consistently disseminated messages about its own «significant successes,» «conducting military operations at less than full strength,» «acts of goodwill,» «tactical retreats,» and the «guaranteed defeat of Ukraine,» regardless of the actual situation on the frontline [6].

In line with the ideology of «second army in the world,» there are narratives *related to international aid to Ukraine*: «the West knows/understands that Ukraine is losing the war, so aid is futile;» «the West is tired of helping Ukraine;» «Western aid only harms Ukraine;» «Western countries supply outdated and poor-quality weapons to Ukraine;» «the war in Ukraine benefits the West, allowing them to test modern weapons in real combat.»

The overarching goal of disseminating these narratives within the Russian domestic information space is to bolster or elevate Russian patriotism. It aims to instill a sense of pride in «the might of their country» compared to a perceived «declining/decaying» West. Additionally, Russia justifies its tactical setbacks on the frontlines. Internally, Russian propaganda convinces its citizens that the «collective West intentionally harms Russia because it fears it.» To achieve this, they employ the specially crafted term «Russophobia.» However, it's important to note that Russians often label any expression diverging from Russian propaganda as «Russophobia,» regardless of its context or intent.

In the Ukrainian information space, such information operations aim to foster despair, intensify feelings of fatigue and hopelessness from the ongoing war, cultivate distrust toward partner states, and ultimately, create an atmosphere conducive to accepting defeat under favourable conditions for Russia (laying the groundwork and shaping public opinion regarding the necessity of capitulation). The impact on the Western target audience is somewhat more intricate. These information operations likely seek to undermine the integrity of the EU and destabilize situations in member countries by dividing public opinion on the advisability of supporting Ukraine. Notably, this information/psychological influence has proven somewhat effective on foreign target audiences, as the international community was unprepared for the prolonged Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Despite the challenges, comprehensive support for Ukraine remains a prevailing trend among global leaders.

It is worth noting that during 2022–2023, Russia exhibited a typical reaction to reports of supplying new types of weapon systems to Ukraine:

- «Supplying new types of weapons won't change anything on the battlefield»: Russia consistently downplayed the impact of any new weaponry provided to Ukraine.
- «Any new type of weaponry is ineffective or easily destroyed»: Russia declared newly supplied weapons, such as tanks, MLRS «HIMARS», and «Patriot» air defence systems, as ineffective or vulnerable.
- «Threats against countries providing aid»: Russia issued threats against states that assisted Ukraine, even going so far as to label them «parties to the conflict» and accusing them of having «legitimate targets» for the Russian armed forces.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that the dissemination of these messages did not yield the intended results. Partner countries continue to provide aid to Ukraine and maintain their support through imposing sanctions against Russia.

As a result of the 2022–2023 period, Russia has become the most sanctioned country in the world [8]. In late December 2023, the EU approved the twelfth package of

sanctions against Russia [9], and on February 23, 2024, the thirteenth [10]. Sanctions against Russia are also being imposed by other partner countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

An important tool was the introduction of personal sanctions against key Russian politicians and propagandists. This led to the emergence of a propaganda narrative about the «*ineffectiveness of sanctions policy.*» Russian propaganda spreads messages that supposedly «Western sanctions only strengthen Russia, as internal «import substitution» is developing and GDP is growing,» «only Western companies suffer from sanctions, as they have lost a huge market of Russian consumers of goods and services,» «Western sanctions are ineffective since they are only «on paper,» and the West still cooperates with Russia,» etc.

The purpose of spreading this narrative in Ukraine is to demoralize and destabilize Ukrainian society: «the war against the «invulnerable» enemy is futile,» and Western partners are «hypocrites who do not deserve trust.» In the global information space, this is an attempt to achieve, if not the abolition, then at least the mitigation of sanctions. In its own information space, the Russian authorities are trying to influence the worldview and perception, convincing that Russian «import substitution» is developing the Russian market, strengthening the economy, and the Russian authorities are «professional and caring, unlike the incompetent Western officials who do not act in the interests of their citizens.»

It is important to emphasize, based on the results of studies on the impact of sanctions policy on the Russian economy, draw attention to the controversial nature of such an assessment in the context of a state of war: «GDP in the war economy is a perverse measure of economic impact and economic welfare. The destructive creation of weapons by National Accounting conventions generates income, and this provides a cushion in the GDP numbers. Russia is producing rockets and grenades, and this directly enhances GDP although it does not create anything of value. Weapons production drives out civilian production and if the increase in the military-industrial complex exceeds the civilian loss, GDP rises while the country has fewer goods to invest and consume than before» [11].

The authors of the study also note that it is important to pay attention not only to the actual (real) economic indicators but also to assess what these indicators would be if the sanctions had not been introduced. In general, sanctions are a tool of influence that is delayed in time. In other words, the most significant impact of the sanctions policy will be in the long term.

Another large block of Russian propaganda narratives concerns the topic of «*Ukrainian refugees.*» According to the «Opora» network, as of June 2023, there were 8 million 177 thousand Ukrainian citizens abroad, which

is about 20% of the population of the state as of February 24, 2022 [12]. Considering the statistics and the emotional and psychological component of this issue, Russia actively exploits this vulnerability in information operations.

By spreading various disinformation messages and narratives about Ukrainian refugees, Russian propaganda tries to divide Ukrainian society according to the principle of «left or stayed.» They say that those who remained in Ukraine are ashamed of the unworthy behaviour of their compatriots who do not show themselves in the best way abroad. They also actively spread the thesis that «Ukrainians who stayed are worthier than those who left.»

Disinformation about Ukrainian refugees is aimed at discrediting and creating a negative image of Ukrainians in the information field of the host countries. Ukrainian refugees are portrayed as ungrateful, criminals, scammers, etc. Also, in the information space of the host countries, messages are often spread that supposedly helping Ukrainians is a higher priority for the authorities than social protection of their citizens (an example of a well-known video where the German police confiscate property from citizens to help Ukraine).

By depicting Ukrainian refugees in a negative light in the Russian information space, propaganda tries to justify the war. They say that «evil must be punished.» It should be noted that in the Russian information space, this narrative is used rather to reinforce other narratives, in particular about Nazism – they say that abroad Ukrainians show their «Nazi character» towards citizens of the host countries.

However, on the international stage, Russia claims to have accepted the most Ukrainian refugees, thus justifying the forced deportation of Ukrainians, including Ukrainian children, which is a war crime. For example, in April 2022, Russian and pro-Russian media, citing Lavrov, reported on more than 1 million Ukrainian refugees who had allegedly fled to Russia. However, according to data provided in 2023 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 5.3 million people have fled Ukraine. Most of them went to Poland – more than 2.9 million people, to Romania – more than 801 thousand people, to Russia – more than 647 thousand, to Hungary – 507 thousand, to Moldova – more than 439 thousand, to Slovakia – more than 363 thousand and to Belarus – more than 24 thousand people [13].

Despite the certain number of people who left for Russia, it is worth noting that at that time more than 500 thousand Ukrainians, including 121 thousand children, were forcibly deported to Russia from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian citizens were also held in so-called «filtration camps» in the temporarily occupied territories [13].

Techniques of Propaganda. To disseminate propaganda and achieve the objectives of their information

operations, Russia employs various tactics, technologies, and procedures. Let us delve more deeply into the most prevalent ones.

A characteristic feature of Russian information and psychological operations is the use of «*newspeak*», i.e. the use of technology of replacing concepts to change the target audience's negative attitude to well-known phenomena or concepts to a neutral or positive one. Let us give a few examples.

Thanks to the cult of the so-called «Great Patriotic War», Russians have developed a stable associative link: «war – death». Therefore, to make it easier to involve Russians in a full-scale invasion, they announced not a war against Ukraine, but a «special military operation.» The word «explosion» has a strong association with danger and fear, therefore, in the information field, such events on the territory of Russia are called «slap» (slap – in Russian sounds like a pop or a clap). This term is rather associated with some everyday sound or applause, i.e. it has a neutral or positive association. The democratically elected Ukrainian government is called a «regime» or «junta» – i.e. terms with a negative connotation.

Another typical tactic of Russian propaganda is «reflection.» It is used to divert attention from real events or phenomena in Russia to similar invented events or phenomena abroad. For example, Russia accuses Ukraine, the US, and the EU of the same crimes that Russia is accused of. For example, after the liberation of the Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions, it became known about numerous cases of torture of civilians in the temporarily occupied territories by Russian military personnel (for reference: as of the end of 2023, the SBU has investigated more than a thousand such cases. In total, the SBU is investigating more than 57 thousand criminal cases on the facts of violations of the laws and customs of war since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine [14]). In response to accusations, Russia disseminates messages in the temporarily occupied territories about «atrocities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the SBU» that civilians were subjected to (or are expected to be subjected to) after the liberation of these territories from Russian troops. After massive missile attacks and hits on civilian infrastructure facilities in Ukraine, Russia reacted with messages about «crimes of the Armed Forces of Ukraine» related to the deaths of civilians in the temporarily occupied territories or border territories of Russia. Thus, the key task of the reflection tactic is to divert attention from the subject of discussion or to change the direction of the discussion. In English-language sources, this tactic is also called «*whataboutism*» as a result of the merger of the words «what about.»

To prevent compassion for Ukrainians, and even more – to form hatred and encourage Russians to go to war with Ukraine as a «sacred mission,» they use

techniques of hyperbolizing the negative qualities of Ukrainians (aggressiveness, vindictiveness, cruelty, etc.). This propaganda tactic is called «*dehumanization of the enemy*.» To «dehumanize,» they use isolated, extremely negative emotional comments or posts on social networks (by real people or bots – it doesn't matter), attributing such emotional tendencies to the entire Ukrainian society towards Russians. They say that Ukrainians are «sincerely happy» about the destruction and death of civilians in the temporarily occupied or Russian territories, or that Ukrainians allegedly want to destroy Russia as a nation. This tactic is most often used when spreading the narrative about «Nazism» and «evil Bandera followers» in Ukraine. The spread of such messages is a reflection of the Russians' attitude towards Ukrainian society (for example, the satisfied reactions of ordinary Russians in telegram channels and social networks to the consequences of missile attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine). Russians also resort to the «dehumanization» tactic in information operations about the «discrimination and persecution» of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine – they say that there is nothing sacred for the Ukrainian authorities, they are «anti-Christians and atheists.»

At the same time, the enemy uses a tactic called «*pass it on*» to spread panic and chaos among the civilian population of Ukraine. Propagandists formulate messages that provoke a strong emotional reaction and call for the urgent maximum dissemination of this information. For example, at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, messages with alleged coordinates of future missile strikes were massively distributed in messengers and social networks. The source of such information was indicated as «intelligence», the serviceman, or «verified sources», which in fact cannot be identified and verified. The key task of these messages was to create panic and undermine trust in official sources of information that «keep silent» about important things.

Simultaneously, Russian propaganda actively employs the «multiple repetition» tactic. Its key objective is to repeatedly propagate a narrative or message across all available communication channels (media, creative industry, cinema, literature, official communication, etc.) to make this narrative appear true. For example, one of the oldest Russian propaganda narratives concerning the inferiority of Ukrainians was disseminated through this technique. Propagandists distorted the historical significance of processes and events, intentionally Russified Ukrainian society, and its information-cultural space, ridiculed the Ukrainian language, and propagated a distorted understanding of Ukrainian culture.

To construct the «correct» internal information space and reinforce Russian propaganda narratives, the «*quoting out of context or distorting interpretation of*

quotes» tactic is widely used. This allows to creation of a false understanding of the overall context and situation among the target audience. For instance, after U.S. President Joseph Biden visited Ukraine in February 2023, Russian and pro-Russian media claimed that Biden had promised Ukrainians «difficult times.» President Biden's speech emphasized that the next five years would likely be decisive for the entire world and global democracies. The selective extraction of words from the broader context aimed to exert psychological pressure on Ukrainian society, suggesting that even partners had lost faith in Ukraine's victory.

Another important tactic of Russian propaganda is «*engaging a wide range of well-known personalities*» to disseminate pro-Russian messages and narratives. By leveraging the sympathies or authority associated with specific individuals, propaganda gains greater significance and «perceived authenticity».

Russian information warfare actors. In information operations conducted by Russian propaganda, various actor groups are actively employed to achieve their geopolitical objectives. Two key groups stand out:

The first group – the Russian Officials. This group includes prominent figures such as Sergey Lavrov (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Nikolai Patrushev (Secretary of the Russian Security Council), Dmitry Medvedev (Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia), Maria Zakharova (Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Sergey Kravtsov (Minister of Education of Russia), Vladimir Medinsky (Minister of Culture), Vyacheslav Volodin (Chairman of the State Duma), Valentina Matviyenko (Chairwoman of the Federation Council), and others.

The second group – media persons. This group comprises individuals who actively shape the media landscape: Vladimir Solovyov, Olga Skabeeva, Evgeny Popov, Margarita Simonyan, Tigran Keosayan, Boris Korchnevnikov, Kirill Andreev, Alexander Krasovsky, Yulia Vitiazeva, Oleg Kots and others.

In effect, these two groups collectively shape the official Russian agenda.

Furthermore, within the internal Russian information space, various celebrities are actively utilized to propagate propaganda and disinformation. These celebrities, including actors, singers, artists, athletes, writers, and bloggers, leverage their influence to promote support for government actions, including the war against Ukraine. Notably, Russian propaganda targets different age groups by employing «idols» from various generations.

Soviet-Era Celebrities. These individuals gained popularity during Soviet times and include figures such as Lev Leshchenko, Vladimir Vinokur, Angelina Vovk, Irina Allegrova, Oleg Gazmanov, Nadezhda Babkina, Nikita Mikhailokov, Yuri Galtsev, and others.

Celebrities of the 1990s–2000s. This group includes well-known personalities from the 1990s and early 2000s, such as Dmitry Duzhev, Sergey Bezrukov, Mykola Baskov, Tina Kandelaki, Valery Kipelov, Mikhail Porechenkov, Dmitry Pevtsov, Yulia Chicherina and others.

Contemporary Representatives of «Russian culture». These individuals, active in the present, contribute to Russian propaganda efforts. Bright examples: Timati and Shaman

Additionally, Russian propaganda vigorously employs celebrities of Ukrainian origin, especially those whose relatives still reside in Ukraine. Figures like Snizana Egorova, Ani Lorak, Taisiya Povaliy, Lolita Myliavska, Yuriy Bardash, Yuriy Baturin, Yuriy Kot, and Tatiana Pop disseminate disinformation, often relying on their supposed personal experiences or «eyewitness accounts» to enhance the impact.

In addition, Russian information operations often involve a group of actors, including former representatives of the Ukrainian political sphere (Viktor Medvedchuk, Illya Kyva, Oleh Tsariov, Mykola Azarov, Viktor Yanukovych), as well as pro-Russian media outlets that are currently banned in Ukraine (Diana Panchenko, Yuriy Podolyaka, Olesia Medvedeva). These actors predominantly disseminate narratives regarding the illegitimacy of the current Ukrainian government, the state coup resulting from the Revolution of Dignity, usurpation of power, suppression of freedom of speech, and «external» control over Ukraine. Pro-Russian narratives are also actively propagated by collaborators who have seized power in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine (Kiril Stremousov, Leonid Pasichnik, Volodymyr Saldo, Yevhen Balitsky, Volodymyr Rogov, Denis Pushilin). Their task is to influence the population in those areas and shape pro-Russian views.

Simultaneously, another influential group of actors consists of religious figures. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Kiril (Vladimir) Gundayaev, publicly support Russia's war against Ukraine. Similarly, representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine disseminate pro-Russian rhetoric. For instance, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has announced suspicions against the former abbot of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed), under two articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine: denial of armed aggression by the Russian Federation and violation of equal rights for citizens based on their religious beliefs, committed by an official repeatedly [15]. Religious motives are also used to cover the activities of Oksana Marchenko, V. Medvedchuk's wife and a television presenter, who has been notified by the SSU of suspicions related to financing actions aimed at forcibly changing or overthrowing the constitutional order or seizing state power, altering territorial

boundaries, or violating the state border of Ukraine. Another example of «religious» Russian propaganda involves Ukrainian Member of Parliament and businessman Vadym Novinsky, who became a cleric in the Moscow Patriarchate's church, left Ukraine and continues to spread pro-Russian narratives.

In addition to the above, Russia has acquired a wide range of speakers among foreign audiences, including politicians, journalists, and academics. They spread pro-Russian rhetoric, relying on their alleged experience and authority. For example, Vladimir Putin's recent interview with American journalist Tucker Carlson allowed him to promote Russian propaganda narratives from the first person of the state to a large foreign audience. Tucker Carlson has repeatedly spread narratives that are in line with Russian propaganda.

Other notable pro-Russian speakers in the West include Scott Ritter, a former American military officer, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, a German politician, and Jeffrey Sachs, an American economist [16]. The aim of spreading pro-Russian narratives abroad is to discredit Ukraine and justify Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, shape pro-Russian public opinion in Western society.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

In summary, it can be concluded that Russian information operations against Ukraine aim to create favourable conditions for offensive operations by strategic groups. These operations involve spreading pro-Russian sentiments, intensifying feelings of doubt, panic, and fear, and undermining trust among Ukrainians in the actions of the government and the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Russian information operations exhibit a systematic and comprehensive impact on critical information infrastructure. The dissemination of narratives and messages by Russian propaganda occurs cyclically, adapting to external circumstances and considering the situation in both the Ukrainian and global information space.

A clear correlation exists between communication channels and target audiences during information operations. Currently, social media platforms and messengers are among the most convenient channels for propaganda and disinformation publishing. This is facilitated by the internal policies governing social media and messenger platforms, the absence of state regulation in this sphere within Ukraine, and the relatively low media literacy level of users.

The article outlines key narrative groups and messaging strategies employed by Russian information operations. However, analysts consistently observe the multifaceted nature of messages and narratives, which increasingly impact various aspects of societal life.

To achieve their goals, Russian propaganda demonstrates flexibility in utilizing diverse information-

psychological tools. These operations involve a combination of individual tactics to construct the information space effectively.

An essential component of countering Russian propaganda and disinformation lies in enhancing the state's strategic communication system. Such improvements would facilitate the timely dissemination of accurate and relevant information. Additionally, addressing Russian propaganda requires a concerted effort to enhance media literacy and critical thinking among the population.

Furthermore, future scientific research should focus on developing mechanisms for regulating the functioning of social media platforms. These mechanisms should strike a balance between preserving freedom of speech and ensuring access to information while effectively blocking the spread of disinformation.

References

1. Ukrainian media use and trust in 2023 [Електронний ресурс] : USAID-Internews Media Consumption Survey // Internews in Ukraine. – Режим доступу : <https://internews.in.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/USAID-Internews-Media-Survey-2023-EN.pdf>.
2. Survey on the impact of online disinformation and hate speech [Електронний ресурс] : September 2023 // UNESCO. – Режим доступу : https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2023/11/unesco_ipsos_survey.pdf.
3. Global Risks Report 2024 [Електронний ресурс] // World Economic Forum. – Режим доступу : <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/in-full>.
4. Pivtorak O. «Our song is beautiful and new.» Messages of Russian propaganda in 11 former socialist camp countries [Електронний ресурс] / O. Pivtorak, P. Khudish // Detector media. – Режим доступу : <https://en.detector.media/post/our-song-is-beautiful-and-new-messages-of-russian-propaganda-in-11-former-socialist-camp-countries>.
5. 330 Shades of Russian Disinformation: Exploring the Media Landscape of Eastern Europe [Електронний ресурс] // Detector media. – Режим доступу : https://detector.media/propahanda_vplyvy/article/206536/2022-12-30-330-shades-of-russian-disinformation-exploring-the-media-landscape-of-eastern-europe.
6. Ukrainian Nazis for the Czech Republic, bio laboratories for North Macedonia, and Russophobia for Georgia. Analysis of Russian propaganda in 11 European countries [Електронний ресурс] / I. Riaboshtan, V. Namestnik, K. Pliuk et al. // Detector media. – Режим доступу : https://detector.media/propahanda_vplyvy/article/202819/2022-09-14-ukrainian-nazis-for-the-czech-republic-bio-laboratories-for-north-macedonia-and-russophobia-for-georgia-analysis-of-russian-propaganda-in-11-european-countries.
7. Snyder T. We Should Say It. Russia Is Fascist [Електронний ресурс] / T. Snyder // The New York Times. – Режим доступу : <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/19/opinion/russia-fascism-ukraine-putin.html>.
8. Manners D. The Most Sanctioned Countries [Електронний ресурс] / D. Manners // ElectronicsWeekly.com. – Режим доступу : <https://www.electronicweekly.com/blogs/manners/democracy-and-standards/the-most-sanctioned-countries-2-2024-01>.
9. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: EU adopts 12th package of economic and individual sanctions [Електронний ресурс] // European Council. – Режим доступу : <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/12/18/russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-eu-adopts-12th-package-of-economic-and-individual-sanctions>.
10. Russia: two years after the full-scale invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine, EU adopts 13th package of individual and economic sanctions [Електронний ресурс] // European Council. – Режим доступу : <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/02/23/russia-two-years-after-the-full-scale-invasion-and-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-eu-adopts-13th-package-of-individual-and-economic-sanctions>.
11. Bergeijk P. A. G. van. Sanctions against Russia: Legal Setting, Intermediate Economic Impact and Potential Political Outcome [Електронний ресурс] : 03 October 2023 / P. A. G. van Bergeijk, L. J. van den Herik // Security and Human Rights Monitor. – Режим доступу : <https://doi.org/10.58866/TQZL81311>.
12. About 20% of Ukrainians Stay Abroad Because of Russia's Full-Scale Invasion – Study by OPORA [Електронний ресурс] // OPORA. – Режим доступу : <https://www.oporaua.org/en/viyana/24792-cherez-povnomasshtabne-vtorgnennia-rosiyi-za-kordonom-perebuvaie-blizko-20-ukrayintsiv-doslidzhennia-opori-24792>.
13. Горбунов Д. рф створює фейки про «добровільне» переселення до них українців, щоб приховати примусову депортацію [Електронний ресурс] / Д. Горбунов // АрміяІнформ. – Режим доступу : <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/05/01/rosiya-stvoryuye-fejky-pro-dobrovolilne-pereselennya-do-nyh-ukrayincziv-shhob-pryhovaty-prymusovu-deportaciyu>.
14. Михайлов Д. СБУ розслідує понад тисячу проваджень щодо катувань цивільних російськими військовими [Електронний ресурс] / Д. Михайлов // Суспільне. Новини. – Режим доступу : <https://suspinne.media/613691-sbu-rozslidue-ponad-tisacu-provadzen-sodo-katuvan-civilnih-rosijskimi-vijskovimi>.
15. SSU exposes UOC-MP metropolitan Pavlo on new facts of subversive activities against Ukraine (video) [Електронний ресурс] // Security Service of Ukraine. – Режим доступу : <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/novyny/sbu-vykryla-mytropolitya-upts-mp-pavla-na-novykh-faktakh-pidryvnoi-diialnosti-proty-ukrainy-video>.
16. Як Західні спікери просували головні наративи, співзвучні російській пропаганді [Електронний ресурс] // Центр протидії інформації. – Режим доступу : <https://cpd.gov.ua/reports/yak-zahidni-spikery-prosuvaly-golovni-naratyvy-spivzvuchni-rosijskij-propagandi>.