



# **RUSSIA'S HYBRID WAR IN UKRAINE (2014-2018)**

CĂTĂLIN ALIN COSTEA

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Cătălin Alin Costea is a PhD student at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest. His thesis analyzes Turkey's foreign policy between 2014 and 2018. His research interests include international relations, foreign policy analysis, security studies, and geopolitics. Costea has written the following articles: "The Role, Objectives and Military Bases of the States Actors Involved in the Syrian Civil War (2011-2019)" (2019);, "Euphrates Shield: An Analysis of Turkey's Intervention in Syria" (2018); "Russian Federation's Provocative Behavior in the Air Space of the Black Sea Region between 2014-2017" (2017); and "The Russian Federation and the Implementation of A2/AD System in the Black Sea: Risks and Threats to Romania" (2016). His articles have been published by Carol I National Defence University Publishing House and are available at the Central and Eastern European Online Library and the ProQuest international database.

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### **SETA | FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TURKEY

Tel: +90 312.551 21 00 | Fax: +90 312.551 21 90

www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

### **SETA | İstanbul**

Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43

Eyüp İstanbul TÜRKİYE

Tel: +90 212 395 11 00 | Fax: +90 212 395 11 11

### **SETA | Washington D.C.**

1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106

Washington, D.C., 20036 USA

Tel: 202-223-9885 | Fax: 202-223-6099

www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

### **SETA | Cairo**

21 Fahmi Street Bab al Luq Abdeen Flat No 19 Cairo EGYPT

Tel: 00202 279 56866 | 00202 279 56985 | @setakahire

### **SETA | Berlin**

Französische Straße 12, 10117 Berlin Germany

Tel: +49 30 20188466

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SIYASET, EKONOMİ VE TOPLUM ARAŞTIRMALARI VAKFI  
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مركز الدراسات السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية



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# FOREWORD

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Ukraine is located in the Eastern Europe and has beautiful mountains, coasts, rural landscapes, and a strong sense of national traditions. It has a strategic position in the Black Sea region and has vast mineral resources. The country has a rich history and its territory, especially the eastern part, was the battlefield between the Russian Empire and its enemies for many centuries. For the tsars and the Soviet leaders, the size of Russia represented the countries geopolitical security against an invader. Shortly after the February 2014 Ukrainian revolution a pro-Western government came to power in Kiev. For the Russian Federation, it was clear that Ukraine would continue its accession steps to the EU and NATO. Moscow understood that it has to intervene to avoid such a scenario and launched a hybrid war against Ukraine.

This report aims to identify the main reasons behind Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine. The report presents the main components of the hybrid war that is being waged to destabilize Ukraine. Russia has used economic, psychological, and cyber warfare against Ukraine and has organized espionage activities on its territory in order to destabilize the country. The same tactics can be used to destabilize another country after they are adapted by the aggressor to the targeted country's profile. The report presents the main threats to Ukraine's national security since 2014. It also underlines the efforts made by Ukraine to counter the hybrid threats.

At the same time, the report draws attention to a less debated topic, namely subversion, which weakens the state's security structure and its national morale. It discusses a selective range of issues like proxy war, trade war, propaganda, cyber-attacks, infiltration, sabotage, and clandestine operations.

This report aims to highlight hybrid war characteristics and the ways in which the Russian Federation implemented the hybrid war concept in Ukraine between 2014 and 2018. It offers solutions to prevent and counter hybrid threats. The report tries to promote an understanding and awareness among the decision-making leaders about the hybrid war threats. The report also addresses academics, researchers, students, and those interested in the topic.

Professor Burhanettin Duran  
*SETA General Coordinator*

# INTRODUCTION

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In the last years, a number of articles have been written about Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine but none of them have presented specific information and examples of all the hybrid activities, available in open sources, organized against Ukraine. This report presents these events and underlines the complexity of this kind of war in order to promote a better understanding of the issue at hand. On November 21, 2013, the Ukrainian government suspended preparations for the signing of the European Union Association Agreement that was to take place a week later during the Summit of the Eastern Partnership at Vilnius (November 28-29).<sup>1</sup> In the following days, thousands of people took to the streets of Kiev and other cities in the Western Ukraine to protest.<sup>2</sup> Despite protests, President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich postponed the signing of the European Union Association Agreement at the Vilnius summit following Moscow's pressures.<sup>3</sup> The decision generated a great wave of dissatisfaction among Ukrainian citizens and triggered the following events. The Azarov government and President Yanukovich's fate along with the future of Ukraine under Russia's influence was decided at the summit in Vilnius. After the decision, thousands of pro-European protesters took to the streets to show their dissatisfaction about the postponement of the signing

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1. "Azarov Says Kyiv Still Interested in EU", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-tymoshenko-interested-eu/25181390.html>, (Accessed: September 1, 2018).

2. Ibid.

3. "Ukraine Crisis: Timeline", BBC, November 13, 2014.

of the agreement. These protests led to a violent fight with the police forces in February that resulted in the death of dozens of people. It all ended on February 22 when the parliament decided with an overwhelming vote to dismiss President Yanukovich, who had already fled to Russia. At the same time, it was decided to appoint an interim president and to set the date of May 25, 2014, for holding presidential elections.<sup>4</sup> On February 23, the Ukrainian Parliament repealed the law on the policy of the state language that allowed the use of minority languages in public institutions in the regions where minorities exceeded 10% of the population. Given the fact that in the southeastern part of Ukraine the ethnically Russian minority accounted for more than 10% of the region's population, the Russian language became a regional one. The abrogation of the law raised a great deal of dissatisfaction among the Russian-speaking population which represents a majority in the southeastern region of Ukraine. Unsatisfied with parliament's decision and encouraged by pro-Russian propaganda, the Russian-speaking population took to the streets to protest.<sup>5</sup> The latest political changes in Kiev and the decisions taken by the new leadership made it clear to the Russian Federation that it must act to protect its strategic interests. On February 27, 2014, while the Ukrainian Parliament was voting for the new pro-Western government, the occupation of Crimea was in full swing. Russia's special forces managed to occupy the peninsula without firing a single shot and on March 18, 2014, the Russian Parliament voted for the annexation of Crimea.<sup>6</sup> So, why did the Russian Federation decide to do this?

The following points are important when speaking about Crimea in geopolitical terms.

- Crimea is a strategic territory in the Black Sea that offers an important advantage in controlling the transit by sea and air into the region.<sup>7</sup> Due to its position it assures the dominance over the Black Sea - from Crimea you can easily reach any shore of the Black Sea. The loss of Crimea would have severely limited Russia's maneuvering freedom and Russia would have lost its influence in the Black Sea region. Also, Russia could not allow Crimea to become a port for NATO's warships. After the Ukrainian

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4. Ibid.

5. Macdonald Alastair and Pavel Polityuk, "Ukraine Government Pledges Russian Language Rights", Reuters, 18 April 2014.

6. Address by President of the Russian Federation, President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>, (Accessed: September 1, 2018).

7. "Russia Blocks Quarter of Black Sea Until Aug 19", UNIAN July 30, 2019.

revolution, it was clear that a pro-Western government would be elected in Kiev and that it would strengthen its relations with the EU, the U.S., and NATO.

- Crimea offers Russia the possibility of projecting its naval power to the Mediterranean Sea and to the Atlantic Ocean. Crimea also facilitates access of the Russian Federation to warm waters and the access to the World Ocean which was drastically limited after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Due to the fact that its ports in the Arctic Ocean are frozen six months a year and its ports in the Baltic Sea are far away from warm-waters, the access of the Russian fleet to the World Ocean was severely limited. The main objective of the Russian Federation after 1991 was to project its naval power and influence to the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East, and the Atlantic Ocean. This objective was also mentioned in Russia's naval doctrine published on July 26, 2015. In the document it is mentioned that Russia's aim is to strengthen its presence in the World Ocean particularly in two regions: the Atlantic and the Arctic.<sup>8</sup>
- Crimea is rich in oil and natural gas reserves off its coasts.<sup>9</sup>

After the annexation of Crimea, Russia tried to destabilize Ukraine by supporting protests in the eastern part of the country. On March 1, in the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Mariupol, and Odessa,<sup>10</sup> thousands of pro-Russian protesters expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the repeal of the law on the policy of the state language.<sup>11</sup> The main core of the protesters was coordinated by Russia's secret services. The situation quickly degenerated and on April 7 protesters occupied the main buildings in Donetsk and Luhansk. . Under Russia's guidance the leaders of the protesters declared Donetsk's independence as the "People's Republic of Donetsk." By April 13, they had gained control of the entire region.<sup>12</sup> In the same month, on April 27, the rebels declared Luhansk's independence under the "Luhansk People's Republic," all with Russia's help and its coordination.<sup>13</sup> Ukraine

8. "Russian Federation Marine Doctrine", President of Russia, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50060>, (Accessed: December 2, 2016).

9. "Chornomornaftogaz Ups Gas Production by 12.8% in H1, 2012", Ukraine Business, July 11, 2012.

10. "Russian Parliament Approves Troop Deployment in Ukraine", BBC, March 1, 2014.

11. Isabel GORST, "In Northeast Ukraine, Pro-Maidan Occupiers Are Routed by Counter-demonstrators", *The Washington Post*, March 1, 2014.

12. Steve Roseborg, "Ukraine Crisis: Protesters Declare Donetsk 'Republic'", BBC, April 17, 2014.

13. "Federalization Supporters in Luhansk Proclaim People's Republic", TASS, April 28, 2014.

acted rather late: on April 15, Kiev triggered an armed offensive against the rebels in the Eastern Ukraine.<sup>14</sup> Ukraine was not able to immediately start an operation for retaking control of its occupied territories for the following reasons:<sup>15</sup>

- The critical internal situation after the revolution.
- The lack of funds and the resources required.
- The lack of a military capacity including modern technology and equipment.
- The lack of a well-trained military body.
- The low morale of its soldiers.
- The presence of a consistent number of Russian agents in Ukraine's army and in the intelligence services.

Despite the fact that a ceasefire was reached on September 5, after the Minsk Agreement, it would not be respected by the two sides. On February 12, 2015, the Minsk II Agreement was signed by Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France which established a package of measures to end the conflict.<sup>16</sup> The region continues to remain a hot spot on the map of Europe, where fighting between the Ukrainian army and pro-Russian separatists backed by Moscow is still underway.

Why did Moscow start a hybrid war against Ukraine? The Russian Federation's interest in the short term is to continue the conflict in order to put continuous pressure on Ukraine and on its leadership in order to destabilize the country and to make it difficult to be governed. In the long term, Russia wants to transform the war in Eastern Ukraine into a frozen conflict, like those in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. Thus, Moscow can block Ukraine's accession to the European Union and to NATO.<sup>17</sup> Besides the proxy war component, the Russian Federation used its gas energy resources as a political weapon to force the new government to act in its interest. Kremlin also launched a broad propaganda campaign. Its purpose is to undermine the state order and to discredit Ukraine, the pro-Western leadership and its allies, the United States, and the European Union. In addition, as part of the hybrid war, Moscow triggered a complex cy-

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14. Tom McCarthy and Alan Yuhas, "Ukraine Crisis: Kiev Launches 'Anti-terror Operation' in East – Live Updates", *The Guardian*, April 15, 2014.

15. \*\*\*, (Transcript of a Secret Meeting of the National Security Council February 28, 2014), "Стенограмма секретного заседания СНБО во время аннексии Крыма в 2014 году. Полный текст на русском языке", Гордон, 22.02.2016, available at <https://gordonua.com/publications/stenogramma-sekretного-zasedaniya-snbo-vo-vremya-anneksii-kryma-v-2014-godu-polnyy-tekst-na-russkom-yazyke-121122.html>, Accessed 02.09.2018.

16. Michael Kofman and Katya Migacheva, *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, (RAND Corporation Report, Santa Monica: 2017), p. 45.

17. *Ibid.*, p.70.

ber war on its eastern neighbor to destabilize the country and to undermine the proper functioning of its institutions and strategic infrastructure. All these tactics used by the Russian Federation aim to weaken, destabilize, and disintegrate Ukraine and are known in the specialty literature as elements of a hybrid war.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the conflict is part of the hybrid war waged by the Russia Federation in Ukraine; the complexity of this war will be analyzed in the following chapters. This report covers the period from February 2014 to December 2018 and defines the peculiarities of the hybrid war in Ukraine and its complexity.

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18. "Ukraine and Russia: The Perceptions and the Reality, Hybrid War - Hybrid Response?", NATO, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Russia-Ukraine-crisis-war/EN/index.htm>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).



# HYBRID WAR

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The concept of hybrid war is not a new one. It can be encountered in the 5th century BC during the Peloponnesian War and targets all levels of war, from the tactical and operational to the strategic.<sup>19</sup> Hybrid war "does not change the nature of war; it merely changes the way forces engage in its conduct."<sup>20</sup> It "provides for the use of a comprehensive and highly-nuanced variety of military activities, resources, programs, and applications, tailored to maximize a non-violent, persuasive use of economic and political influence to reform hostile governments, movements, or trends in politically, socially, and economically unstable conditions."<sup>21</sup> The concept "involves a combination of conventional military forces and irregulars (guerillas, insurgents, and terrorists), which could include both state and non-state actors, aimed at achieving a common political purpose."<sup>22</sup> Hence, hybrid warfare includes several elements, including economic war, cyber war, psychological warfare, proxy war,<sup>23</sup> and espionage operations (including infiltration, sabotage,

19. Ibid.

20. Williamson Murray and Peter R. Mansoos, *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, (Cambridge University Press, New York: 2012), p. 3.

21. Margaret S. BOND, *Hybrid Wars: A New Paradigm for Stability Operations in Failing States*, (U.S Army War College, Pennsylvania: 2007), p. 4.

22. Murray and Mansoos, *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents*, p. 2.

23. Terri Moon Cronk, "U.S. Must Stand Vigilant in Face of New Threats, Flournoy Says", U.S Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=61583>, (Accessed: September 2, 2018).

and clandestine operations).<sup>24</sup> Starting a conventional war consumes a significant amount of economic, natural, and human resources, which can cause great problems for the aggressor. Therefore, it is more profitable for a state, in terms of costs and risks, to start a hybrid war against an opponent in order to achieve its political goals. Thus, the aggressor state acts on as many levels as possible to undermine the state concerned. The purpose is to make it fall apart from the inside or to influence its internal and/or foreign policy according to its own interests.

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24. "NATO's response to hybrid threats", NATO, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_156338.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm), (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

# PROXY WAR

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This type of war represents the indirect involvement of third parties in a conflict in order to influence its result in their own interest.<sup>25</sup> The third parties can fund one of the state or non-state actors involved in the conflict by offering weapons, fighting techniques, money, military training,<sup>26</sup> intelligence, and soldiers or mercenaries. The war in Eastern Ukraine is an eloquent example of such a conflict. The Russian Federation offers all the necessary support to the separatists in order to preserve their occupied territories and to keep the Ukrainian army in check. Yemen and Syria are other examples of conflicts where we can see the involvement of other state actors in the war through proxies.

Regarding the conflict in Ukraine, the Russian Federation was actively involved in the protests in late February in Crimea and in March 2014, in the southeastern part of Ukraine in the regions of Odessa, Kharkov, Mariupol, Donetsk, and Luhansk. The case of the illegal occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation is a particular one in which the operation was carried out by the regular troops of the Russian army involving all armed forces (land, air, and naval).<sup>27</sup> Although mercenaries were present, their role in the operation was minimal compared to that of the Russian Armed Forces. Of the cities mentioned above, only in Donetsk and

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25. Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, (Polity Press, Cambridge: 2013), p. 11.

26. Ibid.

27. "Putin Seized Crimea with Regular Army But Outsourced Action in Donbas", Euromaidan Press, June 10, 2018.

Luhansk protesters managed to occupy public institutions and declared the independence of the regions from the Kiev administration in April 2014. Strategically speaking, the Donbass region is very important for Ukraine since it holds the largest reserves of coal and steel in the country, and it is where the chemicals and turbines needed for nuclear power plants are produced.<sup>28</sup> The protests that broke out in eastern Ukraine in March 2014 were used by the Russian Federation to exploit the dissatisfaction of the pro-Russian population in its own interest. Since early March 2014, hundreds of people have crossed the border from the Russian Federation to join the pro-Russian demonstrators. This was coordinated by Russian intelligence services, which recruited volunteers through social media platforms and especially men between the ages of 18 and 45 who they sent to the cities of Eastern Ukraine.<sup>29</sup> Among them were members of intelligence services, especially GRU agents - the secret service of the Russian army known as the Main Intelligence Directorate.<sup>30</sup> In the beginning, they had the role of agitators and they later sabotaged and recruited fighters from among the Ukrainians.<sup>31</sup> A significant number of rebels also came from officers and non-commissioned officers in the army, police, and Ukrainian intelligence services who have decided to betray their country. Among them, many were long before recruited by the Russian intelligence services.

The maintenance of violent protests was intended to create a state of chaos, to create tensions in society, to show the illegitimacy and inability of the government, and to hinder or even block its activity. At the same time, through these protests Russia put pressure for a breakup of Ukraine and tried to trigger a federalization process. In the meantime, Kiev accused Moscow of encouraging and supporting the protests through the GRU, but Kremlin denied any involvement.<sup>32</sup> Since April, paramilitary groups paid and trained by the Russian Federation joined the protesters.<sup>33</sup> Also the presence of mercenaries from Serbia,<sup>34</sup> the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine,<sup>35</sup> under contract with Moscow were also no-

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28. Ibid.

29. Sam Judah, "Russian Site Recruits 'Volunteers' for Ukraine", BBC, March 5, 2014.

30. Armand Goșu, *Euro-Falia*, (Curtea Veche, București: 2016), pp. 63-64.

31. Roman Goncharenko, "Russians Hold Key Posts with Ukraine Separatists", Deutsche Welle, July 31, 2014.

32. Goșu, *Euro-Falia*, pp. 63-64.

33. Igor Rotar, "The Cossack Factor in Ukrainian War", The Jamestown Foundation, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-cossack-factor-in-ukrainian-war/>, (Accessed: September 1, 2018).

34. Nemanja Rujevic, "Serbian Mercenaries Fighting in Eastern Ukraine", Deutsche Welle, August 14, 2014.

35. "From Donbas to Syria: Investigation Reveals Ukrainians Fighting in Russian PMC Wagner", Euromaidan Press, June 7, 2018.

ticed. Besides them, up to August 2014, American, French, Italian, German, and two Romanian volunteers<sup>36</sup> were fighting next to the separatists. In May 2014, the Security Service of Ukraine, SBU identified a mercenary group named "Wagner", that was fighting in Donbass and had links with the Russian Federation.<sup>37</sup>

Kiev decided quite late, on April 15, that the army should intervene. This is mainly due to the precarious state of the Ukrainian army and the lack of funds.<sup>38</sup> The Ukrainian army's offensive in early July made it possible to regain control of the part of the its territory that was occupied by the separatists. The latter now controlled only the large cities of Donetsk and Luhansk. The Russian Federation provided the separatists with fighters, tanks, rocket launchers, sniper rifles, anti-tank and automatic anti-personnel weapons, and armored personnel carriers equipped with guns.<sup>39</sup> Although Moscow continued to deny the presence of its troops on Ukraine's territory, the photos of Russian soldiers from the battlefield posted in 2014 on the social network *Vkontakte* testify to the contrary. At the end of July, a series of photographs showing several Russian soldiers near military trucks, arms, and Russian military equipment were posted. The images were accompanied by messages like "Ukraine is waiting for us!" and "We bombed Ukraine all night!"<sup>40</sup> As of July 2014, the Russian Federation bombed the positions of the Ukrainian army with artillery strikes.<sup>41</sup> By the end of August, according to NATO, there were 1,000 Russian soldiers in Eastern Ukraine. According to the Soldiers' Mothers Committee, the number of Russian soldiers was between 7,000 and 8,000.<sup>42</sup> As a result, the separatists, helped by the Russian army, managed to increase the front line up to the Azov Sea near the port of Mariupol.<sup>43</sup> In August, the Ukrainian army for the first time entered in a direct conflict with the Russian

36. "Ukraine Crisis: Rebel Fighters 'Trained in Russia'", BBC, August 16, 2014.

37. \*\*\*, "Цивілізований світ має створити єдиний фронт у протидії російській гібридній агресії - Василь Грицак", Служба безпеки України, 09.10.2018, available at <https://ssu.gov.ua/ua/news/1/category/21/view/5301#.conL4VXR.dpbs>, Accessed 12.12.2018.

38. \*\*\*, (Transcript of a Secret Meeting of the National Security Council February 28, 2014), "Стенограма секретного засідання СНБО во время аннексии Крыма в 2014 году. Полный текст на русском языке", Гордон, 22.02.2016, available at <https://gordonua.com/publications/stenogramma-sekretного-zasedaniya-snbo-vo-vremya-anneksii-kryma-v-2014-godu-polnyy-tekst-na-russkom-yazyke-121122.html>, Accessed 02.09.2018.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Michael Kelly, "US: These Satellite Photos Prove That Russian Troops Are Shelling Ukraine", Business Insider, July 28, 2014.

42. "Thousands of Russian Soldiers Sent to Ukraine, Say Rights Groups", *The Guardian*, September 1, 2014.

43. Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis: What It Means for the West*, (Yale University Press, London: 2014), pp. 136-141.

army in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>44</sup> On August 25, ten Russian paratroopers were captured in Eastern Ukraine. The identity tags worn around their necks and their testimonies recorded by Ukrainian troops were undisputed evidence of the Russian army in Ukraine.<sup>45</sup> Following the incident, the Russian Ministry of Defence said that the soldiers crossed the border in Ukraine accidentally while they were executing patrol missions at the Russian-Ukrainian border.<sup>46</sup> Recognizing the "accidental" presence of Russian paratroopers in Ukraine, at 60 km from the Russian-Ukrainian border, Moscow confirmed what the government of Ukraine had been sustaining for several months. Despite the signing of the second Minsk treaty in February 2015, the terms of the agreement were not respected and the conflict is ongoing.<sup>47</sup>

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44. Oksana Grytsenko, "Thousands of Russian Soldiers Fought at Ilovaisk, Around a Hundred Were Killed", *Kyiv Post*, April 6, 2018.

45. Roland Oliphant and Tom Parfitt, "Capture of Russian Paratroopers in Ukraine Overshadows Talks with Russia", *The Telegraph*, August 26, 2014.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Brian Whitmore, "Is This the End of Ukraine's Peace Process?", *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/08/russia-ukraine-conflict-minsk-ceasefire-passports/400505/>, Accessed: September 3, 2018.

# ESPIONAGE OPERATIONS

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## INFILTRATION

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, many Ukrainian and Russian intelligence officers that were trained at the KGB academy in Moscow remained in the Ukrainian intelligence services.<sup>48</sup> Most intelligence officers enrolled after the establishment of the SBU were recruited from the Fifth Directorate of the KGB, which acted in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine and reported directly to Moscow.<sup>49</sup> Although the Soviet Republics declared their independence in 1991, between the Russian and Ukrainian intelligence services a secret line of communication and collaboration was maintained.<sup>50</sup> Since 2010, when Viktor Yanukovich won the presidential election in Ukraine, Russian intelligence services gained a growing influence over their Ukrainian counterparts.<sup>51</sup> Yanukovich was a Kremlin loyalist whose election campaign was supported and paid by Moscow. He appointed Russian citizens or persons who had links with the Russian intelligence services as the Minister of Defence and as heads of the intelligence services.<sup>52</sup> These persons allowed the massive penetra-

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48. Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, (Praeger, Santa Barbara: 2015), p. 470.

49. Philip Shishkin, "How Russian Spy Games Are Sabotaging Ukraine's Intelligence Agency", *The Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2015.

50. Ibid.

51. Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, p. 468.

52. Taras Kuzio, "Russia Takes Control of Ukraine's Security Forces", Jamestown Foundation, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=39154&c Hash=e4ee492d04fa73a1e1659537f7309f71#.VVj-2vmqpBe](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39154&c Hash=e4ee492d04fa73a1e1659537f7309f71#.VVj-2vmqpBe), (Accessed: September 9, 2018).

tion of the Ukrainian intelligence services, especially the SBU, the SZRU (Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine), and the GUR (military intelligence service), by the Russian secret services.<sup>53</sup> Thus, Russian agents sabotaged the security institutions of Ukraine by ensuring that they are weak and unable to face a crisis or an external threat. The SBU counterintelligence department knowingly allowed Russian intelligence agents and officers to carry out espionage and subversion activities on Ukraine's territory. Furthermore, the SBU counterintelligence allowed Russian intelligence services to recruit intelligence officers from all the Ukrainian security structures.<sup>54</sup> In 2012, Viktor Yanukovich appointed Igor Kalinin, at the insistence of Vladimir Putin, as director of the SBU. Kalinin was a Russian citizen, a former KGB agent, and was born and educated in Moscow.<sup>55</sup>

In March 2015, the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko declared that 80% of the SBU officers were FSB agents, a fact that showed the seriousness of the situation.<sup>56</sup> After the Ukrainian revolution in February 2014, not only did the president flee to the Russian Federation but also Oleksandr Yakymenko, the SBU director, and Hryhoriy Illyashov, the SZRU director, and other high-level intelligence officers.<sup>57</sup> The head of the SBU from Crimea along with 90% of the intelligence officers from the agency betrayed the country and joined the Russian Federation.<sup>58</sup> When the new director of the SBU entered the agency headquarters in Kiev, he found an empty building.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the computers and hard drives containing the data of 22,000 SBU officers and informants were destroyed and all relevant information regarding the cooperation between the SBU and the FSB had disappeared.<sup>60</sup> In Ukraine's eastern regions, one-third of the SBU intelligence officers from Donetsk joined the separatists. Among them was Alexander Khodakovsky, the head of the counterintelligence department who was supposed to identify traitors and foreign agents.<sup>61</sup> In addition, a large number of SBU officers from Luhansk joined the separatists.<sup>62</sup>

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53. Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, p. 475.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 453.

55. *Ibid.*

56. "Poroshenko: 80% of SBU Staff Was Russian Agents", *Zik*, March 26, 2015.

57. "Ukraine Accuses Russia of Breaking CIS Agreements over Yanukovich Extradition", *Interfax-Ukraine*, January 12, 2015.

58. "Ukrainian Defectors in Occupied Crimea Sidelined, Relocated – Media", *UNIAN*, October 5, 2017.

59. Kuzio, *Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism*, p. 475.

60. *Ibid.*

61. Philip Shishkin, "How Russian Spy Games Are Sabotaging Ukraine's Intelligence Agency".

62. "The Surrender of Luhansk SBU", *The Ukrainian Week*, December 23, 2015.

In the spring of 2014, after the separatists took over power in Eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian army and intelligence services developed strategies to liberate the territories from the insurgents. The operations, however, did not have the expected results due to the information leak to the Russian intelligence.<sup>63</sup> During the same period, because of the information leak, several SBU officers were captured by separatists while they were carrying an undercover mission.<sup>64</sup> The penetration rate by the Russian intelligence services was equally high in the army intelligence service (GUR) and in the Foreign Intelligence Service (SZRU). After the February 2014 revolution, the new directors of the SBU<sup>65</sup> and the SZRU<sup>66</sup> fired hundreds of intelligence officers and many of them were accused of treason. Shortly after, the SBU and the SZRU hired hundreds of intelligence officers, following much more severe tests, including a lie detector, to ensure they are not Russian agents.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the directors of all the departments within the two services together with their deputies and heads of units from all regions were changed.<sup>68</sup> However, the leakage of information has not been definitively resolved. Even after this process there were still Russian agents in the Ukrainian intelligence agencies. This offered a great advantage to the Russian Federation which in some cases knew in advance the military plans of Ukraine's special operations - and not only. It had broad access to Ukraine's top secret information, vulnerabilities, names of intelligence officers, details about their covers, locations, and operations, information about their battle plans, military positions and supplies, etc. On April 26, 2014, three SBU officers from the Alpha Unit were captured by the separatists while they were conducting a secret operation in the city of Horlivka in the Donetsk region. They were realizing a surveillance mission in the occupied territories evaluating the possibility of arresting a valuable target.<sup>69</sup> They were captured because of a leak inside the SBU.<sup>70</sup> In order to avoid such developments, Ukraine had to clean all its security agencies of Russian agents.

63. Taras Kuzio, "Who Committed Treason in Ukraine?", *Ukrainian Policy*, March 1, 2016.

64. Philip Shishkin, "How Russian Spy Games Are Sabotaging Ukraine's Intelligence Agency".

65. \*\*\*, "Наливайченко каже, що всі зрадники в штабі АТО ліквідовані", *Українська Правда*, 12.12.2014, available at <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/12/12/7051761/>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

66. \*\*\*, "Зі Служби зовнішньої розвідки України від початку року звільнили 249 співробітників", *УНІАН*, 21.10.2014, available at <https://www.unian.ua/politics/998932-zi-slujbi-zovnishnoji-rozvidki-ukrajini-vid-pochatku-roku-zviloni-249-spivrobotnikiv.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

67. Philip Shishkin, "How Russian Spy Games Are Sabotaging Ukraine's Intelligence Agency".

68. *Ibid.*

69. Oksana Grytsenko, "Separatists Acted on a Tip to Capture SBU Officers, Ukraine's sSecurity Service Says (VIDEO)", *Kyiv Post*, 28 April 2014.

70. *Ibid.*

In the table below, the efforts of the SBU counterintelligence department to counter the Russian Federation's agents and espionage operations between 2014 and 2018 are presented. The following information was identified from open sources.

UKRAINE'S SUCCESSFUL COUNTERINTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS	
21.03.2014	SBU officers arrested a Russian citizen working for GRU in Chernivtsi. He wanted to obtain classified information about the sketches of the new missile systems developed by Ukraine. <sup>71</sup>
27.07.2014	The Ukrainian authorities arrested an officer of the Anti-Terrorism Operations Zone Coordination Center (ATO) for providing classified information to Russian intelligence services about the army's operations in the Donbas region. <sup>72</sup>
31.07.2014	The Ukrainian army detained a person in the Donetsk region that illegally crossed the Russian-Ukrainian border. He was collecting information for the Russian Federation about the positions and vigilance of the Ukrainian army. <sup>73</sup> According to the Deputy Director of the National Security and Defence Council, between March 25 and July 3, 2014 there have been more cases of high-ranking officials who betrayed their country in the Ministry of Defence. <sup>74</sup>
31.07.2014	The SBU detained an officer of the gendarmerie, an agent of the Russian Federation, who was preparing the assassination of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. <sup>75</sup>
04.02.2015	The SBU detained a high-ranking officer who worked in the Ukrainian army staff and sent information regarding the operations of the army to the Russian Federation. Furthermore, in order to undermine the soldiers' morale, he was disseminating false information about alleged battles lost by the Ukrainian army and about the unbearable conditions on the front. <sup>76</sup>
18.05.2015	A senior officer of the Ukrainian gendarmerie was detained by the SBU for high treason. He provided classified information to the Russian intelligence services about the positions of the Ukrainian army and its infrastructure. <sup>77</sup>
16.06.2015	An officer of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SZRU) was detained by the officers of the counterintelligence department of the SBU. He had transmitted classified information to Russian intelligence. <sup>78</sup>

71. \*\*\*, "РОСІЙСЬКОГО ШПИГУНА З ГРУ СПИЙМАЛИ НА ГАРЯЧОМУ У ЧЕРНІГОВІ", ТСН, 21.03.2014, available at <https://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/rosiyskogo-shpiguna-z-gru-spiymali-na-garyachomu-u-chernigovi.html> Accessed 10.09.2018.

72. \*\*\*, "У штабі АТО виявили шпигуна з Росії", УНІАН, 27.07.2014, available at [https://www.unian.ua/politics/944382-u-shtabi-ato-viyavili-shpiguna-z-rosiji.html?utm\\_source=unian&utm\\_medium=related\\_news&utm\\_campaign=related\\_news\\_in\\_post](https://www.unian.ua/politics/944382-u-shtabi-ato-viyavili-shpiguna-z-rosiji.html?utm_source=unian&utm_medium=related_news&utm_campaign=related_news_in_post), Accessed 10.09.2018.

73. \*\*\*, "У Донецькій області прикордонники затримали 24-річного шпигуна з Росії Детальніше", УНІАН, available at <https://www.unian.ua/politics/945976-u-donetskiy-oblasti-prikordonniki-zatrimali-24-richnogo-shpiguna-z-rosiji.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

74. \*\*\*, "У ШТАБІ АТО ВІЯВИЛИ ОФІЦЕРА-ШПИГУНА, ЯКИЙ "ЗЛИВАВ" СЕКРЕТНУ ІНФОРМАЦІЮ РОСІЇ – КОВАЛЬ", ТСН, 27.07.2014, available at <https://tsn.ua/politika/u-shtabi-ato-viyavili-oficera-shpiguna-yakiy-zlivav-sekretnu-informaciyu-rosiyi-koval-360811.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

75. \*\*\*, "СБУ затримала офіцера Нацгвардії, причетного до замаху на Авакова", УНІАН, 31.07.2014, available at <https://www.unian.ua/politics/945971-sbu-zatrimala-ofitsera-natsgvardiji-prichetnogo-do-zamahu-na-avakova.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

76. Anna Mostovych, "SBU Arrests Traitors Who Informed on Ukrainian Troops for Russian Intelligence", Euromaidan Press, February 4, 2015.

77. "Lieutenant-Colonel of National Guard Is Sentenced to 13 Years of Imprisonment for High Treason – SBU (video)", Security Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/29/category/21/view/4794#.ygRIELMW.dpb-shhttps://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/29/category/21/view/4794#.ygRIELMW.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

78. \*\*\*, "СБУ повідомляє про арешт капітана зовнішньої розвідки, який шпигував на користь Росії Детальніше", УНІАН, 16.06.2015, available at <https://www.unian.ua/society/1090090-sbu-povidomlyae-pro-aresht-kapitana-zovnishnoji-rozvidki-yakiy-shpiguvav-na-korist-rosiji.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

16.12.2015	A FSB intelligence officer was arrested by the SBU in the Luhansk region while he was trying to recruit Ukrainian soldiers. <sup>79</sup>
16.06.2016	The SBU press service announced that the Deputy Chief of the Anti-terrorist Operations Zone (ATO) was arrested for providing classified information to Russian intelligence services. <sup>80</sup>
22.12.2016	The head of a department within the Ukrainian army was arrested and charged with high treason. He was recruited by the GRU in 2015 and managed to provide 60 classified documents. <sup>81</sup> According to a SBU press release, in 2016 alone there were 83 cases of espionage and high treason. <sup>82</sup>
16.08.2017	An intelligence officer from the SBU was arrested in the Kerson region for collaboration with the FSB. <sup>83</sup>
11.10.2017	An official of the Ukrainian gendarmerie was caught providing intelligence to the Russian intelligence services. <sup>84</sup>
15.12.2017	Ukraine's counterintelligence service announced that they arrested a Russian citizen that was working for the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) in the Cherkasy region. <sup>85</sup>
21.12.2017	The Deputy Head of Protocol Department of the Prime Minister of Ukraine was detained by the SBU and was accused of providing classified information to the Russian intelligence services. Due to his position he had access to highly important information from inside the Cabinet of Ministers. At the same time, he was also the Prime Minister's personal translator during meetings with high-level representatives of other states. He had access to almost everything that was discussed behind closed doors with high-ranking officials from other states. <sup>86</sup> Just months before being arrested, he accompanied Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman to the United Kingdom during an official visit. There he interpreted for Groysman during a meeting with the UK Prime Minister. He had also interpreted the dialogue between Groysman and U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden in July 2016 during an official visit to the White House. <sup>87</sup>
21.12.2017	In less than 24 hours another Ukrainian citizen was arrested for spying for Russia. A high-ranking SBU officer from the Kiev Central Unit was arrested for providing classified information to the Russian intelligence services. <sup>88</sup>

79. \*\*\*, "СБУ: Затримано агента ФСБ, яка мала вербувати українських військових", Українська Правда, 16.12.2016, available at <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2015/12/16/7092670/>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

80. "Ukrainian CI effectively counters Russian saboteurs and agents", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/1/category/21/view/1221#.lWghPtQh.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

81. \*\*\*, "СБУ РАЗОБЛАЧИЛА КАПИТАНА, КОТОРЫЙ ПРЕДАЛ УКРАИНУ И ПЕРЕМЕТНУЛСЯ В РОССИЙСКУЮ РАЗВЕДКУ — ГРИЦАК", ТСН, 22.12.2016, available at <https://ru.tsn.ua/ukrayina/sbu-razoblachila-kapitana-kotoryy-predal-ukrainu-i-peremetnulsya-v-rossiyskuyu-razvedku-gricak-773148.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

82. "Results of Certain Areas of Work of Security Service of Ukraine", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/232/category/21/view/2474#.8ZiwcxzP.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

83. "SBU Reveals Its Own Officer Cooperating with FSB in Kherson", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/1/category/21/view/3782#.4tQR5aB7.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

84. "SBU Detects Serviceman of the National Guard in the Work for the RF Special Services and Blocks the Information Disclosure (Video)", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/97/category/21/view/4008#.STII4eXg.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

85. "Russian Agent of Foreign Intelligence Detained in Cherkasy Region", 112.international, December 15, 2017.

86. "Media Outlet Reveals Details about Russian Agent Exposed in Groysman's Office", UNIAN, December 21, 2017.

87. Luke Harding, "Ukrainian Interpreter Who Visited May Arrested on Russian Spying Charges", *The Guardian*, December 21, 2017.

88. "The SBU Uncovers Its Own Officer on Cooperation with Russian Secret Services", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/76/category/21/view/4235#.SXx IOV39.dpbs>, (Accessed: December 10, 2018).

22.03.2018	In the Kharkiv region, the SBU detained a police officer who provided intelligence to the Russian intelligence services about the Ukrainian soldiers fighting in the Donbas region. <sup>89</sup>
21.04.2018	The SBU detained a person working in a state-owned company under the Ministry of Defence. She was accused of providing strategic intelligence to the Russian intelligence services. <sup>90</sup>
18.08.2018	The SBU detained a SZRU officer that was a Russian agent. <sup>91</sup>
12.10.2018	The SBU detained two men that were working for the local government in the Zaporizhzhya region accusing them of spying for the Russian Federation. Between July 2015 and October 2018, they offered information to the Russian intelligence services about the sociopolitical and socioeconomic situation of the region. They also tried to organize subversive activities like riots and mass protests in Zaporizhzhya. <sup>92</sup> This region is one of the most important industrial centers in Ukraine producing steel, aluminium, aircraft engines, automobiles, and other heavy industry goods. This gives the region a strategic importance for Ukraine's army and industry sector. <sup>93</sup>
10.12.2018	A colonel of the Ukrainian Air Forces was detained by the SBU. According to the SBU, he was working for the GRU, Russia's military intelligence service, for three years. The GRU wanted to obtain Ukraine's most successful UAV models operating on the Donbas front line and other information about its air force capabilities. <sup>94</sup>

Although in December 2014, the SBU director claimed that he had cleared the intelligence services of Russian agents,<sup>95</sup> some of them remained and continued to transmit classified information. Russian secret services have managed to penetrate deeply into key Ukrainian institutions, government agencies, intelligence services, and branches of the armed forces. The FSB and GRU mainly targeted the recruitment of SBU senior officers, using bribes, pressures, blackmail, threats, and even physical violence to reach their goals.<sup>96</sup> During the period of 2014-2018, the SBU dismantled numerous networks formed by Ukrainian citizens and controlled by Russian secret services. These groups collected information on the positions and activity of the army, military, and strategic facilities and about the situation in Ukraine's border areas.<sup>97</sup>

89. "Kharkiv Region: SBU Stops Activities Russian Special Services Network (Video)", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/48/category/21/view/4546#.JZgmRhAd.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

90. "Kyiv: SBU Detains Russian Spy - Employee of Strategic Company under MoD of Ukraine", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/37/category/21/view/4674#.mxEcKNGV.dpbs>, (Accessed: December 10, 2018).

91. "SBU Reveals, Arrests Mole in Own Ranks", UNIAN, August 23, 2018.

92. Denys Krasnikov, "Ukraine's Security Service Uncovers Russian Spies, Corrupt Judge", *Kyiv Post*, October 13, 2018.

93. "Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Turkey, Regions of Ukraine: Zaporizhzhya Region", Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://turkey.mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/info/regions/27-zaporizh>, (Accessed: January 10, 2019).

94. "Ukraine Counterintel Exposes Ex-defense Official Spying for Russia", UNIAN, December 10, 2018.

95. \*\*\*, "Наливайченко каже, що всі зрадники в штабі АТО ліквідовані", *Українська Правда*, 12.12.2014, available at <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/12/12/7051761/>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

96. "SBU Prevents Attempt of Russian Secret Services to Create Source Network among Ukrainian Marines", Security Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/244/category/21/view/2343#.EOK5wx0d.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

97. "SBU Arrests Nine Suspected Saboteurs in Odesa – Media", UNIAN, July 23, 2017.

After the Ukrainian revolution, Russian intelligence services, especially the GRU, through its own officers or through Ukrainian agents, carried out numerous sabotage operations on the transport infrastructure and on the strategic military infrastructure of Ukraine. Between 2014 and 2018, both the GRU and the FSB carried out numerous clandestine operations on the territory of Ukraine. Some of these operations were successful, while others were foiled by the SBU. Given that their number is high, a selection based on open sources is offered below.

SABOTAGE AND CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES	
20.10.2014	Unidentified individuals fired a grenade at an army depot in the city of Kharkiv. They targeted the tanks where lubricants and fuel were stored. <sup>98</sup>
11.01.2015	Unidentified individuals used a grenade launcher to hit the liquefied gas tanks of the Kharkivregiongaz company in the city of Kharkiv in order to trigger an explosion. The grenades did not hit their target but hit the company's technical room. The police said it was a sabotage attempt. <sup>99</sup>
20.01.2015	A railway bridge linking the Zaporizhzhya region to the Donetsk region was blown up just as it was being crossed by a train loaded with coal. The railway line was frequently used by the Ukrainian army to transport military equipment and supplies near the conflict zone. <sup>100</sup>
18.03.2015	A railway bridge was blown up in the region of Luhansk. It linked the area occupied by the Ukrainian army and the area held by separatists. <sup>101</sup>
25.03.2015	A portion of the railway linking the Dnipropetrovsk region to the Donetsk region was blown up as a train loaded with coal was crossing it. <sup>102</sup>
30.03.2015	In the city of Kharkiv, a tank wagon containing fuel and lubricants for the Ukrainian army was blown up at Osnova railway station. <sup>103</sup>
31.03.2015	In the city of Kharkiv, a portion of the railroad was blown up when a train was crossing it. <sup>104</sup> This was the second incident in less than two days. The saboteurs' special interest in this railroad is due to the fact that the route is used by the Ukrainian army to arm its troops in Eastern Ukraine. <sup>105</sup> Therefore, their purpose was to interrupt or at least delay the delivery of weapons and supplies to the Ukrainian army.
28.04.2015	A railway section was blown up in the Odessa region. <sup>106</sup>

98. "Kharkiv Military Warehouses Come under Fire from Grenade Launcher", *Kyiv Post*, October 20, 2014.

99. "Saboteurs Hit Gas Storage in Kharkiv with Grenade Launcher", UNIAN, January 13, 2015.

100. Vitaly Shevchenko, "Ukraine Conflict: Bombings Go beyond Battle Zone", BBC, February 7, 2015.

101. \*\*\*, "На Луганщині підірвали залізничний міст Детальніше", УНІАН, 10.09.2018, available at <https://www.unian.ua/war/1056778-na-luganschini-pidirvali-zaliznichniy-mist.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

102. \*\*\*, "На Дніпропетровщині терористи підірвали колію під час руху поїзда з вугіллям", УНІАН, 25.03.2015, available at <https://www.unian.ua/society/1059790-na-dnipropetrovschini-pid-potyagom-z-vugilyam-stavnya-vibuh-zmi.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

103. "Railway Tank Car with Fuel for Ukrainian Army Explodes in Kharkiv", *Panorama.am*, March 30, 2015.

104. \*\*\*, "У Харкові терористи підірвали залізничні колії під потягом", УНІАН, 31.03.2015, available at <https://www.unian.ua/society/1061758-u-harkovi-teroristi-pidirvali-zaliznichni-koliji-pid-potyagom.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

105. "Kharkiv's Osnova Station Again Sees Train Bombing", *Interfax.ua*, March 31, 2015.

106. \*\*\*, "В Одеській області невідомі підірвали залізничну колію", УНІАН, 28.04.2015, available at [https://www.unian.ua/society/1072355-v-odeskiy-oblasti-nevidomi-pidirvali-zaliznichnu-koliyu.html?utm\\_source=unian&utm\\_medium=related\\_news&utm\\_campaign=related\\_news\\_in\\_post](https://www.unian.ua/society/1072355-v-odeskiy-oblasti-nevidomi-pidirvali-zaliznichnu-koliyu.html?utm_source=unian&utm_medium=related_news&utm_campaign=related_news_in_post), Accessed 10.09.2018.

13.05.2015	In less than a month, another railroad was blown up in Odessa. <sup>107</sup>
12.06.2015	A section of the rail link between the Ukrainian-controlled areas in the Luhank and Donetsk regions was blown up. The railway has a strategic importance since it is used to supply coal for the central heating to the town of Svitlodarsk in the Donetsk region. <sup>108</sup>
27.06.2015	Another railway section was blown up in the Luhansk region, in the area controlled by the Ukrainian army. <sup>109</sup>
30.10.2015	In the Luhansk region several explosions took place at a Ukrainian army depot 100 km from the front line. <sup>110</sup>
26.12.2015	During the night, several drones flew over a weapons depot in Balaklia, in the Kharkiv region. They launched grenades above the complex. The roof of the building caught fire but it was quickly extinguished without causing great damage. A Russian grenade was found at the scene, indicating a sabotage attempt. <sup>111</sup> This is the largest armament depot in the territory of Ukraine. <sup>112</sup>
18.11.2016	A former FSB intelligence officer who betrayed his country and fled to Ukraine was kidnapped in Kiev. The SBU managed to capture the kidnapers at the border with the Russian Federation. <sup>113</sup>
23.03.2017	The Balaklia armament deposit was attacked once again and 138,000 tons of weapons exploded. <sup>114</sup> Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko accused the Russian Federation of sabotage activities. <sup>115</sup> Ukraine lacks adequate facilities for storing weapons in maximum safety. At the same time, the level of security level around these warehouses is also weak, which makes it easy to organize sabotage activities.
23.03.2017	Denis Voronenkov, a former deputy of the Russian Parliament and a critic of Vladimir Putin, was assassinated in the center of Kiev. He obtained Ukrainian citizenship in 2016 after he fled Russia. <sup>116</sup>
31.03.2017	A SBU officer was assassinated after a car bomb attack in the city port of Mariupol. <sup>117</sup> The officer, a former deputy of the counterintelligence director of Donetsk, helped capture dozens of Russian agents.

107. \*\*\*, "В ОДЕССЕ ПРОГРЕМЕЛ ВЗРЫВ НА ЖЕЛЕЗНОДОРОЖНОМ МОСТУ - СМИ (5 ФОТО)", ТСН, 13.05.2015, available at <https://ru.tsn.ua/ukrayina/v-odesse-prgremel-vzryv-na-zheleznodorozhnom-mostu-smi-425193.html?g=article&m=384717040><https://ru.tsn.ua/ukrayina/v-odesse-prgremel-vzryv-na-zheleznodorozhnom-mostu-smi-425193.html?g=article&m=384717040>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

108. \*\*\*, "Бойовики підірвали стратегічно важливу гілку залізниці у Луганській області", УНІАН, 12.06.2015, available at <https://www.unian.ua/war/1088528-boyoviki-pidirvali-zaliznichnu-koliyu-na-peregoni-popasna-roti-u-luganskiy-oblasti.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

109. \*\*\*, "На Луганщині підірвали залізницю, рух потягів зупинено", УНІАН, 27.06.2015, available at <https://www.unian.ua/war/1094575-na-luganschini-pidirvali-zalznitsyu-ruh-potyagiv-zupineno>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

110. "Ukraine Calls Deadly Depot Blast a Terrorist Act", Reuters, October 30, 2015.

111. Tony Wesolowsky, "Ukraine's Exploding Munition Depots Give Ammunition to Security Concerns", RFE/RL, October 6, 2017.

112. \*\*\*, "Найбільший в Україні склад боєприпасів намагалися підірвати за допомогою дронів", Ukr.media, 26.12.2015, available at <https://ukr.media/incidents/250485/>, Accessed 08.08.2018.

113. "UNIAN: SBU Says Russia's FSB Fails to Kidnap Its Renegade Officer Who Fought for Ukraine", *Kyiv Post*, November 18, 2016.

114. "Woman's Body Found in Debris at Blazing Ukrainian Munitions Depot", RFE/RL, March 24, 2017.

115. Ibid.

116. Shaun Walker, "Denis Voronenkov: Ex-Russian MP Who fled to Ukraine Killed in Kiev", *The Guardian*, March 23, 2017.

117. "Ukrainian Intelligence Officer Killed in Car Blast in Mariupol Port", Reuters, March 31, 2017.

27.06.2017	A colonel of the Ukrainian Army Intelligence Service (GUR) was assassinated in Kiev in a car bomb attack. <sup>118</sup>
28.06.2017	A SBU officer was assassinated after a car bomb attack in the Donetsk region. <sup>119</sup>
08.09.2017	A Chechen volunteer fighting in the Ukrainian army was assassinated in Kiev in a car bomb attack. <sup>120</sup>
27.09.2017	A large weapons depot exploded in the Vinnytsia region, in Kalynivka, about 220 km from Kiev. Approximately 190,000 tons of ammunition was stored there. <sup>121</sup> Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman said, "This is the arsenal of the Ukrainian army and I think it was not an accident that it was destroyed." <sup>122</sup> It was the second weapon depot that exploded in the last half year because of sabotage. This poses serious problems to the Ukrainian army in terms of arms supply. The interruption of the continuous flow of arms required in the struggle in Eastern Ukraine with the pro-Russian separatists could lead to the inability to maintain the front line or to organize an offensive operation. As a result of sabotage, Ukraine has lost more weapons than it has used since the beginning of the war in the east of the country. <sup>123</sup>
30.10.2017	A Chechen woman who fought as a volunteer in the Ukrainian army was assassinated in the Kiev region. <sup>124</sup>
05.04.2018	The research and production headquarters of the Photoprylad complex in Cherkasy was attacked by grenades. The Photoprylad Company is part of the state-owned military industrial concern Ukroboronprom, a key component of Ukraine's defense industry. Among others, it produced guiding and firing systems for armored vehicles, anti-tank missiles, applications for artillery and helicopters, and night vision devices. <sup>125</sup>
30.05.2018	The SBU prevented the assassination of Arkady Babchenko, a Russian journalist and a critic of Vladimir Putin. The assassination attempt was ordered by the Russian intelligence services. <sup>126</sup>
09.10.2018.	Around 3 a.m., three depots with ammunition exploded simultaneously and following this, another exploded at the 6th Arsenal of the Ministry of Defence ammunition depot in the Ichnya district of the Chernihiv region. The incident was catalogued as an act of sabotage organized by the Russian Federation. <sup>127</sup> The explosions caused a massive fire that destroyed 30% of the depot. At this military facility approximately "69,500 tonnes of munitions, including 43,000 tonnes ready for use" were stored. <sup>128</sup> Ukraine has three remaining main strategic arsenals, the 1322nd Artillery Ammunition Base (Zhytomyr region); 47th Arsenal of the Ground Forces Command (Khmelnysky region); and the 222nd Central Artillery Ammunition Base (Cherkasy region). <sup>129</sup> The aim of the Russian Federation is to weaken Ukraine's capability to supply its army which fights in Donbas.

118. Alec Luhn, "Ukrainian Military Intelligence Officer Killed by Car Bomb in Kiev", *The Guardian*, June 27, 2017.

119. "Ukrainian SBU Colonel Killed by Blast in Donetsk Region", RFE/RL, June 28, 2018.

120. Christopher Miller, "Kyiv Car Bomb Kills Man in Suspected Targeted Attack", RFE/RL, August 8, 2017.

121. "Thousands Evacuated after Ukraine Arms Depot Blast", Al-Jazeera, September 27, 2017.

122. Ibid.

123. "Ukraine Loses More Ammo in Latest Arms Depot Blast Than Used over 3 Years of War in Donbas", UNIAN, October 2, 2017.

124. "Amina Okueva Killed, Her Husband Survives Assassination Attempt Outside Kyiv", UNIAN, October 30, 2017.

125. "Ukroboronprom's Plant Hit by Two Grenades", UNIAN, April 5, 2018.

126. Andrew Roth, "Ukraine Reveals It Staged 'Murder' of Russian Journalist Arkady Babchenko", *The Guardian*, May 30, 2018.

127. "Poroshenko on Ammo Depot Fire: No Coincidence Sabotage Is the Main Version Given Proximity to Russia Border", UNIAN, October 9, 2018.

128. "Shells Exploding Every 3 Minutes at Ichnia Ammo Depot – Poltorak", Interfax-Ukraine, October 10, 2018.

129. "Anti-sabotage Drills: Ukrainian Spec-op Troops Penetrated Country's Biggest Ammo Depots – Journalist", UNIAN, October 21, 2018.

The railways blown up were in southeastern Ukraine, in the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv Zaporizhzhya, and Odessa. The railways in these regions are strategic in terms of their importance for the Ukrainian army which is fighting in Donbass. It receives fuel, lubricants, arms, troops, ammunition, and other important supplies via this railway system. Also, between 2014 and 2018, dozens of explosions and bomb attacks took place and several dozens were foiled by the SBU<sup>130</sup> in Kiev, Odessa, Nikolaev, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Kharkiv, Lviv, and Mariupol.<sup>131</sup> In addition to these incidents, hundreds of false alarms<sup>132</sup> were recorded over the last four years in which different people announced that bombs had been placed in railway stations, subway stations, airports, and public institutions.<sup>133</sup> The purpose of the bomb attacks and false alarms is to create chaos and to spread panic among the population in order to destabilize Ukraine. On August 17, 2017, SBU Director Pavlo Hrytsak announced that Russian intelligence services are planning the assassination of Ukrainian political and public figures to destabilize the country.<sup>134</sup> Another method used by the Russian services to try to destabilize Ukraine according to the SBU is to fund and organize protests.<sup>135</sup> In November 2016, the SBU and the SZRU mentioned in a joint press release that the Russian Federation is also using NGOs to organize and to fund protests in Ukraine.<sup>136</sup>

130. "Results of Certain Areas of Work of Security Service of Ukraine", Secret Service of Ukraine, December 23, 2016.

131. \*\*\*, "У Службі безпеки України пройшли урочистості за участю Президента України", Служба безпеки України, 25.03.2016, available at <https://ssu.gov.ua/ua/news/1/category/78/view/584#.juSn16ge.dpbs>, Accessed 11.09.2018.

132. "SBU Establishes Russian Origin of the Most of Anonymous Terrorists", Security Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/87/category/21/view/4118#.Vly8pxrM.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

133. \*\*\*, "Невідомі повідомили про загрозу вибухів у аеропортах по всій Україні, їх робота паралізована Детальніше", УНІАН, 10.11.2017, available at <https://www.unian.ua/society/2236069-nevidomi-povidomili-pro-zagrozu-vibuhiv-u-kilkoh-aeroportah-ukrajini-jih-robot-paralizovana.html>, Accessed 10.09.2018.

134. "FSB Plotting Terrorist Attacks, High-Profile Assassinations of State Officials in Ukraine – SBU Chief", UNIAN, August 17, 2017.

135. "Special Services of the RF Try to Destabilize Situation in Ukraine by Means of Artificial Protest Actions – Hrytsak (Video)", Secret Service of Ukraine, July 22, 2017, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/123/category/21/view/3715#.ScScuny1.dpbshttps://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/123/category/21/view/3715#.ScScuny1.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

136. "SBU and SZRU Statement about Plans of Russian Secret Services to Destabilize Situation in Ukraine", Secret Service of Ukraine, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/252/category/21/view/2238#.NVgz7tzG.dpbshttps://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/252/category/21/view/2238#.NVgz7tzG.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

# PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

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In order to win a hybrid war, it is not enough to destabilize the country, to defeat the army of the state concerned, or to occupy a part of its territory or the entire territory. The population and the international public must also believe that the war is over and nothing can be done.<sup>137</sup> Otherwise, the will of the population can change the situation on the field. The first and main element of psychological warfare is propaganda. The second element is represented by direct threats, which intimidate, mislead, demoralize, and put pressure on the enemy's leadership and population.<sup>138</sup> Actions like the continuous threat of war or invasion, massing troops at a state's borders,<sup>139</sup> blocking access to international waters,<sup>140</sup> cutting the gas supply, organizing assassinations, bomb threats and acts of sabotage etc., put pressure on the enemy and affect its morale.

## PROPAGANDA

It is especially important for the aggressor state to have a good propaganda machine that can influence and manipulate public opinion and the attitude of the targeted population. At the same time, propaganda can intimidate and demoralize a part of the population making it unable to act against a threat.

137. Williamson Murray and Peter R. Mansoor, *Hybrid Warfare*, p. 10.

138. Robert Longley, "An Introduction to Psychological Warfare", ThoughtCo, <https://www.thoughtco.com/psychological-warfare-definition-4151867>, (Accessed: August 4, 2019).

139. Andrew Rorth, "Ukraine President Warns Russia Tensions Could Lead to 'Full-Scale War'", *The Guardian*, November 28, 2018.

140. "Ukraine Claims Russia 'Rammed Our Tugboat' off Crimea", BBC, November 25, 2018.

The word "propaganda" was used for the first time in the 16th century by the Vatican, which in 1622 established a department called the *Congregation of Propaganda Fide*.<sup>141</sup> The name comes from Latin; the department can be translated as "Congregation for the Propagation of Faith."<sup>142</sup> Its purpose was to promote the Catholic faith in non-Catholic regions, especially in the Americas and Asia. Since then, propaganda has been increasingly used by state and non-state actors to achieve their goals. In our days, propaganda is often associated with fake news but this is only one outcome of propaganda. Propaganda can also present true information in order to promote a doctrine, ideology or ideas, and to make them known to the public to gain followers.<sup>143</sup> At the same time, propaganda targets the "planned dissemination of news, information, special arguments and messages specifically designed to influence the beliefs, thoughts and actions of a specific group."<sup>144</sup> By disseminating real or false information, the masterminds behind a specific propaganda want the targeted groups or populations who were exposed to it to adhere to the ideas promoted by its sponsors, who may be individuals, states, or international organizations. Also, propaganda can target the disinformation of a specific group, whether ethnic, racial, religious, or an entire population in order to make it act in the way the sponsor of the propaganda wants.<sup>145</sup> The state which disseminates propaganda must know the targeted audience very well - only in this way will propaganda be efficient and yield results.

Disinformation seeks to convince the public of the superiority or inferiority of a subject, be it a candidate of a political party, a president, a government, a state, or a cause. It is, therefore, desirable to obtain a certain attitude from the public in order to make it act in a certain way:<sup>146</sup> to vote for a certain party/candidate,<sup>147</sup> to organize protests, to remain passive in the face of a threat to national security, to support or to disagree with government policies or local/national decisions, etc. In most cases, the disinformation sponsor aims to manipulate public opinion for political purposes.<sup>148</sup>

141. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnel, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, (SAGE, Washington D.C: 2012), p. 2.

142. Vladimir Volkoff, *Tratat de dezinformare*, trad. de Mihnea Columbeanu, Antet, București, p. 18.

143. NATO Military Public Affairs Policy MC 0457/2, (NATO Public Affairs & Strategic Communications Advisor, Brussels: 2011), p. 32.

144. William E. Daugherty and Morris Janowitz, *A Psychological Warfare Casebook*, (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore: 1958), p. 2.

145. Vladimir Volkoff, *Tratat de dezinformare*, p. 19.

146. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

147. *Ibid.*

148. *Ibid.*

The means by which propaganda can be promoted are diverse and with the development of technology the dissemination of information has become much easier. The internet is the main propaganda portal and, in particular, social websites and video platforms websites. Also, media, books, brochures, and agents of influence help promote propaganda.<sup>149</sup> The A Department, also known as the Disinformation Department of the First Directorate of the KGB, is responsible for espionage and subversion,<sup>150</sup> and has the ability to organize subversive actions in different states. Protests, uprisings, massive defamation campaigns of foreign personalities and leaders, and campaigns to disseminate false and sometimes true information to confuse the population, are all the areas of expertise of the A Department.<sup>151</sup> Depending on the source and the accuracy of the information we can distinguish three kinds of propaganda.<sup>152</sup>

**White Propaganda:** The source of propaganda is known, it can easily be identified (e.g.: Russia Today, Sputnik, TASS, CNN, *The Washington Post*, AFP, *Le Monde*, BBC, Deutsche Welle, Sky News, UNIAN, etc.), and the information may be true or partially true. Thus, it is very important to double-check the information from every newspaper or news agencies before drawing a conclusion. In some cases, pieces of information can be omitted on purpose or accidentally. Sometimes false information and exaggeration can be used as we see in articles in Russia Today, Sputnik, or Sky News.<sup>153</sup>

We encounter this kind of propaganda when a state or a non-state actor wants to promote a certain ideology, doctrine, idea, event, leader, etc., and to convince the public that what they are promoting represents the truth. During the Cold War, the Radio Free Europe (RFE) station that broadcasted in Eastern European communist countries promoted democratic values. The Radio Station presented itself as a source of information that did not represent the voice of the United States, but the voice of the dissidents and the oppressed people of the communist countries. In fact, the RFE was secretly funded by the U.S. Congress through the CIA<sup>154</sup> and its purpose was to spread information about democratic values, life in Western countries, and the horrific dictatorships of Eastern Eu-

149. Ibid., p. 121.

150. "The KGB in Asia: Society of Subversion", CIA, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp79-01194a000100430001-8>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

151. Ibid.

152. Jowett and O'Donnel, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 17.

153. Jasper Jackson and Sorin Cristian Semeniuc, "Sky News Defends Report on Gun Running Amid Claims of Faked Meeting", *The Guardian*, August 10, 2016.

154. History, RFE/RL, <https://pressroom.rferl.org/history>, (Accessed: September 10, 2018).

rope to undermine the communist regimes.<sup>155</sup> Through the RFE, people from communist countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, were able to access information banned by their regimes. The aim was to influence the population in order to change the communist regimes from the bottom up through revolutions.

White propaganda is also used to promote religions, the glorious past of a state, the performances of a national team,<sup>156</sup> the necessity to start a war,<sup>157</sup> etc. White propaganda can target the misinformation of a population and of a group based on political orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, for political purposes through the propagation of true, partially true, false, or exaggerated information. A good example is Russia Today's broadcast station bureau from the United States, which frequently tries to spark tensions between the white and the black population in the country.<sup>158</sup> The actor behind this campaign, namely the Russian Federation, wants to increase the racial tensions in U.S. society. Besides information, press agencies and TV stations publish photos and videos that can be taken out of context, cut, and modified in order to manipulate public opinion.<sup>159</sup>

**Gray Propaganda:** The source that releases the information may or may not be correctly identified and the accuracy of the information is not certain.<sup>160</sup> Some information can be published on different sites, blogs, or groups on social media platforms without knowing who is behind it. A good example is the 1980s KGB operation to disseminate the theory that the HIV virus was created by the United States as a biological weapon.<sup>161</sup> First, the information appeared in India and was later taken up by other sources of information.<sup>162</sup> The goal was to spread an anti-American sentiment in the Third World.<sup>163</sup>

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155. Nicholas J. Cull, Vasily Gatov, Peter Pomerantsev, Anne Applebaum, Alistair Shawcross, *Soviet Subversion, Disinformation and Propaganda: How the West Fought against It*, (LSE Institute of Global Affairs, London: 2017), pp. 35-36.

156. Ibid.

157. Ewen Macaskill, "Former Bush Press Secretary Claims Iraq War Fuelled by Propaganda", *The Guardian*, May 28, 2008.

158. Cull *et al.*, *Soviet Subversion*, p. 17.

159. Volkoff, *Tratat de dezinformare*, pp. 176-184.

160. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 20.

161. Cull *et al.*, *Soviet Subversion*, pp. 35-36.

162. Vladimir Volkoff, *Tratat de dezinformare*, p. 105.

163. Ibid.

**Black Propaganda:** The source cannot be identified or is attributed to a source that is not responsible for disseminating the false information. Its purpose is to spread false information, to misinform, manipulate, and to lower the morale of a group or population without being able to identify who is behind it.<sup>164</sup> During the Second World War, the Nazi intelligence services set up an undercover radio station that broadcasted English news about the war and presented itself as a British station. The station broadcasted false information to listeners, especially to the British public, about the situation on the front with the aim of lowering the population's morale.<sup>165</sup> In 2016, during the U.S. elections, the Russian secret services undertook a massive discrediting campaign against Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump's Democratic Party rival, while he was presented as the best option for the White House.<sup>166</sup> They used tens of thousands of fake accounts on social networks like Facebook and Twitter to influence voters' opinions. The users of these networks did not know that there were not Americans behind those accounts or groups, but Russians paid to share false information, modified photos, and to add negative comments. Meanwhile, white, gray, and black propaganda can transmit subversive information that incites the undermining of a state's internal order.<sup>167</sup>

But how did Russia apply this psychological warfare against Ukraine and what was its main purpose? Beginning on February 23, 2014, simultaneously with the coming to power of a pro-Western government in Kiev, the media in the Russian Federation began an extensive campaign of discrediting the new government, describing it as a fascist junta that took over power.<sup>168</sup> The Kremlin's propaganda was particularly effective among the Russian minority concentrated in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea because they were watching especially Russian TV channels. Also, pro-Russian elites in the region played an important role in instigating protests against the new leadership.<sup>169</sup> After the Ukrainian revolution in February 2014, Russian propaganda presented Ukraine as a bankrupt state led by fascists<sup>170</sup>

164. Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 18.

165. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

166. Alicia Parlapiano and Jasmine C. Lee, "The Propaganda Tools Used by Russians to Influence the 2016 Election," *The New York Times*, February 16, 2018.

167. Lee Richards, *The Black Art: British Clandestine Psychological Warfare against the Third Reich*, (www.psywar.org, East Sussex: 2010), pp. 1-2.

168. Kofman and Migacheva, *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, p. 11.

169. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

170. Eric Draitser, "Solving the Crisis in Ukraine," *Russia Today*, March 19, 2014.

and as a state which did not exist before 1991. Also, Russian propaganda presented Ukraine as a state from which Russian ethnics flee because of ultra-nationalists.<sup>171</sup> During the protests in Kiev, the Kremlin's Russian media, such as Russia-24,<sup>172</sup> Russia Today, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*,<sup>173</sup> and NTV,<sup>174</sup> characterized the protesters as "radical militants"<sup>175</sup> that supported the overthrowing of the rule of law. The same TV channels highlighted that the protesters were the first who opened fire against the law enforcement forces.<sup>176</sup> An article in Russia Today dated March 3, 2014, presented the scenario that snipers who killed dozens of demonstrators during the protests were hired by the protesters' leaders.<sup>177</sup> In fact, the snipers were brought to Ukraine by the Russian Federation to help Yanukovich deal with the protests.<sup>178</sup> In July 2015, the chief military prosecutor of Ukraine investigating the role of the SBU before and during the February 2014 revolution, declared that the intelligence service of Ukraine, at the request of the FSB, waged an information war against its own citizens.<sup>179</sup> The aim was to discredit the pro-European protesters and the idea that Ukraine should join the European Union.<sup>180</sup>

Between 2014 and 2018, Russian propaganda aimed to repeatedly promote, over a long period of time and by all means, messages to discredit Ukraine, weaken the civilians' and army's morale, and encourage interethnic tensions. Propaganda focused on repeating the same false themes that it packaged in simple and clear messages so that it can be understood by everyone. The main messages were the following:

171. Kofman and Migacheva, *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, p. 80.

172. Андрей Григорьев, "Снайперами на Майдане руководили нынешние власти Украины", Вести, 19.02.2014, available at <https://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2989052>, Accessed 03.09.2018.

173. СЕРГЕЙ СЕМУШКИН, "Украинский генерал рассказал, чьи снайперы стреляли на Майдане", 12.03.2014, available at <https://www.kp.md/daily/26206.4/3091229/>, Accessed 03.09.2018.

174. \*\*\*, "Майдан четыре года спустя: кто на самом деле расстреливал людей в центре Киева", НТВ, 25.02.2014, available at [www.ntv.ru/novosti/1985460/](http://www.ntv.ru/novosti/1985460/), Accessed 03.09.2018.

175. \*\*\*, "Так называемые демонстранты", Лента, 21.02.2014, available at <https://lenta.ru/articles/2014/02/21/maidansmi/>, Accessed 03.09.2018.

176. Ibid.

177. \*\*\*, "Снайперы в Киеве были наняты лидерами Майдана – телефонный разговор Кэтрин Эштон и главы МИД Эстонии", *Russia Today*, 05.03.2014, available at <https://russian.rt.com/article/23679>, Accessed 03.09.2018.

178. "Poroshenko Blames Russian Official for Mайдan Snipers", Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/en/poroshenko-blames-russian-official-for-maidan-snipers/a-18271531>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).

179. \*\*\*, "Під час Майдану керівництво СБУ за завданням ФСБ вело інформаційну війну проти України – Матіос", УНІАН, 15.07.2015, available at <https://www.unian.ua/politics/1101074-pid-chas-maydanu-vische-kerivnitstvo-sbu-velo-informatsiynu-viynu-proti-ukrajini-matios.html>, Accessed 03.09.2018.

180. Ibid.

- The Ukrainian revolution was a coup funded by the CIA.<sup>181</sup>
- Kiev decision-makers are controlled by the United States and other foreign powers and act in their interests.<sup>182</sup>
- Ukraine is a failed state, bankrupt, strongly divided, corrupt,<sup>183</sup> and the poorest state in Europe.<sup>184</sup>
- The Ukrainian army is guilty of downing the Malaysia Airlines aircraft on July 17, 2014, with 283 people on board.<sup>185</sup>
- Ukraine does not respect the Minsk agreement of February 2015 and continues the war in Donbas.<sup>186</sup>
- Separatist sentiment is on the rise and more and more regions in south-east Ukraine request autonomy from Kiev.<sup>187</sup>
- Ukrainian soldiers are increasingly deserting the Ukrainian army<sup>188</sup> and those who fight in Eastern Ukraine have a very low morale<sup>189</sup> and drink a lot of alcohol.<sup>190</sup> Russian propaganda pays special attention to this subject in order to influence the thinking and the behavior of the Ukrainian soldiers.<sup>191</sup> Russia wants to affect and break Ukrainian soldiers morale, to make them desert their army, and to discourage other people from joining the army.<sup>192</sup>

181. "Brokering Power: US Role in Ukraine Coup Hard to Overlook", Russia Today, <https://www.rt.com/news/233439-us-meddling-ukraine-crisis/>, (Accessed: September 2, 2018).

182. Kofman and Migacheva, *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, pp. 80-82.

183. "Three Strikes and You're Out: Ukraine Is a Divided, Failed, Rogue State", Russia Today, <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/377978-ukraine-rogue-failed-state/>, (Accessed: September 2, 2018).

184. "Ukraine Is Europe's Poorest Nation with \$220 Average Monthly Wage", Russia Today, <https://www.rt.com/business/412692-ukraine-poorest-country-europe/>, (Accessed: September 2, 2018).

185. "Serial Numbers of Missile That Downed MH17 Show It Was Produced in 1986, Owned by Ukraine – Russia", Russia Today, <https://www.rt.com/news/438596-mh17-downing-russian-briefing/>, (Accessed: September 2, 2018).

186. Bryan Macdonald, "Four Years After 'Euromaidan,' Corruption Is Still King in Ukraine", *Russia Today*, February 22, 2018.

187. "Balkanization? Southeast Ukrainian Region Demands Greater Autonomy", Russia Today, <https://www.rt.com/news/313709-ukraine-zaporozhye-autonomy-draft/>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).

188. "Farewell to Arms: Over 10,000 Soldiers Desert Ukrainian Army", Sputnik, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201506211023647747/>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).

189. "Kiev May Now Have as Many as 16,000 Armed Deserters on Its Hands", Sputnik, <https://sputniknews.com/military/201510051028034616-ukraine-army-deserters/>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).

190. "No More Fighting: Poor Morale Causing AWOL Among Ukrainian Soldiers", Sputnik, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201505261022562838/>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).

191. Robert Longley, "An Introduction to Psychological Warfare", *ThoughtCo*, March 1, 2019.

192. Paul W. Blackstock, *The Strategy of Subversion; Manipulating the Politics of Other Nations*, (Quadrangle Books, Chicago: 1964), p. 21.

The main purposes of the Russian intelligence services in promoting propaganda in Ukraine between 2014 and 2018 are as follows:<sup>193</sup>

- To collect information about the psychological profile of users of social networking sites in order to influence them.
- To disseminate false information and preconceived messages for or against an idea.
- To cause large-scale protests.
- To legitimize and support the activities of separatist groups in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>194</sup>
- To encourage the escalation of tensions in society especially between Ukrainians and ethnic minorities (Poles, Jews,<sup>195</sup> Hungarians,<sup>196</sup> Romanians, and Russians<sup>197</sup>).
- To encourage defections among the Ukrainian soldiers.
- To denigrate Ukraine and the Kiev authorities in order to affect the image of the state and the national morale.

## SUBVERSION

The purpose of the propaganda has in the same time a subversive role.<sup>198</sup> According to the Cambridge Dictionary, subversion is "the act of trying to destroy or damage an established system or government."<sup>199</sup> Also, according to US Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, subversion is an "action designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, po-

193. "Tkachuk: SBU Has Evidence That Calls for "Maidan-3" Are Inspired by Russian Secret Services (Video)", Security Service of Ukraine website <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/205/category/21/view/2753#.Wpq6UJRN.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 3, 2018).

194. Ibid.

195. "SBU Exposes Organized Group Engaged in Stirring up Inter-ethnic Conflicts", *Security Service of Ukraine* website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/49/category/21/view/4540#.dBkwhY47.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 4, 2018).

196. "SBU Records Activation of the Russian Special Services Aimed at Destabilizing the Situation in the Country (Video)", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/58/category/21/view/4430#.B2RPinbA.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 4, 2018).

197. "SBU Wrecks Russian Provocation, Oriented to Incitement of Ethnic Hatred in Transcarpathian Region", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/147/category/21/view/3383#.k1zH5bfn.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 4, 2018).

198. "SBU: Director of Anti-Ukrainian Resource "RIA Novosti Ukraina Kyryl Vyshynskiyi Notified of Suspicion in Committing a Crime", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/31/category/21/view/4778#.giPYvpeT.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 4, 2018).

199. Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/subversion>, (Accessed: August 10, 2018).

litical strength or morale of a regime”<sup>200</sup> Subversion is a non-military tool of a state's foreign policy aimed at expanding its influence on another state.<sup>201</sup> Subversion "aims at undermining or detachment of loyalties of significant political and social groups in the targeted state and moving them under ideal conditions to the symbols and institutions of the aggressor state."<sup>202</sup> The national morale and the ability to resist foreign intervention are influenced by social and political loyalty to national symbols such as the flag, the national coat of arms, the anthem, the constitution, the government, the presidency, or important figures, etc.<sup>203</sup> In this context, national morale is particularly important. From the perspective of Hans J. Morgenthau, a representative of classical realism, national morale is one of the nine elements of a state's power.<sup>204</sup> National morale represents the determination wherewith a nation supports its foreign and domestic policy in time of peace or war.<sup>205</sup> At the same time, national morale influences the agricultural and industrial production, the efficiency of the armed forces, the actions of its diplomatic body,<sup>206</sup> and the reaction of the population in the cases of internal and external crises. On July 15, 2016, when a coup attempt took place in Turkey, people showed a powerful spirit of unity and were able to react to a situation of internal crisis. People prevented the coup by going out on the streets and standing in front of the soldiers and the tanks. The loyalty of the people to the constitution and their belief in the legitimacy of the political system were the main forces behind their actions.<sup>207</sup> This is a good example of unity and strong national morale. Also, the effect of propaganda is stronger on national morale when the internal situation is affected by poor governance. The incompetence and corruption in state structures, lack of reforms, low living standards, and a large gap between the rich and the poor, decrease the morale of a population. These make it more vulnerable to propaganda. Due to the delicate domestic situation, a large proportion of the population tends to believe

200. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (United States Government Publishing Office, Washington D.C., 1987), p. 353.

201. Blackstock, *The Strategy of Subversion; Manipulating the Politics of Other Nations*, p. 24.

202. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

203. *Ibid.*

204. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politica între natiuni. Lupta pentru putere si lupta pentru pace*, Polirom, Iași, 2007, p. 174.

205. *Ibid.*

206. *Ibid.*

207. Nilay Kar Onum and Kubra Kara, "Survivors Recall 2016 Defeated Coup Night in Turkey", Anadolu Agency, July 13, 2019.

all negative news about the actions of their decision-makers and the political situation in their country even if the news might be false. At the same time, the level of education and information among a certain population is very important in order to counter propaganda. The population should be informed daily by the government about fake news in mass media, and it should offer examples and present true information.

In the long run, poor governance can make people lose their respect, attachment, and loyalty to national symbols. In this context, power can easily be taken over by different political, social,<sup>208</sup> or paramilitary groups<sup>209</sup> funded and controlled by other state actors.<sup>210</sup> The takeover of power can be accomplished through early elections, the initiation of a censure motion by the opposition parties, a coup d'état, or a revolution.<sup>211</sup> Sometimes, behind the last two events intelligence services of other states can be present as gray eminences.<sup>212</sup> Their interests vary greatly, ranging from dissatisfaction with the internal<sup>213</sup> or external policy direction<sup>214</sup> of the state concerned, to controlling its natural resources.<sup>215</sup> Saudi Arabia<sup>216</sup> and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)<sup>217</sup> are supposed to be some of the actors behind the July 2013 coup in Egypt. Before the coup they were publicly against the domestic and foreign policy of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi and the relations between countries were not optimal. Then, the first democratically elected president was ousted by the Egyptian army. Shortly after the coup, the UAE sent \$3 billion and Saudi Arabia sent \$5 billion in aid to Egypt.<sup>218</sup> Egypt's Chief of General Staff Abdul Fattah al-Sisi organized the coup and took over power. Soon,

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208. Bethany Allen-Ebahimian, "64 Years Later, CIA Finally Releases Details of Iranian Coup", *Foreign Policy*, 20 July 2017.

209. Julian Borger, "Russian-Trained Mercenaries Back Bosnia's Serb Separatists", *The Guardian*, January 12, 2018.

210. Blackstock, *The Strategy of Subversion*, p. 56.

211. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

212. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

213. Elisabeth Malkin, "An Apology for a Guatemalan Coup, 57 Years Later", *The New York Times*, October 20, 2011.

214. Bernard Gwertzman, "Afghan President Is Ousted and Executed in Kabul Coup, Reportedly with Soviet Help", *The New York Times*, December 27, 1979.

215. Allen-Ebrahimian, "64 Years Later".

216. David Hearts, "Why Saudi Arabia Is Taking a Risk by Backing the Egyptian Coup", *The Guardian*, August 20, 2013.

217. David D. Kirkpatrick, "Recordings Suggest Emirates and Egyptian Military Pushed Ousting of Morsi", *The New York Times*, March 1, 2015.

218. Patrick Werr, "UAE Offers Egypt \$3 Billion Support, Saudis \$5 Billion", *Reuters*, July 9, 2013.

he was elected as president. Four years later, in 2017, he ratified a document through which Egypt ceded sovereignty of two of its islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. Tiran and Sanafir Islands are strategically placed at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>219</sup> This decision angered the population and the opposition accused him of handing over the islands in return for economic aid.<sup>220</sup> In the years after the Egyptian coup, Cairo received billions of dollars from Saudi Arabia in economic aid.<sup>221</sup> These are good examples of how certain states try to influence other states' domestic and foreign affairs.

Another coup took place in Sudan six years later.<sup>222</sup> In April 2019, the Sudanese military organized a coup and took over control of the country. Immediately following this, the UAE and Saudi Arabia announced that they would send \$3 billion in aid to Sudan, \$500 million as a deposit to the Sudanese central bank and the rest in the form of petroleum products, food, and medicine.<sup>223</sup> The economic aid offered immediately after the coup can be seen as a solid indication that the new government in Sudan will support Saudi Arabia's and UAE's interests in the region.<sup>224</sup>

Subversion, therefore, pursues three purposes:

1. To demoralize the population of the state concerned and disintegrate its constituent groups.
2. To discredit the authority, the activity, and the image of the state (the government, the presidency, and the institutions that ensure the security and defence of the country), civil servants, and elites.
3. To induce the population of a state into passivity, to block its reaction if a group takes power by force or if the state is invaded.<sup>225</sup>

219. Ian Blakc, "Egypt's President under Fire over Red Sea Islands Transfer to Saudi Arabia", *The Guardian*, April 11, 2016.

220. "Report: Saudi Arabia Paid Egypt \$25bn for Red Sea Islands", Middle East Monitor, <https://www.middleeast-monitor.com/20170629-report-saudi-arabia-paid-egypt-25bn-for-red-sea-islands/>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

221. Amina Ismail, "Opposition Grows to Egypt's Plan to Cede Islands to Saudi Arabia", Reuters, June 15, 2017.

222. Justin Lynch and Robbie Gramer, "Arab States Foment Sudan Chaos While U.S. Stands By", *Foreign Policy*, May 5, 2019.

223. Khalid Abdellazi, "Saudi Arabia, UAE to Send \$3 billion in Aid to Sudan", Reuters, April 21, 2019.

224. Alican Tekingündüz, "The Saudis, Emiratis, and the Future of Turkish Projects in Sudan", TRT World, April 23, 2019.

225. Volfoff, *Tratat de dezinformare*, p. 8.

The propaganda and subversive messages of the Russian Federation were transmitted in Ukraine via all channels of information: TV channels,<sup>226</sup> radio, press agencies,<sup>227</sup> books,<sup>228</sup> magazines, brochures,<sup>229</sup> video-sharing websites like YouTube,<sup>230</sup> social platforms such as *Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*<sup>231</sup> - Russian socialization platforms that enjoy great popularity in the ex-Soviet space, Facebook, and Twitter.<sup>232</sup> In these platforms, information circulates much faster and the Russian intelligence services have troll teams with false accounts that help promote propaganda.<sup>233</sup> On August 28, 2018, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko declared that the Russian Federation is preparing a massive manipulation campaign in order to influence the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2019.<sup>234</sup> He stated, "The tentacles of Moscow have penetrated social networks heavily, they hold a grip on certain media, they are present in cyberspace. At the same time, the Kremlin skilfully covers its subversive activities with democratic values and principles."<sup>235</sup>

According to Poroshenko, tens of thousands of false accounts were recorded on social networking sites under the coordination of the Russian intelligence services. Their purpose is to pass false information to undermine the state order and to influence and manipulate the Ukrainian electorate.<sup>236</sup> Between March 2014 and August 2018, the Security Service of Ukraine destroyed dozens of networks that were working for the Russian Federation and were disseminating propaganda

226. "SBU Deports to Russia a Propagandist Engaged in Anti-Ukrainian TV Propaganda", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/51/category/21/view/4515#.RsYJgvvh.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

227. "SBU: Director of Anti-Ukrainian Resource "RIA Novosti Ukraina" Kyryl Vyshynskiy Notified of Suspicion in Committing a Crime", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/31/category/21/view/4778#.giPYvpeT.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

228. "SBU Blocks Smuggling of Book Products from Russia to Ukraine Amounting to UAH 1,000,000 (USD 35, 714)", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/56/category/21/view/4456#.NnWn bzv1.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

229. "Chernihiv Region: SBU Prevents Smuggling of Anti-Ukrainian Printed Materials from Russian Federation", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/60/category/21/view/4414#.70L4YuuG.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

230. Andrei Soshnikov, "Inside a Pro-Russia Propaganda Machine in Ukraine", BBC Russia, November 13, 2017.

231. "SBU Detects in Cherkasy Region Pro-Russian Propagandist in "VK" and "Odnoklassniki" Social Networks (Video)", Security Service of Ukraine website, 02.06.2017, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/140/category/21/view/3461#.CzUQCTb3.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

232. Kofman and Migacheva, *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, p. 51.

233. "SBU Detects Ten Administrators of Anti-Ukrainian Communities in Social Networks", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/184/category/21/view/2977#.PdJwFbkH.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

234. "Poroshenko: Kremlin Creating Tens of Thousands of Fake Accounts in Social Networks Ahead of Ukraine Elections", UNIAN, <https://www.unian.info/politics/10240584-poroshenko-kremlin-creating-tens-of-thousands-of-fake-accounts-in-social-networks-ahead-of-ukraine-elections.html>, (Accessed: September 9, 2019).

235. Ibid.

236. Ibid.

on social websites.<sup>237</sup> In Ukrainian territory there are active networks organized by the Russian intelligence services that are responsible for hiring bloggers and people willing to post fake news on social networks in exchange for money.<sup>238</sup> Thousands of Ukrainian citizens recruited by the Russian secret services spread propaganda on social media and on video-sharing websites.

Russian propaganda is not only spread by the Russian Federation through the means mentioned above, but also in Ukraine through television channels, Kremlin-controlled press agencies, bloggers, and members of social networks. Regarding Ukrainian TV channels and press agencies, the most popular ones do not promote Russian propaganda so as not to lose their transmission licenses. In order to limit the impact of Russian propaganda on the population, on March 12, 2014, the Ukrainian National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council decided to block several pro-Kremlin Russian television stations.<sup>239</sup> On April 15, 2017, Ukraine decided to add other Russian channels to the list of those forbidden.<sup>240</sup> The National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine also banned several sites with Russian content, social platforms (*Vkontakte* and *Odnoklassniki*) and search engines like Yandex, all of them from the Russian Federation.<sup>241</sup> The same National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine decided on May 2, 2018, to block the sites of the most openly pro-Kremlin news agencies and radio stations from both Russia and Ukraine including Ukrainian Business Portal, RIA Novosti Ukraine, all the TV and radio stations of the public television from Russia, as well as those of the news agencies Novosti, Sputnik, Prima, Vesti, Russia 1, Channel One, NTV, and Radio Vera.<sup>242</sup>

The media sources in Ukraine that enjoy greater confidence regarding objectivity and independence are *Ukrayinska Pravda*, *Hromadske.ua*, *Novoe Vremya*, *Krayina*, *Hromadske Radio*, *Tyzhden*, *Detektor Media*, and *StopFake*.<sup>243</sup> The last two closely monitor Russian propaganda and point out false information to read-

237. Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://www.ssu.gov.ua/en/news/1/category/21>, (Accessed: September 4, 2019).

238. "SBU Exposes 'Russian World' Promoters Involved in Election Meddling Plot", UNIAN, <https://www.unian.info/politics/10242963-sbu-exposes-russian-world-promoters-involved-in-election-meddling-plot.html>, (Accessed: September 5, 2019).

239. Stephen Ennis, "Ukraine Hits Back at Russian TV Onslaught", *BBC*, March 12, 2014.

240. "Ukraine to Block Russia Propagandist Media, Social Networks for Three Years", UNIAN, <https://www.unian.info/politics/1924709-ukraine-to-block-russia-propagandist-media-social-networks-for-three-years.html>, (Accessed: September 3, 2019).

241. *Ibid.*

242. "Ukraine Blocks Access to Additional Russian Media Outlets", *Wired*, <https://www.uawire.org/ukraine-blocks-access-to-russian-internet-media>, (Accessed: September 3, 2019).

243. Vitalii Rybak, "The Paid Word: Who Owns Ukrainian Media", *Euromaidan Press*, July 2, 2018.

ers. Among the channels that are most read and watched by Ukrainians and that are controlled by Ukrainian oligarchs are 1+1, 2+2, TET, UNIAN TV, STB, Novyi Kanal, ICTV Inter TV, K1, K2, MEGA, NTV, and Chanel 5 TV; and in terms of news agencies, Segodnya.ua, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Arguments and Facts Ukraine (aif.ua), TSN.ua, and UNIAN.info.<sup>244</sup> On occasion, some are used by oligarchs in domestic political struggles to discredit their opponents and to promote the activities of the parties they support.

## DIRECT THREATS

As we mentioned before, direct threats are the second element of psychological war. Such actions are represented by threats of war or invasion, massing troops at a state's borders<sup>245</sup> or blocking its access to international waters.<sup>246</sup> Other states can use energetic blackmail, assassinations, bomb threats and acts of sabotage etc. These are realized by a state actor in order to put pressure on its enemies' governments, security structures and population, to affect their morale, and to maintain a state of permanent tension and fear of war. Between 2014 and 2018, Russia threatened Ukraine with war numerous times. In March 2014, at the request of Vladimir Putin the Russian Parliament authorized the use of military force into neighboring states to protect Russian citizens.<sup>247</sup> This created a weighing fear among Ukrainian populations and leaders that an imminent invasion will take place. In August 2016, Vladimir Putin threatened Kiev with serious consequences for Ukraine if it attacks the separatists in Donbass.<sup>248</sup> Also, between 2014 and 2018, the Russian Federation continuously massed troops at Ukraine's borders.<sup>249</sup> In the same period, Russia's president numerous times ordered his country's military to be in a state of combat readiness inducing the idea that he is preparing an invasion.<sup>250</sup> These actions were realized in order to maintain a permanent state

244. Ibid.

245. Andrew Rorth, "Ukraine President Warns Russia Tensions Could Lead to 'Full-Scale War'", *The Guardian*, November 28, 2018.

246. "Ukraine Claims Russia 'Rammed Our Tugboat' off Crimea", BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46333976>, (Accessed: 4 August 2018).

247. Shaun Walker and Harriet Salem, "Russian Parliament Approves Troop Deployment in Ukraine", *The Guardian*, March 2, 2014.

248. Andrew Osborn, Polina Nikolskaya, "Putin Tells Europe on U.S. Trade Threat: 'I Told You So'", Reuters, May 7, 2018.

249. "Ukrainian Defense Ministry: 55,000 Russian Troops Massing Near Ukraine", UNIAN, <https://www.unian.info/war/1650496-ukrainian-defense-ministry-55000-russian-troops-massing-near-ukraine.html>, (Accessed: August 4, 2018).

250. Kim Sengupta, "What Lies Behind the New Russian Threat to Ukraine", *The Independent*, August 12, 2016.

of tension and fear of an imminent invasion. This put a permanent pressure on Ukraine's leadership, on its security institutions, and disseminated fear among the population.<sup>251</sup> On November 25, 2018, Russia blocked the entrance of three Ukrainian ships into the Azov Sea by blocking the Kerch Strait and then captured the ships and their crew.<sup>252</sup> Limiting or denying Ukraine access to its ports from the Azov Sea through the Kerch Strait violated Article 37 and Article 38 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. According to these articles, Ukraine has the right of free passage.<sup>253</sup> Article 37 stipulates that the transit right "applies to straits which are used for international navigation between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone."<sup>254</sup> Also, Article 38 stipulates that transit passage shall not be impeded with the exception of specific cases which in this situation did not apply.<sup>255</sup>

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251. Matthias Williams and Pavel Polityuk, "Russian Threat Highest Since 2014: Ukraine Military Chief", Reuters, December 4, 2018.

252. Rorth, "Ukraine President Warns Russia tensions".

253. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Art. 37, [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf), (Accessed: August 4, 2018).

254. Ibid.

255. Ibid.



# ECONOMIC WAR

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The Russian Federation began to put economic pressure on Ukraine a few months before the summit in Vilnius where Ukraine should have signed the European Union Association Agreement. Moscow had been warning Kiev since September 2013 with economic repression if it were to sign the Association Agreement.<sup>256</sup> The table below shows how Russia triggered an economic war.

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY RUSSIA	
03.03.2014	Russia announced that it will temporarily ban imports of pork from Ukraine due to the fact that the veterinary services cannot fully check products due to political instability in Ukraine. <sup>257</sup>
20.03.2014	Russia's Federal Customs Service intensified control of Ukrainian goods on the grounds that they could be carrying prohibited products including weapons. <sup>258</sup>
01.04.2014	The Russian gas producing and supplying company, Gazprom, increased the price of gas delivered to Ukraine from \$268/1,000 cubic meters to \$485/1,000 cubic meters because it had not paid its debts. Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said his country does not recognize the price rise and that Russia's actions represent an act of economic aggression. <sup>259</sup>

256. Shaun Walker, "Ukraine's EU Trade Deal Will Be Catastrophic, Says Russia", *The Guardian*, September 22, 2014.

257. Vladislav Vorotnikov, "Ukraine Crisis May Have Serious Implications for the Meat Industry", *GlobalMeat*, March 3, 2014.

258. Agata Wierzbowska-Miazga, "Russian Economic Pressure on Ukraine", *The Center of Western Studies*, March 26, 2014.

259. Andrey Ostroukh and Alexander Kolyandr, "Gazprom Bill Puts Ukraine under Pressure", *The Wall Street Journal*, April 24, 2014.

16.06.2014	Gazprom stopped supplying gas to Ukraine because it could not pay its debts. <sup>260</sup> The delivery resumed in 2014 but by 2018 Russia continued to threaten Ukraine to shut off the gas and actually did this for short periods of time between 2014-2018. <sup>261</sup>
14.07.2014	The Russian Federal Service for the Oversight of Consumer Protection and Welfare ( <i>Rospotrebnadzor</i> ) forbade the import of pork and beef from Ukraine. This caused a \$4 million loss to the Ukrainian economy. Ukrainian products no longer had a sales outlet and exports could not be rerouted to EU countries because they did not meet the sanitary-veterinary standards imposed by the EU. <sup>262</sup>
28.07.2014	The Russian Federation prohibited the import of dairy products from Ukraine on the grounds that they are dangerous and do not comply with consumer protection laws. <sup>263</sup>
14.08.2014	Imports of alcoholic drinks from Ukraine were forbidden on the grounds that they violated consumer protection laws. Ukraine represented a big exporter of beer and vodka for Russia, which brought it earnings of millions of dollars. Only in 2013 exports of alcohol to Russia totalled \$230 million. <sup>264</sup>
05.09.2014	All imports of sweets and pastries from Ukraine were suspended after two companies violated consumer protection laws. <sup>265</sup>
22.10.2014	<i>Rospotrebnadzor</i> banned the import of Ukrainian vegetables and fruits on the grounds that they do not have labels of origin and could come from other EU countries. <sup>266</sup>
01.11.2018	Russia imposed economic measures against 322 Ukrainian individuals, among whom were also Ukrainian top officials. At the same time, Russia imposed sanctions on 68 Ukrainian companies. Their non-cash accounts and others assets in Russia were frozen and capital transfers from Russia to Ukraine were banned for those targeted by sanctions. <sup>267</sup>
25.12.2018	In a message post on Twitter, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvede expanded sanctions against approximately 200 Ukrainian individuals and legal entities. <sup>268</sup>

After the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbas, Russia tried to destabilize Ukraine by economic means. Moscow wanted to show to the new leadership in Kiev the price they have to pay for choosing a pro-European path and to force it to pursue a pro-Russian policy. The Russian market was an important sec-

260. Shaun Walker, "Russia Cuts off Gas Supply to Ukraine After Talks Collapse", *The Guardian*, June 14, 2014.

261. Vladimir Soldatkin, Natalia Zinets, "Gazprom Seeks to Halt Ukraine Gas Contracts as Dispute Escalates", Reuters, March 2, 2018.

262. Carmen Paun, "Ukraine Losses US\$4m, Due to Russian Meat Trade Restrictions", GlobalMeat, December 8, 2014.

263. Maxim Stulov, "Russia Bans Dairy Imports from Ukraine", *The Moscow Times*, July 27, 2014.

264. "Russia's Ban on Ukrainian Alcohol Unlikely to Trigger Price Growth", TASS - Russia News Agency, <http://itar-tass.com/en/economy/744878>, (Accessed: September 6, 2018).

265. \*\*\*, "Russia Bans Ukraine Candy Imports", *Deutsche Welle*, <https://www.dw.com/en/russia-bans-ukraine-candy-imports/a-17903231>, (Accessed: September 6, 2018).

266. Alexander Kolyandr, "Russia to Ban All Fruit and Vegetable Imports from Ukraine", *The Wall Street Journal*, October 2, 2014.

267. "Russia Expands Targeted Sanctions against Ukraine", RFE/RL, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-expands-sanctions-ukraine/29675861.html>, (Accessed: January 10, 2019).

268. Ibid.

tor for Ukrainian exports and the economic sanctions severely affected the economy of Ukraine, which was in crisis even before. However, due to the involvement of the European Union, the United States, the IMF, and the World Bank, which massively financed Ukraine, its economy has stabilized. The signing of the European Union Association Agreement in June 2014 significantly helped the country's economy.<sup>269</sup> Between 2014 and 2018,<sup>270</sup> the European Union provided Ukraine €3.8 billion in economic aid.<sup>271</sup> Also, over the same period, the United States provided approximately \$1.5 billion in military assistance,<sup>272</sup> loans of about \$3.5 billion,<sup>273</sup> and \$1.3 billion in USAID funds.<sup>274</sup> In addition to the EU and the United States, both the IMF and the World Bank have provided loans to Ukraine. From February 2014 until January 2018, the IMF provided \$8.4 billion and the World Bank provided \$5 billion.<sup>275</sup> Without the economic aid received from these actors, Ukraine could not have coped with the economic war by Russia. Also, Kiev would not have been able to continue the war in Donbass and to deal with its economic problems.

269. "Countries and Regions: Ukraine", European Commission, [ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/ukraine/](https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/ukraine/), "Russia Expands Targeted Sanctions Against Ukraine", *RFE/RL*, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-expands-sanctions-ukraine/29675861.html>, (Accessed: September 6, 2019).

270. "Ukraine to Receive 600 Million Euros in EU Aid, Commission Says", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-eu/ukraine-to-receive-600-million-euros-in-eu-aid-commission-says-idUSKBN16N1S1>, (Accessed: September 7, 2018).

271. "Parliament Votes for €1 Billion in Aid to Ukraine", European Parliament, [www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180607IPR05244/parliament-votes-for-EU1-billion-in-aid-to-ukraine](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180607IPR05244/parliament-votes-for-EU1-billion-in-aid-to-ukraine), (Accessed: September 7, 2018).

272. Ryan Browne, "US Releases \$200 Million in Defensive Aid to Ukraine as Moscow Seeks Better Ties", CNN, July 20, 2018.

273. "U.S. Signs Third \$1 Billion Loan Guarantee Agreement for Ukraine", Reuters, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-usa/u-s-signs-third-1-billion-loan-guarantee-agreement-for-ukraine-idUKKCN0YP10E>, (Accessed: September 9, 2018).

274. USAID website, <https://explorer.usaid.gov/#2018>, (Accessed: September 9, 2018).

275. "World Bank Joins IMF in Criticism of Ukraine's Anti-corruption Draft Law", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-corruption-worldbank/world-bank-joins-imf-in-criticism-of-ukraines-anti-corruption-draft-law-idUSKBN1F5236>, (Accessed: September 9, 2018).



# CYBER WAR

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Cyberattacks against Ukraine increased in intensity as soon as the relations between Ukraine and Russia deteriorated. Between February 2014 and September 2018, the information systems of strategic state institutions and private companies were targeted by Russian hackers under the coordination of the intelligence services. Moreover, Ukraine has become a Russian test bed for computer viruses and a training ground for breaking into servers and computer networks. The table below shows the main operations performed by the Russian secret services in the cybernetic field in order to destabilize Ukraine.

CYBERATTACKS AGAINST UKRAINE'S STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS	
28.02.2014	The official Ukrainian government website ( <i>www.kmu.gov.ua</i> ) was not responding on the day Russian forces were taking control of Crimea. The website was offline approximately 72 hours until the problem was fixed on March 3. <sup>276</sup>
03.03.2014	After the occupation of Crimea, Russian specialists used Ukrtelecom's infrastructure to send IP-telephonic attacks that blocked the phones of Ukraine's members of parliament. <sup>277</sup> Ukrtelecom is the main communications provider in Ukraine. Russia knows very well the vulnerabilities of Ukraine's communication system because Ukrtelecom uses Russian-made telecommunications, and internet equipment and systems (SORM system). <sup>278</sup>

276. Pavel Polityu and Jim Finkle, "Ukraine Says Communications Hit, MPs Phones Blocked", Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-cybersecurity/ukraine-says-communications-hit-mps-phones-blocked-idUSL6N0M12CF20140304>, (Accessed: October 1, 2019).

277. Ibid.

278. Ibid.

13.03.2014	Ukraine was hit by a powerful eight-minute cyberattack that hit an unidentified computer network in its territory according to Arbor Networks, a cyber-security company. <sup>279</sup>
22.05.2014	Only three days before the presidential election in Ukraine, the Electoral Commission was targeted by a cyberattack handled by Russian hackers. Ukrainian experts restarted the system and the hackers were caught by the police. <sup>280</sup>
24.05.2014	Russian hackers broke into the Central Electoral Commission server and scheduled the appearance of a photo of an anti-Russian, right-wing candidate on the institution's website at 20:00, immediately after the polls closed. The right-wing candidate actually did not obtain more than 1% of the votes. The attempt was thwarted by the Ukrainian company that deals with the cyber-security of the server. The purpose of the Russian hackers was to help the Russian propaganda machine publish fake news that would have presented an Ukrainian presidential election won by a representative of the extreme right wing. <sup>281</sup>
23.12.2015	Hackers, helped by a virus, caused a power strike affecting three regions in the western part of Ukraine, including the Kiev region. The incident interrupted the supply of energy to approximately 225,000 users. <sup>282</sup> This was also confirmed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security a few days later. This was the first time that the U.S. government officially recognized that a power blackout was caused by a virus and according to cyber-security experts, it was considered the first attack that was able to stop a power grid. <sup>283</sup>
25.11.2016	The SBU blocked the provision of programs that helped Russian intelligence services steal information from the computers of strategic institutions and private companies in Ukraine. Russian intelligence services were using Ukrainian commercial entities to plant spy programs in the networks of military and industrial enterprises, critical infrastructures, executive bodies, airports, banks, factories, and state and private companies in Ukraine. <sup>284</sup> In the same month, the websites of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Defence, and the Treasury were targeted by cyberattacks. Most of these government attacks attributed to Russia did not aim to sabotage but to collect intelligence. <sup>285</sup>
17-18. 12.2016	Kiev's electricity grid was targeted by a cyberattack that left the northern part of the capital without electricity. <sup>286</sup>
22.12.2016	According to a CrowdStrike cyber-security report, a group of hackers used a malware program installed on Android devices in 2014-2016 to monitor Ukrainian soldiers in artillery units. Thus, information was obtained regarding the location of the infected devices and the communications stored on them. The information was used in support of pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine. The group has links with the Russian government and the cyberattacks that targeted the U.S. Democratic Party during the 2016 election campaign. <sup>287</sup>

279. Mark Clayton, "Russia Hammers Ukraine with Massive Cyber-Attack", *Business Insider*, March 15, 2014.

280. Robert Windrem, "Timeline: Ten Years of Russian Cyber Attacks on Other Nations", *NBC News*, December 18, 2016.

281. Andrew E. Kramer and Andrew Higgins, "In Ukraine, a Malware Expert Who Could Blow the Whistle on Russian Hacking", *The New York Times*, August 16, 2017.

282. Dustin Volz, "U.S. Government Concludes Cyber Attack Caused Ukraine Power Outage", *Reuters*, February 26, 2016.

283. *Ibid.*

284. "SBU Blocks Activity of Providers of Russian Spy Programs", *Security Service of Ukraine website*, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/244/category/21/view/2344#.31MrVOPg.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 16, 2018).

285. Pavel Polityuk, "Ukraine Investigates Suspected Cyber Attack on Kiev Power Grid", *Reuters*, December 20, 2016.

286. *Ibid.*

287. Dustin Volz, "Russian Hackers Tracked Ukrainian Artillery Units Using Android Implant: Report", *Reuters*, December 22, 2016.

23.12.2016	According to a report by the Security Service of Ukraine, 247 cyberattacks were reported in 2016 regarding telecommunications systems of diplomatic institutions, critical infrastructure, and state security institutions. <sup>288</sup>
29.12.2016	Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said that in the previous two months Ukrainian institutions were targeted by 6,500 attacks. He expressed his belief that this was strong evidence that the Russian services are leading a cyber war against Ukraine. <sup>289</sup>
27.06.2017	Certain Ukrainian banks and the Ukrenergo energy distributor company were targeted by cyberattacks. The action did not affect the sources of supply, but in the case of the banks it caused difficulties in terms of banking operations. <sup>290</sup>
13.11.2017	In November 2017, Dmytro Shymkiv, deputy head of the Ukrainian presidential administration, in an interview to the Kiev Post news agency stated that 99% of the cyberattacks on Ukraine come from Russia. He also highlighted the lack of experts and funds needed by Ukraine to defend itself in this cyber war. <sup>291</sup>
24.10.2017	The operating system of Odessa Airport was infected with a virus. After the attack, workers were unable to process customers' data on computers, and they had to do it manually which caused several flight delays. The Kiev metro payment system was also affected by the cyberattack. <sup>292</sup>
25.01.2018	The inauguration of the Cyber Security Situation Center took place. On the occasion, the head of the SBU said that in 2017, service experts identified and countered over 50 cyberattacks of varying intensity. <sup>293</sup>
27.06.2018	The cyber police chief said that Russian hackers were trying to infect the computers of state institutions and private companies in Ukraine with malware waging a "massively and coordinated attack." <sup>294</sup>
02.07.2018	At the first conference of the leaders of counter-terrorism agencies in New York, Deputy Head of SBU Oleg Frolov said that Russian cyberattacks that targeted Ukraine's communications, energy, banking, and transport networks are one of the Russian Federation's geopolitical instruments. <sup>295</sup>
11.07.2018	The SBU prevented Russian intelligence from committing a cyberattack on the Auly chlorine pumping station in the Dnipropetrovsk region. If the attack would have succeeded, the supply of chlorine used to purify the water in the Ukrainian water pumping units would have been interrupted. <sup>296</sup> A similar cyberattack occurred at a petrochemical refinery in Saudi Arabia in August 2017. The hackers in this case aimed to sabotage the company by triggering an explosion. <sup>297</sup>

288. "Results of Certain Areas of Work of Security Service of Ukraine", Security Service of Ukraine website, <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/news/232/category/21/view/2474#.8ZiwczP.dpbs>, (Accessed: September 16, 2018).

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297. Nicole Perloth and Clifford Krauss, "A Cyberattack in Saudi Arabia Had a Deadly Goal. Experts Fear Another Try", *The New York Times*, March 15, 2018.

11.08.2018	The chief of the Ukrainian cyber police claimed that together with the SBU they recorded regular cyberattacks that came from the territory of the Russian Federation. He said that the purpose of the attacks is to destroy Ukraine's strategic infrastructure. <sup>298</sup>
08.10.2018	On October 8 and 9, Ukraine's state fiscal service was targeted by more cyberattacks which disrupted the programs used by taxpayers for filing taxes. <sup>299</sup> Up to October 5, 2018, the SBU announced that 35 cyberattacks had taken place on Ukraine's critical infrastructure systems and databases of transport, energy, communications, banking, etc. <sup>300</sup>
14.11.2018	On November 14 and 15, the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories was targeted by cyberattacks that succeeded in blocking its website. These were not the first attacks against the institution's website; the first had occurred on November 2 but were not successful. <sup>301</sup>
04.12.2018	The SBU prevented a cyberattack organized by the Russian Federation against Ukraine's judicial system network by sending emails to its institutions that were infected with malware. According to the SBU, Russia's aim was to destabilize Ukraine's judicial information system. <sup>302</sup> Also, in February 2019, Alexander Klimchuk, the head of SBU department of counterintelligence protection of state interests in the field of information security, stated that only in 2018 the SBU prevented 400 cyberattacks. <sup>303</sup>

After the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine became a test bed for the Russian Federation's cyberattacks. In order to counter all these attacks, Ukraine set up the Cybernetic Police Department in October 2014 to "organize effective counteraction to the manifestations of cybercrime and to ensure effective influence on the operational situation, namely: the prevention, detection, termination and disclosure of criminal offenses, the mechanism of preparation, commission or concealment which involves the use of computers, telecommunications systems, computer networks and telecommunication networks, as well as other criminal offenses committed with their use."<sup>304</sup> At the same time, in January 2018, the Cyber-Security Situation Centre was inaugurated to support the work of the Cybernetic Police Department.<sup>305</sup>

298. "Ukraine's Cyber Police Report Constant Cyberattacks from Russia", *UNIAN*, <https://www.unian.info/society/10221741-ukraine-s-cyber-police-report-constant-cyberattacks-from-russia.html>, (Accessed: September 16, 2018).

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# CONCLUSION

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The Ukrainian revolution in February 2014 removed the country from the influence zone of the Russian Federation and brought a pro-Western regime to Kiev that placed Ukraine on the road to EU and NATO integration. The choice of the European and Transatlantic path was paid heavily by Ukraine: the revolution was followed by hundreds of deaths, the loss of Crimea, and the outbreak of a bloody war in the east of the country. Moreover, Ukraine suffered even further because of the war and economic sanctions imposed by the Russian Federation. Ukraine's strong dependency on Russian markets and natural resources caused serious problems after Moscow imposed economic sanctions and stopped gas supplies to the country. The hybrid war triggered by the Russian Federation generated serious problems for Ukraine which was unprepared for this kind of situation but succeeded to adapt and fight against the hybrid threats. The conflict made Ukraine a stronger state with more powerful institutions for fighting a hybrid war. This paper presented the main characteristics of a hybrid war and the ways it is fought with specific examples in order to facilitate a better understanding of the topic. But how can a state counter hybrid threats? What does it need?

To combat hybrid threats to national security a state needs political will, good leadership, and strong institutions which are effective and capable of coping with crisis situations. At the same time, it has to identify its vulnerabilities in

different sectors (security, transport, industrial, economic, military, education, natural resources, etc.) and try to eliminate them. Following this, a state, as much as possible, has to reduce its external dependency on any other single state for different products or resources. It has to make sure that it has multiple sources of supply from other states. Another step in fighting hybrid threats is to create a body responsible for identifying fake news and subversive news. This institution must present true information and showcase the main promoters of the fake news (news agencies, social media accounts, opinion leaders, etc.) for the population to be aware of their content. Also, it should create public registries for unreliable/suspect sources.<sup>306</sup> Another option is to block the content.<sup>307</sup>

To counter the military component of a hybrid war, a state needs a well-trained army equipped with modern fighting technology and capable of performing counterterrorism and counter-insurgency missions. The army and security forces should realize applied national exercises, war games, and have international training.<sup>308</sup> Also, good cooperation between state institutions, decision-makers, and military, police, and intelligence services is needed. The latter must be able to penetrate terrorist and insurgent groups and provide relevant information about their activities and plans.<sup>309</sup> State security institutions must have efficient counterintelligence departments to block their intelligence officers from being recruited by foreign intelligence services. In addition, foreign intelligence services must be specialized in offensive counterintelligence actions to allow false information to be transmitted to agents and to prevent their intelligence officers from turning into double agents.<sup>310</sup> Among intelligence services, there must be a structure capable of cyber warfare and of counter-cyber threats against strategic objectives such as:

- The parliament, the government, the presidential administration, the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry, the Interior Ministry, and other strategic institutions.<sup>311</sup>

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307. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

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309. Williamson Murray, Peter R. Mansoor, *Hybrid Warfare*, p. 16.

310. Boleslaw Piasecki, "Offensive Counterintelligence and the Challenges Facing Polish Intelligence Services", (National Centre for Strategic Studies, NCSS, Warsaw: 2014), pp. 7-11.

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- The national banking system,<sup>312</sup> the electoral system,<sup>313</sup> strategic research institutions,<sup>314</sup> the special telecommunication service,<sup>315</sup> the anti-aircraft defence system,<sup>316</sup> and satellites.<sup>317</sup>
- The infrastructure of nuclear power plants,<sup>318</sup> communications networks, transport,<sup>319</sup> electricity,<sup>320</sup> water,<sup>321</sup> fuel,<sup>322</sup> petrochemical plants,<sup>323</sup> etc.

Cyberattacks should be treated very seriously and the state should invest in scientific research and the development of specialized software and hardware able to fight in the field of cyber-security.<sup>324</sup> Meanwhile, military and civil specialists should receive continuous education and training in cyber-security.<sup>325</sup>

The websites, e-mails, and internal networks of strategic institutions must be well protected by installing the best antivirus software. Employees must be trained to recognize and avoid possible threats.

The existence of teams to engage in counter-revolutionary, counter-insurgency activities can make a decisive contribution to fighting hybrid threats. Last but not least, the existence of an anti-propaganda agency to raise awareness of false news is imperative for countering a hybrid war.

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## **RUSSIA'S HYBRID WAR IN UKRAINE (2014-2018)**

CĂTĂLIN ALIN COSTEA

Shortly after the February 2014 Ukrainian revolution a pro-Western government came to power in Kiev. For the Russian Federation it was clear that its influence in Ukraine and its fleet presence in the Crimean Peninsula were threatened. In this context, Moscow understood that Ukraine would continue its accession steps to the EU and NATO and that it had to intervene to avoid such a scenario.

This report aims to identify the main reasons behind Moscow's hybrid war against Ukraine. The working hypothesis of the report is that the hybrid war initiated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine aimed to destabilize and split the former Soviet republic in order to prevent its accession to the EU and NATO. On February 27 2014, unidentified armed men linked to the GRU, Russia's military intelligence apparatus, seized the buildings of the main public institutions in Crimea and raised the Russian flag over them. In less than a week, Russia took control over the peninsula and on March 18, 2014, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea. Despite this, Moscow did not stop here. Starting in March 2014, Moscow encouraged protests among the pro-Russian population in the eastern part of Ukraine in cities like Donetsk, Luhansk, and Harkov. Since May 2014, Russia has used non-state actors in eastern Ukraine to act as its proxies in the war. It has supplied them with money and combat equipment and, thus, they have been able to take control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions; shortly there after, they declared their independence. At the same time, Moscow started economic, psychological, and cyber warfare on Ukraine and has organized espionage activities on its territory.

This report aims to highlight the characteristics of hybrid war and the way in which the Russian Federation implemented them in Ukraine between 2014 and 2018.