

Perception and Exploitation: Russia's Non-Military Influence in Europe

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With the annexation of Crimea and war in parts of eastern Ukraine, Russia's leaders have deployed instruments of hybrid warfare on a scale completely unexpected by the West. These instruments include not only media propaganda and putting "little green men" on the ground in Ukraine but also support for Euroskeptic parties and politicians within EU member states. Russia's power elite sees itself as "only" reacting "with the same means" as the West, for it sees Western support for civil society in the post-Soviet realm as part of a strategy to keep Russia down and weaken it. The authors argue that Germany and the other EU states must show more consistency in reinforcing values, strengthening responsible government leadership within the EU, and – in addition to offering to hold talks with Russian political and social figures – pursuing a consistent sanctions policy if agreements are not fulfilled.

After Russia's invasion of Crimea and its activities in eastern Ukraine in 2014, the term "hybrid warfare" became a buzzword both in European political circles and in the public sphere. Russia's annexation of neighboring territory with the help of "little green men," and its deliberate instigation of violent conflict through the infiltration of separatists in eastern Ukraine took the West completely by surprise.¹ Although "hybrid warfare" is by no means a new phenomenon, scholars and politicians are still finding it difficult to agree on what exactly constitutes Russian "hybrid warfare" – let alone what the appropriate response should be.

A question of particular interest is whether Russia's "soft," non-military influence in the post-Soviet sphere and the European Union constitutes a further "facet" of hybrid warfare – be it in Russian foreign media such as the television broadcaster RT (Russia Today) or the media platform Sputnik, in the targeted expansion of informal financial networks, or in funding and support of left- and right-wing populist parties and organizations in the EU.

The most intensely debated topic in this context has been Russian "information warfare," which aims to influence public discussion, especially in EU member states.²

The Russian government claims that in this it is merely copying the instruments and techniques that the West itself considers legitimate for the purpose of promoting democracy in Russia and the post-Soviet states. Thus the main aim of the EU's European Neighborhood Policy is to establish a "ring of friends" around the EU and encourage them to modernize their political, economic, and social policies in a way that harmonizes with the EU model. To this purpose, the EU uses soft power to try to strengthen the civil societies in those countries, support independent media, and help the democratic transformation process expand to the east.³ This policy is in direct conflict with the interests of the Russian leadership and its remaining post-Soviet partners because it could weaken the hitherto dominant model of authoritarian rule. Naturally, Moscow is afraid of losing power in its sphere of influence.

From the point of view of Russian security policy, then, the country's expansion and implementation of hybrid or non-linear warfare and soft power is primarily a reaction to the West's pressure on Russia and Russia's position in the post-Soviet realm, but one that makes use of Western tools and methods.

Here we examine how Russia itself perceives the expansion of its zone of influence through non-military means, what methods and instruments it employs to advance the expansion, and what dangers result for the West. Finally, we suggest strategies that the EU can pursue to protect itself. As the first in a series of analyses examining Russia's influence in European countries, this article explains the conceptual framework of Russian non-military influence for the analyses to come. Additional articles will examine a number of individual case studies.

All Quiet on the Eastern Front?

The Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003) and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004) aroused particular concern in Russian political and military circles. The fear was that Russia was losing power in the post-Soviet countries in the face of rising Western influence, for the Russian elite defines its country's status as a regional and major power through its preeminence in this region. The theory gained traction that the West – and in particular the US – was attempting to influence domestic developments in the post-Soviet countries by means of social networks, organized youth groups, and foreign-financed NGOs – with the goal of destabilizing Russia.

Many Russians argue that the West also deployed the same instruments in the Middle East, using the “Arab Spring” to destabilize the entire region. All such instruments, they claim, ultimately exist for the sole purpose of expanding the Western sphere of influence, weakening current legitimate leaderships, replacing them with governments sympathetic to the US, and finally, also contributing to the overthrow of constitutional order in Russia, by means of violent protests.⁴ The fact that the 2003 US intervention in Iraq – an attack on a sovereign state that led to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime – was partly justified by bogus evidence is of key importance to the Russian elite.

Against this backdrop, the Russian General Staff held many debates on the subject of the new non-linear warfare and an appropriate solution to the rift between domestic and foreign policy. A particularly significant contribution was Valery Geramisso's much-quoted speech of January 2013.⁵ Talking at the annual meeting of the Russian Academy of Military Sciences, the chief of the

General Staff described the new rules of 21st-century warfare. Political goals, he argued, are no longer to be attained through conventional firepower but through the “widespread use of disinformation, of political, economic, humanitarian, and other non-military measures deployed in connection with the protest potential of the population.”⁶ The Iraq War and the revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East, allegedly instigated by the West, are, he claimed, proof that in a matter of months or even days a flourishing nation could be transformed into an arena of bitter armed conflict, fall victim to foreign intervention, and descend into chaos, humanitarian disaster, and civil war.

Russian political and military leadership thus perceive non-military, “soft” means of influencing the domestic affairs of foreign states as a threat, against which Russia must defend itself, if it is not to be weakened by the West, and in particular the US. It is hard to gauge how much of this is ideology and how much of it is opportunism, designed to distract from the shortcomings of Russia's own policy. Within the Russian power elite, however, the impression of living in an increasingly unsafe and unstable world is tied in with the feeling of being systematically “kept down” by the West. At the same time, Russia's leaders interpret the processes of social transformation in the post-Soviet states and the Arab world as being externally inspired and orchestrated, thus denying those societies their autonomy.

It cannot be denied that Western intervention in Iraq and Libya contributed to the entire region's destabilization. The Russian take on the “Arab Spring,” however, fully ignores the fact that popular protest played a crucial role in toppling the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries. Those who participated were protesting rigid authoritarian structures and their own lack of economic prospects, organizing themselves via social networks in a way that was previously unheard of. These societies were by no means instruments of foreign powers with no will of their own; they were autonomous actors contributing to a process of social change. To confuse such events with the military interventions in Iraq and Libya is to misinterpret the developments entirely.

The shock of the mass demonstrations in Moscow and Petersburg in late 2011 and early 2012 – before Vladimir Putin's re-election as president – further fed the paranoia of the Russian security elite around Putin, bringing home once again the extent to which Russia's leaders underestimate and misinterpret autonomous social processes. Leaders in Moscow believe that social groups can be manipulated by the targeted deployment of controlled media and propaganda and are incapable of acting on their own initiative.

Similarly, the Kremlin regarded the protest movement in Kiev as an externally controlled movement targeted to bring about the overthrow of the elected Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. In a speech to the officials of the Russian ministry of the interior in March 2015, Putin stressed that “they” – that is, the West and particularly the US – “use so-called color technologies, from organizing illegal street protests to open hate propaganda and hatred in social networks.”⁷

The current Russian military doctrine from December 2014 also reflects this way of looking at things. By focusing on NATO as a key danger to Russia (Item 12a), it clearly shows the close link between how threats are perceived by domestic policy makers and how they are perceived by foreign policy makers.⁸ Under Item 13a of the doctrine, the destabilization of the domestic and social situation in Russia is described as an impending military threat. This includes actions that could influence young citizens to undermine the historical, intellectual, and patriotic traditions of Russia (13w). Under Item 15a, there is mention of the characteristic features of modern military conflict, including the deployment of “political, economic, informational, and other non-military means,” implemented with the “widespread use of the protest potential of the population and special operations forces.” Once again we are dealing with the description of a threat scenario for Russia in which external powers (the US, NATO) destabilize the country by manipulating Russian domestic policy and to which Russian security powers must respond. The message is clear: Russia is on the defensive against enemies from within and without, and it must defend itself.

Perception and its Exploitation

All this goes to show that it is ultimately irrelevant whether or not the West defines Russia's non-military influence in Europe as part of “hybrid warfare.” It seems far more important that the Moscow power elite perceives the influence and activities of Western governmental and non-governmental institutions in the post-Soviet countries as instruments of war, whose goal is to weaken or even topple the Russian government. Moscow believes it has the right to react with the same methods to this non-linear warfare (which they perceive as being waged by NATO and the US) and to respond with “little green men,” media manipulation, and exploitation of networks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Here is how Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of the Russian security council and Putin's close confidant from the secret service, put it in an interview with the newspaper *Kommersant* when talking about the US's role in the Ukraine conflict:

“But [the US] is not remotely interested in Ukraine. They are interested in Russia.... [The US] would prefer it if Russia no longer existed at all as a country.”⁹

It is this Russian perspective, rather than the Western perception of US or European activity in the post-Soviet countries, that is crucial for our analysis. While we regard the support of NGOs and civil society as an appropriate means to promote democracy, the Russian leadership considers such enterprises as non-legitimate methods of meddling in the domestic affairs of sovereign states.

As has been widely noted, Putin's inner circle is made up of people from the security apparatus, most of whom were trained in the Soviet secret service. These figures put their own perception of security and their own hold on power above the economic interest of the country. Their way of thinking is still shaped by the stereotypes of the Cold War and deeply rooted in Soviet propaganda, whose anti-Americanism is closely linked with fears of being hemmed in. This perspective shapes their perception both of themselves and of others and leads to interpretations of current developments in the post-Soviet states that are far removed from those prevailing in the EU and US.

Isolation and Propaganda

Russian leaders have drawn two important conclusions from this threat analysis: the need to protect themselves from outside influence and the need for offensive countermeasures. First of all, it is necessary to isolate those forces within Russia that are open to foreign influence and could thus become “agents” of Western politics or even of a “color revolution” within Russia. To this end, Russian legislation attempts to preclude foreign influence on Russian civil society and domestic structures. In 2004, the first laws were introduced to step up control over NGOs. These laws were gradually tightened at the beginning of Putin's third term of office in 2012 and now impose massive restrictions both on the work of Western NGOs in Russia and on the foreign funding of independent Russian organizations. Unwelcome NGOs are stigmatized as “foreign agents,” their work is hindered by immense bureaucratic requirements, and any funding that is independent of state-controlled sources is rendered practically impossible. One law currently in force threatens anyone collaborating with “undesirable foreign NGOs” with a prison sentence of up to six years. In addition, a blacklist (the so-called “stop list”) is being drawn up by the Federation Council to ban foreign organizations from working in Russia.¹⁰

The last fragments of independent media, which in any case are only consumed by a negligible proportion of the Russian population, have been under considerable

pressure since critical editors-in-chief were fired. Business owners or companies who advertise in such media are harassed. There is now the goal of reducing foreign capital in Russian media to a 20 percent share.

In Russia itself, state control of television broadcasters (which provide 90 percent of all citizens with the bulk of their information) has created a manipulated pseudo-reality operating at a considerable remove from the real world. Putin takes center stage in day-to-day reports and appears as omnipresent and irreplaceable. Controlled coverage is used to generate maximum approval rates for the president among the population and manifests itself above all in a total absence of reporting on unwelcome events and the distortion of others through deliberate factual misrepresentation.¹¹

This policy of promoting lies, half-truths, and conspiracy theories in the media – airbrushing out real events and consciously operating with untruths – also applies to Russia's interaction with the EU and the US. In other words, the tried and tested methods of Russian domestic policy are also being implemented in the country's foreign policy. This includes the growing ranks of Russian Internet trolls, who attack critical articles about Putin or Russian politics in European and American online media, disseminate fake news items, and distort representation of events on heavily funded Russian foreign media such as RT and Sputnik.¹²

Secondly, Russia's leadership has developed countermeasures to use targeted (dis)information to influence public opinion in other countries as well. In the above-mentioned speech, Gerasimov urged his audience to “learn victory from the victors” and to beat the opponent with his own weapons. An important instrument of this non-linear warfare was the expansion of Russian foreign media. An array of media outlets are consciously geared toward “revealing” the weaknesses of Western societies, thereby undermining their credibility. Their primary concern is to make the Western democratic model appear “decadent” and implausible, detracting from its appeal. Naturally, Russian media is reveling in the EU's current deep political, economic and institutional crisis, using the opportunity to point out how little attraction the European model holds.

Moscow is equally concerned with weakening transatlantic relations and pushing the US out of Europe. Its aim is nothing short of paralyzing and sabotaging the decision-making processes of EU and NATO, both alliances that are strongly based on consensus, by influencing politics within the individual member states. Bilateral negotiations with Hungary's EU-skeptic Viktor Orbán, for instance, serve on the one hand to demonstrate that Rus-

sia has allies in the EU, and on the other hand to weaken common EU policy. The same is true of Putin's talks about investing in Greece's pipeline infrastructure.

Russia's Soft Power: The Gentle Instruments of Non-Linear Warfare

There have been debates about the significance of “soft power” to Russian politics ever since the end of the Soviet Union. Russian power elites, however, have always had a different understanding of the term than Joseph Nye, who sees a link between the exercise of political power and an attractive culture, prosperity, and moral values.¹³ For Russian leaders, soft power is instead a non-military instrument for imposing its own goals and has always been perceived as a means of supplementing military power and contributing to manipulating, undermining, and weakening the opponent.

Thus Putin, in his programmatic 2012 article “Russia in a Changing World,” defined soft power as “a complex of tools and methods for achieving foreign policy goals without deploying weapons, using information tools and other forms of intervention.”¹⁴ According to Putin, so-called “pseudo NGOs” could provoke extremism, separatism, and nationalism, and manipulate social perception, thus undermining the sovereignty of other states. For this purpose, the Russian leadership has, since the 2000s, established new institutions, such as the Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, for questions of Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) and the foundation Russkiy Mir (Russian World).¹⁵ Rossotrudnichestvo was originally conceived to promote Russian language and culture in the post-Soviet countries but has since extended its sphere of operation to include a wide range of other countries. The institution's re-establishment came in response to the activities of the internationally operating US aid organization USAID. The main function of Russkiy Mir is to maintain the language and culture of Russian-speakers who live abroad and feel themselves part of Russian cultural circles.

In addition, massive expansions were seen in foreign media such as the television broadcaster RT and the radio station Russia's Voice (now Sputnik). Sputnik has developed into a state-funded network of media platforms, producing radio, social media, and news agency content in local languages in 34 countries. The main goal of Russian foreign media was originally to provide the international dissemination of the Russian worldview as an alternative to the Western perspective offered by CNN and the BBC. This function has changed; by popularizing conspiracy theories and defaming the West, Russian foreign media

now aim to create the impression that everyone is lying and that there are no unequivocal facts or truths.

At the same time, Russian organizations have begun to cooperate with and support radical and anti-establishment groups in the West. This includes extreme right parties, such as the Front National in France, but it also appeals to some representatives of the Linkspartei in Germany. The crucial factor here is that these groups can contribute to weakening the existing European (value) system. Thus Putin's Russia has become a partner to many anti-US, anti-EU and anti-globalization groups in the EU. By defying the US, the West, and the "bureaucrats" in Brussels, Putin becomes a surface on which a possible alternative can be projected. In this way, Moscow plays on various existing fears and frustrations in Western societies, although it lacks an attractive alternative social model to offer those groups. By 2011 at the latest – when Putin made his decision to return to the office of president – Russia's leadership turned its back on any attempt to modernize the country's economy or political system. Instead, today, the Russian head of state epitomizes the power of a small and corrupt authoritarian clique that draws its recruits largely from the security apparatus. Indeed, he is systematically destroying his own country, both economically and morally, with revisionist, anti-liberal, and paranoid policies.

Western Weakness is Putin's Strength

The Kremlin's political technocrats and PR consultants have, however, realized that their propaganda is most effective in the EU when it reveals the opponent's weaknesses. EU member states are now paying the price of having put off necessary reforms and allowing EU-skeptics to gain political clout. Key political areas such as financial, social, and foreign policy have not been sufficiently integrated. In political decision-making processes, a democratic deficit stemming from a lack of transparency in the negotiations of member leaders is increasingly alienating citizens from the power centers. Populist – and racist – parties such as the Front National in France, the Jobbik party in Hungary, and UKIP in the UK are taking advantage of this trend to gain social acceptance, thus playing on the insecurity of many social groups and reinforcing the EU's credibility crisis in the member states.

In addition, the EU is losing influence and appeal in the states in its immediate vicinity. This is particularly true in the West Balkan states, where Russian leverage falls on fertile ground – especially in Serbia, where Gazprom has bought into the country's most important energy suppliers and largely dictates Serbian energy policy.

The Selective Deployment of History

The renaissance of history in Russia fits neatly into this schema, and it corresponds with the way Moscow exploits the remembrance of the World War II victory, memories of the Cold War, and the USSR's achievements. To this day, the old stereotype of the cold-war-era US and its European allies continues to shape Russia's understanding of the US's role in the world. This is evident, for example, in an interview with Security Council Secretary Patrushev. When questioned about Ukraine's request to close the Russian border, Patrushev compared a potential blockade of the Donbas to the Siege of Leningrad. In the same interview, he reiterated his statement that the EU would never have placed sanctions on Russia if it were not for the US.¹⁶

The conflict with the West is said to have had the effect of stabilizing Putin's power clique and the Russian political system. It functions as a distraction from the shortcomings of Putin's own policies and points the finger at others. To achieve this, the regime seems prepared to use any means at its disposal and to pay any price.

What Is To Be Done? Recommendations for European Policy

Certainly, the possibilities of directly influencing developments in Russia from outside are limited. The "modernization partnership" promoted by German foreign and economic policy broke down long ago, as did the decade-long propagated notion of promoting "change through rapprochement." Both Russian civil society and opposition groups in the country are under immense state pressure. Their scope for action is set to be further restricted by repressive legislation; many oppositionists and advocates of critical media have already left the country.

Widespread patriotism also seems to continue unbroken, as is clearly demonstrated by Putin's high approval ratings, which stand at nearly 90 percent.¹⁷ Russian society is not democratic; Putin reflects a consensus in large parts of Russian society, which feeds off the experiences of the economic, social, and political recession of the 1990s.

- 1. The EU should nevertheless attempt to maintain broad contact within Russian society and with the Russian elites and to promote platforms for exchange. A key element could be facilitating visas for Russian citizens in the EU. To provide a positive agenda – in contrast with the tight travel restrictions placed on Putin's entourage since the annexation of Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine – the EU should facilitate entry into the EU for most Russian citizens. At the same time, German and European policy should prepare for the post-Putin era

and different potential scenarios, which might include the destabilization of Russia or the rise of an even more nationalist and aggressive president.

- 2. The EU should work on its image and continue to develop and reinforce its own soft power. The reform deficit and economic problems of many member states are currently giving free play to Russian propaganda, which means that national governments and the EU commission must come up with more convincing arguments to counter the anti-EU propaganda of the right- and left-wing populists in the member states. This involves reinforcing the basic values and norms of the EU. Sanction mechanisms are needed for those governments of member states that are attempting to undermine the basic rights of the EU and weaken EU cohesion.
- 3. It is also essential to keep up the present policy of sanctions against Russia. These have hitherto demonstrated the cohesion of the EU member states, and they represent the EU's credible ability to respond to Russian aggression in Ukraine. This autumn Moscow will continue to try to undermine this common strategy in a variety of ways, for example by using incentives in the form of investments or low energy prices to try to persuade individual member states to mitigate the sanctions or to do a tradeoff with the West on Ukraine with regard to other crises, for example in Syria.¹⁸ If Russia is unwilling to defuse the crisis in Ukraine, the EU member states must stand firm in order to preserve their credibility. Thanks to the sanctions, Russia's leaders have not seized larger parts of Ukrainian territory and will proceed with more caution if similar attacks take place in the Republic of Moldova or in Georgia.
- 4. In its attempt to respond appropriately to Russian propaganda, the EU should not develop "counter-propaganda" but instead help to make Russian propaganda consistently visible by promoting responsible media. In this regard, it is right that the German federal government has provided stronger financial backing to the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle and its Russian- and Ukrainian-language channels, and it is regrettable that the British government plans massive cuts to the BBC and those foreign channels that offer a reliable alternative to RT. The BBC should in fact maintain its foreign channels at the same level at least, and considerably expand its Russian-language channel. The European Endowment for Democracy has published a comprehensive study on improving plurality in Russian-language media space, with several important suggestions for how to react to Russian propaganda and find an answer to the dwindling number of independent Russian-language media inside the country.¹⁹ Possible responses include creating regional Russian-language media hubs, developing a Russian-language media competence center to coordinate the work of NGOs, educational establishments, and governments, and setting up a foundation to support independent media and NGOs in this area. Without duplicating existing structures within EU member states, the coordination of all relevant media activities in the EU should be improved and adequately funded by EU member states and institutions. At the same time, leading German and European media should expand their permanent network of correspondents in Russia, Ukraine, and other post-Soviet states, to enable them to report reliably on location, and to counter propaganda with facts.
- 5. For too long, the EU has come up short in its analysis of developments in Russia and other post-Soviet states. It urgently needs to remedy this. Greater knowledge of and transparency about developments in Russia are as necessary as the disclosure of Russian networks, financial flows, and economic relations in the EU itself. For this purpose it is necessary to strengthen national research in think tanks and at universities and to improve EU-wide coordination among research establishments. Academic funding in the area should be increased at national and EU levels for this purpose. Furthermore, the EU delegations in Moscow and other post-Soviet capitals should strengthen their commitment to explaining developments in Brussels and the EU to the elites as well as to the wider public in those countries. There are at present significant information deficits about the EU in Russia, which make it easier for the political powers there to offer cold-war-era stereotypes as explanatory models.
- 6. In the long term, the EU must make reform efforts to provide consolidation in those areas where Russian propaganda currently has a soft target. It should continue to develop a common energy and foreign policy, reduce its own democratic deficit, tackle the economic problems in the southern EU states, and reinforce good governance – that is, responsible government leadership – not just in neighboring states but also within the EU itself. This includes strengthening minority rights in the EU. A tougher approach to corruption in the

member states is crucial, as is greater transparency and law enforcement regarding, for example, the flow of Russian and post-Soviet money into the European Union and worldwide.

- 7. At the same time, the EU needs to come up with a serious offer for its neighbors in the east. It is in the interest of EU member states to help Ukraine become economically and politically stable. If reform efforts succeed there, the impact could spread to Russia and other post-Soviet states. It is to the great advantage of the EU that Russia neither has the necessary economic power nor offers an appropriate political alternative to actually develop the countries in its post-Soviet neighborhood.

Moscow instead encourages destabilization, corruption, and weak states in order to maintain a relationship of dependency. The EU has something much more attractive to offer the societies of these countries and should make greater use of its strategic advantage.

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Notes

- The term "little green men" has been used to describe unmarked Russian soldiers first deployed in Crimea in the context of the Ukraine conflict. On the terminology see Vladislav Inozemtsev, "Words Don't Come Easy: Vezhliyve Lyudi," Berlin Policy Journal, May 21, 2015 <<http://berlinpolicyjournal.com/words-dont-come-easy-vezhliyve-lyudi/>> (accessed September 22, 2015). In this article, we refer to "the West" to denote the coalition between the EU and the US, although we are aware that this historical term describes the Cold-War alliance and that, given the increasing disparity between the two sides, it does not represent the reality of the post East-West conflict.
- See Ulrike Franke, "War by Non-Military Means: Understanding Russian Information Warfare," Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), FOI-R-4065--SE (March 2015).
- Here we use the term "soft power" in the sense used by Joseph Nye – namely, the power and influence that arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, economic prosperity, political values, and foreign policy (when it is seen as having moral authority). See the section entitled "Russia's soft power."
- See Vladimir Putin, "Rossiya i menyayushchiysya mir" (Russia in a Changing World), *Moskovskie Novosti*, February 27, 2012 <<http://www.mn.ru/politics/20120227/312306749.html>> (accessed September 22, 2015). All translations from Russian are by the authors.
- This speech was published in full in the journal of the Russian armed forces: "Chennost' nauki v predvidenii," *Voenna-promyslennyi kurer*, No 8 (476), February 27, 2013 <<http://vpk-news.ru/print/articles/14632>> (accessed September 22, 2015).
- Putin, "Rossiya i menyayushchiysya mir."
- "Vladimir Putin rasglyadel 'tsvetnye tekhnologii' na ulitsakh i v sotsetyakh," *Kommersant*, March 4, 2015 <<http://kommersant.ru/doc/2679694>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- "Voennaya doktrina Rossiyskoy Federatsii," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, December 30, 2014 <<http://www.rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- "Za destabilizatsiyey Ukrainy skryvaetsya popytka radikalnogo oslableniya Rossii," *Kommersant*, June 22, 2015 <<http://kommersant.ru/doc/2752250>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- Karsten Kaminski and Mikhail Bushuev, "NGOs in Russland unerwünscht," *Deutsche Welle*, July 9, 2015 <<http://www.dw.com/de/ngos-inrussland-unerw%C3%BCnscht/a-18572498>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- Vasily Gatov, "How the Kremlin and the Media Ended Up in Bed Together," *Moscow Times*, March 11, 2015 <<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/how-the-kremlin-and-the-media-ended-up-in-bed-together/517323.html>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- "Was passiert in russischen 'Troll-Fabriken?'" television broadcast, ARD, July 26, 2015 <<http://www.daserste.de/information/wissen-kultur/ttt/sendung/mdr/sendung-vom-26072015-104.html>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power*, New York, 2004.
- Putin, "Rossiya i menyayushchiysya mir."
- Rosstrundnitseshstvo <<http://95.163.77.90/>>; *Russkiy Mir* <<http://www.russkiymir.ru/languages/germany/index.htm>> (both sites accessed September 21, 2015).
- Kaminski and Bushuev, "NGOs in Russland unerwünscht."
- Levada-Tsentr, *Iyulskie reytingi odobreniya i doveriya*, July 23, 2015 <<http://www.levada.ru/23-07-2015/iyulskie-reytingi-odobreniya-i-doveriya>> (accessed September 21, 2015).
- Current sanctions come to an end in January 2016 and must be renewed before then.
- European Endowment for Democracy, *Bringing Plurality and Balance to Russian Language Media: Final Recommendations*, June 25, 2015, <<https://www.democracyendowment.eu/news/bringing-plurality-1/>> (accessed September 21, 2015).

