

INFORMATION WAR MONITOR

CENTRAL EUROPE

CEPI's bi-weekly overview of conventional and social media discourse in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia monitors propaganda and disinformation attempts, as well as democratic responses in the on-going information war, in order to increase awareness about this recently emerged challenge and promote fact-based discussion in Central Europe.

APRIL 2016 (2/2)

- Brexit and migration
- Obama's tour of Europe
- General anti-Western/anti-NATO attitudes

The issue of **migration** is continuously utilized by the propaganda to evoke anti-establishment sentiment against the EU and the political elite. It is **clearly distorting** European refugee policy efforts by implying that there is some sort of a "secret plot" of the elite against the European people that destroys European or Christian culture. Disinformation regarding **Brexit** emphasizes the importance of national sovereignty regained by Britain or subsequent states following the lead of London throughout a list of important policy areas such as the migration crisis. This effort **dismisses** any success, for example post-war peace between the UK, France and Germany, attributed to the EU on a historical scale.

Brexit

Disinformation follows both a positive and negative campaign of Brexit evolving all around state sovereignty. The positive campaign reiterates arguments of the British pro-Brexit camp: Britain will regain control over crucial state authorities exercised by the EU; prevent new wave of migrants from the EU to enter the country etc.¹ The negative campaign is using Brexit to blame EU for handling badly the migration crisis. Vaclav Klaus, former President of the Czech Republic critique of Pope Francis and Chancellor Merkel is quoted by a Slovak site over migration policies. Klaus hopes not only the Brexit to succeed, but also other states following the British in a "domino effect".²

¹ <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/04/brit-miniszter-az-europai-uniobol-kilepesnek-szamos-pozitiv-hatas-a-van/>,

<http://www.titkolthirek.hu/hatalmas-nyomas-ala-kerul-nagy-britannia-a-bevandoelok-miatt-ha-nem-lep-ki-az-eu-bol/>

² <http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/monitor/Pred-hlasovanim-o-vystoupeni-z-EU-se-v-Britanii-deji-veci-Dvema-milionum-lidi-vubec-nedovoli-hlasovat-433532>



Hatalmas nyomás alá kerül Nagy-Britannia a bevándorlók miatt, ha nem lép ki az EU-ból

BY VILÁGFIGYELŐ · 2016-04-26



Obama befenyítette a briteket

BY VILÁGFIGYELŐ · 2016-04-24

In the picture: "Obama has threatened the Britons" – for supporting the Brexit

A Czech website published an article by Paul Craig Roberts, known conspiracy theorist, in which he explains why the American president encourages Brits to remain in the EU: it is easier for Washington "to control the EU government instead of 28 single governments."³ Thus, Brexit would be a liberation of Britain under the US protectorate as well.⁴ The propaganda coverage does not offer fresh arguments, but it tries to entirely **dismiss** any success, for example post-war peace between the UK, France and Germany, unification of Germany, integration of the CEE countries etc., attributed to the EU on a historical scale.

Migration

The issue of migration is continuously utilized by the pro-Kremlin propaganda to evoke anti-establishment sentiment against the EU or the political elite in general. To this end, the communication pinpoints those responsible for the mass-migration; inflates the danger migrants pose to the lives of everyday people in the EU; finally foresees the grim future of Europe or the EU as a result of current migration policies. Czech and Hungarian media outlets blame the EU directly, by creating a flawed refugee system, or indirectly, by representing the "interests" of secret illuminati bankers/secret services/Mossad, for creating the refugee crisis.⁵ Such misinformation or conspiracy theories about political responsibility are clearly **distorting** European refugee policy efforts by implying that there is some sort of a "secret plot" of the elite against the European people. Instead, Slovak and Hungarian pro-Kremlin articles recommend a political alternative established by the Balkan or CEE countries within the EU to resist the "invasion of asylum seekers" and the EU/NATO refugee policies – which clearly means the V4 countries' defiant stance on migration in this

³ http://euportal.parlamentnilisty.cz/Articles/15325-vite-proc-se-americanum-a-obamovi-vyplati-aby-evropska-unie-byla-centralizovany-stat-a-aby-v-evrope-nebyly-suverenni-staty-ctete.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_kremlin_watch_252016

⁴ <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/obama-befenyitette-a-briteket/>

⁵ <http://www.novarepublika.cz/2016/04/uprchlicka-krize-ohrozuje-evropske.html>,

<http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2419-klicove-odhaleni-v-migrantske-krizi-je-mocna-kanclerka-merkelova-pouhy-pesak-take-posledni-dohodu-s-erdoganem-ji-pouze-predlozili-k-prosazeni-v-eu-kdo-stoji-v-pozadi-za-planem-na-zniceni-evropy.htm>, •

<http://henrymakow.com/2016/04/Migrants-are-an-Underground-Army.html>,

<http://www.zvedavec.org/komentare/2016/04/6861-deset-znameni-ze-migranti-jsou-podzemni-armadou.htm>,

<http://tydenikobcanskepravo.parlamentnilisty.cz/2016/04/vitejte-uprchlici.html>,

[http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/4298-deset-sokujicich-znameni-ze-migranti-jsou-skrytou-armadou-](http://www.svetkolemnas.info/novinky/zahranicni/4298-deset-sokujicich-znameni-ze-migranti-jsou-skrytou-armadou-organizovanych-iluminatskymi-bankeri)

[organizovanych-iluminatskymi-bankeri](http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/04/az-eu-maga-hozta-letre-a-terrorfenyetetest-majd-importalta-az/), <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/04/az-eu-maga-hozta-letre-a-terrorfenyetetest-majd-importalta-az/>

context.⁶ Far-right FPÖ's recent success on the Austrian presidential election is another positive example presented, since the party's nominee run on a strict anti-migration, racist platform.⁷



In the picture (left): “A new time period has begun for Europe”

In the picture (right): “Defense against the invasion of asylum seekers unites Eastern and Southeastern Europe”

Disinformation tries to cause **dismay** by portraying the asylum seekers' aggression or the negative economic consequences related to heightened security risks. One current example is Belgium that had its tourism “collapsed” due to the terror attacks in Paris and Brussels.⁸ Other articles write about asylum seekers in Germany praying for the annihilation of “indigenous Germans”, or an Australian Islamic extremist preacher calling for the “armies of jihad” to conquer Europe and America in line with “Hitler's Mein Kampf.”⁹ Apocalyptic visions of migration once again envision Europe falling apart by 2050 resulting in a “Muslim Western Europe” and a “Christian Eastern Europe”, the latter receiving Western asylum seekers.¹⁰

Obama's tour of Europe

A significant portion of media coverage in the second half of April was dedicated to the American president's visit to Saudi Arabia followed by his farewell “propaganda tour” of the old continent.

In Czechia, a website referred to Mr. Obama's (and the USA's) performance in Europe as a “desperate kicking of a mare at her wit's end”—a charade whose success and positive reception in Europe is dependent on Mr. Obama's “girlfriend” Frau Merkel as well as his “good friend” Mr. Cameron.¹¹ The AC24 website reported on how Barack Obama bragged about his saving of the world economy when asked by a student about his presidential legacy.¹² Parlamentní listy published an interview with journalist Tereza Spencerová who said that “Angela Merkel is nothing but a mere American puppet in Europe that

⁶ <http://www.zemavek.sk/articles/view/obrana-pred-azylovou-invaziou-zjednotila-staty-vychodnej-a-juhovýchodnej-euro-py>

⁷ <http://meteon.org/2016/04/24/nagy-elonnyel-nyert-a-migracioellenes-szabadsagpart-az-osztrak-allamfovalasztas-elso-fordulojaban/>

⁸ <http://meteon.org/2016/04/22/itt-a-migracio-es-a-terrorizmus-eredmenye-csod-szelen-a-belga-idegenforgalom/>

⁹ <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/muzulman-migransok-allah-pusztitsd-el-az-oshonos-nemeteket/>, <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/muzulman-mein-kampf-europa-leigazasanak-terve-2016-i-resz-magyar-felirattal/>

¹⁰ <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/magyarorszage-a-jovo-a-kaoszba-sullyedo-nyugat-europaval-szemben/>

¹¹ http://aeronet.cz/news/obama-dela-v-evrope-poradky-britanie-musi-hlasovat-pro-eu-pritelkyni-merkelove-podekoval-za-migracni-politiku-a-za-podporu-ttip-o-demonstracich-v-hannoveru-nic-video/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_kremlin_watch_252016

¹² http://ac24.cz/zpravy-ze-sveta/7865-obama-se-v-britanii-hrde-priznal-ja-jsem-jako-prezident-zachranil-svetovou-ekonomiku?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_kremlin_watch_252016

conspires to open doors for US corporations and allow the old continent to be destroyed by fracking, dangerous chemicals, GMOs and immigrants.”¹³

In Hungary, most of the sites known for spreading propaganda reported on President Obama's visit in quite an “objective” manner, however, they aimed to mislead their readership by spreading sensational, deceiving, even completely false headlines. Obama's visit to Europe is generally viewed as an American effort to project American power reflecting the uneven power-relations between the USA and Europe in diplomatic as well as in military terms: Merkel is “selling out” Europe in the TTIP talks to allow GMO-foods entering the European market;¹⁴ Obama is trying to prevent the Brexit in order to secure a final and conclusive American hegemony over the old continent and form an alliance against Russia.¹⁵ One propaganda piece refers to Hans Christof Graf von Sponeck—a former German UN diplomat—saying that Washington is making “unilateral” decisions on the fate of the European countries, accusing it of being responsible for the migration crisis that it successfully uses as means for weakening the union.¹⁶



Egyéb

Merkel a hátunk mögött adja el Európát Obamának



Obama dělá v Evropě pořádky – Británie musí hlasovat pro EU, přítelkyni Merkelové poděkoval za migrační politiku a za podporu TTIP. O demonstracích v Hannoveru nic – video

In the picture (left): “Merkel sells Europe to Obama behind our backs”¹⁷ In the picture (right): Obama puts Europe in its place – Britain has to vote for staying in the EU, he thanked his good friend Merkel for the migration policy as well as her support for TTIP. Nothing on the Hanover protests.

In Slovakia, one article in particular stands out from the “alternative mainstream”. It compares the character of Mr Obama's April tour with the one he did back in 2008 at the beginning of his first term. The author claims that although he received a warm welcome as the new champion of hope and enjoyed a super-star status back in 2008, in 2016—to much American frustration—he was greeted in Saudi Arabia as some sort of provincial politician and the Saudi king did not even bother to meet him. After that came the realisation of the “bitter truth” that people are laughing at the anti-Russian hysteria spread by the pro-American agents and that Russia is winning the battle for hearts and minds in Europe.¹⁸

It continues by saying that the Russians are simply not scared of the US, which is a fact well demonstrated in their foreign policy. It follows that Russians, along with “all the normal people in Europe”, know that the transatlantic partnership is nothing but a different name for occupation of Europe by American corporations. Americans, who did not succeed in their plans of conquering Russia are thus forced, due to

¹³ http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/politologove/Blaboly-Baracka-Obamy-Tak-si-prskejte-Tereza-Spencerova-sdeluje-vec-ktou-nevite-o-Karlu-Schwarzenbergovi-A-ktou-stveme-Zapad-433054?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_kremlin_watch_252016

¹⁴ <http://meteon.org/2016/04/25/merkel-a-hatunk-mogott-adja-el-obamanak-europat/>

¹⁵ <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/amerikaert-hazal-obama/>

¹⁶ <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/04/amerika-egyenlo-felkent-kell-kezelje-az-europai-uniot/>

¹⁷ <http://meteon.org/2016/04/25/merkel-a-hatunk-mogott-adja-el-obamanak-europat/>

¹⁸ <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/usa-sa-boja-oslobodenia-europy/773259>

their catastrophic economic situation, to try to save their own skin at the European expense. Being aware of their own rapid decline and being unable to do anything to reverse it, the US are trying—by means of its sophisticated disinformation machine—to spread chaos in the world in order to slow down the rise of its rivals like Russia and China, who dare challenging the American neo-colonial perception of the world order and attempt to fill in the political power vacuum left by the superpower in decline. The article claims that the US needs weak (yet unified) Europe they could control economically and continues by saying that if Europe was to cooperate with Russia and China, the phenomenon of the USA would be pushed to the periphery of the world politics where it will rot and disintegrate in a way it happened to the USSR.

The article concludes by saying that Mr. Obama went to the UK in order to lobby for Britain's remaining in the EU. He also did his best to put a positive spin on the infamous TTIP agreement and when it comes to his visit to Germany, it was only a couple of days after his appearance in Hannover when Obama could start seeing the first results. "Merkel succumbs to the will of the American president: Bundeswehr is about to be deployed to Eastern Europe", reads the headline of another article.¹⁹



Nemecká kancelárka Angela Merkelová pózuje s vojakmi

In the picture: German chancellor Angela Merkel posing with the soldiers.

The anti-Western propaganda coverage of Obama's tour of Europe has been an all-encompassing one, containing all the elements of Kremlin's sophisticated propaganda machine. It aimed to **dismiss** Obama's visit as a joke—a trip made by "Mr. Nobody" representing a superpower in decline who attempts to squeeze out as much as he can from the last days of his presidency. It **distorts** the actual situation by claiming that nobody believes in the EU and NATO – projects that work directly against the interests and thus, without the support of the European people and, therefore have to be artificially kept alive by American puppets and traitors of the people. It aims to **distract** the readership from the stagnating conflict in Eastern Ukraine as well as financial scandals and Russian economic crisis by glorifying Russia's strategic, diplomatic and military successes, particularly in Syria. It also attempts to paint a picture of Putin as the true leader fighting for tradition, peace and stability in broader Eurasia. He does that against all odds and powerful interests of foreign financial elites and neo-colonial powers. The campaign also attempts to

¹⁹ <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/merkelova-sa-poddala-americkemu-prezidentovi-bundeswehr-bude-nasadeny-vo-vychodnej-europe/774176>

dismay the public by presenting NATO and EU as a power-hungry warmongering, decadent and immoral interest groups, who represent foreign interests, destroy countries abroad and threaten to destroy Europe. They aim to do so by means of bringing immigrants and terrorists to EU as well as by provoking Russia and risking an all-out armed confrontation between the East and the West.

General anti-Western/anti-NATO attitudes

As a response to the long-term efforts of Baltic countries and Poland to make NATO more present on their territory, 4000 British, German and US troops are about to be sent to the Eastern European countries. The aim of this plan, which has not been officially approved yet, is to react to the provocative behaviour of Russia. According to the US Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert Work, Russia carries out numerous military exercises right at the border with a large number of troops.²⁰ The forthcoming NATO engagement was in a significant focus of pro-Kremlin fringe media, especially in Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Hungarian and Czech pro-Kremlin websites portrayed NATO as an aggressor which unnecessarily provokes Russia and is in fact „occupying” Eastern European member states under the disguise of military „re-deployment” in the region. One of the articles states that the “media of the NATO” distracted the European public from the fact that the American army has invaded Eastern Europe and has deployed armaments capable of carrying nuclear weapons in the Baltics against Russia.²¹ Another one focused on Mrs. Merkel’s statement about Germany playing a more significant role on the eastern flank of NATO during the “G5” talks in Hannover and interpreted it as Germany invading the Central Eastern Europe.²² The Czech version of Sputnik commented that “after the coup in Ukraine and the reunification of Crimea with Russia”, NATO declared Russia an aggressor without any real preconditions and now tries to reinforce its presence at the Russian borders based on the false allegations.²³

Most of the published articles show a certain effort to **distract** from its own hostile behaviour by blaming the other side for responding to it while making up several other allegations related to different issues like migration or engagement in Syria.

In the picture (right): The G5 meeting in Hannover. ²⁴



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²⁰ http://www.natoaktual.cz/nato-planuje-vyslat-ctyri-prapory-na-sve-vychodni-kridlo-pmf-na-media.aspx?c=A160502_163038_na_media_m02

²¹ <http://www.titkolthirek.hu/az-orosz-hatar-menten-kezd-ujabb-provokaciot-az-amerikai-hadsereg/>

²² <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/04/merkel-meg-bukasa-elott-bevonulna-kelet-europaba/>

²³ <http://cz.sputniknews.com/svet/20160430/2939315/nato-pobalti-vojaci.html#ixzz48Kcv5w35>

²⁴ <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/newsblog-zu-obama-in-hannover-g5-gipfel-usa-und-europaeer-wollen-gemeinsam-libyen-stabilisieren/13495582.html>