

INFORMATION WAR MONITOR

CENTRAL EUROPE

GLOBSEC Policy Institute'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.

JULY 2016

- NATO
- EU
- Ukraine

Pro-Russian propaganda in the first half of July 2016 kept on trying to undermine international organizations like NATO and the European Union by exaggerating the uncomfortable situations they find themselves in:

- **The NATO Summit in Warsaw has been described as a meeting with the purpose to prepare for war against Russia. The narrative stays the same; NATO is depicted as an aggressor and a provocateur while Russian Federation as a peacekeeper who keeps on making concessions.**
- **The pro-kremlin outlets keep on predicting how Brexit is going to influence the stability of the European Union. There are wide differences between the points of view of different outlets, from complete dissolution of the EU to creating a new “superstate”.**
- **Ukraine appeared again on several websites regarding the foreign military presence and the role of Russian soldiers in Crimea.**

NATO

The pro-Kremlin propaganda in Central Europe continues to portray NATO as an aggressor, which is constantly “provoking” Russia and also preparingⁱ Eastern European states for war under the disguise of military “re-deployment” in the region. One Hungarian article distorts the declaration of Curtis Scaparrotti, the leader of the US Army in Europe, which he gave in response to the terror attack in Nice, and points out that since NATO is in existential crisis and has become pointless after the end of the Cold War, it has been “using the outside threat, the “Russian threat” and currently an “inside threat” of terrorism for the reinstatement of its purpose.”ⁱⁱ The pictures and

videos of military equipment that are being transported through Eastern Slovakia support this propaganda,ⁱⁱⁱ while other pro-Kremlin outlets compare the NATO Anaconda exercise and the ride of the Dragoons through Vistula to “the march and big offensive of the Soviet army on Berlin during the WWII.”^{iv} Furthermore, information about the NATO exercise is further distorted by Hungarian outlet reporting that Estonia is going to build NATO installations for EUR 70 million “instead of spending the money on its education or healthcare.”^v



In the picture: “NATO hawks would still push the idea of peace and notion that they want nothing but unproblematic coexistence with Russia into people’s heads, even after building a base at the Red Square.”

The primary focus of the pro-Kremlin propaganda however, has been based on the NATO Summit held in Warsaw. Pro-Kremlin outlets depict the NATO Warsaw Summit as meetings where “preparations for war with Russia” were taking place^{vi} and which were supposed “to provide a political backing for the invasion.”^{vii} While one of the Slovak articles claims that the political leaders and representatives of the NATO member states participating at the Summit “showed that contempt for peace has become a permanent paradigm,”^{viii} other authors criticize representatives of Central European countries for their “obliging submission to NATO’s occult ritual,”^{ix} their inability to “voice their position towards NATO,”^x and point out the “combat-tuned” participants with “military drumbeat.”^{xi} One of the Czech articles claims that “The Czech nation is led by traitors and quislings coupled with the US.”^{xii} The outcomes of the NATO Warsaw Summit are, at least according to pro-Kremlin outlets that the world is on the “threshold of nuclear war” with Russia.^{xiii} Some assume that the new collective resistance towards cyber-attacks will only serve “as an excuse for initiation of conflict.”^{xiv}

Furthermore, according to pro-Kremlin outlets, the leaked emails of Former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe and Supreme NATO Commander Phillip M. Breedlove show that the United States (and Breedlove himself)^{xv} has been plotting against Russia.^{xvi} The similar rhetoric is used in article quoting the Polish MEP Janusz Korwin-Mikke: “the United States is paying mercenaries to destroy Russia.”^{xvii} The pro-Kremlin outlets in Central Europe usually claim

that “the United States want Russian natural resources”^{xxviii}, “partition of Russia”, and have been using Ukraine to undermine Russia.^{xix}

Therefore, according to the member of Russian Senate Michail Jemel’janov, “the escalation of the confrontational rhetoric”^{xx} of NATO ended “the visions of partnership with NATO.”^{xxi} Meanwhile the Czech military analyst Martin Koller warns against the Secret Service, which is “supposedly rounding up of inconvenient citizens,”^{xxii} and in an open letter warns the Russian immigrants living in the United States against a Third World War and dismay with the “certain destruction of the United States.”^{xxiii} One of the pro-Kremlin Czech articles is even titled: “Russian leadership will use tactical nuclear weapons in case of threat, even against Europe.”^{xxiv}

This discourse of the US/NATO aggression has been further embedded and spread during the protests “against neo-liberalism and NATO” which according to the pro-Kremlin outlets have been happening all round the world.^{xxv} The Slovak pro-Russian dissident, former Prime Minister and current chairman of Slovak-Russian association, Ján Čarnogurský, in his speech at the protest against NATO proclaimed that: “The biggest warmonger at the moment is the United States. Only Russia is holding it back!” and “Russia protects European values and extends the zone of peace.”^{xxvi}

The European Union

Pro-Kremlin outlets, even more intensely than mainstream media, keep on discussing the consequences of Brexit for the European Union. It is notable that their predictions differ just as much now as they did right after the vote. However, the most common line of argument claims that the Great Britain's withdrawal from the EU will lead to dissolution of the whole organization; an idea widely celebrated by most pro-Kremlin authors. The loudest proponent of this theory is Paul Craig Roberts who is usually described as a forefront US analyst by disinformation websites. He believes that the ultimate dissolution of EU and potentially also NATO might prevent the Third World War from happening.^{xxvii} On the other hand, he also explains in one of his videos that the referendum was part of a plan not only to destroy the EU but also to create an Islamic caliphate, with the support of the ex-Prime Minister David Cameron.^{xxviii}

One Czech website also stated that Brexit is disrupting the big plan for the New World Order and prevents the creation of a European Superstate.^{xxix} Another Hungarian one focused on the support of the Czech Free Citizen's Party for the Czech referendum concerning the EU membership, without mentioning the generally low support of the actual Czech citizens to the party (they gathered 2.5 percent of the vote in 2013).^{xxx}

However, several websites offered the opposite point of view, specifically that Brexit is going to lead to a tighter Union. One of the Czech websites thinks the EU confirmed its “fascist tendencies” by dealing with the referendum results and wants to “destroy the sovereignty of EU Member States”.^{xxxi} Another article suggests that the EU is worse than the USSR and that anyone who criticizes EU's policies is labeled as a Putin's agent.^{xxxii} According to another website, the EU threatens Switzerland to exclude it from the free market if it closes its border for asylum seekers.^{xxxiii}



Evropská unie je horší než Sovětský svaz. Nevěříte? Tady to máte černé na bílém

In the picture: European Union is worse than the Soviet Union. Don't you believe it? There you have it black on white.

Some more creative theories spread in the Czech Republic suggest that the United States is not happy with the events and that Britain now faces a “colour revolution”^{xxxiv} as a counter-move of the globalist movement. Furthermore, George Soros states that the CIA is financing propaganda in Europe and pressures the civil society into supporting the remaining of Britain in the EU.^{xxxv}

Ukraine

The situation in Ukraine was in the viewfinder of especially Czech and Hungarian pro-Kremlin websites, including Sputnik, which are officially financed by the Russian Federation. The articles mostly focused on the Russian and Ukrainian soldiers. Sputnik published an article citing Sergey Aksyonov, the Prime Minister of Crimea, saying that the “polite people”, or in other words, the Russian GRU units dressed in unmarked uniforms, defended the population of Crimea, prevented bloodshed and helped with maintaining peace during the annexation.^{xxxvi}

An article published by one of the Czech disinformation outlets informed about the fact that the British are going to train Ukrainian troops from the Azov battalion. The author added an indignant commentary that it is “astonishing that neither the United Kingdom nor NATO demands to purge Nazism and banderism from Ukraine before helping them train their soldiers”, repeating the old myths about the spread of Nazism in Ukraine.^{xxxvii}

Britové budou cvičit vojáky ukrajinského praporu Azov



Dobrovolníci z praporu Azov

Výcvik čtyř tisíc Ukrajinců bude probíhat až do března 2017, oznámil Philip Hammond, britský ministr zahraničí.

In the picture: The British will train soldiers from the Ukrainian Azov Battalion

A Hungarian website highlighted that the US delegation visited the US military mission in Ukraine, watched a military exercise, and stated that the Minsk II Treaty obliges all international military personnel to leave the country: therefore, the US is breaching its provisions.^{xxxviii} The author however, does not mention that it was an exercise focused on peacekeeping and stability operations.

Edited by **Veronika Víchová**, analyst of Kremlin Watch Program, European Values Think-Tank; **Jakub Janda**, Deputy Director at the European Values Think-Tank; **Lóránt Györi**, Political Capital Institute; **Péter Krekó**, director at Political Capital Institute; **Milan Šuplata**, senior fellow at GLOBSEC Policy Institute, **Katarína Klingová**, GLOBSEC Policy Institute. This document was published in the framework of projects run by the Slovak Atlantic Commission and supported by the National Endowment for Democracy.

© GLOBSEC Policy Institute

ⁱ <http://oroszhirek.hu/2016/07/13/beket-akar-de-haborura-keszul-az-orosz-hatar-fele-nyomulo-nato/>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.vilaglato.info/amerikai-katonakat-vetnenek-be-az-europai-rendfenntartasban/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/sprava-nic-a-zlava-tanky>

^{iv} <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/anakonda-utok-na-visle-ako-nemecky-revans>

^v <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/07/hetvenmillio-euroert-epitenek-barakkokat-a-nato-nak/>

^{vi} <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/07/05/studio-report-4-7-2016/>

^{vii} <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2549-cerny-otec-z-washingtonu-ve-varsave-mir-je-valka-bundeswehr-opet-na-ruskych-hranicich-proc-se-k-planovani-utoku-na-rusko-pridal-i-milos-zeman-pred-nami-jatka-c-3.htm>

^{viii} <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/pohrdanie-mierom-ako-trvala-paradigma-nato>, <https://slobodnyvysielac.sk/2016/07/11/pohrdanie-mierom-ako-trvala-paradigma-nato-zem-vek/?v=13dd621f2711>

^{ix} <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/varsava-2016-slovensko-sa-usluzne-podriadilo-okultnemu-ritualu-nato>

^x <http://www.novarepublika.cz/2016/07/zadna-ceska-politicka-strana-se.html>

^{xi} <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/varsava-2016-slovensko-sa-usluzne-podriadilo-okultnemu-ritualu-nato>

^{xii} <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2549-cerny-otec-z-washingtonu-ve-varsave-mir-je-valka-bundeswehr-opet-na-ruskych-hranicich-proc-se-k-planovani-utoku-na-rusko-pridal-i-milos-zeman-pred-nami-jatka-c-3.htm>

^{xiii} <http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/rozhovory/Jsme-na-prahu-jaderne-valky-s-Ruskem-Martin-Koller-po-summitu-NATO-bije-na-poplach-A-tajne-sluzby-uz-pry-nejspis-chystaji-velky-zatah-na-nepohodne-obcany-444316>, <http://panobcan.sk/sme-na-prahu-jadrovej-vojny-s-ruskom-martin-koller-po-summite-nato-bije-na-poplach-a-tajne-sluzby-uz-vraj-zrejme-chystaju-velky-zatah-na-nepohodnych-obcanov/>

^{xiv} <http://www.novarepublika.cz/2016/07/zadna-ceska-politicka-strana-se.html>

^{xv} <http://aeronet.cz/news/unikle-emaily-byvaly-velitel-americkych-ozbrojenych-sil-v-evrope-a-vrchni-velitel-nato-konspiroval-proti-obamovi-ctel-rozpoutat-valku-s-ruskem/>

^{xvi} <https://www.rt.com/usa/349213-hacked-emails-breedlove-ukraine/>

^{xvii} <http://prvnizpravy.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/zpravy/polsky-europoslanec-nato-vede-vuci-rusku-neuprosnou-agresi/>

^{xviii} <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/07/05/studio-report-4-7-2016/>

^{xix} <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/nato-meni-ukrajinu-na-abces-ktory-ma-znicit-rusko/806633>

^{xx} <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/pohrdanie-mierom-ako-trvala-paradigma-nato>

^{xxi} <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/partnerstvo-s-nato-sa-skoncilo-rusko-musi-reagovat/806544>

^{xxii} <http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/rozhovory/Jsme-na-prahu-jaderne-valky-s-Ruskem-Martin-Koller-po-summitu-NATO-bije-na-poplach-A-tajne-sluzby-uz-pry-nejspis-chystaji-velky-zatah-na-nepohodne-obcany-444316>

^{xxiii} <http://medzicas.sk/varovanie-pred-tretou-svetovou-vojnou/>, <https://www.facebook.com/tomas.haas.1/posts/10206831135996980>, <http://thesaker.is/a-russian-warning/>

-
- xxiv [http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/rozhovory/Ruske-vedeni-v-pripade-ohrozeni-pouzije-bez-vahani-takticke-jaderne-hlavice-l-v-Evrope-
varuje-rusky-analytik-ktery-emigroval-do-USA-443848](http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/rozhovory/Ruske-vedeni-v-pripade-ohrozeni-pouzije-bez-vahani-takticke-jaderne-hlavice-l-v-Evrope-varuje-rusky-analytik-ktery-emigroval-do-USA-443848)
- xxv <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/vo-svete-pribudaju-protesty-proti-neoliberalizmu-a-nato>
- xxvi <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/protestne-zhromazdenie-vyslalo-signal-rodí-sa-novy-svetovy-poriadok-a-vy-v-nom-nebudete/806526>
- xxvii <http://prvnizpravy.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/zpravy/paul-craig-roberts-odchod-britanie-z-eu-zabrani-3-svetove-valce/>
- xxviii <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcLwvovbihM>
- xxix <http://www.czechfreepress.cz/blogy/eu-a-brexít.html>
- xxx <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/07/egy-cseh-ellenzeki-part-referendumot-tartana-az-eu-tagsagrol/>
- xxxi <http://www.novarepublika.cz/2016/07/eu-potvrzuje-fasistické-tendence-po.html>
- xxxii <http://www.lajkit.cz/zpravy/item/567-evropska-unie-je-horsi-nez-sovetsky-svaz-neverite-tady-to-mate-cerne-na-bilem>
- xxxiii <http://ceskoaktualne.cz/2016/07/zpravy-ze-sveta/eu-pritvrzuje-vyhrozuje-svycarsku-pokud-uzavre-hranice-pro-migranty/>
- xxxiv <http://www.zvedavec.org/komentare/2016/06/6943-nyni-celi-britanie-barevne-revoluci.htm>, <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/07/01/studio-report-1-7-2016/>
- xxxv <http://thesaker.is/now-britain-faces-coloured-revolution-as-soros-moves-to-stop-brexít/>,
<http://russia-insider.com/en/politics/now-britain-faces-coloured-revolution-soros-moves-stop-brexít/ri15273>,
<http://www.zvedavec.org/komentare/2016/06/6943-nyni-celi-britanie-barevne-revoluci.htm>
- xxxvi <http://cz.sputniknews.com/svet/20160706/3476126/kyjev-zdvorili-lide-krym-krveproliti.html#comments>
- xxxvii <http://prvnizpravy.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/zpravy/britove-budou-cvicit-vojaky-ukrajinskeho-praporu-azov/>
- xxxviii <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/07/amerikai-vezetok-megtekintettek-az-ukrainaban-zajlo-amerikai-hadgyakorlatot/>