

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.

MAY 2016 (1/2)

- EU & migration
- USA & NATO
- TTIP & Brexit

Anti-European propaganda: The pro-Russian propaganda concerning the European Union is still distorting the European refugee-system, dispersing outright lies about the common institutions, while distracting the public from the temporal success of the EU-Turkey deal on migration.

The propaganda has given the most complete account so far of the European projects' failures. The discrediting begins with outright conspiratorial lies: the EU is the creation of the CIA or the Nazis. According to Hungarian hidfo.ru, the EU has been devised and created by the CIA at the end of 1940s to form a sphere of influence and bulwark against the Soviet Union.¹ Several Czech media mention an alternative conspiracy theory, on the sidelines of Boris Johnson's remarks comparing Brussels to Hitler, about the EU created by several prominent representatives of Nazi Germany who promoted a Germany dominated European economic space. They claim *that "EU is a very bureaucratic, centralized autocratic European federal super state Hitler and other Nazi leaders planned to realize after the Second World War."*² A simpler diagnosis declares the EU a failed project in face of the migration crisis. One article uses a recent research of the Pew Research entitled "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050" to accuse the EU of negative demographic tendencies which result in 100 million fewer Christians and 10% Muslim minority in Europe by 2100 (sic).³ Hungarian conspiracy site, Világlátó cites Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council who allegedly said that the Union will be replaced by a dozen or so "smaller political unions" of nation states which foreshadows the dissolution of the common institutional system.⁴ Migrants and asylum seekers are still portrayed as aggressors, terrorists⁵ or individuals who take unjust

¹ <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/brit-ujsgiro-a-cia-alapitotta-az-europai-uniot/>

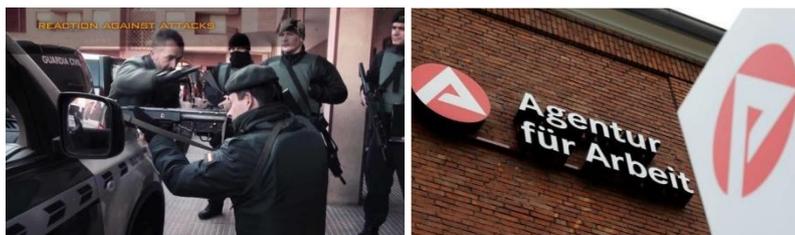
² <http://ac24.cz/zpravy-ze-sveta/8035-naciste-evropska-diktatura-eu-nacismus,>

http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/zpravy/358/vrcholni_naciste_planovali_vytvoreni_federalni_evropske_diktatury_je_eu_ideovym_ditetem_nacismu/, <http://www.prisonplanet.com/boris-is-completely-right-the-eu-was-a-nazi-brainchild.html>

³ <http://www.vilaglato.info/szabad-europa-100-millioval-csokken-majd-a-keresztenyek-szama/>

⁴ <http://www.vilaglato.info/illuzio-bevaltatlan-igeret-volt-az-europai-unio/>

advantage of the European welfare systems. For example, renowned Slovak conspiracy site, Zem a Vek [Earth and Age] claims that refugees are enjoying “luxurious” hotels, using free taxi service to get to the McDonalds, prostitutes hired on the expense of taxpayers.⁶ The most extreme bashing of the EU can be seen in the Czech pro-Russian media which accuses Brussels of transforming into a “clear-cut totalitarian regime” under the rule of Angela Merkel.⁷



EU připravuje vojenskou policii k eliminaci protestů

Zeměvěk 2.3.2016 | W 9

Česká brokerská firma doporučuje ČR neofeudalismus a migranty. Netuší ale, jak to vypadá za hranicemi v Německu! Cesta do pekla je dlážděna už dokonce i chamtivostí!

Somemata

Picture on the left: The EU prepares military police to eliminate protests. Picture on the right: Czech brokerage company recommends neo-feudalism and migrants to the Czech Republic. But they have no idea what it looks like in Germany. Road to hell is paved even with greed!

The refugee crisis is still a plot of the “European bureaucrats” or the “organized kabbalah of brain trusts connected to NATO” to subdue the European people by creating a joint European military police banning all protests.⁸ Main Hungarian pro-Russian site, hidfo.ru gives an easy answer to the malformed EU: every second citizen in Europe wishes for a referendum about the European membership, while most of Moldovans reject joining the EU.⁹

USA & NATO missile defence

This May, a lot of traffic in conspiratory and propaganda circles was generated by the NATO missile defence system in Eastern Europe. According to one article, Vladimir Putin blames NATO missile “defence” system for complicating international situation on Russia’s periphery. He says that in light of lacking credible threat (from Iran and Iraq), the missile defence system has to be viewed as part of the American nuclear potential that is being moved to the periphery.¹⁰ Another article discusses the potential “offensive capabilities” of the new AEGIS anti-missile system claiming it could be used for launching nuclear-tipped Tomahawk missiles, thus justifying Russian pre-emptive strike against these installations.¹¹

⁵ <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/v-nemecku-mlady-afganec-bojuje-o-zivot-po-nasilnostiach-v-ubytovni-pre-utecencov/781629>,

<http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/usa-europu-dostihla-vlna-teroristov-ktora-nema-obdoby-su-pripraveni-zasiahnut/780610>,

⁶ <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/nemecko-all-inclusive>

⁷ <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2429-evropska-unie-se-meni-v-otevrenou-totalitu-ploty-luxusniho-vezeni-vsak-zacinaji-praskat-skvirami-prozaruje-svetlo-svobody-proc-se-u-nas-vyroci-vstupu-neslavi-nebezpečna-obluda-a-vrazdy-protiimigrantskych-oponentu.htm>

⁸ <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://svobodnenoviny.eu/eu-pripravuje-vojenskou-policii-k-eliminaci-protestu/>

⁹ <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/minden-masodik-europai-nepszavazast-akar-az-eu-tagsagrol/>,

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/moldova-lakossaganak-tobbsege-nem-tamogatja-az-eu-csatlakozast/>

¹⁰ <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/putin-kritizoval-aktivaciu-protiraketoveho-stitu-v-rumunsku/781072>

¹¹ <http://ria.ru/analytics/20160516/1434313477.html#ixzz48yzBrl8t>

<http://www.czechfreepress.cz/valky/rostislav-iscenko-treti-svetova-valka-klice-ke-startu.html>

A headline to an extensive article by Zem a Vek reads: “The USA continues with the strategy of Russian encirclement. Poland, Romania, and the Baltic states are eager to please.”¹² It talks about “shocking eagerness” with which these countries are willing to allow an “indefinite deployment of foreign forces on their own soil” under a delusion that this would somehow increase their security. The Zem a Vek article explicitly denounces Polish and Romanian “militarism” and describes the confrontational character of its foreign policy as being directly against the interests of the remaining (V4) central European nations. All this is happening due to foreign agents who are in control of these collaborating countries and “are opening their doors wide open, inviting the deadly American military machinery”. The article is just one among many¹³ that aim to “demonstrate” the lack of American respect for human life. This one in particular attempts to do so by mentioning the last year’s tragedy when the American forces mistakenly bombed a Médecins Sans Frontières facility in Afghanistan, saying that the leaders of the “missile defence countries” are essentially approving their own territories to become “American atomic shooting ranges” as an inevitable result of future “errors” similar to those happening in the middle East on daily basis. Similar ideas are being pushed by various propaganda outlets and conspiracy sites in the region, resembling some sort of delusional, twisted fantasy storytelling competition.¹⁴



Picture on the left: Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama¹⁵. Picture on the right: “And then we told the Russians: “Listen guys, that missile defence shield is aimed against Iran, honestly.””¹⁶

¹² <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/usa-pokracuju-v-strategii-obklucovania-ruska-polsko-rumunsko-a-pobaltie-im-v-tom-horlivo-asistuju>

¹³ <http://karpathir.com/2016/05/05/gyerekeket-gyilkoltak-az-amerikai-bombak/>

<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/az-amerikai-kormany-hatraltatja-a-terrorszervezetek-elleni-harcot-sziriaban/>

¹⁴ <http://aeronet.cz/news/ex-premier-topolanek-sokoval-na-ceskem-rozhlasu-obvinil-americkou-cia-z-ovlivnovani-ceskych-soudu-moderator-z-toho-ztratil-rec-pro-americyany-je-pry-cesko-bananova-republika/>

¹⁵ [https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/1030285130362692/?type=](https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/1030285130362692/?type=3)

¹⁶ [https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/1034973349893870/?type=](https://www.facebook.com/amerikanofil/photos/a.832502473474293.1073741828.832415466816327/1034973349893870/?type=3)

Hungarian conspiracy site Világlátó breaks news with Hillary Clinton who allegedly claimed she would initiate a “nuclear war” against Russia if she were to become the next president of the United States.¹⁷ Another article accuses Poland of preparing for a territorial grab in Eastern Europe¹⁸ and another site claims that the increased NATO activity on its Eastern flank is a proof that the alliance is preparing for war with Russia.¹⁹ Other articles were apologetic of Russian dangerously close fly-by manoeuvres next to American ships as well as surveillance plane intercepts in the Baltic region on grounds that the very presence of American forces in the region is hostile, aggressive, provocative and confrontational aiming to collect information and probe Russia’s defences.²⁰ All these various accusations try, one way or another, to paint the picture of the USA as a superpower in decline that tries to hold itself afloat by means of promoting disagreement, strife and conflict around the world.²¹

When it comes to the conflict in Syria, various articles criticise the involvement of the USA / Europe / NATO, mainly their double standard when it comes to war crimes and their support for the non-existent “moderate opposition” that is in fact a mixture of terrorists and jihadist fanatics.²² One article brought an interview with a Syrian doctor from Aleppo who criticizes Western media for distorting the image of Syrian conflict by focusing on casualties in the small area held by this “moderate opposition” and ignoring the crimes and slaughter these terrorist groups commit against the civilian population living in the remaining parts of the city held by the government forces. Thus, Western media are portraying the various terrorist organisations supported by the West as the true victims of the Syrian conflict.²³ In this context, the propaganda machinery reported a story of two French families who had decided to dedicate medals and distinctions to a fallen Russian officer who died fighting in the Syrian city of Palmyra. In words of Jean-Paul Floch, he did so in order to commemorate a “heroic act of transnational proportion in the fight against terror”.²⁴

The anti-Western propaganda in the first half of May was an all-encompassing one, containing all the elements of Kremlin’s sophisticated propaganda machine. Traditionally, it aimed to **dismiss** NATO as serving foreign imperial interests of the USA. It **distorts** the actual situation by claiming that it works directly against the interests of the European people. It aims to **distract** the readership from Russia’s aggressive policies in its neighborhood, particularly in the Eastern Ukraine, by bashing NATO and glorifying Russia’s strategic, diplomatic and military successes, particularly in Syria. The campaign also attempts to **dismay** the public by presenting the USA and NATO power-hungry warmongers serving the interests of foreign capital, whose lack of respect for human life and dignity is well demonstrated by their military adventurism abroad, as well as their constant attempts to escalate the conflict with Russia and bring about an all-out armed confrontation between the East and the West.

¹⁷ <http://www.vilaglato.info/ha-clinton-lesz-az-elnok-az-usa-nuklearis-haborut-kockaztat-oroszorszaggal/>

¹⁸ <http://karpathir.com/2016/05/05/gyerekeket-gyilkoltak-az-amerikai-bombak/>, <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/az-amerikai-kormany-hatraltatja-a-terroriszervezetek-elleni-harcot-sziriaban/>

¹⁹ <http://www.novarepublika.cz/2016/05/generale-pavle-ministre-stropnický.html>

²⁰ <http://protiproud.parlamentnilisty.cz/politika/2421-dvoji-tvar-americke-politiky-spolecna-jednani-s-ruskem-o-syrskem-primeri-provokace-v-baltskem-i-jihocinskem-mori-spionazni-ofenziva-jako-priprava-na-prepadeni-ruska-podle-planu-barbarossa-ii.htm>

²¹ <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/napatie-nad-baltikom-prudko-rastie-americiania-provokuju-priamo-pri-ruskych-hraniciach>

²² <https://lenta.ru/articles/2016/03/29/glaziev/>

²³ <http://www.novarepublika.cz/2016/05/usa-se-vydaly-cestou-rozpoutani-svetove.html>

²⁴ <http://ceskoaktualne.cz/2016/05/zpravy-ze-sveta/wsj-umirnena-syrska-opozice-slouzi-ve-sluzbach-usa/>

²⁵ <http://prvnizpravy.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/zpravy/wsj-umirnena-syrska-opozice-jsou-teroriste-ve-sluzbach-usa/>

²⁶ <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/doktor-z-aleppa-vini-zapadne-media-zo-skreslovania-cenzury-a-lzi>

²⁷ <http://www.hlavnespravy.sk/dalsia-francuzska-rodina-odovzdala-rodinne-vyznamenania-pribuznym-alexandra-prochorenka-ktory-zahynul-v-syrii/780988>

Brexit: The pro-Brexit campaign of the pro-Russian propaganda clearly distorts public opinion by for example over-generalizing the results, implying a false “domino effect” of referendums based on simple attitude research. There are also singular opinions cited as if they were representing the majority’s negative view about the EU. The alleged pressure of the United States has also been identified as a cause of a potential rejection of withdrawal from the EU in the referendum.

Statements uttered by several politicians during the last two weeks played out very favourably for the pro-Kremlin fringe media supporting the British campaign to leave the European Union. One of the Hungarian websites quoted the opinion of the presumed American presidential nominee Donald Trump about Britain being “better off” outside of the Union considering the terrible migration crisis.²⁵ Bust most notably, websites in all three countries reported the words of the former London mayor and one of the main Brexit supporters Boris Johnson who accused Brussels of creating a “superstrate” and compared the efforts to the ones of Hitler and Napoleon.²⁶ Pro-Russian websites used these quotes in their full potential and sometimes even twisted them into absurd proclamations about the European Union having Nazi roots.

VRCHOLNÍ NACISTÉ PLÁNOVALI VYTVOŘENÍ FEDERÁLNÍ EVROPSKÉ DIKTATURY. JE EU IDEOVÝM DÍTĚTEM NACISMU?

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Boris Johnson, co byl obviněn z přehánění kvůli porovnání EU s plánem Adolfa Hitlera pro Evropu (protože se začalo s vyvoláváním strachu před novou světovou válku, když Británie opustí EU, jako to dělá David Cameron), má naprostou pravdu.

Tento poslanec Toryů, co je pro Brexit, řekl, že ani Napoleon ani nacistický vůdce se sjednocením neuspěli, a tak je EU „pokus udělat to jinou metodou.“

Picture above: The Heads of Nazis planned to create a federal European dictatorship. Is the EU an ideological child of Nazism?

An Ipsos poll conducted in nine leading European countries about the EU membership had quite a carrier, firstly covered by the Financial Times, then dispersed by the official mouthpiece of the Kremlin Sputnik International to different pro-Russian sites. The poll in question concluded that on average 45% of the respondent favoured a referendum about European membership in their respective countries, and more importantly it could set off a “domino effect” of similar exit-referendums all across the Union.²⁷

On top of the criticism of the European Union which is spreading in the Great Britain and puts Russian propaganda in a very comfortable position, the United States were also identified as a powerful actor that could cause a negative result of the referendum. Several Czech disinformation websites published a commentary by Paul Craig Roberts, the former US Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy in Ronald Reagan's administration, whose contributions are often part of the pro-Russian media content. In this particular article he wrote that the

²⁵ <http://karpathir.com/2016/05/07/donald-trump-szerint-nagy-britannianak-jobb-lenne-az-europai-union-kivul/>

²⁶ http://www.vilaglato.info/hitlerehez-hasonlitotta-az-eu-szandekait-a-volt-londoni-polgarmester/?no_frame=1, <http://www.hlavnespravdy.sk/johnson-eu-sa-usiluje-vytvorit-europsky-superstat-podobne-ako-hitler/781449>, <http://ac24.cz/zpravy-ze-sveta/8035-naciste-evropska-diktatura-eu-nacismus>

²⁷ http://www.vilaglato.info/egyre-novekszik-az-euszkptikusok-szama/?no_frame=1, <http://karpathir.com/2016/05/09/a-brit-referendum-dominohatast-indithat-el-az-europai-unioban/>

European Union has been created by the CIA, which is why Washington is forcing the British to remain in the EU. He also describes the upcoming referendum as an opportunity for the British to finally freely choose whether “they want to be a sovereign state or to dissolve as a nation in the EU and to submit themselves to the Brussels dictatorial decrees.”²⁸ Picture below: P.C.Roberts: Washington decided not to let the British leave the EU.



The screenshot shows a news article from the website vaševěc.cz. The article title is "P.C.Roberts: Washington je rozhodnut Brity z EU nepustit". The article is dated 18.5.2016 00:51. The text of the article states: "V roce 2000, a to 19. září, čili před necelými šestnácti lety, zaslal Ambrose Evans-Pritchard londýnskému Telegraphu tuto zprávu: „Dokumenty vlády USA dokazují, že americké zpravodajské služby vedly už v padesátých a šedesátých letech kampaň za nastartování spojené Evropy."

TTIP: The concerns over the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) spread not only in the Central European countries but throughout Europe. Several aspects of the agreement seem questionable and its advantages and disadvantages remain a part of a public, academic and political discussion. Pro-Russian propaganda is attempting to distort the constructive criticism of the TTIP and tries to demonize it as yet another alleged US attempt to blackmail and have full control over Europe.

The Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement has been in the centre of criticism of pro-Kremlin websites since Greenpeace leaked several negotiation texts to the public claiming that the US is trying to lower or circumvent European protections for environment and public health. The dominant direction of the argument is that the United States are blackmailing the European Union into a deal which will be not only unfavourable for us, but perhaps even harmful, mostly concerning environment and consumer protection. This course has been followed by pro-Kremlin media in Hungary and Slovakia.

Among the impacts attributed to the TTIP is also the projected loss of 1 million jobs in the EU.²⁹ Besides substantive objections, disinformation cites the lack of popular or elite support for the agreement. According to the Hungarian conspiracy site, Világfigyelő, “several hundred thousand” protesters rallied against the trade deal throughout Europe. Another article points to the German or French government officials’ opposition based on food or health safety concerns.³⁰ The same narrative is present in the text published by Slovak disinformation website Zem a Vek.³¹ Another line of arguments mentions another aspect of legitimacy problem: big firms interests and backroom

²⁸ <http://www.nwoo.org/2016/05/17/p-c-roberts-washington-je-rozhodnut-brity-z-eu-nepustit/>,
<http://vasevec.parlamentnilisty.cz/clanky/pcroberts-washington-je-rozhodnut-brity-z-eu-nepustit>,
http://www.ctusi.info/zpravodajstvi/ruzne/465/pcroberts_washington_je_rozhodnut_brity_z_eu_nepustit/

²⁹ <http://www.vilaglato.info/a-ttip-dokumentum-kiszivarogtatasa-a-veget-jelenti-e-az-usa-europa-szabad-kereskedelmi-megallapodasnak/>

³⁰ <http://www.vilaglato.info/szazezrek-vonultak-fel-europaban-a-ttip-ellen/>, <http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/a-ttip-ellen-fordul-a-nemet-kormany/>,
<http://www.hidfo.ru/2016/05/franciaorszag-nem-irja-ala-a-ttip-egyezményt/>

³¹ <http://zemavek.sk/articles/view/proces-schvalovania-dohody-o-ttip-narusil-unik-dovernych-dokumentov>

deal prevail over the common good of the society of the people – a well-known conspiratorial logic of the “shadow government.”³²



Picture on the left: The big firm’s ultimate strike against the communities (TTIP, TPP, TISA). Picture on the right: The German government is against the TTIP

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³² <http://www.vilaglato.info/ttip-tpp-tisa-soha-nem-latott-meretu-globalis-kereskedelmi-egyezmények-melyek-a-jelenleg-elérhető-információk-szerint-a-világ-legnagyobb-gigavállalatait/>