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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES REBORN FOR THE 21ST
CENTURY: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?**

by

Alexander M. Perkins

December 2018

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Carolyn C. Halladay
Mikhail Tsyarkin

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**SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES REBORN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:
WHAT IS TO BE DONE?**

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First Lieutenant, United States Air Force
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(EUROPE AND EURASIA)**

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ABSTRACT

Americans were largely surprised when the intelligence community revealed that Russia had launched a widespread influence operation focused on the 2016 U.S. presidential election. With their high-tech, social-media focus, these practices struck many as a newly implemented tactic against the United States. However, throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union developed and deployed influence operations—then called “active measures”—against the United States and its allies. During the last decade of the Cold War, the United States actively and systematically combatted this threat. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, active measures seemed to fade into history as well. This thesis argues that Russia has reincarnated this Cold War relic and is using active measures throughout the world to advance its strategic interests, especially in its post-Soviet space. Russia is utilizing 21st-century technology to gain access to Western populations and sow discord, distrust, and disorder. Thus, this thesis examines the Soviet-era active measures, the U.S. Cold War countermeasures, and Russian active measures today to make recommendations on ways to counter this form of malevolent influence. This thesis finds that the United States should organize purposefully and consistently to counter Russian active measures, educate the American public to increase its resiliency against foreign influence, and intensify its strategic public diplomacy efforts throughout Europe.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMWG	Active Measures Working Group
APN	Novosti
BIS	Czech Republic's Security Information Service
CAATSA	Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS-EMO	Commonwealth of Independent States-Election Monitoring Organization
DOD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
DoS	Department of State
EU	European Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FSB	Federal Security Service
GDP	gross domestic product
GEC	Global Engagement Center
GFP	Generals for Peace
GONGO	Government-organized non-governmental organization
GRU	<i>Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye Sovetskoy Armii</i> (Main Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet Army)
ID	International Department
IID	International Information Department
INF	Intermediate Nuclear Forces
IO	Information Operations
IRA	Internet Research Agency
IRC	information-related capabilities
KAL	Korean Air Lines
KGB	<i>Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti</i> (Committee for State Security)
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCFE	National Committee for a Free Europe

NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	non-governmental organizations
NGW	new generation warfare
NSC	National Security Council
NSDD	National Security Decision Directive
NSS	<i>National Security Strategy</i>
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PSYOPS	psychological operations
RFE	Radio Free Europe
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
SPG	Special Planning Group
SVR	<i>Sluzhba vneshnei razvedki</i> (Foreign Intelligence Service)
UN	United Nations
USIA	United States Information Agency
VOA	Voice of America
WPC	World Peace Council

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union notoriously used what it termed “active measures” as a tool of influence against the Western world to advance its strategic interests. These active measures consisted predominantly of three techniques that relied on disinformation and using people or groups to influence a nation’s public or to subvert Western governments or policies that negatively affected the Soviet Union. For much of the Cold War, the United States ignored these uniquely Soviet tactics of influence. In the 1980s with the election of a new president, Washington put a great emphasis on combating the Soviet Union’s use of active measures and highlighted to the world how the Soviet Union manipulated the public, increasing the costs of using active measures. A great example was the United States publicizing the Soviet Union’s disinformation campaign that Washington created Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) as an ethnic weapon. Not only did it politically embarrass Gorbachev, but the United States also threatened to withhold humanitarian assistance in combatting the AIDS epidemic that was ravaging the Soviet Union.¹ Ultimately the Soviet Union issued statements that refuted the allegation that United States created AIDS.²

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, active measures slowly became a Cold War relic, and many in the scholarly world and decision-making circles no longer perceived active measures as a serious threat. As the cooperation between Russia and the United States deteriorated, Moscow, now with less ability to influence outright—especially in its post-Soviet space—revived active measures as a tool of malevolent influence, but with 21st-century technological advances. This thesis begins with the argument that to counter this revived threat, the United States should look to the past to find viable solutions to reduce the impact of Russia’s active measures.

¹ Charles Z. Wick and United States Information Agency, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost: A Report to Congress by the United States Information Agency* (Washington, DC: United States Information Agency, 1988), 10; Fletcher Schoen and Christopher Lamb, “Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference,” *Institute for National Strategic Studies Strategic Perspectives*, no. 11 (June 2012): 6.

² Wick and United States Information Agency, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, 10.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis investigates past Soviet active measures, the countermeasures employed to combat Soviet active measures, and recent Russian active measures to find an answer to the question: How can the United States counter Russia's active measures?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

With the use of cyber operations and the Internet to promulgate its active measures campaigns, Russia has been able to affect more people than anyone could have conceived during the Cold War. This direct access to most of the world's population has dramatically increased the threat of active measures, and every government is at risk. Furthermore, the interconnected digital world makes it much harder for governments to counter such tactics because of the vast operating environment; identifying those engaged on behalf of the Russian government has become much more difficult than it was during the pre-digital days of the Cold War. Russia's active measures use the basic principles of democracy to attack democratic governments from within and aim to create disunity among nations and alliances.

To protect free democratic societies throughout the world, one must first understand Russia's tactics, techniques, and procedures utilized in pursuit of its active measures campaigns. Once a baseline is established, governments can create and implement policies to diminish the impact of Russia's active measures. If governments do nothing or introduce haphazard strategies to counter this threat, then Russia's active measures could have long-lasting and devastating consequences for democratic governments and alliances worldwide.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

The legitimacy and origins of the Russian threat are of great concern for policymakers of many countries in Europe and the United States. This literature review examines the validity of this threat and the different theories about how this threat proliferated to its current heightened level, which has contributed to the resurgence of Russia's use of active measures.

1. Validity of the Threat

Scholars have suggested that empirical evidence did not support a serious Russian military threat against the West. Kofman indicates policymakers exaggerated the Russian military threat to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and cautioned that a response strategy of permanently posting an increased number of troops in countries along Russia's western border could create a security dilemma that might ultimately lead to a self-fulfilled prophecy of increased Russian military threat against NATO.³ Furthermore, he specifies NATO's deterrence was still an effective tool against Russian military action as the balance of power remained in NATO's favor due to that organization's air and sea superiority and the ability to rapidly generate mobilized military power.⁴ He argues that the Russian military did not aim its preparations at NATO; instead, it aligned its military to prepare for a war against Ukraine or a potential revolution in Belarus.⁵ Overall, the Russian military threat against NATO was hyperbole.

This sentiment for the lack of a serious Russian military threat against NATO is also supported by Rojansky, who opines that it was "possible that Russia's non-kinetic interventions in the Baltic States, and the bombastic statements of some Russian officials and politicians, are about sending messages for a wider post-Soviet audience."⁶ Furthermore, he argues it was to set a red line against the West and to indirectly threaten post-Soviet states, "especially Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia," about implementing any pro-Western reforms or revolutions.⁷ Based on NATO and Russian military capabilities and maneuvering, Russian scholar Khramchikin indicates both the

³ Michael Kofman, "Fixing NATO Deterrence in the East or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love NATO's Crushing Defeat by Russia," War on the Rocks, May 12, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/05/fixing-nato-deterrence-in-the-east-or-how-i-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-natos-crushing-defeat-by-russia/>.

⁴ Kofman.

⁵ Kofman.

⁶ *U.S. Policy Toward the Baltic States: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats*, House of Representatives, 115th Cong. (2017), (statement of Matthew Rojansky, Director, Kennan Institute Woodrow Wilson Center), 3-4, ProQuest.

⁷ Rojansky, 12.

Russian and the Western governments' projections of a military threat was propaganda to generate unsupported anti-Russian or anti-NATO hysteria.⁸

On the other side of the coin, some authors and strategists feel Russia has the capability and desire to directly threaten and degrade the effectiveness of NATO. Such scholars as Colby and Solomon provide examples of Russian military capabilities and conclude Russia might not be able to sustain a long-term conflict with NATO, but it had built the capability and the strategy to win a short-term war to seize NATO territory on the Russian western periphery.⁹ Furthermore, the Kremlin could seize an opportunity to control territory that includes the Baltic States, which it saw as part of its sphere of influence.¹⁰ A 2016 RAND study, for which the authors conducted almost a year's worth of wargaming scenarios, also emphasize this Russian capability.¹¹

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was not interested in its integration into the global world as was the West's policy intended.¹² Instead, as Bernstein and Ball argued, "the Putin regime saw 'integration' as defined by the West as fundamentally incompatible with its chosen form of governance"¹³ and "Putin sees the rules defining the international system as a threat not only to Russian interests but to his regime's very survival."¹⁴ As a result, over many years, Russia has developed doctrine and the capability to challenge the global order, which includes not only military capabilities but also soft power and nuclear saber-rattling "to paralyze alliance decision making."¹⁵ They

⁸ Aleksandr Khramchikhin, "Rethinking the Danger of Escalation: The Russia-NATO Military Balance," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 25, 2018, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/01/25/rethinking-danger-of-escalation-russia-nato-military-balance-pub-75346>.

⁹ Elbridge Colby and Jonathan Solomon, "Facing Russia: Conventional Defence and Deterrence in Europe," *Survival* 57, no. 6 (November 2, 2015): 21–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2015.1116146>.

¹⁰ Colby and Solomon, 24–28.

¹¹ David A. Shlapak and Michael W. Johnson, *Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt19w71fs>.

¹² Paul Bernstein and Deborah Ball, "Putin's Russia and U.S. Defense Strategy" (workshop report, National Defense University, 2015), 19–20, <http://inss.ndu.edu/Portals/82/Documents/conference-reports/Putins-Russia-and-US-Defense-Strategy.pdf>.

¹³ Bernstein and Ball 2.

¹⁴ Bernstein and Ball.

¹⁵ Bernstein and Ball, 4.

underscore the Russian threat as real, and the NATO alliance must carefully develop a new strategy to deter this threat.¹⁶

Whether warranted or not, both the White House and the Kremlin perceived the other as the primary threat to security. A 2017 Defense Intelligence Agency report detailed that the Russian Security Strategy, released in 2015, identified “the United States and its NATO allies as Russia’s main threat and accuse[d] the West of pursuing a deliberate policy of containment.”¹⁷ Additionally, it specified that NATO’s positioning of its military capabilities near Russia’s borders was “a serious threat to Russian security.”¹⁸ Furthermore, it detailed the United States’ desire to spread democracy worldwide was a scheme to create regime change in governments that did not have the same values as the United States.¹⁹ As a result of the Kremlin’s view on the increased threat, Alexander Velez-Green argued “a rising number of Russia’s senior military strategists are advocating for the adoption of a doctrine of pre-emption for the defense of their nation.”²⁰ This pre-emptive defense strategy would consist of striking NATO and the United States first in the event of the perception that Russian strategic security interests were at risk.²¹ Not only did the Kremlin view the global order as a contested sphere but the White House also indicated this vulnerability in its 2017 *National Security Strategy* when, in multiple instances, it specifically mentioned Russia as a direct threat to U.S. interests and the regional balance of powers.²²

¹⁶ Bernstein and Ball,

¹⁷ Defense Intelligence Agency, *Russia Military Power—Building a Military to Support Great Power Aspirations*, DIA-11-1704-161 (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017), 15, <http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Russia%20Military%20Power%20Report%202017.pdf>.

¹⁸ Defense Intelligence Agency.

¹⁹ Defense Intelligence Agency.

²⁰ Alexander Velez-Green, *The Unsettling View from Moscow* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, April 27, 2017), 1, ProQuest.

²¹ Velez-Green.

²² White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

2. The Cold War Never Ended

After examining Russia's national strategic documents, Pynnöniemi concludes that Russia always intended to pursue "its national interests in the military sphere through the protection of independence, sovereignty, state, and territorial integrity of Russia and its allies against military aggression."²³ It was not until recently, however, that "Russia had both the resources and the political will to protect its national security with the means of military force."²⁴ Kier Giles echoes this argument and cited Russia's response to Syria and Ukraine as examples of its confidence in its power to protect its national interests.²⁵

Similarly, Papava concludes that the renewed Russian aggression was not a new phenomenon and instead was a continuation of the suspended Cold War from when the Soviet Union collapsed.²⁶ Once Russia's economy stabilized and recovered, Moscow began to push back against the West and officially unsuspended the Cold War in 2008 with the invasion of Georgia.²⁷ Feffer also insists the Cold War never really ended, but he argues the United States was to blame for keeping it on life support because Washington never gave up or disbanded its Cold War institutions nor did it give up its global ambitions.²⁸ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, America's delusion that it won the Cold War led U.S. policymakers to implement policies and make demands that disregarded Russian sovereignty and deepened Russia's mistrust of what it saw as American imperialism.²⁹ Cohen provides a litany of examples: American withdrawal from the Anti-

²³ Katri Pynnöniemi, "Russia's National Security Strategy: Analysis of Conceptual Evolution," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 31, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 255, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2018.1451091>.

²⁴ Pynnöniemi, 255.

²⁵ Keir Giles, *The Turning Point for Russian Foreign Policy*, Letort Papers (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2017), xiii-xvii, <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/PUB1354.pdf>.

²⁶ Vladimer Papava, "Is the New Cold War a Continuation of the Old?," CICERO Foundation Great Debate Paper no. 14/07 (October 2014): 4-6.

²⁷ Papava, 4-6.

²⁸ John Feffer, "The Cold War Never Ended," *Foreign Policy in Focus* (September 10, 2014), <http://fpif.org/cold-war-never-ended/>.

²⁹ Stephen Cohen, "The New American Cold War," *The Nation* (July 10, 2006): 18-35.

Ballistic Missile Treaty and the development of weapons designed to nullify other nations' nuclear deterrence; support of the many different color-revolutions, demands on how the Russian government should govern; and hypocritical criticism of Russian foreign policy with regard to its support of neighboring states and its efforts to establish military alliances, among others.³⁰

Not all scholars have associated the increased tension between the West and Russia as a continuation of the Cold War and have highlighted the differences between the current situation from that of the Cold War. A critical difference, Engle argues, was that the conflict was not “an absolute conflict between radically opposite economic systems” and they “are not expressions of antithetical ideologies.”³¹ In the same vein, Rojansky and Salzman cite the open dialogue and interpersonal relations between Russia and the West, not just in geopolitics but between citizens, was also a distinct difference.³² Furthermore, they note that the conflicts did not include all the major world powers taking sides and instead many regional power states remained neutral—unlike during the Cold War. They do caution that continued tension and resistance to cooperation could create a more hostile atmosphere like that of the Cold War.³³

3. NATO Enlargement Created Tension

NATO enlargement was of great debate during this time and was what some scholars thought would lead to the increased hostilities of today. Upon reviewing the literature in the 1990s, there appeared to be two principal sides to this debate: one held that Russia was still an adversary to the West and expanding NATO would contain and limit

³⁰ Cohen, 23–24.

³¹ Eric Engle, “A New Cold War-Cold Peace Russia, Ukraine, and NATO,” *Saint Louis University Law Journal* 59, no. 1 (2014): 173.

³² Matthew Rojansky and Rachel Salzman, “Debunked: Why There Won’t Be Another Cold War,” *Perspectives on Peace & Security* (March 2015), <https://perspectives.carnegie.org/us-russia/debunked-wont-another-cold-war/>.

³³ Rojansky and Salzman.

Russia's future ability to exert its influence when it renounced democratic reform.³⁴ The other argument was that NATO should avoid enlargement as it would reduce Russia's cooperation to democratic reform and instead bolster tension between Russia and the West.³⁵ Ron Asmus, who ultimately came to favor NATO enlargement as a way to provide long-term security and stability, provides a detailed examination of this debate and explains that the Clinton administration intended to gradually expand NATO in a way so it was redefined and strengthened as well as to consolidate democracy throughout Central and Eastern Europe without alienating Russia.³⁶

Even after the first rounds of NATO enlargement, the debate continued. Mearsheimer argues NATO expansion should have ceased and U.S. support for the accession of Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was a huge mistake.³⁷ Moreover, Russia's responses to both Georgia and Ukraine was understandable if observed from Putin's geopolitical point of view.³⁸ Mearsheimer also attributes the expansion of the European Union and the United States' efforts to democratize Ukraine as predominant factors for Russia's aggressive actions.³⁹ Furthermore, Toal indicates the Bucharest Declaration of April 2008, wherein NATO affirmed future accession of Georgia and Ukraine, was a contributing factor to the decline of cooperative relations between Russia and the United States.⁴⁰ Authors also argue that Russian hostility toward the West is defensible because during the 1990s the West informally promised Russia that NATO would not expand

³⁴ William E. Odom, "NATO's Expansion: Why the Critics Are Wrong," *The National Interest*, 1995; Lars S. Skalmes, "From the Outside in, from the Inside Out: NATO Expansion and International Relations Theory," *Security Studies* 7, no. 4 (June 1, 1998): 45–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419808429358>.

³⁵ Michael E. Brown, "The Flawed Logic of NATO Expansion," *Survival* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 1995): 41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339508442775>; Arms Control, "Opposition to NATO Expansion," June 25, 1997, <https://www.armscontrol.org/print/221>.

³⁶ Ronald D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

³⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, "Getting Ukraine Wrong," *New York Times*, International edition, March 14, 2014, 2, ProQuest.

³⁸ Mearsheimer, 2.

³⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (October 2014): 77–89.

⁴⁰ Gerard Toal, *Near Abroad: Putin, the West and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 7 and 125.

eastward past Germany.⁴¹ Others counter this argument on the basis that there was no written or formal policy prohibiting or limiting NATO expansion and because the Russian government knew the West's intention was to provide opportunities for gradual NATO enlargement.⁴²

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

In the 1980s, the United States made concerted efforts to counter the Soviet active measures threat, which increasingly made it politically costly for the Soviets to utilize these techniques as a form of strategic influence. Through these efforts, the U.S. government created an interagency working group called the Active Measures Working Group (AMWG); its mission was to collect and disseminate information on Soviet active measures in an effort to educate the public and governments abroad on Soviet active measures. The primary goal of the U.S. efforts was to increase awareness and highlight the potential impact of the Soviet active measures, in turn, reducing the ability for the Soviets to manipulate the public.

This thesis hypothesizes that Russia's active measures consist of the same fundamental techniques that the Soviets used during the Cold War that are only modified for use in the 21st century. Russia has increased its active measures' audience by taking advantage of technological developments such as social media and the Internet. This thesis also theorizes governments can limit the impact of Russia's active measures by modernizing the techniques the U.S. government used during the Cold War to counter the Soviets' active measures. Limiting the influence of Russia's active measures will rely on rapid identification and extensive public dissemination of information concerning Russia's actions to influence public opinion or increase societal divisions.

⁴¹ Joshua Shiffrin, "Deal or No Deal?: The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40, no. 4 (2016): 40–41, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00236; Gordon Hahn, "Broken Promise: NATO Expansion and the End of the Cold War," *Strategic Culture On-Line Journal*, January 9, 2018, <https://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2018/01/09/broken-promise-nato-expansion-and-end-cold-war.html>.

⁴² Mark Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia," *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (March 12, 2009): 39–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01636600902773248>; Hannes Adomeit, "NATO's Eastward Enlargement What Western Leaders Said" (working paper, Federal Academy for Security Policy, 2018), https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working_paper_2018_03.pdf.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis compares the techniques the Soviets used during the Cold War to the current Russian active measures to determine if the countermeasures used during the Cold War would limit the Russian influences of active measures. Furthermore, it makes recommendations on ways in which the United States can better protect Americans against Russian active measures that use 21st-century technology to gain greater access to much of the population.

I examined relevant publications to define the complicated term of “active measures” and reviewed other Western terms associated with strategic influence, such as “public diplomacy.” For information about the Soviets’ use of active measures, I examined books, articles, and government reports published during the Cold War and shortly after that examine Soviet active measures techniques. Specifically, I studied these works to obtain examples of how the Soviets utilized active measures operations as well as how the United States countered these operations. For the Russian active measures, I focused the research to categorize the different Russian active measures techniques and provided examples to form a complete picture of Russia’s use of active measures relating to information operations (IO).

Ultimately, I sought to compare Russian and Soviet active measures to determine similarities and differences. Based on this research, I analyzed whether countermeasures implemented against the Soviet Union could be utilized against Russia or if there would be significant gaps that would need to be addressed.

I limited the research for this thesis to open-source information, available in books, scholarly journals, newspaper and magazine articles, and de-classified government hearings. I do not include any classified or restricted information, but this limitation should not detract from the analysis as there has been a surge in research since 2016. Scholars have associated active measures with assassinations, commonly referred to as “wet operations,” as well as with terrorist-inspired proxy wars, but I did not focus on those types of operations. Instead, I focused on the analysis of the IO aspects of active measures. Due to the nature of active measures and the disinformation surrounding these types of

campaigns, I took care to examine the credibility of a source to minimize the mistake of representing disinformation as fact in this thesis.

Even though scholars have traced the Soviets' use of active measures dating back to the Bolshevik Revolution, which arguably formed the heyday of this tactic, this thesis is focused on the Cold War. Unless required for analytical clarity or to provide examples of different themes categories, I limited the examples for each identified technique because it would not be feasible or beneficial to examine several examples of the same method.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is organized into five chapters. After this introductory chapter, Chapter II describes what scholars have defined as “active measures” and other terms associated with influence techniques and accepted means of soft power. Chapter III explores the numerous methods in which the Soviet Union utilized active measures during the Cold War, examples of these techniques, and the measures the United States took to counter the active measures threat during the Cold War. Chapter IV identifies recent Russian active measures utilized against the Western world. Finally, Chapter V explains current U.S. countermeasures and provides policy recommendations on countering the present Russian active measures threat.

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II. ACTIVE MEASURES DEFINED

Some early forms of political or strategic influence were Queen Elizabeth I's use of the London theaters to implant ideas through plays⁴³ and Napoleon's use of revolutionary ideas against the Monarchs to generate support for his military conquests throughout Europe.⁴⁴ Over time, states with competing interests have weaponized and increasingly used influence to further national interests. This development gained attention in the political and scholarly world predominantly because of the Cold War, when the two great powers—the United States and the Soviet Union—polarized the world into two distinct ideological camps. As a result, much terminology arose to describe different forms of strategic influence. One such term was “active measures.”

When decision makers refer to strategic influence, they frequently mix terminology, muddling the analysis of active measures. Because of the many like terms to describe the different forms of strategic influence, confusion exists as to what types of influence belong to each category. The confusion of terms can lead to not clearly identifying the active measures threat, in turn, constricting decision makers' abilities to implement plausible countermeasures. To better communicate and focus the examination of active measures, one must first define the terms that people sometimes mistakenly use to describe the Soviets' and now Russia's unique way of influence and the actual term itself. Therefore, this chapter focuses on establishing a fundamental understanding of active measures through identifying similar Western terms and comparing the Cold War definition of active measures with its more contemporary meaning. These definitions help establish the base knowledge to aid in the comparison of active measures used during the Cold War to active measures used in the recent past.

⁴³ Paul A. Smith, *On Political War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press Publications, 1989), 54–63.

⁴⁴ Smith, 93.

A. WESTERN TERMINOLOGY

Many people misuse Western terms to describe active measures. These terms include “propaganda”—an essential component of active measures—as well as “disinformation,” “misinformation,” and the broad category of “political warfare,” encompassing “public diplomacy” and “information operations” or “IO.” Confusion as to terms of strategic influence can muddle the collective analysis and result in a miscalculation of the threat from active measures.

1. Propaganda

Jowett and O’Donnell define “propaganda” as “the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”⁴⁵ A propagandist can use any communication platform as a means to deliver propaganda.⁴⁶ Examples include false stories or fabricated data promulgated through print, videos, speeches, radio broadcasts, music, and the many different communication venues on the Internet, such as social media, blog posts, or websites.

Jowett and O’Donnell assert that propaganda received its negative connotations after World War I, when people realized their governments were not only using propaganda overseas to influence the enemy but also to sustain the war effort on the home front.⁴⁷ Through exaggerations of atrocities in the form of hate propaganda, the states used propaganda to stoke the flame of anger against the enemy and were highly successful. Once the public learned about the lies, they saw propaganda in a negative light.⁴⁸ Thus, today, government officials no longer refer to the government’s use of information to influence as “propaganda”; instead, Jowett and O’Donnell referred to it in such terms as

⁴⁵ Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2015), 7.

⁴⁶ Jowett and O’Donnell, 233.

⁴⁷ Jowett and O’Donnell, 246–48.

⁴⁸ Jowett and O’Donnell.

“communication, information, and persuasion because they imply no value judgment.”⁴⁹ Typically, governments reserve the terms associated with propaganda to describe an adversary’s use of information as an influence tool.⁵⁰ Still, scholars have acknowledged that most countries, including Western nations, utilize different variations of propaganda as tools of influence in the pursuit of their national interests.⁵¹

2. Disinformation and Misinformation

Two other terms directly associated with propaganda are “disinformation” and “misinformation,” which are fundamental to active measures operations. Many define “misinformation” and “disinformation” interchangeably, but they, in fact, have two separate meanings. As Fallis illustrates, over the years many scholars have rendered their interpretation of what disinformation means.⁵² For simplicity, however, this thesis uses Fetzer’s definition of disinformation as “the distribution, assertion, or dissemination of false, mistaken, or misleading information in an intentional, deliberate, or purposeful effort to mislead, deceive, or confuse.”⁵³ Fact-based disinformation typically works best as the facts help legitimize the message. With respect to active measures, it appears propagandists contrive disinformation to weaken an adversary, perhaps by painting a country as inherently racist or as warmongers.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Jowett and O’Donnell, 55.

⁵⁰ Ladislav Bittman, “The Use of Disinformation by Democracies,” *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1990): 249, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850609008435142>.

⁵¹ Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 105–178.

⁵² Don Fallis, “What Is Disinformation?,” *Library Trends* 63, no. 3 (2015): 401–26, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2015.0014>.

⁵³ James H. Fetzer, “Disinformation: The Use of False Information,” *Minds and Machines* 14, no. 2 (May 1, 2004): 231, <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:MIND.0000021683.28604.5b>.

⁵⁴ Shultz and Godson detail a primary active measures theme was to portray the United States as a warmonger. For more information see: Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey’s, 1984), 149–57; Examples of propagandists portraying the United States as racist include the disinformation campaign that the U.S. government assisted in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. For more information, see: Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*, 1st ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 238.

An essential distinction between “disinformation” and “misinformation” is the element of intent. “Misinformation,” according to Bittman, is when a person “as a result of a mistake, omission, prejudice or sheer ignorance”⁵⁵ disseminates erroneous or false information. On the other hand, the goal of disinformation is to make people believe in the falsities of the information to the point that people doubt the truth or accept the disinformation as fact. As a result, people naively disseminate the disinformation that then becomes misinformation, and as it spreads, it gains legitimacy. A common example is a typical email hoax that people forward not realizing it is a trick. Once a person forwards the email without an intent to deceive, the email becomes misinformation.

Western democratic governments are less likely to utilize disinformation because of voter accountability and the principles of liberalism but will occasionally resort to using disinformation to further national objectives. Bittman argues that democratic governments, particularly the U.S. government, use different terms, such as “strategic deception,” to mask its use of disinformation.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he identifies two publicly exposed operations: the Iran-Contra Affair and the 1986 “anti-Libyan disinformation misfortune,”⁵⁷ wherein the U.S. government utilized disinformation to further its national objectives. Moreover, not only did the U.S. government attempt to deceive foreign adversaries, but the disinformation campaigns also misled the American public and government officials.⁵⁸ Another example of a democratic government utilizing disinformation was France’s use of it in 1993 during the Rwandan Civil War to frame the fighting as new and a Ugandan invasion as more than a civil war, which allowed the French to justify increased involvement.⁵⁹ Despite these examples, there is a lower propensity for Western democratic governments to utilize disinformation as a tool of influence due to the

⁵⁵ Bittman, “The Use of Disinformation by Democracies,” 284.

⁵⁶ Bittman, 251.

⁵⁷ Bittman, 253.

⁵⁸ Bittman, 253–56.

⁵⁹ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 176.

stigma of propaganda and the overall disapproval of the use of disinformation as a means of influence.

3. Political Warfare

Political warfare encompasses many different categories of state influence. One of the first persons to acknowledge the many aspects of state influence was Clausewitz when he famously wrote, “War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means.”⁶⁰ When Clausewitz defined war, he specifically referred to “act[s] of violence.”⁶¹ In 1948 as a response to the increasing Soviet influence on the world, George Kennan, utilizing the Clausewitz definition of war, defined political warfare as “the employment of all the means at a nation’s command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives”⁶² to include “operations [that] are both overt and covert.”⁶³ Kennan’s words laid the foundation for what the western world came to define as “political warfare.”⁶⁴

A 2018 RAND study describes the historical evolution of the term and synthesized a more contemporary definition as “a deliberate policy choice to undermine a rival or achieve other explicitly political objectives by means other than routine diplomacy or all-out war.”⁶⁵ This definition underscores the importance of a state’s intent; therefore, states cannot inadvertently conduct political warfare. Additionally, the definition excludes normal relations that do not seek to undermine a state’s policy or its decision makers.

⁶⁰ Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

⁶¹ Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret, 90.

⁶² “The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare” U.S. Department of State, May 4, 1948, para. 1, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945-50Intel/d269>.

⁶³ U.S. Department of State.

⁶⁴ Linda Robinson et al., *Modern Political Warfare: Current Practices and Possible Responses* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), 6, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html.

⁶⁵ Robinson et al.

4. Public Diplomacy

All nations practice some form of public diplomacy as a basic means of strategic influence. A wide range of views exists on the precise definition of public diplomacy. As outlined in *The Public Diplomacy Reader*, some people do not associate national broadcasting, such as Radio Free Europe (RFE), with public diplomacy, while others see all methods of state communication with a foreign public as a form of public diplomacy.⁶⁶ The difference depends on the person, and some of those who work in international public broadcasting see themselves as unbiased journalists rather than mouthpieces of public diplomacy.⁶⁷ Still, the idea behind public diplomacy is to enhance a country's image or explain a nation's policies to a foreign public. In most regards, states fund national broadcasting agencies and maintain direct control or manage them through an umbrella organization, such as the Broadcasting Board of Governors—of which all nine board members, to include the U.S. Secretary of State, are Senate-confirmed presidential appointees.⁶⁸ Therefore, regardless of the latitude the national broadcasting agencies have to independently operate, it seems implausible to consider that the state does not maintain some say over the content of the broadcasting.

According to Nye, the desired outcome of public diplomacy was for a state to maintain or develop an attractive image to improve the chance of achieving the desired results as they relate to national objectives.⁶⁹ Nye specifies three dimensions to public diplomacy: 1) daily communication with the foreign public to explain policy decisions, 2) a strategic-communications plan based on long-term themes related to national objectives, and 3) the development and cultivation of personal relationships with key personnel and a nation's citizens.⁷⁰ Some of the wide-ranging tools used in public diplomacy include

⁶⁶ Michael J. Waller, *The Public Diplomacy Reader* (Washington, DC: The Institute of World Politics Press, 2009), 23.

⁶⁷ Waller, 23.

⁶⁸ "Our Leadership," Broadcasting Board of Governors, April 26, 2018, <https://www.bbg.gov/who-we-are/our-leadership/board/>.

⁶⁹ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 1st ed (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 110.

⁷⁰ Nye, 108–11.

public broadcasting, official press releases, cultural exchanges, foreign aid/humanitarian assistance, economic initiatives, engagement through social media, and support of non-governmental organizations (NGO) that represent the ideals of a nation. Public diplomacy does not include normal diplomatic relations or public affairs activities typically designed to inform domestic audiences.⁷¹ States should aim to use public diplomacy to generate what Nye describes as “soft-power,” which is influence through “attraction rather than coercion or payment.”⁷² Essentially, public diplomacy, if executed correctly, allows a nation to generate enough positive influence that the foreign public acts in the interests of the outside state.

The key difference between public diplomacy and active measures lies in the positive influence aspect. Unlike public diplomacy, active measures are based on manipulative influence and are not concentrated on building a nation’s own positive influence. Instead, active measures focus on tarnishing another nation’s image, typically by some form of disinformation or manipulation that Russia uses to advance its own nation’s influence around the world.

5. Information Operations

Another term popular in the United States and frequently used to describe active measures is “information operations” or “IO.” IO is primarily a U.S. military term and entails an extensive array of capabilities focused on the use of information to influence and include any offensive or defensive acts related to communication systems that are not limited to but routinely focused on the cyber domain. According to DOD’s Joint Publication 3–13, DOD IO is defined as “the integrated employment, during military operations, of [information-related capabilities] IRCs in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own.”⁷³ The publication does not limit the

⁷¹ Waller, *The Public Diplomacy Reader*, 32–33.

⁷² Nye, *Soft Power*, x.

⁷³ United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Information Operations*, JP 3–13 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), ix, I-1, http://edocs.nps.edu/2014/December/jp3_13.pdf.

timeline of military operations to combat operations; instead, it includes any DOD--supported operation.⁷⁴ The influence components of IO are similar to active measures, but one should not confuse IO with active measures because active measures do not include the many different IRCs that IO includes.

The mistake of referring to active measures as IO often occurs because IO capabilities include the utilization of military information support operations (MISO)—formerly referred to as psychological operations (PSYOPS)—and military deception as tools of influence, which closely resemble the techniques of active measures. The DOD publication defines “MISO” as “planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals.”⁷⁵ Additionally, it defines “military deception” as “actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary decision makers, creating conditions that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission.”⁷⁶ According to the definitions of propaganda and disinformation, the DOD uses “MISO” to deliver propaganda and “military deception to disseminate disinformation.” Principally, these two capabilities of IO are what make up the foundation for active measures, which explains the frequent confusion of the two terms.

B. DEFINING ACTIVE MEASURES

In their article, “Active Measures: Russia’s Key Export,” Jolanta Darczewska and Piotr Zochowski provide varying definitions of the term and thereby illustrate the complexity of its meaning.⁷⁷ Within their article, they provide the *Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* (KGB, or Committee for State Security) definition of the term as listed in the 1972 KGB-issued *Dictionary of Counterintelligence* as:

acts of counterintelligence making it possible to penetrate the intentions of the enemy, allowing his unwanted steps to be anticipated, to lead the enemy

⁷⁴ United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.

⁷⁵ United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, II-9-II-10.

⁷⁶ United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, II-10.

⁷⁷ Jolanta Darczewska and Piotr Zochowski, “Active Measures Russia’s Key Export,” *Point of View*, no. 64 (July 2017): 1–71. ProQuest.

into error, to take the initiative from him, to thwart his actions of sabotage. Active measures ... are offensive in nature, allowing the detection and prevention of hostile activities in their early stages, forcing the opponent to expose himself, imposing the will to act on him, forcing him to act in adverse conditions and in ways desired by the counterintelligence services. In practice, active measures ... include projects aimed at building up the position of spies in the camp of the enemy and its surroundings, conducting operational games with the enemy, disinformation directed at him, compromise and demoralisation, the transfer onto the territory of the USSR of persons of special operational value, obtaining intelligence information, etc.⁷⁸

This definition contradicts the actual usage of the term as the Soviets, and more recently the Russians, have used it as a capability of influence more than as a mechanism of counterintelligence. This confusion exists because the KGB's intelligence and counterintelligence handbooks, issued to KGB officials during the 1970s, had two definitions for the term, one for counterintelligence (*meropriyatiya aktivnyye*) and the other for offensive intelligence (*aktivnyye meropriyatiya*).⁷⁹ Vasily Mitrokhin, former Soviet archivist and defector, smuggled and translated copies of the handbooks, which provide the following KGB intelligence definition for active measures (also *aktivnyye meropriyatiya*) as:

agent-operational measures aimed at exerting useful influence on aspects of the political life of a target country which are of interest, its foreign policy, the solution of international problems, misleading the adversary, undermining and weakening his positions, the disruption of his hostile plans, and the achievement of other aims.⁸⁰

Mitrokhin's copy of the KGB handbooks provides a similar definition to the one Darczewska and Zochowski provide, and it was specific to counterintelligence. These two definitions were not the only ones in the KGB's handbook that related to active measures. There was also a definition for "active measures by KGB external intelligence" (*aktivnyye meropriyatiya vneshney razvedki KGB*),⁸¹ which the handbook defined as

⁷⁸ Darczewska and Zochowski, 12–13.

⁷⁹ Vasily Mitrokhin, ed., *KGB Lexicon: The Soviet Intelligence Officer's Handbook* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 13, 251.

⁸⁰ Mitrokhin, 13.

⁸¹ Mitrokhin, 13.

agent-operational measures directed at exerting influence on the foreign policy and the internal political situation of target countries in the interests of the Soviet Union and of other countries of the socialist community, the World Communist and National Liberation Movement, weakening the political, military economic and ideological positions of capitalism, undermining its aggressive plans, in order to create conditions favourable to the successful implementation of the Soviet Union's foreign policy, and ensuring peace and social progress.⁸²

The multiple definitions in the KGB intelligence and counterintelligence dictionaries alone demonstrate the complexity of the term, but over the years as scholars and public officials have attempted to grasp the totality of active measures, they continue to add to the lexicon. In her master's thesis, Stephanie Whittle provided a compilation of seven authors' definitions of active measures.⁸³ She contributes to the list by synthesizing her own interpretation of active measures, which was a "protracted whole-of-government approach to undermine, isolate, and incapacitate an adversary through influencing and mobilizing relevant populations in order to prepare the environment for decisive military action."⁸⁴ The discrepancy in her definition is that active measures are not necessarily a precursor to military action.

Out of all the definitions, the most concise is from the U.S. Department of State (DoS). In 1989, the DoS defined active measures as "covert or deceptive operations conducted in support of Soviet foreign policy" with the "goal to influence opinions or actions of individuals, governments or publics." Furthermore, the DoS specified that the methods of employing active measures included "disinformation and forgeries," "front groups and friendship societies," "nonruling communist and leftist parties," and "political influence operations."⁸⁵

⁸² Mitrokhin.

⁸³ Stephanie K. Whittle, "'Conquest from Within': A Comparative Analysis Between Soviet Active Measures and United States Unconventional Warfare Doctrine" (master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2015), 44–48, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll2/id/3269/rec/3>.

⁸⁴ Whittle, 48.

⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1987–1988* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, August 1989), vii.

While the DoS definition is simple and easy to understand, it omits the overt methods of active measures. As Schultz and Godson note, the overt aspect of active measures can include influence delivered through the state media, cultural programs, and diplomatic means.⁸⁶ It is important to note that many, including Schultz and Godson,⁸⁷ add paramilitary operations to the active measures toolkit and authors such as Richelson⁸⁸ include assassinations as a form of active measures. Essentially, scholars who studied active measures during the Cold War focused on the weaponization of information as an influence mechanism.

Since the 1980s, the definition of Soviet influence activities has changed little; however, they have assumed another name. A July 2018 Department of Justice (DoJ) report labelled the activities previously associated with active measures as “malign foreign influence operations” and defined them as “covert actions by foreign governments intended to sow division in our society, undermine confidence in our democratic institutions, and otherwise affect political sentiment and public discourse to achieve strategic geopolitical discourse to achieve strategic geopolitical objectives.”⁸⁹ Additionally, a 2018 Minority Staff Report for the Committee on Foreign Relations also refers to Russian influence operations as “malign foreign influence” but indicates active measures were the genesis for current Russian efforts to subvert or influence other nations.⁹⁰ The Minority Staff Report’s description of malign foreign influence is similar to the Cold War definitions of Soviet active measures, but specifically included in the Committee’s description is Russia’s use of economic controls mixed with the use of criminal organizations as influence tools.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 2.

⁸⁷ Shultz and Godson.

⁸⁸ Jeffrey Richelson, *Sword and Shield: The Soviet Intelligence and Security Apparatus* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1986), 137.

⁸⁹ U.S. Department of Justice, *Report of the Attorney General’s Cyber Digital Task Force* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, July 2, 2018), 1, <https://www.justice.gov/ag/page/file/1076696/download>.

⁹⁰ U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security* (minority staff report, Washington, DC: Committee on Foreign Relations, 2018), 35–39, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FinalRR.pdf>.

⁹¹ Committee on Foreign Relations, 37.

Russia's use of criminal organizations and corruption is significant because, as its economic influence spreads throughout a target country, it enables Moscow to purchase political influence.⁹² With the use of economic influence and traditional active measures techniques, Russia can cement its power within a state. The Kremlin Playbook emphasized that once Russia controlled over 12 percent of a nation's gross domestic product (GDP), Russia had a higher chance of influencing the nation's policies.⁹³ This economic influence was prevalent during the Cold War, but the Soviet primarily used it against Third World countries. In 1983, Guan-Fu noted that, dating back to 1956, trade and foreign aid was a main Soviet strategy of influence, to the extent that Khrushchev thought a Third World country would become socialist if the Soviets controlled 40 percent of its total trade.⁹⁴ Even though the Soviets used economic influence during the Cold War, scholars and intelligence officials did not typically include economic influence as part of Soviet active measures.

The principal differences between the Cold War and the present were not the overall objectives of active measures or even necessarily the fundamental techniques. Instead, the differences revolved around the delivery methods, such as the use of cyber platforms and the utilization of cyber hacking as ways in which operatives accessed information used to influence. The DoJ report highlights the use of cyber operations as the primary delivery method for the Russians in using active measures techniques as a means of influence, which was not an option during the Cold War.⁹⁵ Except for the inclusion of economic influence, there are limited differences between the common Cold War definition of active measures and the current description of malign foreign influence.

The underlying objectives for active measures was to plant ideas in either a single mind (influential political figure) or in the minds of a group of individuals (communities,

⁹² Heather A. Conley et al., *The Kremlin Playbook* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), xi-xiii, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/1601017_Conley_KremlinPlaybook_Web.pdf.

⁹³ Conley et al., xi.

⁹⁴ Gu Guan-Fu, "Soviet Aid to the Third World an Analysis of Its Strategy," *Soviet Studies* 35, no. 1 (1983): 71.

⁹⁵ U.S. Department of Justice, *Report of the Attorney General's Cyber Digital Task Force*.

political groups, minority groups, and various others) to create disunity that leads to potential subversion, conflict, or the undermining of public trust, or influence an action that politically benefits Soviet or Russian national interests. After the operatives plant the idea, they must cultivate and reinforce it through a variety of means. The embedding and the cultivation process can include overt, covert, or semi-covert means, or a combination thereof. During a Senate Committee Hearing in 1985, Thomas Thorne, Jr., the deputy assistant secretary for Coordination, Intelligence, and Research for the DoS, testified that the U.S. intelligence community designated active measures techniques into three different types of operations: black, gray, and white.⁹⁶ Black operations were those not attributable or falsely attributable to a government and were highly covert.⁹⁷ Most black operations allow for plausible deniability. Thorne testified that white operations were those directly attributed to a country and would usually be in the form of a governmental response or public message indicating its stance on a topic or issue.⁹⁸ Furthermore, gray operations included those operations that a government would not necessarily acknowledge, but for which there was a reasonable assumption of government affiliation.⁹⁹ The black-and-white color scale is not unique to active measures and applies to various types of intelligence and/or military action.

C. CONCLUSION

A wide range of Western terms exists that are associated with political influence, and this chapter has focused on providing definitions of each of these terms to aid in the analysis of Soviet and Russian active measures. Active measures, distinct from Western influence terms, rely more on using deceptive techniques as a form of influence. The Soviet Union and Russia have used these techniques to wage political war against Western nations. This war continues even in times of perceived peace and cooperation. The active

⁹⁶ *Hearings before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee of Foreign Relations*, 99th Cong. 1 (1985). ProQuest.

⁹⁷ *S. Hearings before the Subcommittee on European Affairs*.

⁹⁸ *S. Hearings before the Subcommittee on European Affairs*.

⁹⁹ *S. Hearings before the Subcommittee on European Affairs*.

measures threat must be seen for what it is, and nations must not confuse terms that disguise that threat. To protect a nation's security, Western leaders must then clearly define active measures. Ultimately, this thesis uses the DoS's 1989 definition of active measures in combination with Schultz and Godson's definition, which includes overt methods.

III. SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES DURING THE COLD WAR

This chapter examines the Soviet Union's use of active measures during the Cold War and the United States' counterefforts. The Soviet Union created a centralized apparatus to use active measures as a primary means of influence throughout the world. It targeted the West in an attempt to degrade the NATO alliance and deteriorate the fabric of Western society, exploit democratic freedoms, and widen societal fissures. The United States reduced the influence of active measures by taking an aggressive approach to identify, publicize, and confront the Soviet Union to make it politically costly for the Soviet Union to use active measures as a form of malevolent influence. The research finds that the United States' aggressive approach reduced the impact of Soviet active measures.

The chapter starts by explaining the Soviet intelligence apparatus the Soviet Union used to implement active measures. Next, it outlines and provides examples of the different categories of active measures. The chapter concludes with the historical approach of the United States' efforts to counter Soviet active measures.

A. SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES

Soviet-era active measures were a primary way in which the Soviet Union competed to maintain international influence and further its strategic interests. It developed a multi-faceted approach that centered on tarnishing another nation's image in hopes of bettering its own. Soviet-era active measures exploited any topic, even those with little evidentiary support. In 1982, the director of the FBI testified that the FBI determined that Soviet active measures did not have a significant impact in the United States.¹⁰⁰ He justified the FBI assessment because of the United States' high degree of suspicion of Soviet influence and Americans were sensitized to the Soviet front group's' attempts to influence—which was the Soviet Union's primary access to the American public. Furthermore, he indicated the Soviet implementation of active measures was easily

¹⁰⁰ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 97 Cong. 337 (1982). ProQuest.

detected.¹⁰¹ Even though the assessment specified Americans were not easily influenced through Soviet active measures, the amount of time and resources the Soviet invested shows they perceived active measures as a significant form of influence. The incentive came from the developing world as the Soviet Union had easier access to the population and these countries, for the most part, lacked sophisticated media outlets.

To maintain control over its active measures, the Soviet Union developed a centralized apparatus consisting of three organizations. These organizations implemented active measures using four primary techniques: media disinformation, forgeries, agents of influence, and front groups/organizations. The Soviet Union used these active measures techniques to influence foes and allies alike right up until the Soviet Union collapsed.

The first organization to examine within the Soviet active measures apparatus is the International Department (ID), which, according to Pincher, was “responsible for suggesting active measures operations to the Politburo, and when approved, they direct[ed] and orchestrate[d] them.”¹⁰² The ID was directly responsible for managing front organizations, coordinating with the foreign communist parties around the world, controlling clandestine radio stations, planting forgeries, and recruiting and/or maintaining recruited assets to include agents of influence.¹⁰³ The Politburo linked the ID to the International Information Department (IID), which the Soviet Union created in the late 1970s to maintain and manage all Soviet foreign media, including newspapers, radio, television broadcasting stations, and the published Soviet books.¹⁰⁴

The infamous KGB tactically carried out the covert active measures operations.¹⁰⁵ According to Pincher, prior to 1968, the KGB did not emphasize the use of active measures as a weapon against rival countries.¹⁰⁶ Instead, he argues the Soviet Union mostly used

¹⁰¹ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*.

¹⁰² Chapman Pincher, *The Secret Offensive* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 25.

¹⁰³ Pincher.

¹⁰⁴ Pincher, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Amy W. Knight, *The KGB: Police and Politics in the Soviet Union*, Rev. ed. (Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman Inc., 1990), 3.

¹⁰⁶ Pincher, *The Secret Offensive*, 27.

active measures to slander those who criticized the Soviet government. Furthermore, it was not until the late 1950s and early 1960s that the KGB transformed and developed its active measures program into an offensive weapon against rival countries.¹⁰⁷ Pincher explains after World War II and up to the late 1960s, Department D (Disinformation) of the KGB conducted active measures operations for the KGB. He indicates that because of minimal funding and staffing of Department D, it showed the KGB lacked emphasis for active measures during this period. It was not until the Politburo appointed a new director in 1958 that the Soviet Union began to emphasize the use of the KGB to implement active measures.¹⁰⁸

Pincher writes that the new KGB director suggested the KGB should be more than just experts in the field of espionage, and he proposed that KGB agents should also be proficient using active measures.¹⁰⁹ The new director's vision supported the Marxist ideological war against capitalism and that the KGB could use active measures in rival countries to spark the rise of communist revolutions in capitalist countries. The Politburo approved the director's plan and let him refocus the KGB to emphasize the use of active measures.¹¹⁰ Within 10 years, the department swelled in the number of agents and was upgraded from a department to a service, thus increasing its access to resources and funds.¹¹¹ From 1970 onward, the section of the KGB that conducted active measures was known as Service A.¹¹²

Active measures quickly became a top priority of the Politburo, and Moscow heavily invested into the program. The CIA estimated that in 1980, the Soviet Union spent approximately \$3 billion annually on its active measures program.¹¹³ The KGB was also responsible for coordinating with other Soviet Bloc intelligence services and it "introduced

¹⁰⁷ Pincher.

¹⁰⁸ Pincher.

¹⁰⁹ Pincher.

¹¹⁰ Pincher.

¹¹¹ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 33.

¹¹² Shultz and Godson.

¹¹³ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 97 221.

a new element of coordination with the satellite services through the creation of departments for disinformation in East Germany, Czechoslovak and Hungarian series and the establishment of direct lines of communication from these departments to the KGB.”¹¹⁴

The KGB’s 1984 Work Plan illustrates the Politburo’s centralization efforts to focus intelligence operations—including active measures. Gordievsky, a former KGB colonel, and Andrew provided a translated copy of the Work Plan in their book.¹¹⁵ Gordievsky and Andrew note that the Politburo directed the creation of the plan and supplied it to all KGB residencies to specify the priorities for intelligence operations. This document directed KGB agents to “concentrate on developing and carrying out large-scale comprehensive operations using the various lines of intelligence in key-sectors.”¹¹⁶ The authors note that the key sectors included: countering U.S. and NATO efforts to obtain military superiority; destabilizing NATO through emphasizing differences of strategic military thinking among NATO members; encouraging the anti-war and anti-missile movement; reducing U.S. and capitalist influence in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; countering U.S. attempts to curtail foreign investment, trade, and scientific exchange with the USSR; destabilizing the relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China (PRC); and further distancing the Non-Aligned Movement from Westernizing. The plan directed the KGB to develop additional avenues to implement active measures and increase coordination between Soviet departments as well as with allied nations’ intelligence services.¹¹⁷ Overall, it appeared the strategic goal for active measures was to reduce the influence of the West—mainly the United States, or as the Soviets termed it, “the Main Adversary”—which within a bipolar world would increase Soviet influence.¹¹⁸ The 1984 Work Plan revealed that the Politburo had high expectations

¹¹⁴ Knight, *The KGB: Police and Politics in the Soviet Union*, 285.

¹¹⁵ Christopher M. Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *Comrade Kryuchkov’s Instructions: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations, 1975–1985* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 14–20.

¹¹⁶ Andrew and Gordievsky, 19.

¹¹⁷ Andrew and Gordievsky, 14–20.

¹¹⁸ Andrew and Gordievsky, 19.

for its active measures, and based on the listed priorities it must have had confidence in its intelligence services to implement long-term active measures operations.

Another essential intelligence arm of the Soviet Union was the *Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye Sovetskoy Armii* (Main Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet Army), commonly referred to in the West as the GRU. The GRU conducted covert missions that encompassed a military role such as assassinations, paramilitary support of terrorism, and sabotage missions.¹¹⁹ The GRU recruited, trained, and provided covert material support for dormant assets that the Soviet Union could activate to undermine its adversaries in support of military operations. While the GRU had operatives around the world, it played more of a supportive role to the KGB with respect to active measures.¹²⁰

In 1978, the IID became the overt propaganda arm for the Soviet Union, replacing the Department of Agitation and Propaganda.¹²¹ In the early 1980s, according to Schultz and Godson, the IID oversaw “two news agencies (Tass and Novosti Press Agency), the prestige press (e.g., Pravda), various publications, and approximately 500 Soviet journalists stationed in foreign countries.”¹²² The department’s influence dramatically grew between the 1960s and the 1980s as Soviet international radio broadcasts went from approximately 1,047 hours to 2,762 hours.¹²³ The IID predominantly carried out the overt portions of the Soviet active measures operations.

B. SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES TECHNIQUES

The Soviet Union predominantly utilized four active measures techniques: media disinformation, forgeries, agents of influence, and front groups/organizations.

¹¹⁹ For more information on the GRU reference, see Stephen Seth Beitler, “SPETSNAZ: The Soviet Union’s Special Operations Forces” (master’s thesis, National Defense Intelligence College, 1985), <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a169710.pdf>.

¹²⁰ Beitler.

¹²¹ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 26–27.

¹²² Shultz and Godson.

¹²³ Shultz and Godson.

1. Media Disinformation

The Soviet Union prioritized the use of propaganda and built a large state-controlled media apparatus that helped deliver disinformation as a form of active measures. The Soviets were able to utilize the many different media outlets of the Soviet Republics to disseminate its propaganda for both foreign and domestic audiences. The Soviet Union had two primary print news agencies for international dissemination, *TASS* and Novosti (APN). According to a 1986 CIA report, *TASS*—official news agency of the Communist Party—operated in 126 countries and disseminated its material through various news outlets in 115 countries but tailored its content toward the Soviet domestic audience.¹²⁴ APN, according to the CIA, was the Soviet Union’s unofficial news agency. Its primary function was to inform foreign audiences as it delivered content specifically for each country where it operated.¹²⁵ Additionally, the CIA explains that in 1986, APN operated in 110 nations with more than 5,000 affiliates and its journalists worked in almost all of the Soviet embassies. One benefit to Soviet print media over Western print was it was considerably less expensive, which made it more accessible.¹²⁶

Soviet active measures through disinformation focused on specific themes developed by the Politburo and the ID. Schultz and Godson detail their study of Soviet news to determine Soviet external propaganda themes.¹²⁷ They analyzed a column titled International Review in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda*—which targeted both foreign and domestic audiences—and the Soviet newspaper *New Times*—which targeted foreign audiences—from 1960–1980. They identified a consistent theme of “American and NATO aggressiveness and militarism,” and the Soviet journalists frequently included negative and derogatory terms to describe the West.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, “The Soviet Foreign Propaganda Apparatus” (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, April 1986), iii-10, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP87T00787R000200170003-4.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Alvin A. Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation: American Propaganda, Soviet Lies, and the Winning of the Cold War: An Insider’s Account*, 1st ed (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995), 101.

¹²⁶ Snyder, 101.

¹²⁷ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 51–102.

¹²⁸ Shultz and Godson, 100.

Starting in the 1970s, in addition to themes of aggressiveness and militarism, the authors explain that the Soviet journalists also included the following themes: the United States and NATO were not interested in solving international problems, the United States wanted to subvert communist unity, and the West was undergoing multiple crises.¹²⁹ The authors hypothesize that the Soviet Union did not see the West as an actual security threat, and instead, only desired to weaken the NATO alliance.¹³⁰

The Soviet Union not only used its own media apparatus to implement theme-based propaganda and disinformation but it also exploited media outside the Soviet Union, notably in the developing world.¹³¹ Once an item was published in the developing world, the Soviet Union referenced the developing world's reporting in Soviet media.¹³² Thus, the Soviet Union used the developing world's press to hide its connection as the original reporting source and to increase the information's credibility as an item from the international media.¹³³ In instances when the Soviet Union lacked sources to implant its articles in foreign newspapers surreptitiously, the Soviet embassies purchased newspaper advertisements to disseminate its political messages.¹³⁴

Soviet propagandists, according to the United States Information Agency (USIA), scoured different foreign news sources to find material they could twist to fit into a particular theme. Additionally, the Soviet Union exploited unwitting sources or "useful idiots" into providing fodder for its disinformation campaigns.¹³⁵ The USIA provides such examples as portraying the opinions of individuals or small groups with radical views as the majority view.¹³⁶ The USIA also notes that the Soviet media took legitimate quotes out of context to fit a narrative it was trying to exploit, sometimes totally distorting the

¹²⁹ Shultz and Godson, 101.

¹³⁰ Shultz and Godson.

¹³¹ Wick and United States Information Agency, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, 4.

¹³² Wick and United States Information Agency.

¹³³ Wick and United States Information Agency.

¹³⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, "The Soviet Foreign Propaganda Apparatus," 26.

¹³⁵ Wick and United States Information Agency, *Soviet Active Measures in the Era of Glasnost*, 4.

¹³⁶ Wick and United States Information Agency.

original intent. Finally, the USIA report concludes that even after Soviet leadership promised to stop promulgating disinformation in 1987, measures particularly in and through the foreign news continued apace.¹³⁷

Soviet active measures sometimes played both sides of an issue if it furthered Soviet objectives, which was evident in how it exploited the racial division during the Civil Rights Movement. Andrew and Mitrokhin write that while Dr. Martin Luther King was alive, the Soviet Union created disinformation campaigns to discredit him in hopes to have a more radical leader replace him.¹³⁸ Dr. King's methods of advancing civil rights for African Americans through peaceful protest did not help the Soviet Union rouse division within the United States.¹³⁹ It appears the Soviet Union's objective was to promote riots and mass violence to tear America down from within and to provide the Soviet Union with ammunition to further attack capitalism as an inferior system of governance. After riots exploded on the streets of many U.S. cities following the assassination of Dr. King, with its active measures campaigns the Soviet Union embraced Dr. King as a martyr and disseminated stories that U.S. government officials helped white racists plot his assassination.¹⁴⁰

The Soviet Union developed specific methods it used to disseminate disinformation as a form of active measures. As it lacked reliable access to Western media, the Soviet Union utilized its own extensive media arm and the developing world's press agencies to promulgate its deceitful messages to the world. The Soviet Union developed specific disinformation themes as active measures to tarnish its adversaries' reputation. The Soviet Union also used disinformation in an attempt to amplify socially divisive issues to weaken an adversary from within. A fundamental understanding of how the Soviet Union used disinformation as active measures will provide clarity on how Russia is currently using disinformation to weaken its adversaries and further its strategic objectives.

¹³⁷ Wick and United States Information Agency.

¹³⁸ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 237–38.

¹³⁹ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew and Mitrokhin, 238.

2. Forgeries

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union created and used forgeries to complement its active measures campaigns. Forgeries are considered black operations and consist of documents that the Soviet Union, or any other government, created that were either partially fraudulent, known as alterations, or entirely fabricated, identified as fabrications.¹⁴¹ In 1983, the DoS noted that the Soviet-bloc countries that predominantly created and distributed forgeries were the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia.¹⁴² Certain characteristics typified Soviet forgeries, in part because these hallmarks made the forgeries harder to detect as such. The nine characteristics of a Soviet forgery were “(1) use of security classifications, (2) use of official letterheads, (3) surfaced as a copy, not an original, (4) key documents were not in sharp focus or full sized, (5) accompanied with a cover letter, (6) used logical plots, (7) documents were provided for free, (8) designed for media, and (9) aimed at foreign governments or leaders.”¹⁴³

Soviet forgeries deployed as active measures followed strategic themes. Schultz and Godson found that from 1960–1975, Soviet forgeries focused on painting the United States as the main threat to world peace because U.S. officials refused to negotiate with the Soviets regarding disarmament. They explain that the forgeries were used to accuse the United States of covertly influencing developing countries, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, so that the United States could become the sole hegemonic power in the world.¹⁴⁴ The forgeries also concentrated on destabilizing the Western Alliance and the relationships between Western countries. Additionally, the forgeries depicted U.S.

¹⁴¹ Richelson, *Sword and Shield*, 138.

¹⁴² U.S. Department of State, “Soviet Active Measures: Focus on Forgeries,” *Inside the Cold War*, April 1983, 1, <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Department%20of%20State%20Note%20Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Focus%20on%20Forgeries%20April%201983.pdf>.

¹⁴³ Richelson, *Sword and Shield*, 139–40; *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 40. The Soviet Union typically targeted developing countries’ journalists to initially publish a forgery in hopes a Western journalist would naively reference or circulate the story as misinformation. Western news outlets brought more legitimacy to an article, but Western journalists were typically more skeptical and fact-checked stories before publishing. Richelson, *Sword and Shield*, 140. To eliminate inquiries, intelligence operatives sent the forgery to the targeted journalist

¹⁴⁴ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 149–57.

politicians and military leaders as warmongers who had no regard for European safety and that they would sacrifice European countries in the event of a war by launching nuclear strikes on European territory to defeat the Soviets.¹⁴⁵

One of the more well-known and sophisticated forgeries was the forgery known as Army Field Manual 30–31B, which reappeared more than 20 times from 1967–1982.¹⁴⁶ The intent, according to Barron, was for this forgery to look like a supplement to the real *U.S. Army Field Manual 30–31*.¹⁴⁷ The fake supplement contained instructions for U.S. military specialists to interfere with a host nation’s domestic politics to ensure that countries implemented anti-leftist and anti-communist policies.¹⁴⁸ Specifically, Barron illustrates the manual instructed the military specialist to promote violence among leftist groups to force host nation governments to implement policies or take actions against those groups.¹⁴⁹ This forgery was often referenced and the Soviet Union was able to plant its seed of deception in the minds of millions of people around the world, raising the specter of U.S. interference where there was none.¹⁵⁰

The Soviet Union used forgeries to stoke domestic divisions along ethnic lines within a country. One such forgery, documented in a 1982 Congressional Hearing, was a faked Presidential Review Memorandum/NS46 dated March 17, 1978.¹⁵¹ The forgery purported to be a review of U.S. policy with regard to South Africa and the United States’ concern of the influence of what was referenced as “black Africa.” The faked memorandum suggested U.S. intelligence agencies act to “inhibit coordinated activity of the black nationalist movement in Africa and the black movement in the United States.”¹⁵² Someone delivered this forgery to journalists in the United States, and it appeared in Soviet news

¹⁴⁵ Shultz and Godson.

¹⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Soviet Active Measures: Focus on Forgeries,” 1.

¹⁴⁷ John Barron, *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand* (New York: Reader’s Digest Press, 1983), 258–60.

¹⁴⁸ Barron.

¹⁴⁹ Barron.

¹⁵⁰ Barron.

¹⁵¹ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 111–18.

¹⁵² *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 117.

outlets as well as some foreign newspapers.¹⁵³ The obvious intent of this forgery was to widen the racial fissures within America and tarnish the United States' international image.

Similarly, according to Andrew and Mitrokhin, to stoke ethnical divisions between African Americans and Jewish Americans, the Soviet Union created and delivered pamphlets to black militant groups that claimed to be from the Jewish Defense League.¹⁵⁴ The pamphlets contained racial slurs and accused African Americans of attacking Jewish Americans.¹⁵⁵ These blatant attempts at generating racial violence in America did not pan out quite like the Soviet Union hoped, but they demonstrate the extent the Soviet Union went to create divisions within a society.¹⁵⁶

The Soviet Union also used forgeries and disinformation in its active measures campaigns to meddle in U.S. elections. Andrew and Mitrokhin illustrate that the Soviet Union feared the Democratic nomination of Henry Jackson for the 1976 U.S. presidential elections.¹⁵⁷ Although Jackson adopted an anti-homosexual stance and there was nothing to indicate he was gay, the authors note that the Soviet Union created and distributed forged documents—including a forged FBI memorandum—that accused Jackson of being a homosexual. Jackson did not win the nomination, but Andrew and Mitrokhin argue the active measures operation did not affect the election or Jackson's career.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, the Soviets' aim may simply have been to sow doubt—at which task this campaign was moderately successful.¹⁵⁹

This election was one of many in which the Soviet Union used active measures to interfere. Other examples according to Andrew and Mitrokhin include the 1965 British Parliament general elections against a conservative candidate, the 1974 French presidential

¹⁵³ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 111–18.

¹⁵⁴ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 239.

¹⁵⁵ Andrew and Mitrokhin, 239.

¹⁵⁶ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

¹⁵⁷ Andrew and Mitrokhin, 239–41.

¹⁵⁸ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

¹⁵⁹ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

election in favor of the French Communist Party candidate, the 1980 German Bundestag election in favor of the Socialist Democratic Party, the 1981 French presidential election against all candidates, and the 1984 U.S. presidential election against Reagan.¹⁶⁰

3. Agents of Influence

Recruiting or emplacing people who could act as agents of influence was a primary black technique for the Soviet Union's active measures program. The KGB used recruited assets to influence government officials, group leaders, or the public in ways that were beneficial for the Soviet Union. The intelligence community labeled these people as agents of influence, and they could be undercover KGB agents, witting assets, or unwitting assets—which some in the intelligence community have termed as “willies”¹⁶¹ or “useful idiots.”¹⁶² Unwitting agents were unaware they were helping the Soviet Union; instead, the KGB typically manipulated them through various techniques to do the Soviet Union's bidding.¹⁶³

During the Cold War, the majority of the Soviet agents of influence were journalists used to publish Soviet propaganda and surreptitiously influence the masses. According to Levchenko, a former KGB officer for Service A and defector, most “Soviet journalists [including those stationed in foreign countries] were intelligence officers, and those who were not still did work on behalf of the KGB.”¹⁶⁴ Not only did Soviet journalists produce articles, but the KGB also penetrated journalists' social circles to spot and assess them for recruitment as assets.¹⁶⁵ Barron describes the Soviet emphasis on the recruitment of journalists when he details Levchenko's career as a KGB agent who primarily worked as an undercover journalist in Japan.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ Andrew and Mitrokhin, 407, 304, 468–69, 456, 472, 243.

¹⁶¹ Pincher, *The Secret Offensive*, 3.

¹⁶² “Soviet Subversion of the Free Press: A Conversation with Yuri Bezmenov,” YouTube video, 1:21, posted by Glenn Howell, December 28, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzKl6OF9yvM>.

¹⁶³ Barron, *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand*, 242–43.

¹⁶⁴ Barron, 161.

¹⁶⁵ Barron, 96.

¹⁶⁶ Barron.

One writer or pseudo-journalist who was an efficient weapon for the Soviet Union was the disheartened former CIA agent Philip Agee. According to the Mitrokhin Archives, Agee approached the KGB to offer his assistance as a spy, but out of suspicion that he was a CIA dangle the KGB turned him away.¹⁶⁷ The archives detailed how Agee then went to the Cuban intelligence service, where they recruited him and informed the KGB of his recruitment and potential. Through the Cubans, the KGB directed, funded, and assisted Agee with producing journals and writing books wherein he slandered CIA activities and published the names of CIA operatives working around the world.¹⁶⁸ Agee estimated that he exposed 2,000 CIA officials, a betrayal so damaging that the U.S. government created the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, which made it a felony to expose U.S. covert agents.¹⁶⁹

According to a 1986 CIA report, the Soviet Union also used a grant program that sponsored the travel of foreign journalists to the that country.¹⁷⁰ Once there, the Soviet Union showed them everything positive about the state.¹⁷¹ The CIA describes this grant program as “an important propaganda and active measures activity for the USSR.”¹⁷² During an interview in 1984, Yuri Bezmenov, a former Soviet journalist and defector, explained that the foreign journalists had minders who were responsible for ensuring the journalists had an outstanding time to ensure they were unaware of any negative aspects concerning the communist country.¹⁷³ Furthermore, he adds, the Soviet Union chose journalists to participate in the program whom they deemed were not inquisitive in an effort to increase the chance of the journalists writing favorable stories upon their return home.¹⁷⁴ Bezmenov stated that Soviet officials photographed the journalists while they were in

¹⁶⁷ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 230–34.

¹⁶⁸ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

¹⁶⁹ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

¹⁷⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, “The Soviet Foreign Propaganda Apparatus,” 4.

¹⁷¹ Central Intelligence Agency.

¹⁷² Central Intelligence Agency.

¹⁷³ Howell, “Soviet Subversion of the Free Press.”

¹⁷⁴ Howell.

country to use as propaganda or blackmail if the visitors participated in any compromising activities.¹⁷⁵ Soviet officials felt this program worked; according to the CIA “One Soviet official noted that, upon returning from the USSR, the foreign guests annually publish[ed] as many as 3,500 articles devoted to the Soviet Union.”¹⁷⁶

Another group of agents of influence that the Soviet Union highly regarded were those who could influence politicians and government officials on policies that strategically benefited the Soviet Union or undermined its adversaries. During a 1985 Senate Hearing on active measures, CIA Director Robert Gates testified that “Moscow’s ultimate objective is to develop agents of influence at the highest levels of foreign governments,” which would maximize their influence within a government.¹⁷⁷ The KGB did not just recruit those who were already in a place of influence but instead looked for those who had the potential to become politically relevant, as was the case of Arne Treholt.¹⁷⁸ The KGB initiated his recruitment while he was a journalist, but did not actively manage him until he served as the secretary for the Norwegian Minister for Trade and Shipping.¹⁷⁹ In 1985, Norway convicted Treholt of spying for the Soviet Union from 1974–1984 and sentenced him to 20 years confinement. In addition to being a traditional spy used to steal classified documents, Treholt was also an agent of influence who exerted Soviet influence on Norway’s decisions not to deploy nuclear weapons in Norwegian territory.¹⁸⁰ He also influenced the signing of the 1974 provisional agreement, which weakened Norway’s claim to large portions of the Barents Sea.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Howell, “Soviet Subversion of the Free Press.”

¹⁷⁶ Central Intelligence Agency “The Soviet Foreign Propaganda Apparatus,” 4.

¹⁷⁷ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 22.

¹⁷⁸ Herbert Romerstein, *Soviet Agents of Influence*, Intelligence Issues Series 3 (Alexandria, VA: Center for Intelligence Studies, 1991), 21–23, <http://jmw.typepad.com/files/romerstein-soviet-agents-of-influence.pdf>.

¹⁷⁹ Romerstein, 21–23.

¹⁸⁰ Jan Brogger, “KGB in Norway’s Foreign Office,” *Washington Times*, February 21, 1984.

¹⁸¹ Brogger.

4. Front Groups/Organizations

According to the *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, “the use of fronts, of course, is as old as Lenin, who referred to them as ‘transmission belts.’”¹⁸² The Soviet Union’s use of front groups counts as “gray operations” as, for the most part, the groups’ ideology was similar to the Soviet Union. Still an attempt was usually made to conceal their direct affiliation with the Soviet Union. For example, such innocuous-sounding names as North American Christian Peace Conference or the Women for Racial and Economic Equality would not immediately link the group with Moscow.¹⁸³

As time elapsed and it became apparent that some of these front groups were just mouthpieces for the Soviet Union, the front groups themselves created front groups to hide Soviet affiliation. In 1985, Copp, who was a USIA policy officer on Soviet Disinformation, testified that one such group was the Generals for Peace (GFP).¹⁸⁴ This revelation seemed to shock the senators on the Senate Hearing panel as the GFP consisted of 13 former NATO generals who advocated against nuclear proliferation and for the removal of all U.S. troops in Europe.¹⁸⁵ Copp further testified that the KGB did not direct the GFP, but the World Peace Council (WPC)—notoriously known in the intelligence communities as a Soviet front group—created and funded the GFP.¹⁸⁶

Another benefit of utilizing front groups was the access that the NGOs had within the United Nations (UN), which essentially allowed the Soviet Union to discreetly inject propaganda and exert influence on UN delegates from around the world.¹⁸⁷ A significant illustration of the magnitude of Soviet front organizations was a 1983 CIA Directorate of

¹⁸² *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 108.

¹⁸³ U.S. Department of State, “Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1987–1988,” 39–40. The ID utilized the KGB as a conduit to provide funds to ensure the money was not traceable back to the Soviet Union

¹⁸⁴ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 112–13.

¹⁸⁵ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*.

¹⁸⁶ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*.

¹⁸⁷ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*.

Intelligence research paper titled *Soviet International Fronts*.¹⁸⁸ In this document, the CIA depicts in a diagram the connections between Moscow and the various Soviet front organizations. The diagram shows that 10 major Soviet front organizations had more than 1,000 affiliated groups operating worldwide through 25 regional organizations. Additionally, these affiliated groups created and controlled approximately 67 additional subsidiary front groups.¹⁸⁹

With so many front organizations as part of the Soviet active measures program, the Soviet Union had the resources to mobilize a large number of supporters to promote its agenda as it did when it undertook the campaign to prevent the U.S. deployment of nuclear forces in Europe. In 1979, because of the Soviet Union's development and deployment of the nuclear-capable SS-20 intermediate ballistic missile, U.S. and NATO allies decided to deploy U.S. intermediate nuclear forces (INF) in Europe.¹⁹⁰ The U.S. INF deployments were a direct threat to Soviet security. As a result, the Soviet Union enacted a campaign to influence the public that placing these missiles in Europe was a provocation and an immediate threat to the safety of the entire world.¹⁹¹ The ID tasked the Soviet front organizations to start a "'campaign from below' and create mass opposition to the INF deployment by exploiting popular fears of nuclear weapons."¹⁹² As such, the Soviet front organizations proceeded to organize massive demonstrations around the world to protest the positioning of U.S. INF, distribute anti-NATO propaganda, and engage the media to highlight the dangers of arms buildup.¹⁹³ Additionally, the front groups publicized and mobilized support for the rallies not initiated by the front groups.¹⁹⁴ Nuclear freeze protests

¹⁸⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Soviet International Fronts," (research paper, Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, March 1983), <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP84S00558R000200070002-4.pdf>; *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 256–58.

¹⁸⁹ Central Intelligence Agency "Soviet International Fronts; *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 256–58.

¹⁹⁰ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, 218–21.

¹⁹¹ Andrew and Mitrokhin.

¹⁹² Knight, *The KGB: Police and Politics in the Soviet Union*, 287.

¹⁹³ Richelson, *Sword and Shield*, 156–57.

¹⁹⁴ Richelson.

sprouted up in every major city around the world and drew large numbers, such as the 1981 protest in Amsterdam that attracted 400,000 protestors and the 1982 rally in New York City that attracted over 500,000 demonstrators.¹⁹⁵ Soviet front organizations engaged the UN and U.S. political representatives to influence the United States to adopt a nuclear freeze, and they were able to get U.S. representatives and state legislators to speak during conventions.¹⁹⁶ In 1985, Gates testified that the CIA estimated during 1981 and 1982, the Soviet Union invested approximately \$100 million into the INF active measures campaign.¹⁹⁷ It is difficult to determine the impact the Soviet active measures had on the implementation of the INF treaty, but based on the amount of effort the front organizations exerted and the large sum the Soviet Union invested, it would be flawed to argue that it had no impact.

C. COUNTERING SOVIET ACTIVE MEASURES

U.S. countermeasures fall into two broad eras. The first era ranges from the end of WWII until the election of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. During the first era, although officials did not use the term “active measures,” the United States took a national public diplomacy approach to combat Soviet influence through President Harry Truman’s leadership and focus. As nuclear war became a frightening reality, the U.S. drive to combat Soviet influence waned. It was after Reagan’s election that the United States reinvigorated its programs to counter Soviet active measures. Thus, the second era ranges from Reagan’s election to the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 31, 1991. The Reagan administration emphasized the collection of intelligence on Soviet active measures with the creation of the Active Measures Working Group (AMWG) and used USIA to wage an all-out centralized public diplomacy war against Soviet malevolent influence.

¹⁹⁵ Richelson, 227.

¹⁹⁶ Barron, *KGB Today: The Hidden Hand*, 283–84.

¹⁹⁷ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 7–8.

1. First Era of Countermeasures: End of WWII to Reagan's Election

The first U.S. attempts to combat Soviet deception through active measures were in the late 1940s and early 1950s with President Harry Truman's Campaign of Truth, which emphasized the use of American propaganda against the Soviet influence in Europe. In 1947, Truman ordered the State Department to utilize the Voice of America (VOA), which was created as a weapon of influence against the Nazis in WWII, to start broadcasting in Russian.¹⁹⁸ Truman intended to communicate directly with the people and "give listeners in the USSR a picture of life in America" to "broaden the bases of understanding and friendship between the Russian and American people."¹⁹⁹ The VOA aimed to connect with those secluded behind the Iron Curtain, whom the Soviet Union manipulated with its ideological propaganda to dismiss the Western way of life.²⁰⁰

An initial problem was that the VOA's equipment and infrastructure was not large enough to produce a quality broadcast and, as a result, the broadcasts were inaudible for the intended audience.²⁰¹ Another problem was that the content of the shows reemphasized the communists' negative portrayals of the capitalist system by highlighting the materialistic advantages of the American way of life.²⁰² The State Department, which at that time controlled the VOA, coordinated with specialists from U.S. embassies and were able to focus the content to better relate to its intended target.²⁰³ The focused content helped with the planned outreach but it was short lived, as by the end of 1949, the Soviet Union was able to mostly jam the VOA broadcasts from reaching people living in

¹⁹⁸ "Voice of America Begins Broadcasts to Russia," History.com, 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/voice-of-america-begins-broadcasts-to-russia>; Melton Marissa, "VOA Russian Service Celebrates 70 Years," Voice of America, February 17, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/friday-marks-70th-anniversary-of-voa-broadcasts-to-russia/3728545.html>.

¹⁹⁹ History.com, "Voice of America Begins Broadcasts to Russia."

²⁰⁰ Marissa, "VOA Russian Service Celebrates 70 Years."

²⁰¹ History.com, "Voice of America Begins Broadcasts to Russia."

²⁰² Gary D. Rawnsley, "The Campaign of Truth: A Populist Propaganda," in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Gary D. Rawnsley (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1999), 35, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27082-8_3.

²⁰³ Rawnsley, 36.

communist countries.²⁰⁴ The Soviet jamming did not deter the U.S. government from utilizing and investing in the VOA and continuing to exploit broadcasting as a tool against Soviet active measures throughout the Cold War.

In 1948, the passage of the Smith-Mundt Act—which “legalized peacetime propaganda but forbid its use for domestic purposes”—led to the creation of the USIA in 1953.²⁰⁵ The USIA absorbed the responsibility of operating the VOA and all U.S. overseas overt propaganda efforts including television, radio, press, and publication services.²⁰⁶ The USIA also used what it termed as “media control projects” that “were designed to influence the indigenous news media by planting news, placing programs on local television channels, and using personal contacts to influence the perspective of foreign journalists. Personal contacts were also used to influence influential opinion leaders.”²⁰⁷

President Truman implemented various other techniques against Soviet disinformation. In 1950, Truman embarked on what he called the Campaign of Truth, designed to generate an all-out U.S. propaganda offensive against the Soviet ideology.²⁰⁸ Not only did the U.S. government use propaganda to promulgate the American way of life, but under the Campaign of Truth, the government utilized it to defame communism by creating “hard-hitting propaganda in its most obvious form—cartoons depicting bloodthirsty communists, vituperative anticommunists polemics, and sensational commentary.”²⁰⁹ As part of the Campaign of Truth, the Truman administration encouraged the American public to help combat Soviet and communist influence by sending letters that championed the American way of life to relatives and associates who lived in Europe and

²⁰⁴ Rawnsley, 36.

²⁰⁵ Richard Nelson and Foad Izadi, “Ethics and Social Issues in Public Diplomacy,” in *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy* (Routledge, 2008), 335, <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203891520.ch28>.

²⁰⁶ Nelson and Izadi, 335–36.

²⁰⁷ Nelson and Izadi, 336.

²⁰⁸ Rawnsley, “The Campaign of Truth,” 36, 37.

²⁰⁹ *Encyclopedia of the New American Nation*, s.v., “Propaganda-Cold War,” accessed March 10, 2018, <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/O-W/Propaganda-Cold-war.html>.

behind the Iron Curtain.²¹⁰ The administration emphasized this approach during public speeches and by publishing articles in immigrant newspapers that provided instructions on how the American public could exploit this initiative.²¹¹ The administration highlighted the messages they wanted the public to include in their letters.²¹² The Truman administration essentially created a nationalized strategic communications effort and turned everyday Americans into propagandists to combat Soviet influence throughout Europe and the Soviet Union. The effectiveness of this creative approach is disputable because, as Rawnsley notes, it was impossible to know how many letters were written based on this initiative, the content of those letters, or if letters reached those who were most susceptible to Soviet influence.²¹³

The Truman administration also utilized the CIA to combat Soviet active measures and disinformation. Starting in 1950—in conjunction with the Campaign of Truth—the Truman administration initiated the Crusade for Freedom.²¹⁴ As part of the crusade, the U.S. government created a covert CIA front organization named the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE) under the auspices of a “group of private citizens organized to help ‘exiled leaders from the prisoner countries of Central Europe’ and used their stories to inspire ‘peoples behind the Iron Curtain.’”²¹⁵ The Crusade for Freedom was a nationwide fundraising campaign spanning several years wherein the NCFE raised funds to operate RFE and used to advertise RFE as “a private grassroots organization devoted to telling the truth to captives behind the Iron Curtain.”²¹⁶ Unbeknownst to the American

²¹⁰ Rawnsley, “The Campaign of Truth,” 37–39.

²¹¹ Rawnsley.

²¹² Rawnsley.

²¹³ Rawnsley, 40.

²¹⁴ Martin J. Medhurst, “Eisenhower and the Crusade for Freedom: The Rhetorical Origins of a Cold War Campaign,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1997): 647.

²¹⁵ Medhurst, 101.

²¹⁶ Medhurst, 651.

public, the CIA oversaw RFE operations and covertly funded it until 1972 to conduct psychological warfare against Communist states.²¹⁷

The idea behind RFE was to create a U.S. propaganda machine as an alternative to the VOA, with the appearance of a privately funded radio broadcast utilizing émigrés as its voice.²¹⁸ The privately funded appearance was necessary for two reasons. First, it eliminated the government bureaucratic content constraints that accompanied state-funded projects, much like the VOA.²¹⁹ Second, it increased the credibility of the broadcasts as listeners viewed it independently from the U.S. government, which would considerably lessen the impression that it was a tool used to disseminate U.S. propaganda.²²⁰ The apparent intent behind utilizing émigrés as the voice of RFE focused on having people culturally relatable to the audience of a target country increasing the broadcasts' credibility and developing a better connection between the audience and the broadcasters.

RFE broadcasts were broadly varied but focused on news, commentary, and various forms of entertainment, such as music or stories.²²¹ Spring details various RFE activities, which in addition to radio broadcasts included collecting various forms of intelligence as well as conducting balloon drops containing leaflets and sometimes containing medicine or Western commodities, such as soap.²²² The balloon drops fell under the mission of what was dubbed the “Winds of Freedom” and eventually transformed into the production of “Free Europe Press,” which was designed to litter the Soviet bloc with strategic messages congruent with RFE broadcasts.²²³

RFE, along with the many other broadcasting organizations such as the VOA and the British Broadcasting Company, was highly successful in its mission of informing and

²¹⁷ Medhurst, 99–100.

²¹⁸ Medhurst.

²¹⁹ Medhurst, 100.

²²⁰ Medhurst, 648.

²²¹ Dawn Spring, *Advertising in the Age of Persuasion: Building Brand America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 102, https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057%2F9780230339644_7.pdf.

²²² Spring, 101–103.

²²³ Medhurst, “Eisenhower and the Crusade for Freedom,” 103–4.

appealing to the desires of the people trapped behind the Iron Curtain; so much that many accused it of inciting the 1956 Hungarian revolution with the implied promise of Western military support.²²⁴ After the Soviet Army mercilessly crushed the uprising, many were critical of the RFE's mission and held it partially responsible for the massacre.²²⁵ Four independent organizations conducted investigations on the culpability of RFE in the Hungarian revolution, and for the most part, each one cleared it of any serious wrongdoing.²²⁶ With the aftermath of the Hungarian revolution, the U.S. government exerted more control over RFE broadcasts and issued guidance that tamped down the propaganda delivered to the Eastern Bloc countries.²²⁷ RFE, particularly later with the 1976 merger of RFE and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), became a primary source of information for a large percentage of citizens living in the Soviet Union.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, communications between the United States and the Soviet Union broke down, and it was not until the Cuban Missile Crisis that the two states developed direct communications line.²²⁸ By the late 1960s onward, the United States' appetite to challenge Soviet disinformation and active measures subsided as the risk of war became a much-feared reality.²²⁹ The strategic mood went from confrontation to more cooperation for disarmament, and action against Soviet disinformation could not derail any potential progress under détente.²³⁰ Therefore, the U.S. government did not take any direct acts to confront Soviet active measures nor did they prioritize the collection of intelligence on such operations.²³¹ Lamb and Schoen argue that another factor that

²²⁴ Arch Puddington, *Broadcasting Freedom - The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 90, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=1915004#>.

²²⁵ Puddington, 103–4.

²²⁶ Puddington, 103.

²²⁷ Puddington, 118–20.

²²⁸ Philip M. Taylor, "Through a Glass Darkly? The Psychological Climate and Psychological Warfare of the Cold War," in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. Gary D. Rawnsley (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1999), 241, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-27082-8_13.

²²⁹ Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 12–13.

²³⁰ Schoen and Lamb, 12–13.

²³¹ Schoen and Lamb, 19–20.

contributed to the U.S. government turning a blind eye to Soviet active measures was the U.S. domestic intelligence controversies in the 1970s, which resulted in reform of the intelligence services “that effectively downgraded the importance of disinformation and deception.”²³² The cooperation over confrontation strategy continued into the late 1970s but with the Soviet Union’s invasion and occupation of Afghanistan the strategy waned, which led to the United States’ desire to confront the Soviet Union.²³³ America’s increased confrontational spirit opened the door for the second era, which culminated in the United States’ most aggressive efforts to counter Soviet active measures.

2. Second Era of Countermeasures: The Reagan Administration to the Collapse

The second era of countermeasures was when the United States reinvigorated its approach with the Soviet Union and took direct aggressive action to counter the influence of Soviet active measures. The Reagan administration prioritized the collection and dissemination of intelligence on Soviet active measures and used public diplomacy to weaponize the USIA against Soviet influence. With the AMWG, the United States created a reporting mechanism that informed the world about Soviet active measures. By the end of the Cold War, U.S. efforts against Soviet active measures began to pay off and perceivably had an impact against the Soviet threat.

With the election of Reagan, the United States tossed the cooperation strategy out the window and proceeded with a campaign of direct confrontation.²³⁴ Reagan’s confrontation strategy led to the U.S. government addressing Soviet active measures head-on, with the prioritization for the collection of intelligence on Soviet active measures and the rapid exposure of Soviet schemes and tactics. The Reagan administration countered Soviet influence through public diplomacy consisting of strategic messaging built on the truth, which resembled Truman’s approach.

²³² Schoen and Lamb, 13–14.

²³³ Schoen and Lamb, 21–24.

²³⁴ Schoen and Lamb, 25.

With the appointment of new leadership under the Reagan administration, the CIA renewed itself and reinvigorated its collection of intelligence concerning Soviet active measures. The first major CIA product concerning Soviet active measures was its 1981 top-secret study titled “Soviet Active Measures,” which described Soviet active measures operations.²³⁵ The information Reagan publicly used from the report was the CIA’s rough estimate that the Soviet Union spent approximately \$100 million on an active measures campaign to develop opposition in Western Europe against the U.S. building the neutron bomb.²³⁶ Presumably, Reagan used this estimation to highlight the magnitude of the program to increase funding of countering Soviet influence operations. The CIA director also widely disseminated 3,000 copies of a secret version of the study with the intent “to raise consciousness and to suggest CIA action to counter the Soviets.”²³⁷ This publication was the first attempt to renew an emphasis—which increasingly grew during Reagan’s presidency—of focus to identify Soviet active measures.

Early in his presidency, Reagan implemented policies to emphasize the importance of winning the ideological battle against the Soviet Union. In January 1983, the Reagan administration published *National Security Decision Directive 75* (NSDD 75), a classified document that outlines Reagan’s foreign relations policy with the Soviet Union.²³⁸ Although this document did not mention active measures per se, the strategy did outline areas that related to countering Soviet influence telling of active measures. Specifically, it highlighted that the aim for U.S. policy was to “have an ideological thrust which clearly affirms the superiority of U.S. and Western values ... over the repressive features of Soviet Communism.”²³⁹ To achieve this objective, it specified the administration had to review and increase its efforts to “support democratic forces,” “highlight Soviet human rights

²³⁵ Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981–1987* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 162.

²³⁶ Woodward, 163.

²³⁷ Woodward, 163.

²³⁸ Ronald Reagan, *NSDD 75 Relations with the USSR*, (College Park, MD: National Archives, 1983), 7, ProQuest.

²³⁹ Reagan, 3.

violations,” and strengthen its policy on “U.S. radio broadcasting.”²⁴⁰ On the propaganda front, the Reagan administration directed the U.S. to expose the Soviet double standards and avert the Soviet Union from winning the propaganda battle.²⁴¹ Following the publication of NSDD 75, the Reagan administration took significant steps in combating Soviet active measures centered on identification and public exposure.

Published almost concurrently with NSDD 75, the Reagan administration also released NSDD 77, which centralized most aspects of U.S. public diplomacy and public affairs under the direction of the National Security Council (NSC) through a Special Planning Group (SPG).²⁴² The directive also created four committees, responsive to the SPG, that were responsible for overseeing the incorporation of national security objectives into their respective areas of responsibility.²⁴³ The SPG’s four areas of responsibility were public affairs, international information, international political (democracy promotion), and international broadcasting.²⁴⁴ Utilizing these four committees, the NSC could coordinate and deliver a strong strategic communications agenda in line with its National Security Policy to overpower the Soviet propaganda initiatives. With NSDD 77, the Reagan administration elevated and prioritized the importance of using information in the ideological battle with the Soviet Union and against Soviet active measures.

With NSDD 77, the Reagan administration tasked USIA to take responsibility for a new initiative called Project Truth.²⁴⁵ Project Truth focused on two primary goals. The first goal was to explain U.S. policies and objectives.²⁴⁶ The second goal was to identify and refute Soviet disinformation and misinformation.²⁴⁷ Project Truth emphasized the

²⁴⁰ Reagan.

²⁴¹ Reagan.

²⁴² Ronald Reagan, *NSDD 77 Management of Public Diplomacy*, (College Park, MD: National Archives, 1984), 1. ProQuest.

²⁴³ Reagan, 1–3.

²⁴⁴ Reagan.

²⁴⁵ Reagan, 2.

²⁴⁶ Woodward, *Veil*, 77.

²⁴⁷ Woodward, 77.

collection and declassification of intelligence on Soviet active measures. It provided a mechanism for streamlined distribution through its monthly Soviet propaganda alerts and its rapid notifications on Soviet distortions and fabrications.²⁴⁸ The project, through its representatives from the major U.S. government agencies and departments—such as DoS, DOD, CIA, NSC, and various others—developed the capability to rapidly and accurately refute major Soviet active measures themes.²⁴⁹

Much like a Soviet active measures campaign, Project Truth created focused communication themes that the Reagan administration promulgated through various media apparatuses to plant strategic messaging to the international public. One such theme was to project America as a peace party in an attempt to refute the Soviet active measures campaign of portraying the United States as a warmongering nation.²⁵⁰ The peace party theme intended to show the United States had a “defense and deterrent-oriented military strategy; and the Soviet Union the party threatening world peace, with its offensive doctrine and deployment.”²⁵¹ Another more controversial theme was Washington’s 1981 allegation that it had scientifically proven the Soviet Union used a chemical agent in Afghanistan and Southeast Asia nicknamed Yellow Rain.²⁵² Many scientists and academics discredited Washington’s allegation and dismissed its proof as scientifically invalid, raising the concern that Yellow Rain was just anti-Soviet propaganda.²⁵³ The U.S. government never admitted Yellow Rain was a disinformation campaign, but in 2005, the DoS did release a report that determined the evidence could not conclusively identify the substance or its origins.²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Charles Z. Wick, *Report on Project Truth* (Washington, DC: United States International Communication Agency, 1982), <https://archive.org/details/ProjectTRUTH>.

²⁴⁹ Wick.

²⁵⁰ Wick, 3.

²⁵¹ Wick.

²⁵² N. Stephen Kane, *Selling President Reagan’s Foreign Policy: Going Public Vs. Executive Bargaining* (New York: Lexington Books, 2018), 53–84.

²⁵³ Kane, 67–71.

²⁵⁴ Kane, 72.

At the same time, the Reagan administration launched Project Democracy to overtly counter the Soviet Union's portrayal that Western democracy was inferior to communism. Reagan described Project Democracy "as a major program in an ideological competition with the Communists."²⁵⁵ The main effort focused on funding anti-communist regimes and organizations oriented toward reinforcing democratic institutions throughout the world with a primary concentration on the Soviet satellite states and developing countries.²⁵⁶ With Project Democracy, "the administration signaled a fundamentally new approach that dragged political action once and for all out of the shadows of the intelligence world and into the light, where it could be openly defended by senior officials and endorsed by the Congress."²⁵⁷

Project Democracy evolved into a Western public diplomacy organization that still exists today. Within two years, Project Democracy transformed into the congressionally funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which was and currently is a private NGO used to support and spread liberalized democracy around the world.²⁵⁸ Much of its strategy was to provide large amounts of aid to overseas organizations that favored democratic institutions—one such example was the Solidarity movement in Poland.²⁵⁹ Much controversy surrounded this organization, as some saw it as violating a state's sovereignty or a U.S. tool of subversion and accused it of election meddling.²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the NED created an avenue through democracy promotion to reduce the Soviet influence and combat its active measures.

²⁵⁵ Bernard Gwertzman, "Skeptics Pelt Shultz with Queries on Reagan's 'Project Democracy'" *New York Times*, February 24, 1983.

²⁵⁶ Francis H. Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War: Conservative Strategists and America's Cold War Victory*, 1st ed. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), 33.

²⁵⁷ Carnes Lord, "The Past and Future of Public Diplomacy," *Orbis* 42, no. 1 (1998): 61, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0030-4387\(98\)90050-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0030-4387(98)90050-3).

²⁵⁸ "About the National Endowment for Democracy," National Endowment for Democracy, accessed August 31, 2018, <https://www.ned.org/about/>.

²⁵⁹ Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War*, 33.

²⁶⁰ Barbara Conry, "Foreign Policy's Loose Cannon: The National Endowment for Democracy," *USA Today*, September 1994, 18–19.

To achieve public diplomacy objectives outlined in the Reagan administration's NSDDs and to counter Soviet active measures, the administration needed to revamp the neglected international broadcasting mission under the USIA. With NSDD 45, published in 1983 and reinforced with NSDD 130, released in 1984, Reagan emphasized international broadcasting as "an important instrument of national security policy of the United States" and afforded it the highest prioritization of national funding.²⁶¹ NSDD 130 details international broadcasting as a "key strategic instrument for shaping fundamental political and ideological trends around the globe on a long-term basis and ultimately affecting the behavior of government" as well as a "strategic instrument of U.S. national policy, not a tactical instrument of U.S. diplomacy."²⁶² The U.S. government invested more than \$2.5 billion in modernizing its international broadcasting infrastructure and boosted the effect of the USIA broadcasting efforts.²⁶³ The intent behind the investment was to counter or make it costlier for Soviet jamming and to increase the reach of VOA and RFE/RL.²⁶⁴

The USIA utilized its broadcasting capabilities to quickly capitalize on opportunities to get a narrative out on reactive issues before the Soviet Union had a chance to deploy an active measures operation. One such example was the 1983 information campaign organized around the Soviet Union's shootdown of KAL 007. According to Snyder, the former director of USIA's Television and Film Service, after the Soviet Union shot down the commercial plane, the Reagan administration, through public speeches, immediately went on the propaganda offensive and the USIA quickly aired information showing the Soviet Union's culpability for the disaster.²⁶⁵ With Snyder's oversight, the USIA created a video played to the UN Security Council of top-secret audio intercepts containing the Soviet pilots' radio transmissions before and after the incident. Snyder notes

²⁶¹ Ronald Reagan, *NSDD 45 U.S. International Broadcasting* (College Park, MD: National Archives, 1982), 1. ProQuest.

²⁶² Ronald Reagan, *NSDD 130 U.S. International Information Policy* (College Park, MD: National Archives, 1983), 1.

²⁶³ Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications: How One Interagency Group Made a Major Difference," 36.

²⁶⁴ Marlo, *Planning Reagan's War*, 31.

²⁶⁵ Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 46–69.

the USIA designed the video to convey “the Soviet Union had cold-bloodedly carried out a barbaric act.”²⁶⁶ Snyder claims the video forced the Soviet Union to admit it shot down the plane, but the Soviet Union avowed that its military thought KAL 007 was a U.S. spy plane. Snyder indicates it was true that the Soviet pilots did believe KAL 007 was a U.S. spy plane and unbeknownst to him at the time, the U.S. government altered the audio clips to make Moscow appear more negligent and vicious.²⁶⁷ In contrast, Romerstein argues that the Soviet Union’s excuse—that the pilots thought it was a U.S. spy plane—was disinformation that the Soviet Union unsuccessfully promoted through various active measures.²⁶⁸

The USIA also capitalized on new emerging technology to increase its public diplomacy arsenal against the Soviet Union and its use of active measures. With the advent of satellite communications, the USIA established satellite linkups throughout its embassies and invited foreign journalists to attend interactive video-conferences wherein the journalists could directly question Washington’s top leaders.²⁶⁹ This satellite broadcasting program became known as Worldnet.²⁷⁰ Snyder describes that the USIA made Worldnet events a reoccurring spectacle and publicized them to ensure maximum participation of foreign journalists.²⁷¹ After the Worldnet broadcasts, foreign journalists published stories in their local media referencing the information from the broadcasts.²⁷² As Worldnet grew, the USIA used it to conduct live broadcasts of Reagan’s speeches and other major U.S. political events.²⁷³ To facilitate greater local media press coverage, the USIA provided transcripts and copies of Worldnet recordings to attendees that the local

²⁶⁶ Snyder, 57.

²⁶⁷ Snyder, 70.

²⁶⁸ Herbert Romerstein, “Counterpropaganda: We Can’t Win Without It,” in *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda and Political Warfare*, by J. Michael Waller (Institute of World Politics Press, 2010), 166, http://jmw.typepad.com/files/strategicinfluenceclass_copy.pdf.

²⁶⁹ Lord, “The Past and Future of Public Diplomacy,” 59.

²⁷⁰ Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*.

²⁷¹ Snyder.

²⁷² Snyder, 86.

²⁷³ Snyder.

media outlets later televised, enhancing the credibility and dissemination of Washington's public diplomacy effect.²⁷⁴ No longer did it appear that the U.S. government was advancing its agenda; instead, the local foreign media did it for Washington. The Soviet Union feared, as the satellite technology grew, the USIA would have the ability to beam daily televised programs directly into Soviet homes, showing them Washington's truth.²⁷⁵ With its imaginative use of emerging satellite technology, the USIA significantly enhanced the U.S. public diplomacy arsenal against all forms of Soviet influence, including its active measures.

In 1981, the Reagan administration created the AMWG as the primary unit to collect and disseminate information about Soviet active measures, which grew to become the United States' primary counter.²⁷⁶ The AMWG was an interagency group consisting of members from "NSC, FBI, CIA, USIA, DOD, DoS, and various other entities,"²⁷⁷ which was initially under the responsibility of DoS but toward the end of the Cold War fell under the USIA.²⁷⁸ The Reagan administration made the group a top priority, giving it greater authority and providing it with the flexibility to incorporate information into its reports that U.S. intelligence agencies would typically safeguard from release on the grounds it was classified.²⁷⁹ The overall purpose for the AMWG was "to educate foreign and domestic government officials, journalists, researchers, and the public-at-large about how Active Measures are used to advance Soviet foreign policy goals."²⁸⁰ With the creation of the AMWG, the United States increased its capacity to uncover and identify the Soviet Union's use of active measures.

²⁷⁴ Snyder, chap. 5 and p. 86.

²⁷⁵ Snyder, 88.

²⁷⁶ G. M. K. Kinahan, "Exposing Soviet Active Measures in the 1980s: A Model for the Bush Administration?," *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies*, 15, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 316–17.

²⁷⁷ Kinahan, 159.

²⁷⁸ Kinahan, 316; Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 116.

²⁷⁹ Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 116.

²⁸⁰ Kinahan, "Exposing Soviet Active Measures in the 1980s," 316.

The AMWG primarily used its highly detailed reports and foreign affairs notes to educate both U.S. and foreign government officials as well as the international public on Soviet active measures tactics.²⁸¹ The group compiled this information from various intelligence agencies, the DoS, and the USIA.²⁸² A valuable source of information was from “overt collection through the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, and reports from USIA public affairs officers in embassies around the world.”²⁸³ The USIA overseas offices had unique access to foreign media. They collected and provided Soviet disinformation and forgeries discovered in the foreign media to the AMWG and members of the AMWG considered them a “front line unit for American defense.”²⁸⁴ To collect relevant information on Soviet tactics, members of the AMWG consulted with Soviet defectors who had an intimate knowledge of Soviet active measures because they helped design and implement them.²⁸⁵ Soviet defectors provided the AMWG with valuable insight that assisted with the production of reports, and they also testified before Congress on Soviet active measures.²⁸⁶

The AMWG produced various reports based on the intelligence collected on Soviet active measures. Over the span of the AMWG’s existence (1981-1992), the group published more than 30 products related to Soviet active measures.²⁸⁷ The products ranged from short Foreign Affairs Notes to highly detailed congressional reports. The Foreign Affairs Notes detailed information on specific topics; examples include Communist Clandestine Broadcasting, Soviet Active Measures: Focus on Forgeries, and Soviet Fronts:

²⁸¹ Romerstein, “Counterpropaganda: We Can’t Win Without It,” 162.

²⁸² Romerstein, 162.

²⁸³ Romerstein, 162.

²⁸⁴ Herbert Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group: Successful Template for Strategic Influence,” in *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda and Political Warfare*, by J. Michael Waller, 201, http://jmw.typepad.com/files/strategicinfluenceclass_copy.pdf.

²⁸⁵ Schoen and Lamb, “Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications,” 37–39; Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group,” 200.

²⁸⁶ Schoen and Lamb, “Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications,” 38 and 40; Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group,” 198 and 200; Kinahan, “Exposing Soviet Active Measures in the 1980s,” 322–23.

²⁸⁷ Schoen and Lamb, “Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications,” 121–23.

Women and Youth.²⁸⁸ The AMWG frequently produced Foreign Affairs Notes and the USIA disseminated them to foreign journalists and academics overseas.²⁸⁹ The larger reports such as responses to congressional requests or special reports were highly detailed and covered a wide range of Soviet active measures for a particular period. The AMWG increased its credibility by having high standards for accurate and factual reporting.²⁹⁰ Members knew the group's impeccable reputation would be what enabled it to counter Soviet active measures.²⁹¹ As Congressman Gingrich said in 1986 with regard to the AMWG reporting on Soviet active measures, "it begins to establish the principle that we're going to be aware that some of the reports that the media receives may be active measures. It gives people a place to go to check things out."²⁹²

The AMWG utilized the USIA's international broadcasting capabilities to disseminate its revelations to the public overseas.²⁹³ The USIA not only refuted allegations but also highlighted programs or initiatives that the U.S. government was engaged in and directly contradicted the accusations from the Soviet active measures.²⁹⁴ For example, in Africa: to counter the claim that the United States created AIDS as an ethnic weapon, the USIA broadcasted information on AIDS research and how people could protect themselves and limit exposure to the virus that caused AIDS.²⁹⁵ The AMWG also utilized teams to travel to U.S. embassies abroad to educate foreign government officials, counterintelligence professionals, and foreign journalists on the techniques the Soviet Union used.²⁹⁶ With the travel teams, the AMWG increased foreign media awareness on

²⁸⁸ Schoen and Lamb, 121–23.

²⁸⁹ Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group," 201.

²⁹⁰ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 112; Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 43.

²⁹¹ *Hearing on Soviet Active Measures*, 112; Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 43.

²⁹² Bill Gertz, "U.S. Begins New Offensive on Soviet Disinformation," *Washington Times*, October 6, 1986; Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 60.

²⁹³ Romerstein, "Counterpropaganda: We Can't Win Without It," 162 and 163.

²⁹⁴ Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation*, 106.

²⁹⁵ Snyder, 106 and 107.

²⁹⁶ Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 106.

active measures that in turn increased the propensity for foreign journalists to fact-check with U.S. embassies before publishing potential disinformation or forgeries.²⁹⁷

Toward the later years of the Cold War, top U.S. leadership used the information from the AMWG to confront Soviet officials on its use of active measures, leading to the Soviet Union to disengage from perpetuating specific active measures campaigns.²⁹⁸ Confronting Soviet officials and the accuracy of the AMWG's information put pressure on the Soviet Union, as they were unable to authenticate the disinformation published in Soviet-controlled media.²⁹⁹

Overall, the AMWG's efforts damaged the Soviet Union's image and made it costlier for Moscow to use active measures. This effect was evident when Gorbachev confronted the U.S. secretary of state and demanded the United States stop publishing the AMWG reports accusing the Soviet Union of conducting active measures.³⁰⁰ In the later years of the Cold War, the Soviet Union requested the United States privately coordinate with them about disinformation allegations, and according to Schoen and Lamb, the USIA viewed this as a "clear sign that America's efforts to raise the cost of Soviet disinformation were working."³⁰¹ The members of the group also felt they made an impact against Soviet active measures because the Soviet Union and its supporters attempted to discredit the group's work to the extent of deploying active measures against the head of the group.³⁰²

The Soviet active measures threat gradually subsided as the cooperation between the Soviet Union and the United States grew, but it was the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet Union that caused the United States to disregard the potential threats from Soviet active measures. With the unexpected end to the Cold War and the implosion of

²⁹⁷ Schoen and Lamb, 106.

²⁹⁸ Romerstein, "The Interagency Active Measures Working Group," 203.

²⁹⁹ Romerstein, 204.

³⁰⁰ Kinahan, "Exposing Soviet Active Measures in the 1980s," 330; Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 63; Romerstein, "Counterpropaganda: We Can't Win Without It," 170.

³⁰¹ Schoen and Lamb, "Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications," 95.

³⁰² Schoen and Lamb, 23, 43, 46, and 61; Romerstein, "Counterpropaganda: We Can't Win Without It," 169–70.

the Soviet threat, the United States no longer saw a need for the AMWG.³⁰³ In 1992, the last remnants of the AMWG—one person—produced a final report and closed up shop.³⁰⁴

D. CONCLUSION

Reviewing the history of Soviet-era active measures reveals a country weaker in influence, lacking the soft power of the West, whose ideals were not attractive to the rest of the world. To compete with the rest of the world, the Soviet Union relied heavily on active measures to further its strategic interest and tarnish the reputations of its adversaries, particularly the United States. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union relied heavily on sometimes clumsy forgeries and disinformation, often marked by language deficiencies. The Soviet Union was isolated and not in tune with the Western world. It was so married to the communist ideology that it prevented the Soviet Union from connecting with the Western world, thus making it easier to identify its use of active measures. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union still used active measures as primary weapon of influence against the West and the United States.

But the Cold War era was also a time when the United States recognized the Soviet Union as an adversary and treated it with more suspicion. The American people were generally unified in their belief that communism was inferior and evil; President Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as the Evil Empire. The United States used strategic communications and public diplomacy to explain American policy and tell its story to the world, which contradicted the Soviet narrative. The United States also highlighted the hypocrisy of Soviet policies and actions. By forming an organization focused on collecting and publicizing Soviet active measures techniques, the United States used truth and accuracy to gain credibility and educated the world about Soviet active measures. Ignoring Soviet-era active measures was not the answer, and the United States overcame them through an aggressive and concentrated effort of exposure.

³⁰³ Romerstein, “Counterpropaganda: We Can’t Win Without It,” 171.

³⁰⁴ Romerstein, “The Interagency Active Measures Working Group,” 202; Schoen and Lamb, “Deception, Disinformation, and Strategic Communications,” 96.

It seems history has repeated itself and active measures have returned as a primary weapon of influence. If the United States ignores them, it does so at its own peril.

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IV. RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES

This chapter examines Russia's use of active measures against the West since 1991. Russia is using the same basic techniques that the Soviet Union utilized during the Cold War, but it has significantly increased its capacity by taking advantage of 21st-century technology and the interconnected world. Russia has developed a more complex and decentralized apparatus and incorporated many more directorates than the Soviet Union had. This complex apparatus is using active measures to divide Western societies through its exploitation of political polarization, Russian dysphoria, and nationalistic views within a country. Russia's active measures are not confined to a particular ideology; instead, Russia will exploit any topic to widen societal fissures. The research finds that Russia has reestablished the use of active measures as a primary form of influence.

The chapter explains the circumstances that led Russia to reinvigorate active measures as a form of influence and the Russian military's perspective of using asymmetrical tactics like active measures. It provides an overview of Russia's apparatus used to implement active measures and concludes with an outline and examples of the active measures Russia deploys against the United States and the West.

A. THE REBIRTH OF ACTIVE MEASURES

During the 1990s, there was a tentative reset of the U.S.-Russian relationship, as evidenced by the unification of Germany and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Tensions resumed, however, as NATO expanded eastward and the so-called color revolutions in the new democracies among former Soviet republics punctuated their aspirations to exit from Moscow's sphere of influence.³⁰⁵ The 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia and the 2004–2005 Orange Revolution in Ukraine revealed to Russia that it was

³⁰⁵ For information on U.S.-Russian cooperation see "United States Relations with Russia: After the Cold War," U.S. Department of State, June 4, 2007, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/pubs/fs/85962.htm>. For information on NATO expansion, see "NATO Topics: NATO Enlargement," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, April 9, 2009, https://www.nato.int/summit2009/topics_en/05-enlargement.html.

in serious jeopardy of losing influence of those states to the West.³⁰⁶ Russia blamed these revolutions on Western meddling with the goal of encircling Russia.³⁰⁷

The perceived Western incursion into Russia's post-Soviet space led Russia to the realization that it lacked the influence it previously had during the Soviet era, and this realization put Russia on the offensive.³⁰⁸ Thus, as Saari notes, after the Orange Revolution, Russia invested many resources in all aspects of its influence programs with a goal to catch up to the West and to improve its own image.³⁰⁹ Saari explains that Russia attempted to mirror its influence with Western public diplomacy to generate a high level of soft power. However, underlying Russia's attempts to create what has essentially become internationally accepted forms of soft power through public diplomacy was Russia's use of active measures. Saari indicates that after the Orange Revolution there was evidence that Russia began to progressively use different forms of Soviet-inspired active measures as a means of influence.³¹⁰

One of Russia's first large-scale use of active measures after the Orange Revolution that received mass media attention was Russia's alleged attack on Estonia, which became known as the "Bronze Night."³¹¹ Lucas and Pomeranzev argue that the "Bronze Night" was "a defining moment in the development of information operations as a tool in Russia's

³⁰⁶ Thomas Devold, U.S. *Policy Toward Russia After 9/11: Between Cooperation and Containment* (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 2008), 53–58; Sinikukka Saari, "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii," *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 1 (2014): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2013.864109>.

³⁰⁷ Devold, 54–58; Katherine Hinkle, "Russia's Reactions to the Color Revolutions" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2017), https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/52991/17Mar_Hinkle_Katherine.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

³⁰⁸ Saari, "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former Soviet Republics," 50–51.

³⁰⁹ Saari, 51.

³¹⁰ Saari, 56–59.

³¹¹ Kaspars Galkins, "NATO and Hybrid Conflict Unresolved Issues from the Past or Unresolvable Threats of the Present" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012), https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/17369/12Sep_Galkins_Kaspars.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

hybrid warfare kit.”³¹² The authors accuse Russia of deploying active measures in the form of an extensive disinformation campaign and in mobilizing various ethnic Russian groups to protest and exert influence on the Estonian government. Estonia managed to avert a large-scale disaster, but as the authors note, Russia’s use of active measures did not stop, and Russia deployed similar tactics against Georgia in 2008 and later in Ukraine.³¹³

One of the first public acknowledgments of Russia’s rebirth of Soviet active measures came from the Czech Republic. In 2009, the Czech Republic’s intelligence service—Security Information Service (BIS)—released its 2008 Annual Report on threats against the Czech Republic.³¹⁴ In the report, BIS confirms that “Russia readopted the Soviet practice of using active measures to promote its foreign policy interests worldwide.”³¹⁵ The BIS report indicates that Russian active measures included the use of propaganda, which harkened back to the “forms and methods successfully employed by the Soviet espionage in the 1980s to influence the Western peace movement.”³¹⁶ The report also indicates that the Russian intelligence service exploited political movements and businesses as a means of influence that the Soviet Union also heavily utilized during the Cold War.³¹⁷ By 2008, the West was slowly waking up to Russia’s use of active

³¹² In April 2007, the Bronze Night occurred in Tallinn, Estonia. Lucas and Pomerantsev explain that the Estonian government decided to relocate a bronze statue of a WWII Soviet soldier, which was a monument marking the gravesite of Soviet soldiers who died during WWII. The Estonian government intended to relocate the remains and the monument to a military cemetery. They note that on April 27, 2007, as the government prepared for the excavation of the site, riots broke out that lasted two days. Additionally, the riots resulted in the vandalization of buildings, one death, and hundreds of arrests. Lucas and Pomerantsev note that these riots were “the worst civil unrest in Estonia’s post-1991 history” (22). Furthermore, they blame Russia for the riots as preceding the event; Russian media increased its propaganda against the Estonian government and Russia’s embassy incited the Russian-speaking community members. In tandem with the riots, according to the authors, Russia launched a cyber-attack on the Estonian government and a Russian youth group blocked the Estonian embassy in Moscow. These two events prolonged the riots. However, it must be noted that there was no definitive proof that the Russian government conducted the cyber-attacks. Edward Lucas and Peter Pomerantsev, “Winning the Information War,” Center for European Policy Analysis, August 2016, 22–24, <https://www.cepa.org/winning-the-information-war>.

³¹³ Lucas and Pomerantsev, 22–24.

³¹⁴ “Annual Report of the Security Information Service for 2008,” Security Information Service, August 31, 2009, <https://www.bis.cz/public/site/bis.cz/content/vyrocní-zpravy/en/ar2008en.pdf>.

³¹⁵ Security Information Service, para. 1.3.

³¹⁶ Security Information Service, para. 1.3.

³¹⁷ Security Information Service, para. 1.3.

measures, but arguably it was not until Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, and later Russia's meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, that the West truly became aware of Russia's use of active measures as a tool of malevolent influence.

B. RUSSIA'S MILITARY PERSPECTIVE

In 2013, high-ranking Russian military officers published two articles in Russian military journals explaining their views of 21st-century warfare or what they termed as new generation warfare (NGW). These articles opened a window into the Russian military's perspective on what the authors describe as the West's use of non-military means through asymmetrical methods to conduct warfare and advance its strategic interests throughout the world. The authors include examples of asymmetrical methods of information and psychological warfare, which closely resemble active measures the Soviet Union used during the Cold War. The authors also advocate for Russia to research and develop better ways to use asymmetrical methods to obtain strategic objectives and even imply that Russia should use them as offensive weapons.

In February 2013, Gerasimov published an article in a Russian military journal explaining his views on the advancements in warfare.³¹⁸ He specifies "the very 'rules of war' have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness."³¹⁹ Gerasimov explains that Western warfare has evolved to include nonmilitary means as precursors to create circumstances to justify the use of conventional military force.³²⁰ As Bartles points out in his analysis of Gerasimov's article, from the Russian perspective the West's use of military force in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan all precipitated with "finding a pretext such as to prevent genocide or seize weapons of mass destruction; and finally, launching a military operation to cause regime change."³²¹ From

³¹⁸ Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying Out Combat Operations," trans. Robert Coalson, *Military Review* (January-February, 2016): 23–29.

³¹⁹ Gerasimov, 24.

³²⁰ Gerasimov, 24–25.

³²¹ Charles R. Bartles, "Getting Gerasimov Right," *Military Review* (2016): 32.

the Russian perspective, “Instead of an overt military invasion, the first volleys of a U.S. attack come from the installment of a political opposition through state propaganda (e.g., CNN, BBC), the Internet and social media, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)”³²²—similar to the tactics defined as active measures. Bartles explains that, as social diffusion and unrest grows, state authorities in the victim-state are forced to act to maintain control of society, in turn providing the West with a perceived justification to intervene with more overt and covert support. Finally, once the government collapses, Western forces in the form of peacekeepers are deployed to prop up a government that is amicable to the West.³²³ Based on Gerasimov’s article, Russia perceives the West’s modern tactics of war inherently as manufacturing instability that creates the opportunity to effect regime change.

While Gerasimov does not mention active measures per se, he does highlight his understanding of the seriousness of the active measures threat when he writes, “The information space opens wide asymmetrical possibilities for reducing the fighting potential of the enemy.”³²⁴ Additionally, he includes the use of informational measures in a list of activities he associates with Western methods of conflict.³²⁵ Russia’s 2014 Military Doctrine also highlights Russia’s understanding of the active measures threat wherein it specifies subversive information activities as both internal and external military risks to Russia.³²⁶ From Bartles’ analysis of Gerasimov’s article,³²⁷ Russia perceives that the initial acts of the West waging war in the 21st century essentially begins with the use of active measures deployed within the information space.

³²² Bartles, 32.

³²³ Bartles, 32–33.

³²⁴ Gerasimov, “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight,” 27.

³²⁵ Gerasimov, 24.

³²⁶ “The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation,” The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, May 29, 2015, paras. 12 and 13, <https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029>.

³²⁷ Bartles, “Getting Gerasimov Right,” 32–33.

After explaining his views on the Western approach to modern warfare, Gerasimov calls on Russia's military scholars to research this contemporary approach to war. He indicates that Russia must compete with the West in this realm and "outstrip them and occupy leading positions ourselves."³²⁸ From Gerasimov's perspective, Russia is justified in utilizing asymmetric methods of warfare—such as active measures—because that was how the West advanced its strategic interests. Not only does he encourage their use but it also seems he intends Russia to take an aggressive approach in developing the methods of the asymmetrical utilization of non-military means in modern warfare. Arguably, the military heard his call to action: since 2013, the reports of Russia's use of asymmetrical methods to include active measures has steadily increased.

As mentioned earlier, two Russian military officers published a follow-on article to Gerasimov's wherein, without using the actual term, they indicated active measures were a foundational tactic in what they termed as NGW.³²⁹ According to retired General-Lieutenant Bogdavov and Reserve Colonel Chekinov, NGW is the future of warfare and is heavily reliant on the use of non-military asymmetrical methods. A primary emphasis in their explanation of NGW is the use of information and psychological warfare as a primary factor for ensuring victory over an adversary. The information and psychological warfare methods they describe closely resemble or mirror Soviet active measures used during the Cold War. They mention using public institutions—such as NGOs, religious organizations, cultural institutions, and public movements—to damage a victim state's social system, which mirrors the Soviet Union's use of front groups. The authors essentially describe the Soviet Union's use of agents of influence when they detail the method of using undercover agents or manipulating people in influential positions to sway government officials, military leaders, or the public to take action that strategically benefits an aggressor state. The authors also reference using disinformation multiple times throughout the article. They describe disinformation as a method to be used against the public to create chaos or to

³²⁸ Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight," 29.

³²⁹ Sergey G. Chekinov and Sergey A. Bogdanov, "The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War," *Military Thought* 4 (2013): 12–23.

incite subversion as well as against government officials to cause confusion or to mask the aggressor-state's actions.³³⁰

As part of the authors' conclusion, they write "the Russian Armed Forces must be ready to fight new-generation wars in the medium and long terms and to use indirect, arm's length forms of operations."³³¹ In other words, the world should anticipate an increase in Russia's use of active measures long into the foreseeable future. Not only should the world anticipate an increase in the use of active measures, but because the authors caution "a country preaching a defensive doctrine may get the short end of the deal,"³³² Western leaders must anticipate that Russia's use of active measures will only grow more aggressive and offensive in nature.

C. RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES APPARATUS

The Russian active measures apparatus is noticeably different from the Soviet Union's centralized active measures apparatus. Whereas during the Soviet era three entities made up the active measures apparatus, Russia has developed a decentralized yet compartmentalized structure that allows Russia plausible deniability and has incorporated many different directorates that conduct active measures. The Presidential Administration is somewhat similar to the role that the ID played within the Soviet active measures apparatus in that it acts as a loose overseer and coordinator within Russia's active measures apparatus. However, unlike the Soviet Union, Russia's active measures are developed through a bottom-up approach.

1. The Presidential Executive Office

The Presidential Executive Office, more commonly referred to as the Presidential Administration, is Putin's executive branch, which manages all aspects of the government. According to the Russian Federations' webpage, the Presidential Executive Office "is a state body providing support for the President's work and monitoring implementation of

³³⁰ Chekinov and Bogdanov.

³³¹ Chekinov and Bogdanov, 23.

³³² Chekinov and Bogdanov.

the President's decisions."³³³ It consists of presidentially appointed representatives from the major directorates, which enables Putin to have political control over the government.³³⁴ Putin provides the Presidential Administration with overall strategic guidance, and it is up to the Presidential Administration to disseminate his intent to the various directorates and agencies.³³⁵ However, the exact tactical application is left up to the specific agency, which provides Putin with a large degree of plausible deniability as he can declare he was unaware of a particular operation.³³⁶

Regarding active measures, the Presidential Administration provides coordination between the many different directorates as these directorates are mostly compartmentalized.³³⁷ This structure allows the Russian government the ability to create competition between the different entities.³³⁸ The Presidential Administration provides guidance on the broad objectives of specific active measures, and it is up to the directorate and its employees to create ideas on how to best achieve these objectives.³³⁹ This bottom-up approach creates an environment that promotes innovation and creativity.³⁴⁰ The agencies will use many different active measures themes or operations to achieve broad objectives. When an operation becomes successful, the Presidential Administration will coordinate with the different agencies to advance the most influential operational themes.³⁴¹ Soldatov and Borogan argue that the Presidential Administration directs non-

³³³ "Presidential Executive Office," President of Russia, September 12, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/structure/administration>.

³³⁴ Mark Galeotti, *Controlling Chaos: How Russia Manages Its Political War in Europe* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017), 10, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/controlling_chaos_how_russia_manages_its_political_war_in_europe.

³³⁵ Galeotti, 10–13.

³³⁶ Clint Watts, "Russia's Active Measures Architecture: Task and Purpose," *Alliance for Securing Democracy* (blog), May 22, 2018, <https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/russias-active-measures-architecture-task-and-purpose/>.

³³⁷ Galeotti, *Controlling Chaos*, 10.

³³⁸ Galeotti, 10.

³³⁹ Galeotti, 9.

³⁴⁰ Galeotti, 13.

³⁴¹ Clint Watts, "Technology and Insurgency: What Is to Come?" (presentation, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, September 28, 2018).

state hacker groups and Internet propagandists to deploy active measures against Russia's adversaries.³⁴² The Presidential Administration also coordinates with Putin to obtain approval for active measures operations that have the potential to create significant political consequences for the Russian Federation.³⁴³

According to Galeotti, aside from the intelligence services, there are primarily six agencies that the Russian government relies on to implement active measures each with a department head that is part of the Presidential Administration³⁴⁴:

1. **Presidential Foreign Policy Directorate:** Focuses on the influence of the foreign business sector on matters that can further Russia's strategic interests, such as sanctions relief.
2. **Presidential Directorate for Interregional Relations and Cultural Contacts with Foreign Countries:** In conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), it assists with active measures to influence the global community of Russians living outside Russia.
3. **Presidential Directorate for Social and Economic Cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States Member Countries, the Republic of Abkhazia, and the Republic of South Ossetia:** Oversees the active measures operations that are focused on influencing Russia's "near abroad."
4. **Presidential Domestic Policy Directorate:** Oversees the active measures operations to influence the political parties and politicians in European countries.
5. **Presidential Press and Information Office:** Oversees the media apparatus for Russia's active measures. Galeotti also notes it is highly

³⁴² Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, *The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB*, 1st ed. (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010), 233.

³⁴³ Galeotti, *Controlling Chaos*, 10.

³⁴⁴ Galeotti, 10–13.

likely that this Directorate also coordinates with the social media influencers such as the troll farms.

6. **Presidential Experts' Directorate:** Oversees the think tanks and research organizations that produce pro-Russian intellectual products or developed strategies on using active measures to further Russia's strategic interests.³⁴⁵

Galeotti notes that within the Presidential Administration several other independent presidential councils focus on coordinating with entities such as the Russian Orthodox Church or assisting with the funding for different Russian front groups abroad.³⁴⁶ In conjunction with the other Presidential Administration agencies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID)—similar to the U.S. DoS—influences and funds the many different Russian NGOs and civic groups abroad.³⁴⁷

2. Intelligence Services

The three Russian intelligence services that emerged from restructuring after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and have a role in Russia's active measures, are the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) (*Sluzhba vneshnei razvedki*), the Federal Security Service (FSB) (*Federalnaya sluzhba bezopasnosti*), and the GRU.³⁴⁸ Each intelligence service operates independently of the other, creating an environment of fierce competition and a considerable overlap of duties.³⁴⁹ As Tsypkin describes, “there are no formal horizontal links between these agencies,” and Russia typically coordinates the intelligence services’

³⁴⁵ Galeotti, 10–13.

³⁴⁶ Galeotti, 12.

³⁴⁷ Galeotti, 2–3.

³⁴⁸ Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Hydra: Inside Russia's Intelligence Services* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016), 3–4, https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/putins_hydra_inside_russias_intelligence_services. In 2010 Russia changed the name of the GRU to the Main Directorate of the General Staff (GU). However, due to the widespread use of the GRU to identify Russia's military intelligence service, this thesis continues to reference the organization as the GRU.

³⁴⁹ Galeotti, 3–4.

activities through the higher echelons of government.³⁵⁰ Putin maintains direct control over the FSB and the SVR through the Presidential Administration.³⁵¹ Putin also maintains direct control over the GRU through the Minister of Defense, who is a member of the Security Council, which Putin presides over.³⁵² Putin also exerts influence over the intelligence services through informal links in the form of personal relationships with the presidentially appointed heads of each service.³⁵³

Galeotti notes that the SVR does engage in active measures, but for the most part, it focuses its efforts on traditional forms of intelligence activities.³⁵⁴ However, with its worldwide reach, it does expend resources to identify agents of influence and manage “illegals”—covert intelligence agents who assume a false identity and operate illegally within a country and who attempt to gain access to a nation’s policy-making circles or recruit assets who already have access.³⁵⁵

The FSB’s active measures, according to Galeotti, mainly focus on political influence operations.³⁵⁶ These activities include assassinations, infiltrating the Russian immigrant communities, and conducting cyber operations to gain access to information that Russia can use to supplement its active measures.³⁵⁷ Not only does the FSB have its own cyber capabilities, but according to Watts the FSB also “creates plausible deniability for the Russian government by co-opting, compromising, or coercing ‘patriotic Russians’

³⁵⁰ Mikhail Tsyarkin, “Terrorism’s Threat to New Democracy,” in *Reforming Intelligence: Obstacles to Democratic Control and Effectiveness*, by Thomas C. Bruneau and Steven C. Boraz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 277, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=3443229>.

³⁵¹ Tsyarkin, 277.

³⁵² Tsyarkin, 277; Galeotti, *Putin’s Hydra*, 9.

³⁵³ Galeotti, *Controlling Chaos*.

³⁵⁴ Galeotti, *Putin’s Hydra*.

³⁵⁵ An example is the SVR’s emplacement of 11 illegals that the U.S. Department of Justice charged with conspiracy to act as unregistered agents of a foreign government on June 27, 2010. For more information, see “Ten Alleged Secret Agents Arrested in the United States,” United States Department of Justice, June 29, 2010, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/ten-alleged-secret-agents-arrested-united-states>.

³⁵⁶ Galeotti, *Controlling Chaos*, 4.

³⁵⁷ Galeotti, 4.

to do their bidding, whether they be notorious cybercriminals, international companies, or highly connected oligarchs acting as extensions of the Russian state.”³⁵⁸

Most reports of the GRU’s involvement with active measures revolve around cyber-hacking to obtain information that Russia can use as part of its active measures. The GRU is also heavily involved in the military aspects of active measures, which include assassinations and paramilitary support. There are also reports of the GRU directing Russian-affiliated groups, such as the Night Wolves, and infiltrating radical right groups to recruit agents of influence.³⁵⁹ Finally, the GRU operates within the social media realm— for instance, during the attempted 2016 Montenegro coup, when GRU operatives created false social media accounts to create the appearance of increased discontent to generate sedition.³⁶⁰

D. RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES TECHNIQUES

Russia predominantly uses the same three active measures techniques the Soviet Union utilized albeit modified: media disinformation, forgeries, and agents of influence. Although they assume the same role, for the most part, Russia has substituted NGOs, government-organized NGOs (GONGO), and civic groups in place of the Soviet front groups as a form of active measures.

1. Media Disinformation

Moscow utilizes a multifaceted media apparatus to deploy its active measures in the form of disinformation. However, this thesis research is limited to Russia’s use of its overt external media and social media. Russia’s overt external capability mostly resides in its two state-controlled media platforms of RT—formerly operated under the name of Russia Today—and Sputnik. These two media platforms are considered white operations as they are directly tied to the Kremlin. Even though RT’s Editor-in-Chief Margarita

³⁵⁸ Watts, “Russia’s Active Measures Architecture.”

³⁵⁹ Michael Carpenter, “Russian Intelligence Is Co-Opting Angry Young Men,” *The Atlantic*, August 29, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/08/russia-is-co-opting-angry-young-men/568741/>.

³⁶⁰ Carpenter.

Simonyan stated the Kremlin did not “dictate” what RT reported, many—to include RT employees—have contradicted her claims and have described it “as a propaganda tool for the Russian government.”³⁶¹ Not only does the Russian government utilize its media to conduct active measures, but it also deploys grey and black operations through social media. With this multi-faceted approach and using 21st-century technology, Russia can deploy its active measures in the form of disinformation against almost any segment of the world’s population to further its strategic interests.

a. *Russia’s External Media*

In response to the Orange Revolution, to increase its external influence capacity, Russia launched RT in 2005. The Kremlin funds RT, and it operates on an excess of \$300 million per year.³⁶² According to its website, RT’s motto is “Question More,” which it facilitates through reporting “stories overlooked by mainstream media, provid[ing] alternative perspectives on current affairs, and acquaint[ing] international audiences with a Russian viewpoint on major global events.”³⁶³ Watts describes that RT’s motto of “Question More” was not geared toward providing answers; instead, it focused on sowing doubt in people’s minds to make them believe “that nothing can be trusted, and if you can’t trust anyone, then you’ll believe anything.”³⁶⁴

According to Herpen, in 2008 as a result of the Russo-Georgian War, RT transitioned from a platform of soft power to actively disseminating disinformation to influence the war in favor of Russia.³⁶⁵ After the war, in 2009, RT shifted its reporting to highlight the negative aspects of the West, and it focused its reporting on topics such as “growing social inequality, the fate of homeless people, mass unemployment, human rights

³⁶¹ Beth Knobel, “Russian News, English Accent,” CBS News, December 11, 2005, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/russian-news-english-accent-11-12-2005/>.

³⁶² Christopher Paul and Matthews Miriam, “The Russian ‘Firehose of Falsehood’ Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It.” (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2016), 2, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE198.html>.

³⁶³ “About RT,” RT International, accessed October 5, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/about-us/>.

³⁶⁴ Clint Watts, *Messing with the Enemy*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2018), 93.

³⁶⁵ Marcel Van Herpen, *Putin’s Propaganda Machine: Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 72.

violations, and the consequences of the banking crisis.”³⁶⁶ Additionally, it provided a platform for conspiracy theorists that promulgated such outlandish claims as that the U.S. government orchestrating the 9/11 attacks, President Obama not being a native-born American, and America amassing forces in Afghanistan to invade Russia.³⁶⁷

RT’s website boasts that RT is available in more than 100 countries, with its largest audience in Europe with 43 million viewers, and 11 million viewers in the United States.³⁶⁸ The website also touts its sizeable online presence and states it is the number one viewed YouTube TV news network.³⁶⁹ Even though some dismiss its popularity as the promulgation of infotainment, nonetheless, RT’s popularity provides the Kremlin a broad international active measures platform to disseminate its disinformation.³⁷⁰ Unlike during the Cold War, it gives Russia unfettered access to the Western population.

Sputnik, a smaller platform than RT, is a state-owned international radio broadcasting agency and online news outlet. Sputnik’s websites advertise it as a “modern news agency whose products include newsfeeds, websites, social networks, mobile apps, radio broadcasts, and multimedia press centers.”³⁷¹ It reports in 31 languages and costs Russia approximately \$69 million per year to operate.³⁷² Russia created Sputnik in 2014 by merging its Voice of Russia (international broadcasting agency) and the RIA Novosti news agency which was APN during the Soviet era.³⁷³ According to Fedchenko, Russia

³⁶⁶ Herpen, 72.

³⁶⁷ Herpen, 72–73.

³⁶⁸ “About RT.”

³⁶⁹ “About RT.”

³⁷⁰ Daisuke Wakabayashi and Nicholas Confessore, “Russia’s Favored Outlet Is an Online News Giant. YouTube Helped.” *The New York Times*, December 27, 2017, sec. Technology, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/23/technology/youtube-russia-rt.html>.

³⁷¹ Sputnik, “About Us,” Sputnik International, accessed October 5, 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/docs/about/index.html>.

³⁷² “Comparing Russian and American Government ‘Propaganda,’” Meduza, September 14, 2017, <https://meduza.io/en/short/2017/09/14/comparing-russian-and-american-government-propaganda>.

³⁷³ “Comparing Russian and American Government ‘Propaganda.’”

launched Sputnik during the Euromaidan demonstrations in Ukraine.³⁷⁴ It is likely that the Euromaidan demonstrations led Russia to the realization that it still could not influence its “near abroad,” which caused Russia to consolidate and modernize its tools of influence.³⁷⁵

Much like the Soviet Union did—minus the ideological component of communism—Russia uses its media to divide the West. According to Lucas and Nimmo, Russia’s media promotes radical and fringe beliefs that go against the mainstream beliefs of a nation.³⁷⁶ Nimmo argues Russia’s media “grant[s] disproportionate coverage to protest, anti-establishment and pro-Russian MEPs [members of the European Parliament] from CEE [Central and Eastern Europe]; that it does so systematically; and that even when it quotes mainstream politicians, it chooses comments that fit the wider narrative of a corrupt, decadent and Russophobic West.”³⁷⁷ As examples, Lucas and Nimmo cite RT’s impartial support of ultranationalist parties across Europe and its promotion of Scotland’s independence from the United Kingdom.³⁷⁸ A prominent example in the United States was RT’s overwhelming support for the Green Party and its 2016 presidential candidate Jill Stein. RT hosted Green Party debates and provided Stein with ample air time to explain her platform, which was increasingly supportive of the Kremlin.³⁷⁹ Russia’s media platforms have also portrayed right-wing radicals as experts, such as labeling Ryan Dawson—a well-known Holocaust denier—as a “human rights expert” and “peace

³⁷⁴ Yevhen Fedchenko, “Kremlin Propaganda: Soviet Active Measures by Other Means,” *Estonian Journal of Military Studies* 2 (2016): 144.

³⁷⁵ President of Russia, “Executive Order on Measures to Make State Media More Effective,” December 9, 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19805>. On December 9, 2013, Putin ordered the consolidation of RIA Novosti and Voice of Russia and cited the reasoning was to “provide information on Russian state policy and Russian life and society for audiences abroad.” It just so happened to coincide with the Euromaidan demonstrations in Ukraine wherein Ukrainians were demanding closer ties to the West.

³⁷⁶ Ben Nimmo and Edward Lucas, *Information Warfare: What Is It and How to Win It?*, CEPA Infowar Paper No. 1 (Washington, DC: CEPA, November 2015), 8.

³⁷⁷ Ben Nimmo, *Propaganda in a New Orbit*, CEPA Infowar Paper No. 1 (Washington, DC: CEPA, January 2016), 6.

³⁷⁸ Nimmo and Lucas, *Information Warfare*, 8.

³⁷⁹ Casey Michel, “The Kremlin’s California Dream,” *Slate*, May 4, 2017, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/foreigners/2017/05/why_russia_cultivates_fringe_groups_on_the_far_right_and_far_left.html.

activist.”³⁸⁰ It appears RT portrays radicals as experts to represent their beliefs as a majority view.

A well-known example of Russia using its external media to spread misinformation and disinformation as a means of influence is the 2016 “Lisa Case” wherein Russia’s media used false information to tarnish the German government. In 2016, a 13-year-old German girl went missing and reappeared the next day alleging that Arab-looking men had abducted and raped her.³⁸¹ A Russian news reporter in Germany reported on the allegation, which was rapidly picked up by Russia’s mainstream news outlets.³⁸² The German police identified the story as false, made public statements that the victim recanted her story, and released cell phone records that showed the allegation was false.³⁸³ Instead of reporting the police had debunked the allegation, Russian media continued to perpetuate the original story as disinformation and alleged the German police were trying to cover up the allegation.³⁸⁴ As a result, anti-immigrant demonstrations and protests developed consisting of German-Russian minorities and anti-immigrant groups.³⁸⁵

To determine themes of Russian disinformation, Orlova et al., who write and research for Stopfake—a Ukrainian-based independent fact-checking organization—analyzed articles and stories from Russian sources that Stopfake deemed as false.³⁸⁶ From March 2014 to June 2017, Stopfake identified 919 fake Russian stories or messages; of

³⁸⁰ Michel; Southern Poverty Law Center, “Dubious Broadcast ‘Experts’ Seen on Many Networks,” *Intelligence Report*, November 21, 2014, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2014/dubious-broadcast-%E2%80%99experts%E2%80%99-seen-many-networks>.

³⁸¹ Ben Nimmo and Nika Aleksejeva, “Lisa 2.0,” *Medium* (blog), November 3, 2017, <https://medium.com/@DFRLab/lisa-2-0-133d44e8acc7>. “Nimmo is a Senior Fellow for Information Defense at the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab) and Aleksejeva is a Digital Research Associate at the DFRLab.”

³⁸² Nimmo and Aleksejeva.

³⁸³ Nimmo and Aleksejeva.

³⁸⁴ Nimmo and Aleksejeva.

³⁸⁵ Nimmo and Aleksejeva.

³⁸⁶ Daria Orlova et al., “Fakes Debunked by the StopFake Project between 2014–2017: Narratives and Sources,” *StopFake* (blog), August 20, 2018, <https://www.stopfake.org/en/fakes-debunked-by-the-stopfake-project-between-2014-2017-narratives-and-sources/>.

those, 804 were news stories.³⁸⁷ After analyzing 500 of these articles, Orlova et al. conclude that most of the fake articles concentrated on influencing people that the Ukraine armed forces and the volunteers fighting on behalf of Ukraine had an illegitimate cause and were committing atrocities against the people of Ukraine.³⁸⁸ Additionally, the authors describe that some of the fake stories blamed the West for the war in Ukraine and indicated Western nations were using contractors to fight against the Ukrainian separatist forces.³⁸⁹ It is evident that Ukraine is a primary strategic interest of Russia and Russia has used its media platforms to wage an information war to delegitimize the Ukrainian government. However, the authors note that toward the end of 2015, they started seeing false stories about the war in Syria that paralleled Russia's entrance into the Syrian conflict.³⁹⁰ These disinformation themes illustrate that Russia's use of disinformation to achieve its strategic objectives echo Russia's military thinking concerning war in the 21st century.

Russia has used its active measures to discredit NATO's increased role in the Baltic states. According to Nimmo, in 2016, after NATO announced future efforts to enhance its presence in the Baltic states to deter Russian aggression, Russia began a campaign to attack NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence. Nimmo argues that Russia has used its state media to publish negative stories about NATO's presence.³⁹¹ The top four themes during this time—which accounted for more than 90 percent of the articles—were “the Baltic states are paranoid and/or Russophobic,” “NATO is unwelcomed/NATO troops are occupants,” “NATO cannot protect the Baltic States,” and “NATO's actions are provocative/aggressive.”³⁹² With these themes, it appears Russia is following the same strategy that the Soviet Union did during the Cold War and is trying to weaken the NATO alliance, which will in turn strengthen its geopolitical position within the region.

³⁸⁷ Orlova et al.

³⁸⁸ Orlova et al.

³⁸⁹ Orlova et al.

³⁹⁰ Orlova et al.

³⁹¹ Ben Nimmo, “Russian Narratives on NATO's Deployment,” *Medium* (blog), April 1, 2017, <https://medium.com/dfirlab/russian-narratives-on-natos-deployment-616e19c3d194>.

³⁹² Nimmo.

b. Social Media

According to Paul and Matthews, Russia uses a “firehose of falsehood” to exert its influence throughout the world.³⁹³ With this approach, the authors argue that the Kremlin’s playbook uses many different media apparatuses to blast its audiences with disinformation. They expound that if people hear a constant stream of disinformation from multiple sources, they are more inclined to believe it.³⁹⁴ The firehose approach has become evident with Russia’s use of social media to flood many different platforms with its disinformation. Russia has used the social media platforms of Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Reddit, and other smaller platforms as a means to exert its influence on the United States.³⁹⁵

Russia envisioned using social media and the Internet as a tool of influence long before the Western World realized the severity of this threat. In 2009 Russia created a school that Soldatov and Borogan describe as the “Kremlin School of Bloggers” which taught its students how to use the Internet as a tool of influence.³⁹⁶ Once students completed the course, Russia directed them to carry out and organize Russia’s online information influence operations.³⁹⁷ The bloggers fill online forums with pro-Kremlin comments and leave defamatory comments on websites that are critical of Russia.³⁹⁸ This school seems to be the start of what would evolve into Russia’s massive efforts to use the Internet as a platform of influence.

Chen notes that in 2015, a Russian newspaper reported that Russia spent approximately \$400,000 per month to operate the Internet Research Agency (IRA).³⁹⁹ The

³⁹³ Paul and Miriam, “The Russian ‘Firehose of Falsehood’ Propaganda Model.”

³⁹⁴ Paul and Miriam.

³⁹⁵ Watts, *Messing with the Enemy*, 163–64; Bradley Hanlon, “It’s Not Just Facebook: Countering Russia’s Social Media Offensive,” *Brief*, no. 19 (April 2018): 9.

³⁹⁶ Soldatov and Borogan, *The New Nobility*, 233.

³⁹⁷ Soldatov and Borogan, 233.

³⁹⁸ Herpen, *Putin’s Propaganda Machine*, 93.

³⁹⁹ Adrian Chen, “The Agency,” *New York Times*, June 7, 2015, 60, 61, 2074285917, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times.

IRA is a company operated by a Russian oligarch who was a close associate of Putin and employed hundreds of employees to conduct round-the-clock influence operations on many different online social media platforms.⁴⁰⁰ IRA operators are provided with daily or weekly themes for what the Kremlin deems as primary topics of influence.⁴⁰¹ It is up to the individual operator to determine how to best implement the designated theme. The themes can be used to spread conspiracy theories, disseminate disinformation, attack Russian critics, or create noise.⁴⁰² The operators also use automated bots that rapidly amplify and broadly disseminate Russia's active measures.⁴⁰³ This amplification creates a false sense of popularity about the information, which in turn increases its credibility through social proof.⁴⁰⁴ Some disinformation campaigns attributed to the IRA are the chemical plant explosion in Louisiana, an Ebola outbreak in Atlanta, and PizzaGate, which falsely alleged that a pizza restaurant in Washington, DC, was a cover for a child sex ring that Hillary Clinton helped set up.⁴⁰⁵ These disinformation campaigns were initiated on social media and rapidly grew in popularity when local Western media outlets picked up the stories and disseminated them as misinformation. PizzaGate, in particular, generated such a buzz that a North Carolina man traveled to the restaurant with a weapon to investigate the allegation and ultimately discharged his weapon in his search for the abused children.⁴⁰⁶

Weisburd, Watts, and Berger note that Moscow's social media propaganda falls into four primary categories of influence: political messages, financial propaganda, social

⁴⁰⁰ Chen, 60, 61.

⁴⁰¹ Max Bergmann and Carolyn Kenney, "War by Other Means: Russian Active Measures and the Weaponization of Information," Center for American Progress, June 6, 2017, 12, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/06/06/433345/war-by-other-means/>.

⁴⁰² Bergmann and Kenney, 12–13.

⁴⁰³ Bergmann and Kenney, 13.

⁴⁰⁴ Bergmann and Kenney.

⁴⁰⁵ Amanda Robb, "PizzaGate: Anatomy of a Fake News Scandal," *Rolling Stone*, November 16, 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/anatomy-of-a-fake-news-scandal-125877/>; Chen, "The Agency."

⁴⁰⁶ Robb, "PizzaGate: Anatomy of a Fake News Scandal."

issues, and fear of global calamity.⁴⁰⁷ For political messages, they argue that the Kremlin designs its social media influence to “tarnish democratic leaders or undermine institutions.”⁴⁰⁸ They provided examples such as “allegations of voter fraud, election rigging, and political corruption.”⁴⁰⁹ For social issues, they explain that Russia exploits and magnifies the many different social issues that can polarize a nation, such as “police brutality, racial tensions, protests, anti-government standoffs, online privacy concerns, and alleged government misconduct.”⁴¹⁰ In regard to the financial propaganda, they argue that Moscow intends to lessen “confidence in foreign markets” and to suggest that capitalist economies are failing.⁴¹¹ Lastly, the authors note that Russia uses conspiracy theories to incite fears that the world is in peril.⁴¹² They use examples such as “stoking fears of Nuclear War” and promulgating such conspiracies as the Jade Helm⁴¹³ to forward ideas that the U.S. government was implementing martial law.⁴¹⁴ Most of Russia’s social media influence operations are classified as black operations as Russian operatives take measures to hide their Russian affiliation.

Robert Mueller III’s 2016 grand jury indictment of 13 Russian citizens and three companies provides an illustrative example of Russia’s use of social media to influence.

⁴⁰⁷ Andrew Weisburd, Clint Watts, and J. M. Berger, “Trolling for Trump: How Russia Is Trying to Destroy Our Democracy,” *War on the Rocks*, November 6, 2016, <https://warontherocks.com/2016/11/trolling-for-trump-how-russia-is-trying-to-destroy-our-democracy/>.

⁴⁰⁸ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger.

⁴⁰⁹ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger.

⁴¹⁰ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger.

⁴¹¹ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger.

⁴¹² Weisburd, Watts, and Berger.

⁴¹³ Tom Dart, “Obama Martial Law Scare Was Stoked by Russian Bots, Say Ex-Director of CIA,” *Guardian*, May 3, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/may/03/martial-law-scare-russian-bots-michael-hayden-jade-helm>. Jade Helm—a military exercise in Texas that occurred in 2015—which was portrayed as an attempt by the Obama administration to round up and detain Texas Republicans. The conspiracy theory was so widely believed that the Texas governor mobilized the state guard to monitor the exercise. The former secretary of the CIA confirmed that Russia used its social media influence apparatus to perpetuate the conspiracy theory.

⁴¹⁴ Weisburd, Watts, and Berger, “Trolling for Trump.”

Russia used social media in an attempt to influence U.S. politics.⁴¹⁵ Mueller explains that the accused used virtual private networks to mask their operating location and created countless numbers of false social media accounts pretending to be American citizens posting politically charged posts.⁴¹⁶ Additionally, they created social media groups that purported to represent grassroots political movements within America.⁴¹⁷ Mueller alleges false social media groups exploited social and political movements in the United States; topics included immigration, the Black Lives Matter movement, religion, and regional or geographical concerns.⁴¹⁸

Mueller accuses the indicted organizations of directing its operators to make social media posts that “create[d] ‘political intensity through supporting radical groups, users dissatisfied with [the] social and economic situation and oppositional social movements.’”⁴¹⁹ The accused did not just rely on the Internet to obtain information to influence U.S. politics. Some of the accused, according to Mueller, traveled to the United States to gather intelligence that would help their political influence operations and purchase computer hardware to aid in concealment of their activities.⁴²⁰ Finally, the indictment alleges that the accused co-opted and funded Americans to stage rallies and protests throughout the United States. Mueller indicates that in one incident, the accused

⁴¹⁵ Robert S. Mueller III, “United States of America v. Internet Research Agency LLC A/K/A Mediasintez LLC A/K/A Glavset LLC A/K/A Mixinfo LLC A/K/A Azimut LLC A/K/A Novinfo LLC; Concord Management and Consulting LLC; Concord Catering; Yevgeniy Viktorovich Prigozhin; Mikhail Ivanovich Bystrov; Mikhail Leonidovich Burchik A/K/A Mikhail Abramov; Aleksandra Yuryevna Krylova; Anna Vladislavovna Bogacheva; Sergey Pavlovich Polozov; Maria Anatolyevna Bovda A/K/A Maria Anatolyevna Belyaeva; Robert Sergeyevich Bovda; Dzheykhun Nasimi Ogly Aslanov A/K/A Jayhoon Aslanov A/K/A Jay Aslanov; Vadim Vladimirovich Podkopaev; Gleb Igorevich Vasilchenko; Irina Viktorovna Kaverzina; and Vladimir Venkov,” Pub. L. No. 1:18-cr-00032-DLF Document 1, 37 (2018), <https://www.justice.gov/file/1035477/download>; Director of National Intelligence, “Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections,” Intelligence Community Assessment (Washington, DC: Director of National Intelligence, January 6, 2017), https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence’s assessment broadly supports the claims that Mueller makes in the indictment. Furthermore, the assessment proclaims that Putin was aware and ordered the influence campaign against the United States.

⁴¹⁶ Mueller III, para. 39.

⁴¹⁷ Mueller III, para. 51.

⁴¹⁸ Mueller III, para. 34.

⁴¹⁹ Mueller III, para. 33.

⁴²⁰ Mueller III, para. 5.

paid an American to dress up in a Hillary Clinton costume and ride around in a cage constructed on the back of a truck for a protest rally in West Palm Beach, Florida.⁴²¹ Mueller explains that the accused also organized rallies in multiple cities of which most were supportive of candidate Trump.⁴²² However, Mueller indicates that after the elections the accused also attempted to organize rallies that questioned the legitimacy of the vote simultaneously while they coordinated Trump support rallies.⁴²³ It appears that Russia intended to play both sides against each other to further incite the political polarization within the United States.

With Russia's operations to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the *New York Times* reports that through Facebook alone, Russia's posts reached 126 million users; on Twitter, they posted an excess of 131,000 tweets using more than 2,700 accounts.⁴²⁴ Russian agents also used YouTube and Instagram as platforms of influence.⁴²⁵ YouTube curators identified "more than 1,100 videos totaling 43 hours of content" that they associated as part of Russia's influence operations, but the curators also noted that the influence effect of these videos was less than marginal as they had relatively low numbers of views, totaling only 309,000.⁴²⁶ Russia's use of Instagram was also minimal; Facebook—parent company of Instagram—identified more than 170 Instagram accounts that "posted about 120,000 pieces of Russia-linked content."⁴²⁷ The Internet—primarily social media—has provided Russia unimpeded access to a nation's population at a level that the Soviet Union could never have imagined.

⁴²¹ Mueller III, para. 55, 77.

⁴²² Mueller III, para. 7.

⁴²³ Mueller III, para. 57.

⁴²⁴ Mike Isaac and Daisuke Wakabayashi, "Broad Reach of Campaign Is Disclosed," *New York Times*, October 30, 2017, sec. B1, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/technology/facebook-google-russia.html>.

⁴²⁵ Isaac and Wakabayashi.

⁴²⁶ Isaac and Wakabayashi.

⁴²⁷ Isaac and Wakabayashi.

2. Forgeries

There is little evidence of Russia implementing fabricated documents in its active measures campaigns against the United States. However, there are a few reported examples of entities closely connected to Russia that have used forgeries to influence, to tarnish Russian critics, or to coerce as a form of blackmail. Russia has not abandoned the use of forgeries entirely as Russia has used them to influence Ukrainians and incite ethnic tensions in Central and Eastern Europe.

Hulcoop et al. identified a campaign wherein a cyber hacking group—reportedly connected to Russian intelligence services⁴²⁸—stole, altered, and released documents with the intent to influence.⁴²⁹ The authors termed this process as “tainted leaks” and defined it as “the deliberate seeding of false information within a larger set of authentically stolen data.”⁴³⁰ Essentially, a hacking group will use cyber operations to hack into a victim’s email account and extract data. The hackers will then take a document or an email and alter its content in a way that conveys a particular message they want to highlight. The hackers can either leak the forgeries alone or in a bundle of unaltered items they stole from the hack. By releasing it as a package, they add legitimacy to the falsified document and make it more difficult to identify and refute. Russia’s media apparatus will then report on the leaks in which other media organizations rebroadcast the reports and unknowingly spread the falsified information as misinformation.⁴³¹

Hulcoop et al. provide two examples of identified tainted leaks, but they also illustrate that the hackers who obtained the documents for the identified tainted leaks also hacked over 200 government, civil society, industry, and military accounts from various countries.⁴³² These cyber operations have theoretically provided the Russia-linked hackers

⁴²⁸ Elias Groll, “Turns Out You Can’t Trust Russian Hackers Anymore,” *Foreign Policy*, August 22, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/08/22/turns-out-you-cant-trust-russian-hackers-anymore/>.

⁴²⁹ Adam Hulcoop et al., “Tainted Leaks: Disinformation and Phishing with a Russian Nexus,” The Citizen Lab, May 25, 2017, <https://citizenlab.ca/2017/05/tainted-leaks-disinformation-phish/>.

⁴³⁰ Hulcoop et al.

⁴³¹ Hulcoop et al.

⁴³² Hulcoop et al.

with a treasure trove of information, providing future opportunities to release additional tainted leaks. Examples of tainted leaks the authors present consist of a stolen report from David Satter’s—author and staunch critic of the Russian government—email account and two documents along with a budget report stolen from the Open Society Foundation (OSF)—a George Soros–funded organization that promotes liberal democracy throughout the world, which coincidentally happens to be an organization that Russia views as a direct threat to Russian security.⁴³³

In the Satter-tainted leak, Hulcoop et al. describe that the hackers released an altered report originally sent to NED.⁴³⁴ The authors note that the alterations to the report made it appear that Alex Navalny—a Russian political activist and the main political opposition to Putin, whom some have described as “the man Vladimir Putin fears the most”⁴³⁵—and other anti-corruption Russian activists received foreign funding to finance some of their efforts in Russia.⁴³⁶ Additionally, they explain that Russia’s media reporting of the leaked document claimed it proved that the United States was using the CIA to induce a “color revolution” in Russia and that the allegations of corruptions at the highest levels of Russian politics was disinformation created to defame Russia’s leaders.⁴³⁷

Similar to the Satter-tainted leak, the OSF-tainted leaks were altered to make it appear that the OSF was funding Navalny and financed his efforts of revealing Russian government corruption.⁴³⁸ According to Groll, both Navalny and an OSF representative denied the allegation that OSF funded Navalny or his organization.⁴³⁹ The objective behind the tainted leak was not only to discredit Navalny and his organization, but as Groll explains, was also “to tie Russia’s most outspoken and prominent dissident to one of the

⁴³³ Hulcoop et al.; Groll, “Turns Out You Can’t Trust Russian Hackers Anymore.”

⁴³⁴ Hulcoop et al., “Tainted Leaks.”

⁴³⁵ Matthew Kaminski, “The Weekend Interview with Alexei Navalny: The Man Putin Fears Most,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 2, 2015, sec. Opinion, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150102042232/http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970203986604577257321601811092>.

⁴³⁶ Hulcoop et al., “Tainted Leaks.”

⁴³⁷ Hulcoop et al.

⁴³⁸ Hulcoop et al.

⁴³⁹ Groll, “Turns Out You Can’t Trust Russian Hackers Anymore.”

Kremlin's biggest enemies," which was Soros through his work with the OSF.⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, the tainted leaks functioned as an opportunity to defame Soros and the work of the OSF.⁴⁴¹

Tainted leaks were also reportedly used against French president Macron during his 2017 presidential campaign to personally attack him and question his ethics.⁴⁴² However, the exact details of the forgeries are difficult to distinguish because the Macron campaign said they deliberately altered documents because they were aware of the Russian-linked hacking and wanted to discredit the influence of any potential leaks.⁴⁴³

Russia has used forgeries as a form of active measures numerous times to inflame ethnic tension in Ukraine and to widen societal fissures within Central and Eastern Europe. Haines reports that Russia used forgeries leaked online and doctored photos to manipulate the public regarding the Ukrainian war.⁴⁴⁴ The forgeries that Haines describes were a fabricated Ukrainian presidential draft decree and a series of emails that gave the appearance that the president of Ukraine was intent on making a vast region in southern Ukraine, which sits outside of the Crimea peninsula, an autonomous region for the Crimean Tartars.⁴⁴⁵ The author implies the motivation behind these forgeries was to have other ethnic regions in Ukraine advocate for autonomous regions, and Russian media reporting following the leaks was meant to incite tension between the Crimean Tartars and Ukrainians. Haines also provides an example of a doctored photo of a pro-Ukrainian

⁴⁴⁰ Groll.

⁴⁴¹ Groll.

⁴⁴² Hulcoop et al., "Tainted Leaks"; Boris Toucas, "The Macron Leaks: The Defeat of Informational Warfare," Center for Strategic & International Studies, May 30, 2017, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/macron-leaks-defeat-informational-warfare>.

⁴⁴³ Toucas, "The Macron Leaks."

⁴⁴⁴ John R. Haines, "Distinguishing the True from the False: Fakes & Forgeries in Russia's Information War Against Ukraine," Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 28, 2016, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2016/09/distinguishing-true-false-fakes-forgeries-russias-information-war-ukraine/>.

⁴⁴⁵ Haines.

demonstration wherein the fabricator(s)⁴⁴⁶ changed the text of a participant's banner that altered the context of the demonstration with the intent of fueling ethnic tension between Poles and Ukrainians.⁴⁴⁷ It appears Russia is willing to utilize forgeries to manipulate the public in areas where they have significant strategic interests.

Russia has purportedly used forgeries in Sweden as an active measures tactic to diminish support of NATO, the European Union (EU), and its support for Ukraine. Kragh and Åsberg explain that as of 2017, at least 26 suspected Russian forgeries were introduced into the Swedish media.⁴⁴⁸ The authors indicate the forgeries were of numerous methods, with most consisting of fabricated government correspondences and letters from various organizations. Additionally, they note that one was a fabricated satellite image purported to show NATO's culpability for a near air-to-air collision in Swedish airspace and there was even a forged letter from the Islamic State that indicated Sweden was providing military support to the terrorist organization.⁴⁴⁹ Most of the forgeries appeared aimed at diminishing Sweden's policymakers' will to continue support of Ukraine.⁴⁵⁰ Russia has significant strategic interest in swaying Swedish policymakers. Russia does not want Sweden to join NATO, nor does Russia benefit from a stabilized Western-oriented Ukraine. It appears that these strategic interests have offset the reputational costs of using forgeries as a form of active measures. Russia has also used forgeries to create

⁴⁴⁶ The source of the doctored photo was from kresy.pl, which is an online media outlet based in Poland. While there lacks explicit evidence that kresy.pl is linked to the Kremlin, according to Gajos and Rodkiewicz a lot of kresy.pl reporting follows closely with Russia's propaganda narratives. Bartłomiej Gajos and Witold Rodkiewicz, "The Russian Metanarratives in the Polish Online Media," in *Fog of Falsehood: Russian Strategy of Deception and the Conflict in Ukraine*, ed. Katri Pynnöniemi and András Rácz (Helsinki, Finland: The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2016), 247–73, http://www.sfpa.sk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/FIARReport45_FogOfFalsehood.pdf. Although the evidence is lacking to classify kresy.pl as a Russian-controlled agent of influence, based on its continuous reporting that mirrors the Russian propaganda narrative at a minimum it meets the definition of an unwitting agent of influence.

⁴⁴⁷ Haines, "Distinguishing the True from the False."

⁴⁴⁸ Martin Kragh and Sebastian Åsberg, "Russia's Strategy for Influence through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: The Swedish Case," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 6 (September 19, 2017): 790–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2016.1273830>.

⁴⁴⁹ Kragh and Åsberg.

⁴⁵⁰ Kragh and Åsberg.

*Kompromat*⁴⁵¹ on individuals much like it did in 2009 against U.S. Diplomat Kyle Hatcher when its intelligence services created a fabricated video that falsely accused Hatcher of having sexual intercourse with a Russian prostitute.⁴⁵²

Extended open-source research has uncovered limited examples of Russia using forgeries as a form of active measures against the United States. The forgeries that relate to the United States seemed targeted at tarnishing individuals and not at influencing the general public. While it is clear that Russia has not abandoned the use of forgeries as a form of active measures, currently it appears Russia has mostly not needed to resort to using this Soviet-era technique against the United States. Instead, it seems Russia has mainly reserved⁴⁵¹ this technique in areas where they have a significant strategic interest such as Ukraine. In its effort to exert influence in the United States, Russia currently does not need to create forgeries to influence when they possess the cyber-hacking capability to obtain all the derogatory information needed in its active measures campaigns. A prime example of this is the massive document leaks from Russia's hacking of the Democratic National Convention and the Hillary Clinton presidential campaign in 2016.⁴⁵³

By releasing factual emails and documents that contained derogatory information, Russia was practically able to dictate the media narrative in the United States toward the latter half of the 2016 U.S. presidential race. As Applebaum mentions, the majority of the U.S. media was not so much concerned about who performed the hacking, who released the emails, or the motive behind the leaks; instead, the media focused on the content of the leaked emails, which seemed to be Russia's intent behind the leaks.⁴⁵⁴ Russia does not

⁴⁵¹ *Kompromat* in Russian means compromising material that is used to defame an individual. The Soviet Union heavily relied on obtaining *Kompromat* to blackmail opponents. Russia has also used *Kompromat* extensively in its domestic affairs.

⁴⁵² Jill Dougherty, "U.S. Calls Purported Sex Tape 'Doctored' and 'Smear Campaign,'" CNN, September 24, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/09/24/russia.us.sextape/>; Soldatov and Borogan, *The New Nobility*, 237.

⁴⁵³ Director of National Intelligence, "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections," 3. This intelligence assessments asserts that Russia's intelligence services conducted the hacks on both the DNC and senior members of Hillary Clinton's Presidential Campaign.

⁴⁵⁴ Anne Applebaum, "Connecting the Dots: How Russia Benefits from the DNC Email Leak," *Washington Post*, June 25, 2016, sec. Opinion, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2016/07/25/connecting-the-dots-how-russia-benefits-from-the-dnc-email-leak/>.

need to run the risk of creating defamatory forgeries as a form of influence when they can steal and release actual unaltered documents that achieve the same or better results.

3. Agents of Influence

Russia did not relinquish the Soviet-era tactic of recruiting agents of influence as a form of active measures. There are three differences in whom Russia recruits as agents of influence. First, through Russia's access and successful exploitation of the media, it does not have to rely on recruiting journalists to introduce disinformation to the West; second, Russia uses its wealth as a way to buy agents of influence; and third, Russia is not ideologically constrained as the Soviet Union was with its commitment to communism.

Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia does not have to place a significant amount of time in recruiting agents of influence within the media. As previously mentioned, Russia has demonstrated it can exert influence through Western media platforms, which allows Russia to expend more effort toward recruiting agents of influence in more sensitive areas. Moreover, through the leaking of documents on Internet websites such as WikiLeaks, Russia has been able to use the Western media, specifically within the United States, as unwitting agents of influence and direct the media narrative.

Another variance from the Soviet Union lies in Russia using its wealth to purchase agents of influence throughout the world, especially in Europe, as a form of active measures. Russia funds political parties and politicians who support a closer relationship with Moscow and who are supportive of pro-Kremlin policies. Polyakova et al. provide examples of how Russia is either directly or indirectly—through Russian-connected businesses—funding both left- and right-winged political parties.⁴⁵⁵ Russia uses both as it is not ideologically bound and instead will use anyone who can further its strategic interests. Polyakova et al. explain that in France, Russia openly funded Marine Le Pen in her 2017 presidential bid.⁴⁵⁶ Le Pen has regularly espoused support for Russia, and she

⁴⁵⁵ Alina Polyakova et al., "The Kremlin's Trojan Horses," *The Atlantic Council*, November 15, 2016, 27.

⁴⁵⁶ Polyakova et al., 9.

ran on a platform of France orienting itself more toward Moscow.⁴⁵⁷ Polyakova et al. note that in Germany, Russia has used such business ventures as Nord Stream 2 to entice political leaders to support Russia.⁴⁵⁸ The authors imply this foreign investment may have been what enticed former Vice-Chancellor Sigmar to take a softer stance against Russia and advocate for the removal of Russian sanctions.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore, the authors provide another example of Russia's business influences in Germany with former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who actively petitioned for deeper economic ties with Russia and in 2005 accepted a board position with the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.⁴⁶⁰ They explain that in the UK, Russia has indirectly—through various Russian-connected businesses—funded numerous political parties and political leaders.⁴⁶¹ Russia using its money to buy influence in the post-Soviet space is even more prevalent as Herpen provides examples from states including Estonia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Hungary.⁴⁶² While Russia may not have total control over these politicians and political parties, common sense indicates that Russia's money buys it a degree of influence.

In the United States, there are strict laws that prevent politicians from accepting foreign campaign funds, but these laws do not prevent Russia from using its money to buy influence within U.S. policymaking circles. Since 2006, Russia has used its money to purchase lobbying firms that work as paid agents of influence for the Kremlin.⁴⁶³ While historically a vast majority of countries have employed lobbying firms to influence Washington, it is only within the 21st century that Russia has used them as an agent of influence.⁴⁶⁴ Herpen notes that one of the firms that Russia has consistently utilized is Kissinger Associates, whose founder, Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State, regularly

⁴⁵⁷ Polyakova et al.

⁴⁵⁸ Polyakova et al., 15.

⁴⁵⁹ Polyakova et al.

⁴⁶⁰ Polyakova et al., 13.

⁴⁶¹ Polyakova et al., 20.

⁴⁶² Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine*, 106–9.

⁴⁶³ Herpen, 51.

⁴⁶⁴ Herpen, 48.

met with Putin.⁴⁶⁵ He specifies that in 2009, Thomas Graham—who led the lobbying firm’s Russian department—wrote a report that advised the newly elected Obama administration on its international relations policy with Russia. Herpen explains that Graham’s report advised to halt efforts on NATO expansion, to positively consider Russia’s proposition to create a new security architecture in Europe, to promote the Finlandization of Ukraine, and to halt U.S. interference in Russia’s domestic affairs through its criticism of Russia for human rights and its democratization policies or lack thereof.⁴⁶⁶ Herpen describes that Graham’s report illustrates the success of Russia’s lobbying efforts within the United States as the report reflects policies that Putin himself would have wanted the United States to adopt.⁴⁶⁷

The Century Foundation, a long-standing think tank in Washington, DC, released Graham’s report a little more than one month after Hillary Clinton held a press event with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in which she theatrically used a red reset button to unveil the U.S.-Russian reset policy.⁴⁶⁸ With the Russian reset, the United States took a softer approach with Russia, and the Obama administration withdrew some of the earlier policies that had soured U.S.-Russian relations. Kissinger Associates’ efforts and the release of Graham’s report may have been coincidental, but it is not without logic to surmise that Russia’s investment in its lobbying efforts could have influenced the Obama administration to take this softer approach.

Kissinger Associates is not the only Western lobbying firm that Russia has used to exert its influence within the United States. Starting in 2006, Russia hired Ketchum, an American lobbying and public relations firm in New York.⁴⁶⁹ Russia invested millions in having Ketchum and its subsidiary company portray the country as more democratic and to increase its image in the West after the Russo-Georgian war and its invasion of

⁴⁶⁵ Herpen, 48–51.

⁴⁶⁶ Herpen, 50–51.

⁴⁶⁷ Herpen, 48–50.

⁴⁶⁸ Clinton’s Russian Reset press event occurred on March 6, 2009, and the Century Foundation released Graham’s report in April 2009.

⁴⁶⁹ Herpen, *Putin’s Propaganda Machine*, 50–51.

Crimea.⁴⁷⁰ Ketchum used its resources to polish the Russian image by “helping them disguise all the issues that make[s] [Russia] unattractive: human rights, invasions of neighboring countries, etc.” to attract more investment in the country.⁴⁷¹ Herpen explains that Ketchum also ran a website on behalf of Moscow to project a positive image of the country.⁴⁷² Additionally, he writes that the company published an article in the *New York Times* that Putin wrote wherein he questioned President Obama’s depiction of American exceptionalism, cautioned the United States to stay out of the Syrian conflict, and lectured the United States on its use of coercion.⁴⁷³ Ketchum provided Putin with an avenue to speak directly to the American people as a form of soft power.⁴⁷⁴ While a foreign country hiring a lobbying firm is not abnormal or necessarily considered questionable behavior, it still represents one way in which Russia is using its money to purchase agents of influence as a form of active measures within the United States.

Although unclassified, nonpartisan evidence of recruited American agents of influence operating under the direction of Russia’s intelligence services is lacking, there are examples that indicate Russia still prioritizes identifying and recruiting such assets in the United States. In 2010, the FBI concluded a 10-year counterintelligence investigation, codenamed Operation Ghost Stories, with the arrest of Anna Chapman and 10 other Russian illegal deep-cover agents subordinated to the SVR.⁴⁷⁵ In addition to traditional espionage of collecting sensitive information—or as reported, open-source information that the Kremlin thought was important—the SVR tasked these 11 agents with infiltrating U.S. political elite circles to identify potential agents of influence.⁴⁷⁶ According to Frank Figliuzzi, former FBI assistant director for counterintelligence, they were succeeding in

⁴⁷⁰ Herpen, 50–51.

⁴⁷¹ Herpen, 52.

⁴⁷² Herpen, 50.

⁴⁷³ Herpen.

⁴⁷⁴ Herpen.

⁴⁷⁵ Stéphane Lefebvre and Holly Porteous, “The Russian 10 ... 11: An Inconsequential Adventure?,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 24, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 448, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2011.568290>.

⁴⁷⁶ Lefebvre and Porteous, 448 and 454.

this endeavor and “several were getting close to high-ranking officials.”⁴⁷⁷ Figliuzzi did not elaborate, but it is reported that one of the illegals, Cynthia Murphy, began cultivating a relationship with Alan Patricof—a Democratic fundraiser and friend to both Hillary and Bill Clinton—as a potential agent of influence.⁴⁷⁸

Another example is the FBI’s recently uncovered investigation of Maria Butina, who as of this research was awaiting trial for acting as an unregistered foreign agent of Russia. The FBI’s criminal complaint alleges Butina tried to infiltrate a gun rights organization—which the media reported was the NRA—to influence U.S. policymakers.⁴⁷⁹ While Butina is not considered an illegal, the FBI’s criminal complaint alleges a Russian official—whom the media identified as Aleksander Torshin, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Russia—directed and advised her on how to operate in order to develop relationships with those who could facilitate private communications that Russia could exploit to influence U.S. decision-makers.⁴⁸⁰ The FBI alleges Butina set up meetings with sitting U.S. politicians and political candidates and relayed information to Moscow through a Russian official as an intermediary. The FBI contends that Butina developed a relationship with a U.S. political operative who provided her with names of American representatives who had influence in U.S. politics. Furthermore, she arranged

⁴⁷⁷ Ken Dilanian, “Russian Spies Were Succeeding, FBI Official Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/31/nation/la-na-russian-spies-20111101>.

⁴⁷⁸ Dilanian; Jason Horowitz, “Clinton Confidant Believes He Might Have Been Spies’ Target,” *Washington Post*, June 29, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/29/AR2010062904525.html>. Horowitz’s reports that Patricof believed he was the target of potential recruitment as an agent of influence. However, he was adamant that he never discussed any politics with her; instead, they only discussed his finances as she worked at a financial firm.

⁴⁷⁹ Kevin Helson, “Affidavit in Support of an Application for a Criminal Complaint for Mariia Butina, Also Known as Maria Butina” (2018), 2–3, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1080766/download>; Sean Rossman, “Sex and Schmoozing Are Common Russian Spy Tactics. Publicity Makes Maria Butina Different,” *USA Today*, August 28, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2018/08/28/maria-butina-accused-russian-spy-nra-networking-old-russian-spy-tactic-not-being-public-figure/1002964002/>.

⁴⁸⁰ Helson, Affidavit in Support of an Application for a Criminal Complaint for Mariia Butina, Also Known as Maria Butina, 2–3; Rossman, “Sex and Schmoozing Are Common Russian Spy Tactics. Publicity Makes Maria Butina Different.”

dinner and meetings wherein she invited the representatives to introduce them to Russian officials.⁴⁸¹

While open-source information of post–Cold War agents of influence operating in the United States is lacking, there are multiple examples of exposed assets throughout Europe. Herpen explains that in 2010, German authorities revealed they had uncovered three German citizens who operated as agents of influence for Russia who gained close access to the minister president of Brandenburg.⁴⁸² Herpen indicates that there were two examples of Russian agents of influence operating in Britain, one a known Russian SVR agent who allegedly influenced a member of UK’s Foreign Affairs Committee, the other, a “honeypot,” a Russian female employed as the assistant to a member of Parliament.⁴⁸³ In both UK examples, Herpen alludes that the targeted politicians seemed to advocate for Russia or appeared to be inquisitive on Russia’s behalf regarding Russian-related issues.⁴⁸⁴ In France, Herpen explains that Russia was intent on identifying an asset deep within the government.⁴⁸⁵ A Russian attaché who was a known intelligence officer for the GRU met with many French prospects who were journalists, officers, and researchers.⁴⁸⁶ When the GRU officer conducted an initial in-person assessment, he already had a significant amount of information about them and tried to recruit them by first placating them by offering an expensive gift to test their reaction.⁴⁸⁷ These examples illustrate that Russia still prizes the recruitment of agents of influence as a form of active measures and for the most part still operates in the same manner as the Soviet Union.

⁴⁸¹ Dilanian, “Russian Spies Were Succeeding, FBI Official Says,” 2–3.

⁴⁸² Herpen, *Putin’s Propaganda Machine*, 118–19.

⁴⁸³ Herpen, 119–20.

⁴⁸⁴ Herpen, 119.

⁴⁸⁵ Herpen, 120–21.

⁴⁸⁶ Herpen.

⁴⁸⁷ Herpen.

4. NGO, GONGOs, and Civic Groups as Front Group Substitutes

Russia uses state-funded foundations, NGOs, and GONGOs to advance its influence. Lutsevych notes that six main state-funded foundations fund a multitude of NGOs and GONGOs that Russia uses to influence the so-called Russian World.⁴⁸⁸ The Russian World is an inclusive term that encompasses a vast population set. In a 2014 speech, Putin offered his interpretation of what makes up the Russian World. He stated, “When I speak of Russians and Russian-speaking citizens, I am referring to those people who consider themselves part of the broad Russian community, they may not necessarily be ethnic Russians, but they consider themselves Russian people.”⁴⁸⁹ Lutsevych explains that the “narratives of the Russian world encompasses language, culture, history, shared heritage, economic links, religion and conservative values.”⁴⁹⁰ Russia uses this broad definition to justify its action in the post-Soviet space or wherever there are people who fit into this category. Russia tries to portray itself as the protector of a forgotten and mistreated people. Although it is difficult to accurately assess due to a lack of transparency, Lutsevych estimates Russia invests approximately \$130 million each year in groups that are focused on expanding Russia’s strategic interests, with most of the money going toward influencing the post-Soviet space.⁴⁹¹

Within the Russian World, Russia uses pseudo-NGOs and GONGOs to create an us-versus-them mentality against the West. These groups are not like Western NGOs, and instead of being independent they are in fact loyal to the Kremlin. The groups have close ties to Russia’s intelligence services, and most of the NGOs are run by those who are well connected to the Russian government.⁴⁹² Russia portrays these groups as independent to

⁴⁸⁸ Orysia Lutsevych, *Agents of the Russian World: Proxy Groups in the Contested Neighbourhood* (London: Chatham House, 2016), 10–13, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2016-04-14-agents-russian-world-lutsevych-embargoed.pdf>.

⁴⁸⁹ “Conference of Russian Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives,” President of Russia, accessed October 20, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46131>.

⁴⁹⁰ Lutsevych, “Agents of the Russian World,” 8.

⁴⁹¹ Lutsevych, 11. Lutsevych indicates the \$130 million figure is probably underestimated as he made this estimate based on annual budgets for the six primary state foundations and grants issued to other NGOs.

⁴⁹² Lutsevych, 12.

create the illusion that they are grassroots groups primarily supported by the local community. Russia uses the groups to portray Western traditions and values as contrary to traditional Russian values, and that the expansion of such Western institutions as NATO and the EU is a direct threat to the ethnic Russian communities.⁴⁹³ Moscow highlights the United States as the enemy resolved in becoming the sole hegemonic power throughout Europe.⁴⁹⁴ The intent behind the narratives seemed aimed at creating subversion within communities against national governments, pushing the Russian World away from the West, and convincing these communities that their best interests are to align with Russia. These efforts are especially prevalent within countries wherein the government has indicated a desire to form closer ties or integrate with the West.⁴⁹⁵

Russia has created or promoted NGOs and GONGOS that are similar to Soviet front groups designed to legitimize Russia's interests and act as a counterweight to internationally recognized organizations. One area where this is most prevalent is in election monitoring in Russia and the post-Soviet space. A particular NGO that has liberally aligned itself with Russian interests is the Commonwealth of Independent States-Election Monitoring Organization (CIS-EMO), which claims to be an unbiased independent election-monitoring organization.⁴⁹⁶ In 2003, a former Russian politician created CIS-EMO, and throughout the years its observers have consisted of people who are by no means impartial; instead, they are aligned with Russia's foreign policies.⁴⁹⁷ CIS-EMO has observed elections in Russia, a few European countries, multiple former Soviet states, and in unrecognized breakaway territories that international organizations refused to monitor.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹³ Lutsevych, 12–13.

⁴⁹⁴ Lutsevych.

⁴⁹⁵ Lutsevych, 12.

⁴⁹⁶ Anton Shekhovtsov, *Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir, Fascism and the Far Right* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 104–9.

⁴⁹⁷ Shekhovtsov, 104, 109.

⁴⁹⁸ Shekhovtsov, 107.

CIS-EMO has released reports and statements that typically validate fraudulent elections or raise questions about legitimate elections that did not end favorably for Russia's strategic interests.⁴⁹⁹ For the most part, CIS-EMO election findings are contrary to internationally recognized organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, which has historically been unbiased.⁵⁰⁰ Russia has also promoted other Russian-aligned election-monitoring organizations such as the Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections, the European Centre for Geopolitical Analysis, and the Cooperation with Civic Control.⁵⁰¹ Russia legitimizes and supports these NGOs and GONGOs because they validate the Kremlin's authoritarian style of democratic governance and further its strategic interests abroad.

Russia also largely uses the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) as a mechanism for Russian influence. Herpen illustrates that the ROC is fiercely faithful to the Kremlin and essentially acts as an extension of the state, reaffirming its policies.⁵⁰² He explains that when the patriarch visited Ukraine in 2009, he gave speeches that seemed like they were coming from Russian state officials and not from a man of religion.⁵⁰³ Russia's use of the ROC as a tool of Russian influence was illustrated when Lavrov emphasized that the church has a role "in solving the tasks of strengthening our Fatherland and establishing the most favorable conditions for the further development of the country."⁵⁰⁴ Herpen remarks that Putin echoed this sentiment when he indicated the ROC "had always played a 'special role' in Russia, different from the role of religion in other countries: 'It was a source of Russian statehood.'"⁵⁰⁵ These two statements show the Kremlin's intent to utilize the church as a form of Russian influence. While it is not identical to the front groups of the

⁴⁹⁹ Shekhovtsov, 106–107.

⁵⁰⁰ Shekhovtsov, 107.

⁵⁰¹ Shekhovtsov, 110–21.

⁵⁰² Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine*, 129–31.

⁵⁰³ Herpen, 130.

⁵⁰⁴ Herpen, 138.

⁵⁰⁵ Herpen, 138.

Soviet Union, the church does fulfill the role of Soviet fronts in exerting influence well beyond Russia's borders as well as being from a source that should seemingly be void of government influence.

Russia has co-opted far-right fringe groups to support Russian influence. Carpenter writes that Russia is using its intelligence services to coordinate with and recruit "skinheads, biker gangs, soccer hooligans, and street fighters" as a means of influence aimed at weakening Western democratic institutions.⁵⁰⁶ Carpenter explains that Russia targets these groups because they are like-minded to Russian policy in which they are more inclined to believe nationalistic views over institutional convergence. Additionally, these groups include spirited young members whom the Kremlin can use to initiate anti-government and social protests. Carpenter writes that Russia has supported neo-Nazi groups and cites the example of Hungarian National Front, which conducted weapons-training events that GRU agents under diplomatic immunity attended.⁵⁰⁷ While the groups do not represent the mainstream view of a nation, Russia can leverage them to promote subversion within a country and create exploitable situations that portray the government as illegitimate or paint the country under the broad strokes of hate groups.

A Russian group that has become infamous in Eastern Europe and Russia is the Night Wolves, an outlaw motorcycle club turned into a political activist group that travels throughout Europe promoting nationalized ideals and independence from Western institutions. They hold lavish patriotic concerts and shows as a way to spread their influence in which they espouse anti-American and anti-Western rhetoric.⁵⁰⁸ Russia has generously funded the group. In 2014, the Night Wolves received \$500,000 in Russian state funds and in 2018 they received a Russian grant of \$41,000 to support the secession of Republika Srpska from Bosnia.⁵⁰⁹ This group provides Russia with a means of intimidation and a force to protect the Russian world in Eastern Europe. The Night Wolves

⁵⁰⁶ Carpenter, "Russian Intelligence Is Co-Opting Angry Young Men."

⁵⁰⁷ Carpenter.

⁵⁰⁸ Carpenter, 6.

⁵⁰⁹ Carpenter.

have expanded their influence outside of Russia and have opened chapters in several Eastern and Central European countries and Germany.⁵¹⁰ While the Night Wolves are only one of many groups, it is arguably the most publicly supported by the Russian government to the degree that Putin has even participated in the club's motorcycle rallies.

In 2016, the Kremlin provided \$55,000 to help fund Russia's Anti-Globalist Movement's second annual conference of the Dialogue of Nations.⁵¹¹ This conference was held in Moscow and gathered secessionist leaders from around the world to promote secessionist movements outside of Russia. The attendees included secessionist groups from California, Texas, Puerto Rico, Ireland, Catalonia, Italy, Donetsk, Lebanon, and other former Soviet Republics.⁵¹² While Russia's support for secessionist movements is hypocritical, as Russia is highly intolerant of such groups within Russia, supporting these movements abroad furthers Russia's strategic interests through widening societal fissures and dividing Western democracies.⁵¹³ Furthermore, the remote chance that a secessionist group succeeds—as what the separatists almost did in Catalonia—means Russia could gain a close partner and exponentially expand its influence within these areas.

Russia is using NGOs and GONGOs as a form of active measures, similar to how the Soviet Union used front groups. Russia has substituted the Soviet communist ideology with Russian dysphoria and a nationalistic ideology to form a base for its influence throughout the world. Russia creates and funds NGOs that promote this ideological influence. Russia also promotes fringe groups outside of Russia's direct control as a way to create subversion in Western countries. Russia embraced the value of religious influence and adopted the narrative of traditional religious values as a way to attack the West. Unlike the Soviet Union, Russia has taken a more overt approach in supporting groups that exert Russian influence throughout the world and has portrayed these groups as independent

⁵¹⁰ Carpenter, 7.

⁵¹¹ Mansur Mirovalev, "Moscow Welcomes the (Would-Be) Sovereign Nations of California and Texas," *Los Angeles Times*, September 27, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-russia-separatists-snap-story.html>.

⁵¹² Mirovalev.

⁵¹³ Mirovalev.

organizations. However, much like the Soviet Union, through its monetary support, there is little doubt that Russia lacks control of these groups and is actively using them as a form of active measures against the West.

E. CONCLUSION

When the Soviet Union collapsed and Russia adopted democracy, the world was full of optimism that the chapter of conflict between the great powers had finally ended. The hope for enduring peace was one that most of the world shared, but it seems this may have ended in a false hope. The two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union was not an era of peace; instead, it was an era of reloading. Through Russia's active measures and various other acts, such as the invasion of Crimea, its proxy war in Eastern Ukraine, and its invasion of Georgia, Russia has signaled to the world that it views the West as an adversary. Russia cannot legitimately compete against the West and must resort to asymmetrical means as a way to obtain its strategic objectives. Active measures allow it to do so with minimal costs.

Russia is not closed off from the rest of the world like the Soviet Union, which enables it greater ease in deploying active measures to further its strategic interests. Compared to the Soviet-era active measures, the interconnected world has allowed Russia to penetrate deeper into Western societies. Russia's active measures capabilities have grown in the last decade and will only get stronger as they continue to invest and refine their tactics. Russia's active measures threat shows no signs of dissipating.

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V. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Russia is using the same active measures techniques that the Soviet Union used against the United States and the West during the Cold War. However, Russia's active measures have a much higher chance of success today because through technology, it has direct access to the American people. Through its actions, Russia has shown itself as an adversary to the United States and the West. Russia will not stop using active measures as a form of influence until the costs outweigh the benefits, as its past has shown. Much like Reagan did against the Soviet Union, the United States should organize and focus its efforts and create a significant deterrence to prevent Russia from using active measures in the future.

This concluding chapter starts by explaining the actions that the United States has taken to date to counter Russia's active measures. It concludes by making recommendations for ways in which the United States can deter Russia from using active measures in the future and how the United States can increase America's resilience to Russia's manipulative influence.

A. CURRENT U.S. COUNTERMEASURES

After the exposure of Russia's active measures campaign during the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, the U.S. government acted against the Russian government as a consequence for its attempt to subvert American democracy. The U.S. government expelled 35 intelligence operatives from the United States and closed two Russian-owned properties located in the United States that the Kremlin used to facilitate its espionage activities against America.⁵¹⁴

The primary way in which the United States has responded to the Russian threat is through sanctions. To date, the United States has sanctioned 72 individuals or organizations

⁵¹⁴ Robert D. Blackwill and Phillip H. Gordon, "Containing Russia: How to Respond to Moscow's Intervention in U.S. Democracy and Growing Geopolitical Challenge" (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, January 2018), 12–13, https://cfrd8-files.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR80_BlackwillGordon_ContainingRussia.pdf.

that were either tied to the Russian defense apparatus or its intelligence sectors.⁵¹⁵ The sanctions are part of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA), which was passed to punish those who are part of Russia's active measures, particularly as they relate to cyber-security.⁵¹⁶ CAATSA includes provisions that allow the U.S. government to issue secondary sanctions to any person or organizations that knowingly engage in significant transactions of more than \$10 million within a year with those who are on the sanctions list.⁵¹⁷ Most of those sanctioned as a consequence for Russia's interference with the 2016 U.S. presidential election were added as of 20 September 2018, and most of the previously sanctioned individuals and organizations were part of Russia's defense sectors.⁵¹⁸ While CAATSA is a good starting point for sanctions, it has failed to produce a significant deterrence as Russia is still using active measures throughout Europe and has not de-escalated its efforts in Ukraine and other areas in the post-Soviet space. Furthermore, there are reports that Russia has used active measures on social media to influence the 2018 U.S. midterm elections.⁵¹⁹

The U.S. Congress has acted to identify Russia's use of active measures. Congress has convened multiple hearings in which it has sought the testimony of senior intelligence officials, social media companies, experts on Soviet-era active measures, and experts on Russia's current active measures to understand how Russia is operating and to make recommendations on how to defeat and deter Russia's active measures. Additionally, Congress has held social media companies accountable and forcefully encouraged them to mitigate the opportunities Russia had to influence the American public and make past attempts publicly known. As a result, social media companies such as Twitter and

⁵¹⁵ "CAATSA Section 231(d) Defense and Intelligence Sectors of the Government of the Russian Federation," U.S. Department of State, September 20, 2018, <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/caatsa/275116.htm>.

⁵¹⁶ Blackwill and Gordon, "Containing Russia," 13.

⁵¹⁷ U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe*, 146.

⁵¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, "CAATSA Section 231(d) Defense and Intelligence Sectors of the Government of the Russian Federation."

⁵¹⁹ Josh Gerstein, "U.S. Brings First Charge for Meddling in 2018 Midterm Elections," Politico, October 19, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/10/19/first-criminal-case-filed-over-russian-interference-in-2018-midterms-916787>.

Facebook have identified and removed millions of accounts that Russia may have used in its active measures campaign. Furthermore, social media companies such as Facebook now clearly identify the entities that purchase advertisements on its platform, which increases the transparency of potential influence attempts by both foreign and domestic actors.

In 2016, the DoS's Global Engagement Center (GEC), initially charged with combatting the propaganda efforts of terrorist cells around the world, also assumed the role of countering disinformation efforts of Russia, Iran, North Korea, and China.⁵²⁰ A 2018 Minority Staff Report to Congress notes that the DoS has failed to use \$20 million of the \$60 million increase that Congress appropriated for the GEC to fund its new mission set.⁵²¹

However, the problem with the GEC is not funding. As Hill explains, the GEC's performance history on combatting the propaganda efforts of terrorists is subpar, and the increase of funding will not fix the systemic issues fraught with the GEC.⁵²² Hill points out that increasing the workload will only exacerbate the problems within the GEC as it lacks leadership and direction.⁵²³ The Minority Staff Report to Congress indicates that as of January 2018, "the administration has yet to appoint a Special Envoy and Coordinator of the Global Engagement Center, suggesting that the administration does not consider the GEC's new mission of countering foreign state propaganda a priority."⁵²⁴ Failing to staff this position may contribute to the inability of the GEC, and to make things worse, as of October 2018, the position was still vacant. Having an effective entity focused on identifying and countering Russia's active measures is a critical component in the fight against Russia's malevolent influence, and the answer may not reside in a large agency that focuses on all forms of foreign disinformation.

⁵²⁰ Thomas M. Hill, "Secretary Tillerson Is Doing the Right Thing, So Why Is Congress Bashing Him?," *Brookings Institution* (blog), October 27, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/10/27/secretary-tillerson-is-doing-the-right-thing-so-why-is-congress-bashing-him/>.

⁵²¹ U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe*, 150.

⁵²² Hill, "Secretary Tillerson Is Doing the Right Thing, So Why Is Congress Bashing Him?"

⁵²³ Hill.

⁵²⁴ U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations. *Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe*, 150.

The *National Security Strategy* (NSS) for 2018 indicates that the Russian active measures threat and similar acts from other states are a threat to U.S. national security.⁵²⁵ The NSS lists broad actions the government will take to minimize this risk, which include developing an understanding of adversarial tactics, creating an effective strategic communications plan centered on public diplomacy, exposing propaganda and disinformation efforts, updating the U.S. public diplomacy efforts, and incorporating private enterprises against the fight of malevolent influence.⁵²⁶ Including the active measures threat into the NSS is an important step in deterring Russia from using them against the United States. However, public statements from senior government officials that Russia did not intervene in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections counteracts the strategic efforts to deter Russia. Such statements contradict the NSS and illustrate that the United States lacks a strategic public diplomacy effort against Russia's malevolent influence. Refusing to acknowledge Russia's culpability only emboldens Russia to continue its active measures against the United States and the West.

The United States has taken other steps aimed at combatting Russia's influence. In 2017, through the Foreign Agents Registration Act, the DoJ required Russia's external media, RT America to register as a foreign agent, which increases the transparency of the RT's operations and funding.⁵²⁷ The DoJ has also actively pursued Russian attempts at recruiting agents of influence. Coupled with the Mueller indictments, the DoJ has attempted to send the message that the U.S. government will hold those accountable who engage in activities to subvert American democracy.

The United States has increased its capacity to engage with the people of Eastern Europe and Russia. In 2017, the BBG—rebranded as the USAGM on August 22, 2018—formally launched Current Time, a television broadcasting initiative created to provide

⁵²⁵ White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

⁵²⁶ White House, 35.

⁵²⁷ "Production Company Registers Under the Foreign Agent Registration Act as Agent for the Russian Government Entity Responsible for Broadcasting RT," U.S. Department of Justice, November 13, 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/production-company-registers-under-foreign-agent-registration-act-agent-russian-government>.

Russian speakers in Russia and Eastern Europe truthful reporting of political events that affect its audience and explain American policies.⁵²⁸ It currently operates a network delivering content to “Russia and nearly 30 other countries, including the Baltics, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Central Asia.”⁵²⁹ Although it operates 24/7, only 38.5 hours per week is original content.⁵³⁰ According to the Minority Staff Report, if the U.S. government doubled Current Time’s funding, the network could quadruple its original content and deliver live news coverage round the clock.⁵³¹ Current Time also has a robust and rapidly growing online presence, wherein it manages social media profiles on both American- and Russian-based platforms and has its own YouTube channel.⁵³² Creating this network is a great initiative aimed at combatting Russia’s manipulation of the Russian dysphoria in Eastern Europe and one that the United States should increase.

The VOA and RFE/RL operate several other radio, television, and online media networks aimed at people living in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. According to a 2017 *Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting*—which is the most recent publicly released report on the U.S. public diplomacy efforts—there are 21 U.S. government–operated radio, television, and online broadcasting networks available in Eastern Europe and Eurasia.⁵³³ The report indicates that only four of these networks—Current Time included—are on the air more than 50 percent of the week, and of these networks, only one dedicates more than 50 percent of its on-air time to original

⁵²⁸ U.S. Agency for Global Media, “At One-Year Mark, Current Time Leads with Innovation and Growth,” February 7, 2108, <https://www.usagm.gov/2018/02/07/one-year-mark-current-time-leads-innovation-growth/>.

⁵²⁹ U.S. Agency for Global Media.

⁵³⁰ Shawn Powers, Chris Hensman, and Jennifer Rahimi, *2017 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting: Focus on Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Data* (Washington, DC: United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, October 6, 2017), 240, <https://www.state.gov/pdcommission/reports/274698.htm>.

⁵³¹ U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe*, 148–49.

⁵³² U.S. Agency for Global Media, “At One-Year Mark, Current Time Leads with Innovation and Growth.”

⁵³³ Powers, Hensman, and Rahimi, “2017 Comprehensive Annual Report on Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting,” 240–48.

programming.⁵³⁴ As a result, much like the Minority Staff Report suggests about Current Time, it seems these other networks are underfunded as well, which potentially inhibits them from connecting with a broader audience and countering Russia's malevolent influence in this area.

Another instrument the VOA and RFE/RL created to counter Russian active measures is Polygraph.info. Polygraph.info offers platforms in both Russian and English and functions as a fact-checking site in which journalists expose Russia's disinformation.⁵³⁵ The website has a simple layout modeled after other well-known independent fact-checking sites wherein journalists rate the veracity of stories from the Russian media and statements from Russian officials.⁵³⁶ This modest operation has had successes in countering Russia's disinformation.

One highly successful revelation came as a result of the February 2018 Russian mercenary attack against U.S. troops in Syria, for which Putin initially denied there was any Russian involvement.⁵³⁷ A journalist at Polygraph.info obtained and publicly released an audio recording that implicated Russian mercenaries in the attack and detailed that 200 Russians had died during the attack.⁵³⁸ This revelation forced Putin to backtrack on his previous statement and admit that Russian citizens were indeed fighting in Syria and that a significant number died in the attack against U.S. forces.⁵³⁹ This example illustrates the impact that Polygraph.info and similar initiatives can have in the fight against Russia's active measures; however, Polygraph.info cannot support 'round-the-clock operations as it is only staffed with five people.⁵⁴⁰ Increasing the capacity of this organization could significantly enhance U.S. efforts in countering Russia's active measures against the West.

⁵³⁴ Powers, Hensman, and Rahimi, 240–48.

⁵³⁵ Ken Dilanian and Rich Gardella, "Someone's Fighting Back Against Russian Disinformation," NBC News, April 15, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/one-tiny-corner-u-s-government-pushes-back-against-russian-n866021>.

⁵³⁶ Dilanian and Gardella.

⁵³⁷ Dilanian and Gardella.

⁵³⁸ Dilanian and Gardella.

⁵³⁹ Dilanian and Gardella.

⁵⁴⁰ Dilanian and Gardella.

Various agencies within the U.S. government have created groups dedicated to thwarting and educating the public on Russian active measures and influence operations from multiple countries. The FBI established the Foreign Influence Task Force to investigate foreign influence attempts and coordinate with numerous companies, organizations, and local law enforcement regarding foreign efforts to disseminate disinformation or influence the American public, especially as it relates to U.S. elections.⁵⁴¹ Also, the task force created a website wherein they uploaded a series of videos titled “Protected Voices,” which is focused on educating political campaigns and the public on how to practice better cyber-security to prevent adversaries from stealing data that Russia could later use in an active measures campaign.⁵⁴² The National Security Agency and the U.S. Cyber Command created a joint task force named the Russia Small Group, which is tasked with identifying and combatting Russian influence in the cyber realm.⁵⁴³ However, the group is shrouded in secrecy, and the U.S. government has not publicly revealed any details on the group’s activities.

The United States has taken a more aggressive cyber approach against foreign actors that could prove to be a considerable deterrence against Russia’s use of active measures. In August 2018, the Trump administration rescinded Presidential Policy Directive 20, which required the U.S. military to get approval before engaging in offensive cyber operations.⁵⁴⁴ Rescinding this directive provides the U.S. Cyber Command greater latitude in its ability to launch cyber-offensive operations against a foreign adversary, and it signals that the United States is taking a more aggressive approach in protecting the U.S. national security.⁵⁴⁵ The national security advisor to the president, John Bolton, echoed this new aggressive approach and sent a warning to U.S. adversaries when he stated, “For

⁵⁴¹ “Combating Foreign Influence,” Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed October 28, 2018, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/foreign-influence>.

⁵⁴² “Federal Bureau of Investigation.”

⁵⁴³ Alyza Sebenius, “NSA Chief Forms Group to Counter Russian Cyber Threat,” *Bloomberg*, July 22, 2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-07-22/u-s-cyber-commander-tackles-russian-threat-with-new-task-force>.

⁵⁴⁴ Eric Geller, “Trump Scraps Obama Rules on Cyberattacks, Giving Military Freer Hand,” *Politico*, August 16, 2018, <https://politi.co/2MSWCnS>.

⁵⁴⁵ Geller.

any nation that's taking cyber activity against the United States, they should expect ... we will respond offensively as well as defensively."⁵⁴⁶ A little over a month after Bolton made this statement, the *New York Times* reported that the U.S. Cyber Command was tracking and messaging Russian operatives who were involved in online influence operations.⁵⁴⁷ The article does not elaborate on the exact content of the messages, but it indicates that the messages were nonthreatening and the intent behind the messages was to inform the operatives that the United States knew their identity and was watching their online activity in an attempt to deter future influence operations against U.S. elections.⁵⁴⁸

The United States has also supported initiatives in Europe to counter Russia's active measures. The 2018 Minority Staff Report to Congress notes that the United States operates the Russian Information Group that focuses on combating Russian disinformation in Ukraine; however, the report notes that a senior U.S. military official testified that the group needed additional funding, staffing, and greater authority to be more effective.⁵⁴⁹ The report explains that the United States is a contributing participant of Finland's European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, which focuses on conducting "research and training to improve participants' readiness to respond to cyber-attacks, disinformation, and propaganda."⁵⁵⁰ The United States is also a sponsoring nation of NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence, which focuses on cyber defense research and training and conducts annual multinational exercises that test a nation's ability to defend against various cyber-attacks.⁵⁵¹ Throughout Europe and in the United States, there are individual think tanks, organizations, and programs that contribute

⁵⁴⁶ Kevin Liptak, "John Bolton: U.S. Is Going on the Offensive against Cyberattacks," CNN, September 20, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/20/politics/us-cybersecurity-strategy-offense-john-bolton/index.html>.

⁵⁴⁷ Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. Begins First Cyberoperation Against Russia Aimed at Protecting Elections," *The New York Times*, October 24, 2018, New York edition, sec. Politics.

⁵⁴⁸ Barnes.

⁵⁴⁹ U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe*, 151.

⁵⁵⁰ Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, 142.

⁵⁵¹ "About US," CCDCOE, May 20, 2014, <https://www.ccdcoe.org/about-us>; U.S. Congress, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe*, 142.

in the fight against Russian active measures, which the United States may be funding through grants or other means.

B. WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

While the United States has taken steps to counter Russia's active measures, more should be done as there are apparent lacks in its ability to effectively deter Russia from using active measures. According to a Director of National Intelligence press release dated October 19, 2018, Russia has not stopped its efforts of influence and it "may seek to influence voter perceptions and decision making in the 2018 and 2020 U.S. elections."⁵⁵² As a result of this assessment, it appears that the steps the United States has taken thus far have not created enough of a deterrence to convince Russia that the costs of using active measures outweigh the benefits.

In comparison to how the Reagan administration countered Soviet active measures, the United States currently lacks a concentrated approach at mitigating Russia's influence. The Reagan administration made it a national priority to counter Soviet active measures, adequately invested in its countermeasures, and made a concerted effort to publicly reveal the Soviet attempts to use deceptive influence. They made it clear that the Soviet Union's use of active measures was not acceptable and would not go unanswered. Currently, it seems the United States is taking a minimalist approach to counter and deter Russia's active measures. U.S. countermeasures are underfunded, which detracts from its capability and because of the political polarization, the United States has not delivered a coherent message that Russia will be held accountable for its use of active measures. The longer it takes the United States to develop an effective deterrence, the more advanced Russia's capability will become, which will make it much more difficult to deter in the future.

The United States must act similarly as the Reagan administration did against the Soviet Union. The United States should organize purposefully and consistently to counter

⁵⁵² "Joint Statement from the ODNI, DoJ, FBI and DHS: Combating Foreign Influence in U.S. Elections," Director of National Intelligence, October 19, 2018, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/item/1915-joint-statement-from-the-odni-doj-fbi-and-dhs-combating-foreign-influence-in-u-s-elections>.

Russian active measures and implement policies that significantly increase the costs of using such forms of malevolent influence. Additionally, because Russia has greater access to the American people, the United States should invest in educating its citizens to increase their resiliency against disinformation. Based on the research in this thesis, the United States should consider taking the following actions to stop Russia from using active measures against the West:

1. Impose Sanctions

The United States should heavily increase sanctions against those who facilitate Russia's active measures. The United States could strengthen CAATSA and reduce the secondary sanction transaction limits to zero, which will increase the deterrence of those who wish to harm the United States and the West. Any person or organization that the United States has confirmed as being part of Russia's active measures should be added to CAATSA. This list should include all the department heads and senior leaders of the directorates that make up Russia's active measures apparatus and potentially their immediate family members, as well as any privately owned organizations and companies that help facilitate Russia's active measures. Before adding anyone to the sanctions list, the United States should publicly warn those considered for sanctions of the consequences for continuing to perpetuate Russia's malevolent influence. Hopefully, this public warning will deter individuals from implementing active measures; however, if they fail to stop, the United States must be willing to apply the heaviest sanctions possible to reduce their access to the United States and the West and to constrict any financial gains through Western businesses. The United States should also petition its allies to implement similar sanctions, which will create a unified front and greater deterrence against Russia.

2. Develop an Interagency Focused on Russian Active Measures

The United States should increase its capability to identify Russia's active measures. During the Cold War, the Reagan administration created the AMWG, which solely focused on collecting and disseminating well-vetted intelligence on Russia's active measures and increased the political costs for the Soviet Union. The United States should refocus its efforts away from a large agency like the GEC; instead, it should create a smaller

interagency much like the AMWG, specializing in only Russian active measures. This agency should be well funded and staffed with experts from the many different government and private institutions that focus on Russian influence. Additionally, the agency must be given the highest authority to execute its mission unimpeded from political influence, bureaucratic hurdles, and over-classification burdens that limit publicly revealing Russian tactics. The agency should develop working relationships with experts from social media companies to provide accurate real-time threat information on Russia's online active measures. At a minimum, the agency should produce unclassified semi-annual reports on Russia's active measures techniques, tactics, and procedures that are highly publicized and widely disseminated throughout the world. The United States should also petition its allies to create similar agencies that can cross-check and share information on Russia's active measures.

3. Create Strategic Communications against Russia's Malevolent Influence

Much like the Reagan administration did, the current administration should create a unified strategic communications plan centered on exposing Russia's use of active measures and its hypocritical acts against human rights and democracy. All U.S. government officials must be committed to the communications strategy and publicly confront Russia on its malevolent influence throughout the world. The United States should label Russia as an adversary and use the many different international public platforms to truthfully speak out against Russia and highlight its unacceptable behaviors. Furthermore, the United States should release any verified information on Russian officials' corruption, to include Putin's corruption. However, the United States must ensure that the information that is released is accurate to limit Russia's ability to legitimately deny the allegations. If Russia fails to abandon its use of active measures, the United States should work with its allies to isolate Russia from the rest of the world. All of these acts should be transparent and forewarned to Russia and the Russian people as a deterrent to alter its behavior.

4. Increase International Broadcasting Capability

The United States should double-down and heavily invest in its international broadcasting efforts in Russia, Central Asia, and Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, it should restructure the USAGM to become more aligned with a stringent strategic communications policy aimed at combating all forms of Russian influence. Currently, the USAGM has too much leniency in what it chooses to report, and there should be more government control. The USAGM needs to develop the capacity to deliver live breaking news coverage—much like the major 24-hour news networks in America—in all languages in the post-Soviet space. These broadcasting stations must also maintain accessible, relevant, and content-rich websites, and to enhance outreach, the broadcasting stations should create an extensive social media presence on all social media platforms used in its area of responsibility. Increasing the international broadcasting capability will significantly increase the expense of the USAGM, but in the information war against Russia, international broadcasting will become the United States’ most lethal weapon, much like it was during the Cold War.

5. Promote Fact-Checking

With an increase in funding for broadcasting, the USAGM should significantly enhance the capabilities of Polygraph.info. Polygraph.info should have the ability to work ‘round the clock at debunking Russian disinformation that attacks the United States and the West. Additionally, the United States should also either create or fund and publicize a non-partisan fact-checking organization that is focused on exposing disinformation within the United States. The American public should have easy access to this information, which will help develop a better-informed citizenry. Additionally, the government should require social media companies to post links on its users’ profiles that allow users easy access to fact-check information they encounter on social media. While the government cannot force people to use fact-checking websites, it should encourage the verification of information and make it simple for users to become better informed.

6. Institute Offensive Cyber Operations

The United States should go further with its offensive cyber-operations against foreigners who conduct hacking operations or facilitate Russia's online active measures. It is not enough to warn the perpetrators that they are being watched. Instead, the United States should raise the costs and destroy their capability to conduct future attacks against the American people. The United States should conduct offensive cyber-attacks to damage the computer equipment used to perform hacks or to rapidly spread disinformation, such as the IRA. The United States should limit its offensive cyber-operations only to destroy the computers and equipment used to facilitate Russia's active measures and not attack Russia's civilian infrastructure. Russia's senior military officers have essentially admitted the tactics they use in the information space as an act of war; therefore, the U.S. government must be willing to degrade Russia's capability to wage war against the United States, and offensive cyber operations can achieve this objective through limited and focused attacks against the actual perpetrators.

7. Build Resiliency through Education

The United States must build up Americans' resiliency to Russia's active measures. During the Cold War, a significant amount of Russian disinformation was filtered and did not reach the public through the use of editors and professional journalists. Currently, the Internet has dramatically reduced the filter because anyone can post information online that can become widely disseminated. Due to this lack of protection, the United States must invest in enhancing the American public's resiliency to disinformation. To create resiliency for future generations, the United States should mandate that middle and high schools incorporate more media literacy and critical thinking skills into their curriculums. These lessons should teach students to think for themselves and not believe everything they are told without proper verification. Not only should the United States prepare the new generations, but it should also focus on building resiliency in older generations. To fulfill this requirement, the United States should create a series of short, entertaining public service announcements that detail ways in which citizens can guard against falling prey to Russia's active measures. The government can create videos tailored to age demographics

and mandate social media companies deliver these announcements to profiles based on the age of the users. Essentially, the social media companies would treat the public service announcements in the same manner as they do to deliver paid advertisements. Additionally, the government should create a website linked to the advertisements that provides greater detail on how people can protect themselves and the latest information on Russia's active measures tactics and campaigns.

Giving Americans the information to protect themselves will act as a shield against the manipulative effects of Russia's active measures. Not only will education better protect Americans from Russian disinformation, but it will also create a more well-informed society that can sift through the deafening noise from the polarized political atmosphere.

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