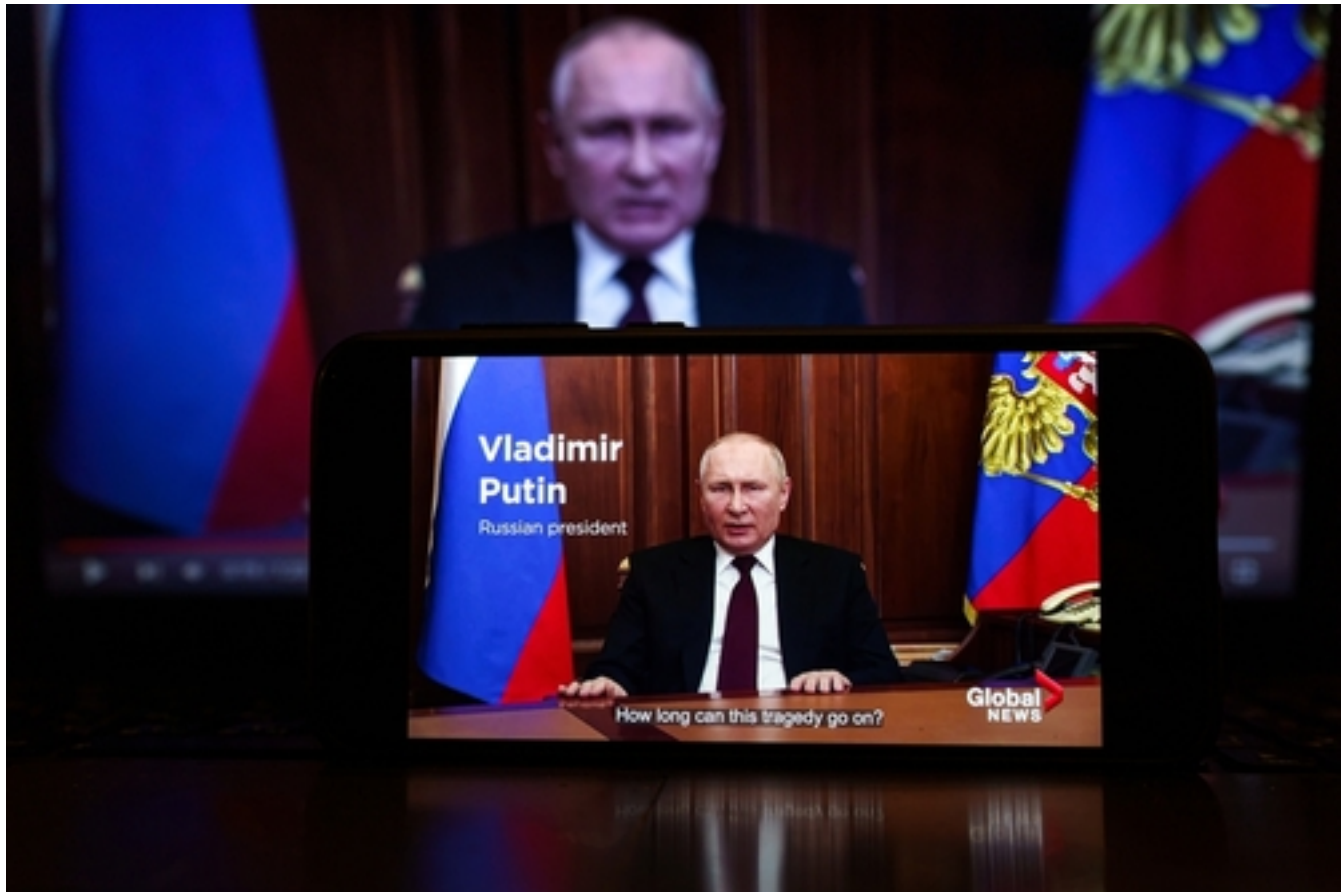




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Putin needs a break - Russia's new disinformation strategy



The invasion of Ukraine showed that the strength of the Russian army was significantly overestimated, and that it would not have much chance of recovery after the war.

However, the campaign against Ukraine has shown that Russia is still the best at something. Russia has the best disinformation and fake news dissemination army in the world.

Russia has been losing on the battleground, but has identified methods to neutralise its failures on the front line by implementing a fake news strategy.

At the start of the war, Russia believed in a quick conquest, but the Ukrainian army forced it to retreat. At the time, the Russian patriotic domain was filled with grievances, confusion, tears, and uncertainty.

When the Ukrainian army started kicking the Russians out of Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities and districts, it was a shock and humiliation no one in Russia could hide.

Grievances and tears were all over the Russian media and the internet. Losing to Ukraine was humiliating for Russia and its victorious Russki world ideology.

That was when Russia convinced itself that it was fighting against NATO in Ukraine. Russia cannot live with the idea of losing to Ukraine.

Then the Kremlin made very clever adjustments. But we need to take a look at the Russian media in general.

Controlled media provide a way out of defeat

All Russian media that is not prohibited, banned or restricted is under total control of the Kremlin.

Similarly, all pro-Kremlin patriotic bloggers are managed, sponsored or influenced by the Kremlin or its emissaries or loyalists. There are no exceptions.

After the Ukrainian army pushed back the Russian troops, the Kremlin concluded that the retreat was less damaging to Russia and its image than domestic reports on the withdrawal.

That was when Russia realised that fake news would be an easy way to exploit the Russian patriotic majority, particularly the Russki ethnic group, and use this fake news to send disinformation suitable for Russia and cause confusion in the West.

As soon as the directive arrived from the Kremlin's managers, all Russian media outlets and patriotic correspondents started publishing coordinated fake news provided by the Kremlin on how superior and dominant the Russian army had become, and how negligible and poor the Ukrainian offensive was.

To juice up the Kremlin's fake news agenda on the Ukrainian offensive, all Russian propaganda outlets and patriotic bloggers started sharing pictures of damaged Western infantry fighting vehicles and tanks.

The same pictures circulated but did not bother anyone, including those Western accomplices and supporters of the Kremlin who were surprisingly enjoying - just as the Russians did - publishing and commenting on those pictures of burned Western tanks.

A strange meeting with war correspondents

Russia went further, and organised Putin's meeting with the so-called Russian military correspondents, many of whom are patriotic bloggers.

This was very peculiar meddling for Putin because he did not need to meet such a low hierarchy of people, particularly those from low-profile media and propagandists.

The Kremlin has thousands of people working for the administration, and some engineer what Russian people see on TV or read on internet portals on a daily basis.

All Russian news outlets or patriotic bloggers daily receive the so-called manuals or "methodichkas", which outline and specify what topics their publications should cover.

This process of controlling what information is available to the Russian people has been polished for many years, long before the war.

Other factors influenced Putin's desire to meet patriotic bloggers and military correspondents.

Putin used that meeting to camouflage and "whisper" his proposal to the West, and calm the continuing domestic turbulence.

During the meeting, he claimed he wanted to acknowledge Ukraine as an independent country. He even suggested that Russia might not advance further, providing that Russian current territorial claims were satisfied.

He suggested that his army might refrain from advancing to Kyiv. He even confirmed that he

wanted to join NATO, but was rejected.

Putin is now pretending to be acceptable to the West, just as he once pretended to be acceptable to Boris Yeltsin's family.

He is sending disinformation regarding the war, spinning stories about Ukrainian failures, but, on the other hand, he is telling the West that he is willing to compromise and even stop.

Putin is lying again, just as he has throughout his career. The Ukrainian army is advancing, considering it is always much easier to be defensive than offensive.

The Russian army had months to settle in on the territories it seized while Western politicians tried to meet Ukrainian needs regarding tanks and planes.

New propaganda addresses Ukrainians and the West

So far, Russian lies have worked well on the Western political class, even without those Western politicians who were corrupted or infiltrated by the Kremlin or its emissaries, because Russian disinformation has enabled Russia to buy time.

Since Russia adapted a fake news strategy, all Russian media outlets claimed that Ukraine's offensive has failed.

The goal Russia has been trying to achieve is to demoralise the Ukrainian public following Russian propaganda mouthpieces and patriotic bloggers, and convince the West of the need to stop supporting Ukraine.

Putin stated that if the West wanted to end the war, it must cease to support Ukraine. Leaving Ukrainian territory is not an option for Putin because his life and political career intertwine with those occupied Ukrainian territories.

The truth is Putin cannot advance and cannot go back. Putin is now like a fairy tale prototype of Baron Münchhausen, between a lion and an alligator.

The Western alliance has been pressuring Putin. He has nothing to match the Western support of Ukraine.

He has demoralised and brainwashed the Russian population, particularly the Russki ethnic group, that has lived with the "Ukrainian Nazi" reality show since 2014.

Since then, they have been convinced that most Ukrainian people want to be Russki, and that Zelensky's administration was just like all the other previous administrations since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, under control of the British and American intelligence, and that those fake Russki people in Ukraine who only existed in Russian propaganda want to be liberated from the Ukrainian Nazis.

Putin needs to cheat his way out

Putin needs to stick to this fake legend about Ukraine and the Ukrainians because in the course of the Russian propaganda lies that have lasted for almost 10 years, the Russian majority accepted this lie as the absolute truth.

With the invention of the Ukrainian Nazis, Putin has given the Russian majority a purpose and a goal similar to the one the Soviet people had on the outcome of the Great Patriotic

War.

Putin cannot abandon the fake news about the Ukrainian Nazis. It worked so well on the Russian chauvinist majority, the Russki people. Everything was going swimmingly before for Putin.

Now everything has gone wrong. Because of that, Putin needs a pause. He needs to cheat his way out.

The Russian propaganda started devaluing Ukrainian achievements and amplifying Russian army performances.

Russia was always good at fake news. It has the best fake news industry because Russia has never bothered with accountability.

No one objected to Russian lies globally. Particularly if those lies regarded Ukraine.

The Russki world and anti-Ukrainian sentiment are popular among the Russian opposition representatives.

The Russian opposition who claimed brotherhood between the Russki and the Ukrainians have not been telling the truth, probably because denial of this fake brotherhood ultimately endangered the territorial integrity of Russia itself. The Russki ethnic group almost similarly despised all other ethnic groups that lived in the USSR and Russia.

The threat of terrorism

During the meeting with military correspondents, Putin admitted that the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam was to

Russia's advantage, even though Putin claimed Russia did not do it. It was also a message to the West.

He has been blackmailing the West and the world community, trying to suggest that there could be similar catastrophes in case they fail to comply with his claims.

Putin has nowhere to go, unlike everyone else in the Russian establishment. He thus decided to send fake news to the West and the patriotic Russian majority.

In the fairy tale, Baron Münchhausen jumped, and a crocodile swallowed a lion which had attacked Baron Münchhausen.

Putin is not going to be as fortunate as Baron Münchhausen. He will be defeated in Ukraine, while the Russian establishment will use Russia's military defeat as an opportunity to shake him, unless Putin tells the West that the Ukrainian army has no potential and that it is in everyone's best interest to end the war now with the current territorial divisions.

These will be lies too. Russia will not stop and will try to seize many more Ukrainian cities and provinces, and cut off Ukraine's access to the sea.

Ending the war with Russia's interests, Putin and few people around him will not be able to get any foothold in post-war Russia, humiliated and defeated.

To intensify his claims and bargaining leverage, Putin will probably use hunger terrorism, and annul the grain deal, and perform other acts of ecological terrorism.

Putin is an experienced liar and recruiter. It was not an accident that he acknowledged the benefits of the Nova Kakhovka dam explosion.