



By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

# God job NAFO! Why do Russians like to be feared and hate being laughed at?



The average Russian does not know much about what happens in other Russian regions. But they are familiar with the Kremlin's interpretation of the events in Western countries.

Russian people have retained communist communal thinking, particularly regarding individual achievements and success.

They do not consider themselves separate from all other Russian people, particularly their rulers.

The absence of personal achievements has always been compensated with state achievements. It has been like that since the Soviet days.

Foreign policy achievements get the Russian patriotic majority going. Russian news covers their foreign policy and current events.

Russian news channels love to savour genuine or fabricated setbacks and errors by other countries and their leaders.

## Putin never calls, others call him

The average TV viewer does not know much about what happens in other Russian regions. But they are familiar with the Kremlin's interpretation of the events in Western countries.

Since 2014, the Russian majority has been well aware of the Kremlin's agenda and vision regarding Ukraine.

Russian propaganda has been using every nuance and millimetre to glorify Russia and diminish Western countries.

Whenever, for example, Russian people have been told about a phone call that Putin has had with a world leader, propaganda has always emphasised that the initiative came from the other side, and that Putin graciously accepted the invitation and agreed to speak.

This gives the Russian people a boost of pride and self-esteem. It demonstrates to them that their leader's influence and respect are unmatched by comparison to the influence and respect of any Western leader.

"Great Russia" is not prosperous or technologically advanced. "Great Russia" is a country feared by other nations and countries.

## Ukraine is not a member of NATO - news that is celebrated

That is why the Russian propaganda has refused NATO's

extend an invitation to Ukraine. This would provide additional support in favour of the Russian majority's conviction that NATO and the West, in general, are afraid of Russia.

Refusal to invite Ukraine is now passionately utilised by the Russian propaganda machine, which has been spinning various Kremlin sentiments about the decision of the recent NATO summit in Lithuania.

The patriotic majority loves the fact that NATO refused to admit Ukraine. Everything else, including the newly established Ukraine-NATO Council and the firm commitment of Western

countries to continue and intensify assistance to Ukraine has remained in the background.

NATO's decision is interpreted as proof that Putin has been doing a good job and that the West is afraid of Russia.

NATO's decision regarding Ukraine has also helped Putin consolidate power after Prigozhin's uprising.

Too many Russian opposition representatives want to change the Kremlin leader. Unfortunately, they do not want to change Russia fundamentally.

## Mocking Russian arrogance

The NAFO initiative, an internet movement initiated by a group of individuals who decided to mock and ridicule Russian propaganda, is a great danger for this deep-rooted coexistence of creators of propaganda and those for whom it is intended.

This NAFO initiative is one of the best ways to counter Russian propaganda and influence Russian imperial anti-Western sentiment.

Russian people live in false and alternative paradigms. That is why Russian opposition representatives such as Alexey Navalny, who hoped to win the Russian elections, refrained from criticising Crimea's annexation and instead claimed that Crimea was not a sandwich to be returned to Ukraine.

This is why Russian opposition representatives such as Leonid Volkov, one of the heads of the Navalny team, who still hope to participate in the Russian electoral charade, passionately oppose the NAFO initiative.

These Russian opposition representatives understand that NAFO has been targeting Russian pillars defining the worldview of the Russian majority: the people whom Russian opposition representatives intend to attract.