



2020

SOVIET AND RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION



Introduction

This list has been prepared for those who, already familiar with the concept of disinformation, would like to dive deeper into the origins and characteristics of Russian disinformation.

Although deception is arguably as old as conflict and war, the operationalisation of disinformation and its becoming a discipline of its own can be traced back to the Soviet Union under Stalin. It is thus generally understood, though often understated too, that contemporary Russian disinformation operations are largely influenced by and inspired in the historical Soviet disinformation doctrine. For that reason, a detailed understanding of Soviet conception and execution of disinformation operations serves as no other instrument to correctly interpret the disinformation campaigns launched against Western audiences by the Russian Federation under Vladimir V. Putin.

Disinformation was indeed extensively used by Soviet Russia during the Cold War and even before that. But it was right after the demise of the Soviet Union, when the triumphant Western governments believed that the threat of disinformation would die off with the KGB. Much on the contrary, active measures and disinformation operations actually went on uninterrupted throughout that post-Cold War period and into Putin's illiberal Russia as an inalienable instrument of its foreign policy.

Resources selected by the Council Libraries

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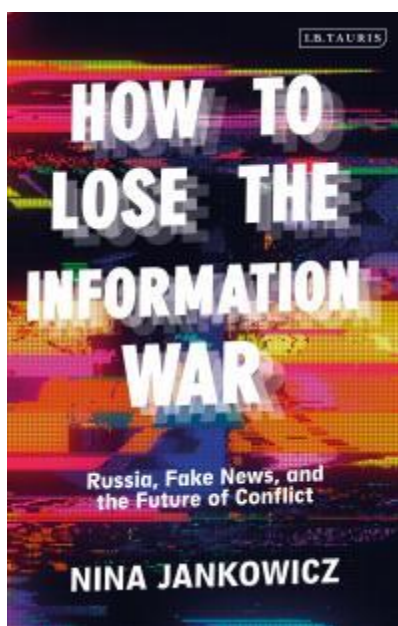
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CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION

MONOGRAPHS



How to lose the information war : Russia, fake news, and the future of conflict

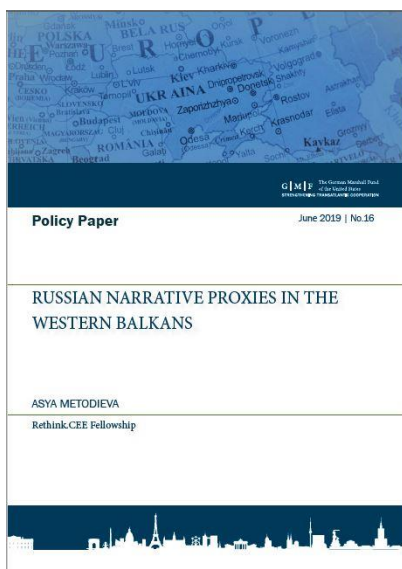
Nina Jankowicz

I. B. Tauris & Company, 2020

Available on [Request](#)

"Since the start of the Trump era, the United States and the Western world has finally begun to wake up to the threat of online warfare and the attacks from Russia. Central and Eastern European states, however, have been aware of the threat for years. Nina Jankowicz has advised these governments on the front lines of the information war. The book takes the reader on a journey through five governments' responses to Russian information warfare tactics. She journeys into the campaigns the Russian operatives run, and

shows how we can better understand the motivations behind these attacks and how to beat them."



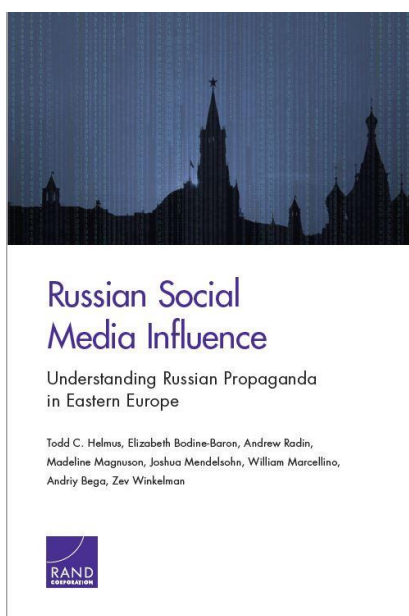
Russian Narrative Proxies in the Western Balkans

Asya Metodieva;

Washington DC: German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2019.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"This paper seeks to explain the growth of anti-West/pro-Russia narratives in the Western Balkans by looking at the role of local narrative proxies -local state and non-state information agents that willingly promote Russia's interests across the region. In particular it looks at their role in three recent political developments: the name-change referendum in North Macedonia in 2018, the latest phase of the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo, and the 2018 elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

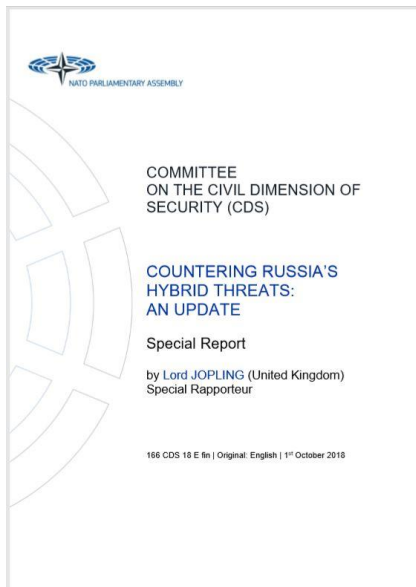


Russian Social Media Influence: Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe

Todd C Helmus, Elizabeth Bodine-Baron, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson, Joshua Mendelsohn, William Marcellino, Andriy Bega, Zev Winkelman,
Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 2018

Available [Online](#)

"Russia employs a sophisticated social media campaign against former Soviet states that includes news tweets, non-attributed comments on web pages, troll and bot social media accounts, and fake hashtag and Twitter campaigns. Nowhere is this threat more tangible than in Ukraine. Researchers analyzed social media data and conducted interviews with regional and security experts to understand the critical ingredients to countering this campaign."



Countering Russia's Hybrid Threats: An Update

Lord Jopling

NATO's Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security, 2018

[Access Online](#)

"In NATO's context, 'hybrid warfare' entails a campaign against an Ally or the Alliance by means that are not expected to trigger Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which enshrines the principle of collective defence. This special report will focus specifically on the Kremlin's use of hybrid tactics because Moscow's hybrid toolbox is arguably the most sophisticated, resourceful, comprehensive and concerted. It also focuses on Russia because Russia's 2014 military doctrine clearly identifies NATO

as its primary threat. This report aims at further improving awareness of Russia's hybrid activities, including political interference, low-level use of force, espionage, crime and corruption, disinformation and propaganda, cyberattacks, economic pressure and sanctions-busting, as well as showing how several techniques reinforce and complement each other."



Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy

edited by Andrei P. Tsygankov.

London, England ; New York, New York : Routledge , 2018

[Available on Request](#)

"Providing a comprehensive overview of Russia's foreign policy directions, this handbook brings together an international team of scholars to develop a complex treatment of Russia's foreign policy. The chapters draw from numerous theoretical traditions by incorporating ideas of domestic institutions, considerations of national security and international recognition as sources of the nation's foreign policy."

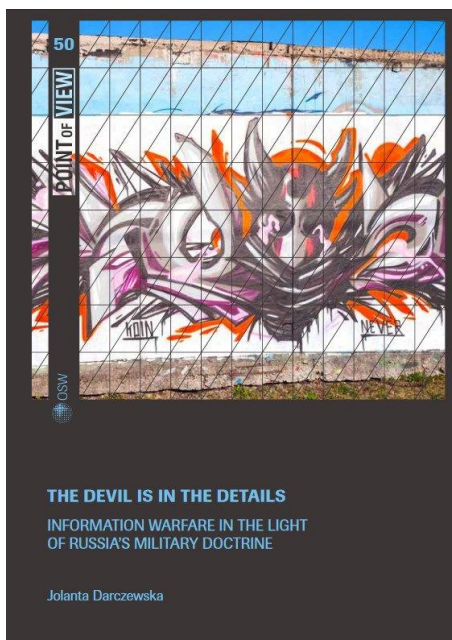


Routledge Handbook of Russian Security

edited by Roger E. Kanet,
Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
Available on [Request](#)

"The Routledge Handbook of Russian Security offers a comprehensive collection of essays on all aspects of Russian security and foreign policy by international scholars from across the world. The volume identifies key contemporary topics of research and debate and takes into account the changes that have occurred in the study of Russian security strategy since the end of the Cold War. The book concludes with case studies of the major examples of Russian involvement and operations in a series of security conflicts,

including that in Georgia, the intervention in Ukraine and occupation of Crimea, and the ongoing Civil War in Syria."

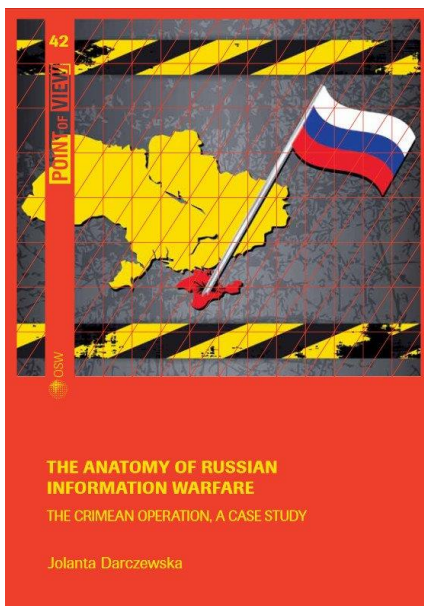


The devil is in the details. Information warfare in the light of Russia's military doctrine

Jolanta Darczewska,
Warsaw: The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW),
Point of View 50, May 2015
Available [Online](#)

"By highlighting informational threats and giving them a military dimension, the authors of the Russian Federation's military doctrine have outlined the concept of information warfare. It is a kind of combat conducted by both conventional and indirect methods, open and concealed, using military and civilian structures. It has two dimensions: broader ("non-nuclear containment", i.e. combat waged on various levels - political, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian, military) and

narrower (as an element supporting of action). An analysis of these issues enables us to identify several rising trends over the period 2000-2014 in Russian security policy."



The Anatomy of Russian Information Warfare: The Crimean Operation, a Case Study

Jolanta Darczewska

Warsaw: The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW),

Point of View 42 (May 2014)

[Access Online](#)

"This text is an attempt to reconstruct an outline of the information warfare theory based on the writings of the leading representatives of Russian geopolitics, Igor Panarin and Aleksandr Dugin, and also its applied use during the operation in Crimea."



Ukraine and Beyond: Russia's Strategic Security Challenge to Europe

Janne Haaland Matlary, Tormod Heier, Janne Haaland Matlary, Cham Tormod Heier,

Switzerland : Palgrave Macmillan , 2016

[Available at Council Library Main Collection \(104110 \)](#)

"This book is the first full-spectrum analysis of Russian and European norms of political action, ranging from international law, ethics, and strategy, to the specific norms for the use of force. It brings together leading scholars from these various fields, examining the differences in norm understanding between Russia and Europe. In light of the 2014 occupation and annexation of Crimea by Russia, and its subsequent covert participation in the

internal affairs of Ukraine, including aggressive flying and major military exercises, Russia seems to be a classical revisionist power, intent on changing the balance of power in Europe in particular. It also reaches beyond Europe, inserting itself as the key actor in the Syrian war. The book therefore considers how we should understand Russia. It also questions whether or not the West, in particular Europe, responds adequately in this delicate and dangerous new situation. The book concludes that at present Russia acts strategically and with considerable success whereas Europe is reactive in its response."

ARTICLES

Russia's long-term campaign of disinformation in Europe

Carnegie Europe
Agnieszka Legucka, 2020
[Access Online](#)

"The Russian authorities were probably satisfied with the title of the 2020 Munich Security Conference; "Westlessness." Years of trying to weaken and undermine the current order in Europe have had the intended effect. The European Commission has identified Russian disinformation campaigns as the EU's greatest threat because they are systematic, well resourced, and perpetrated on a larger scale than similar campaigns by any other country, including China, Iran, and North Korea."

The rhythm of struggle; Disinformation and democracy

Economist Intelligence Unit N.A. Incorporated
The Economist, 2020-05-16, Vol.435 (9194), p.73
[Access Online](#)

"Four new books reveal different facets of how that murky struggle between Russia and the West has played out and evolved. In "Active Measures", Thomas Rid, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, surveys the history of disinformation, with an emphasis on the KGB's prodigious output. "The Folly and the Glory" by Tim Weiner, a veteran journalist, examines America's campaign of propaganda against communist rivals. Gordon Corera, a security correspondent for the BBC, looks at Russia's "illegals" programme of deep-cover sleeper agents in "Russians Among Us". And in "From Russia with Blood", Heidi Blake, a journalist for BuzzFeed News, investigates Russia's killing spree in Britain."

Contemporary Russian revisionism: understanding the Kremlin's hybrid warfare and the strategic and tactical deployment of disinformation

Mason Richey,
Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg,
Asia Europe Journal 16, no. 1 (March 2018): 101-113.
[Access via Eureka](#)

"In this policy brief, after an account of the historical-political context of Russia's recent aggressive actions, the author examines the objectives, strategy, and tactics of Russia's information warfare, particularly as concerns eastern Europe and Syria, although also against selected western European states and the USA. Of special interest is the notion that Russia's disinformation is potent because it does not necessarily establish falsehoods as true, but rather pollutes political discourse such that news information consumers are led to doubt the very concepts of truth and objective

political facts. The author concludes by (a) discussing the impact this strategy has had--and will continue to have--on Europe's domestic politics, as well as on the global liberal order, and then (b) broaching policy ideas for countering Russian disinformation."

Covert Action in the Age of Social Media

Mark Stout,

Washington DC: Georgetown University Press,

Georgetown Journal of International Affairs 18, no. 2 (July 2017): 94-103.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"Although most countries conduct covert action operations, Russia is particularly well-suited in historical, technical, and strategic terms to perform successful influence campaigns in the Cyber Age."

Corpus-Based Analysis as a Method to Identify Russian Trolling Activity

Kamil Baraniuk,

Torun: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek,

Polish Political Science Yearbook 46, no. 1 (2017): 239-255.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"There has been an increased interest in the field of informational and psychological warfare conducted by the Russian Federation directed at Western countries and their allies following the intensification of the conflict in Ukraine. The most visible example of this are the activities in the field of propaganda, disinformation and psychological operations accompanied the annexation of the Crimea and manipulate the American public during the presidential election in 2016. Trolling as one of using tools of such activity is a highly visible manifestation in which users or automatic comment generation programs manipulate online discussions. This phenomenon is visible and widely discussed in the media discourse. Efforts are being made to develop academically rigorous systems of identification and description. This paper presents the results and main conclusions reached through the application of the author's method of analysing key words supported by corpus-based analysis in exploring this phenomenon."

Londongrad; Russia, Twitter and Brexit

Economist Intelligence Unit

The Economist, 2017-11-25, Vol.425 (9068), p.53

Access [Online](#)

"Trolls, bots, hackers, propagandists and provocateurs of Russian origin have lately descended on Western democracies. The tentacles of the disinformation apparatus, thought to be rooted in the Kremlin, have been found fiddling with elections everywhere from Ukraine and Bulgaria to France and America. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that they may also have touched the Brexit campaign

held in June 2016 by trying to steer social-media conversations before the referendum, as a spate of new academic research suggests."

The 'combination' : an instrument in Russia's information war in Catalonia

Mira Milosevich-Juaristi ; Real Instituto Elcano.

2017

Access via [Eureka](#)

"The 'combination' (kombinaciya) is an operation which integrates diverse instruments (cyber warfare, cyber-intelligence, disinformation, propaganda and collaboration with players hostile to the values of liberal democracy) in Russia's information war in Catalonia during and in the wake of its illegal referendum."

Controlling chaos : how Russia manages its political war in Europe

Mark Galeotti,

London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2017.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"Russia carries out 'active measures' in Europe to destabilise and confuse governments and societies. However, there is no grand strategy, beyond weakening the EU and NATO and creating a more conducive environment for itself. Evidence suggests different ambitions for Kremlin operations in different European countries. This has very significant implications not just for understanding Russian policy but also in shaping European responses. This report seeks to identify the degree to which this is more than just a random medley of negative memes and self-interested falsehoods, and where the semi-structured political offensive against the West is planned and managed."

Putin's hydra: inside Russia's intelligence services

Mark Galeotti

London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"Far from being an all-powerful "spookocracy" that controls the Kremlin, Russia's intelligence services are internally divided, distracted by bureaucratic turf wars, and often produce poor quality intelligence – ultimately threatening the interests of Vladimir Putin himself. Drawing on extensive interviews with former and current intelligence officials, this article explains how the spy agencies really work and argues that Europe's view of them is patchy and based on outdated caricatures."

Russia's hybrid warfare in the east: the integral nature of the information sphere

Sascha Dov Bachmann, Hakan Gunneriusson,

Washington DC: Georgetown University Press

Georgetown Journal of International Affairs 16, Special Issue (September 2015): 198-211.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"Russia has resorted to a new way of waging war, combining conventional and unorthodox methods of warfare, including the use of covert Special Forces as provocateurs, (dis)information campaigns by media outlets, cyber-attacks, and even leveraging its oil and gas resources to exert economic pressure... [This] hybrid approach functions well for the West for two reasons. Firstly, it is obvious that the relative balance of military strength currently favours Russia. Given Russia's nuclear capabilities, there is a clear and omnipresent reluctance to go to war against Russia. This in itself is not just realpolitik, however. Russia is also enjoying success against its EU and NATO rivals because the latter two have demonstrated little willingness to forcefully respond to the former's provocations. It's not just a lack of capability: the various publics constituting the European Union and NATO are wary of large-scale military engagements."

Reverse Engineering Russian Internet Research Agency Tactics Through Network Analysis

Charles Kriel, Alexa Pavliuc

Defence Strategic Communications 6, Spring 2019, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

Available [Online](#)

"In mid-October of 2018, Twitter released a dataset containing both the contents and information for accounts on their platform related to the Internet Research Agency. These accounts were used to influence the 2016 US Presidential election, as well as elections and referenda in several other countries, including the UK and Venezuela. This article documents a data analysis of these tweets, and through data visualisation demonstrates a rigorous methodology of practice at work in Russia's online interference in foreign democracies, particularly through St. Petersburg's Internet Research Agency (IRA). This research will also show that many previous visualisations of this data have failed to factor for time, and therefore overemphasise certain trends. Finally, we question whether Twitter released the entire Internet Research Agency dataset, as claimed."

What We Now Know About Russian Disinformation

By Renee DiResta

New York, N.Y: New York Times Company

The New York times, 17 December, 2018.

Available [Online](#)

The Only Way to Defend Against Russia's Information War

Nina Jankowicz

New York, N.Y: New York Times Company

The New York times, 25 September 2017.

Access via [Online](#)

Putin Is Waging Information Warfare. Here's How to Fight Back

Mark Galeotti

New York, N.Y: New York Times Company

The New York times, 14 December 2016.

Available [Online](#)

VIDEO

Russian Disinformation: Structures and Strategies with Alexa Pavliuc [video]

Alexa Pavliuc

Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Online lecture, 1 June 2020.

Access video [online](#)

"The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) is pleased to present an online lecture and Q and A session – Russian Disinformation: Structures and Strategies, on June 1 at 12 PM EST by Alexa Pavliuc, MSc, London Lead at Ryerson University's Faculty of Communication and Design. Alexa has provided advisory support in devising tools to detect and understand disinformation to both the Canadian Government and the European Union. Alexa will speak about her research on Russian disinformation efforts in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine."

Approaches to Counter Russian Social Media Influence [video]

Elizabeth Bodine-Baron

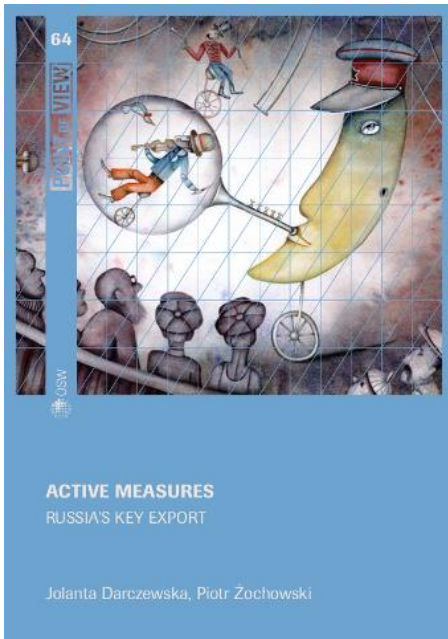
RAND Corporation, Congressional Briefing, 15 March 2019.

Access video [online](#)

RAND researchers categorized and analyzed different approaches and policy options to respond to the specific threat of Russian influence via disinformation spread on social media in the United States. In this briefing, Elizabeth Bodine-Baron discusses: The challenges facing current measures underway by Department of Homeland Security and Department of State to combat this threat; Proposed approaches, as well as unintended consequences and drawbacks; Recommendations for policymakers.

HISTORICAL SOVIET DISINFORMATION

MONOGRAPHS



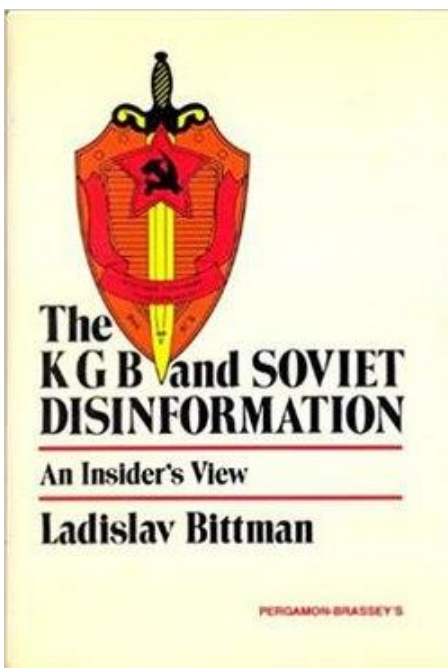
Active measures. Russia's key export

Jolanta Darczewska and Piotr Żochowski,
Warsaw: The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW),
Point of View 64 (June 2017).

Access via [Eureka](#)

"This paper shows the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the techniques referred to as 'active measures'. The renaissance of this question currently observable today has called their role in causing crises into prominence. This topic also deserves special treatment because the contemporary forms of active measures are largely based on patterns already known and described in the past. A historical perspective may help to assess and identify their covert mechanisms. The current problems with the aggressive

actions of the Russian special services are enhanced versions of the old, to which new informational and communication technologies have contributed."



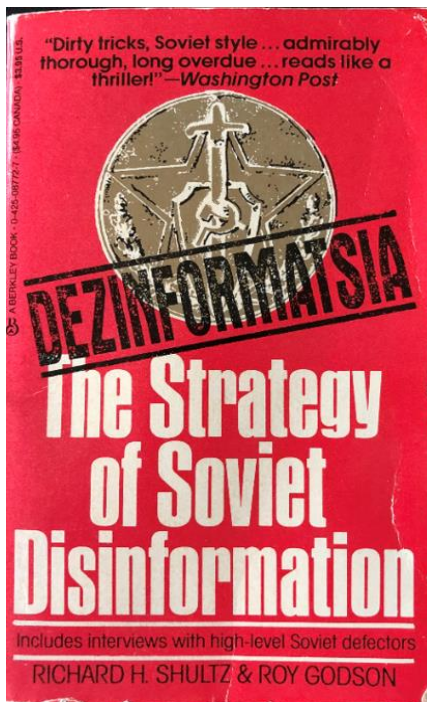
The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View

Ladislav Bittman

Washington: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985.

[Interlibrary loan request](#)

"The purpose of this book is to describe disinformation methods and techniques used by the Soviet bloc and to assess the impact of these operations against the United States in the last decade. The major objectives are to show how Communist nations misuse democratic communication systems and to advocate more effective devices to protect the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution."



Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy (later edited as *Dezinformatsia: The Strategy of Soviet Disinformation*)

Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson;
New York: Berkley Books, 1986

[Interlibrary loan request](#)

This book discusses Soviet techniques of overt and covert propaganda against the free world in general and the United States in particular. Chapters include discussions of foreign policy perspectives, strategy and bureaucracy; Soviet organizational structure for active measures; overt propaganda and covert political techniques; general propaganda themes; a descriptive analysis of Soviet foreign propaganda directed against the United States and NATO; a longitudinal analysis of Soviet propaganda themes; and a comparative longitudinal

analysis."

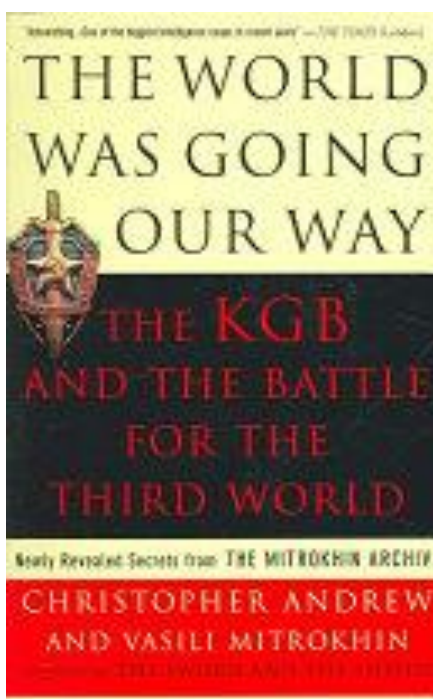


The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West

Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin,
London: Penguin Books, 2000.

[Interlibrary loan request](#)

"For years KGB worker Vasili Mitrokhin had risked his life smuggling material from the Russian secret service archives and hiding it beneath his family dacha. When he defected to the West he took with him what the FBI would call 'the most complete and extensive intelligence ever received from any source'. This book is the result."

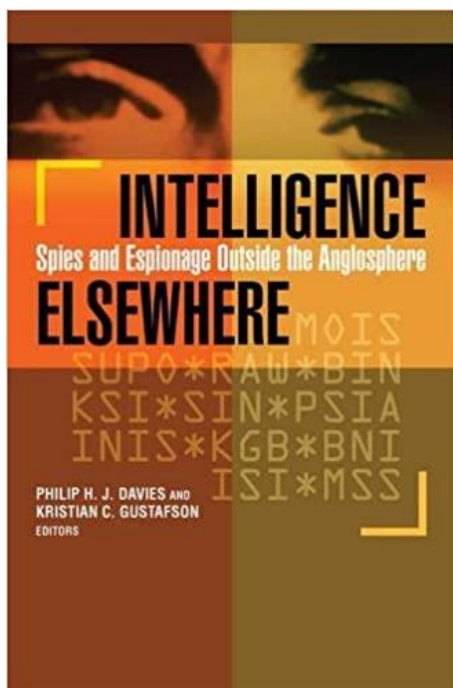


The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World

Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin,
New York: Basic Books, 2006

[Interlibrary loan request](#)

"Whereas *The Sword and the Shield* revealed the secrets of the KGB's operations in the United States and in Europe, *The World Was Going Our Way* gives us by far the most complete picture we have ever had of the KGB and its operations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. The KGB believed that that the third world was the key to winning the Cold War, and *The World Was Going Our Way* reveals their secret dealings with third world leaders and heads of government for the first time."



Protecting the New Rome: Byzantine Influences on Russian Intelligence

Kristian C. Gustafson

In: **Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage Outside the Anglosphere**

Philip H. J. Davies and Kristian Gustafson,
Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013

Available on [Request](#)

"One matter that causes particular concern in the West is the behaviour of Russia's security services and their relationship with the central authority of the state ... One can make more sense of Russia's security and intelligence culture -as opposed to specific communist or post communist cultures- by tracing their common philosophical and historic roots back to their point of origin, between five hundred and a thousand

years ago in Constantinople and its empire, the long-lived eastern successor of the Roman Empire. The Byzantines had a strongly bureaucratized and institutionalized intelligence and security culture, which formed the heart of their overall political system, and which strongly influenced the behaviour of Tsarist and Communist Russia -and likely still influences it today."

ARTICLES

Soviet active measures

William E. Knepper,

U.S. Government Printing Office, Department of State Bulletin 84, no. 2089 (1 August 1984): 53-57.

Access via [Eureka](#)

"The author offers a detailed overview of Soviet active measures since the 1920s up to the early 1980s to exemplify the long game played by the Soviets relying on the cumulative impact of their active measures operations over the decades."

Russia's Failed Transformation: The Power of the KGB/FSB from Gorbachev to Putin

Ulf Walther

International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence 27, no. 4 (2014): 666-686,

Available [Online](#)

"The dimensions of the secret service's penetration and autonomy in the USSR/RF remain very high. Hardly any changes took place in the transition years. The KGB/FSB has proven for almost the entire period that, in a predetermined, deficient legal and regulatory framework, it is able to not only provide information, but also to exert influence. Its conspiratorial and therefore non-transparent approach has increased the effect of penetration and prevented the creation of the basic conditions necessary for a democratic limitation of the accumulation of power by the secret service. Consequently, this has resulted in the usurpation of political power."

Whatever happened to the KGB?

Joseph L. Albini & Julie Anderson

International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence 11, no. 1 (1998): 26-56,

Available [Online](#)

"Contrary to Russia's claim that following the August 1991 coup attempt to reinstall hard-liners the KGB was dismantled and "disappeared into thin air," the notorious secret police and intelligence service continues to exist. Any alterations in KGB techniques and methods have been merely cosmetic."