Information Security Policy

Conditions, Threats and Implementation in the International Environment

EDITED BY
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INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

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Information Security and Mechanisms Used by the Russian Federation to Shape Polish Public Opinion

ABSTRACT: The article presents the results of research on the determinants of information security and the disinformation activity of the Russian side – which relates to the implementation of the objectives of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation concerning Poland, but also other countries in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. The article presents trends, methods of operation and techniques used by the Russians that have been implemented in recent years and the recent period. The text also outlines the general features of disinformation activities and propaganda, the main narratives and the trends in Russian communications.

KEYWORDS: information security, propaganda, disinformation

Introduction

As part of this work, an attempt will be made to describe the determinants of information security and disinformation activity Russia, referring to the pursuit of foreign policy objectives of the Russian Federation concerning Poland, but also countries in the region such as Lithuania and Ukraine. The following analysis will outline the trends, modus operandi and techniques employed by the Russian side that were mani-

fested primarily in 2021. Based on specific examples of actions, the general features of disinformation activities conducted against countries in the region by the Russian Federation and the main narratives, as well as the orientations of Russian communications, will be presented. The main goal of the research on the issue discussed [in the paper] will be to present the methods and techniques used by the Russian part in attempts to influence Polish society. Russian activity refers, however, not only to the formation of Poles' opinions in such a way as to influence Polish domestic policy, but also to gaining the ability to interfere in the foreign policy line of the Polish state after February 2022 – especially in the field of Polish-Ukrainian relations.

At the beginning of the work, the meaning of the key terms that will be expressed in the text should be clarified. The concepts of *disinformation* and *propaganda* in this paper will be captured based on Yevhen Mahda's interpretation, whereby disinformation is "the deliberate dissemination of false information in order to achieve military objectives more effectively and provoke the opponent to take certain actions".[1] The term *propaganda* in this context will be understood as "a form of communication designed to disseminate information intended to influence and create public opinion in accordance with the needs of a particular ideology or so as to serve a particular purpose".[2] *Propaganda* and *disinformation* will, therefore, be understood as part of information and psychological activities. Because of this, at this point, it is worth clarifying the notion of *an information-psychological-oriented operation*, a concise explanation of which was provided by Michał Wojnowski, according to whom "An information-psychological-oriented operation can be defined as a methodology for creating and implementing a combination of various activities leading to the transformation of the image of the world that exists in the consciousness of the opposing party".[3] Another concept that will arise at work will be *narration*. It will be understood as a "story" that is part of a "way of understanding reality".[4] In the context of the issue at hand, it will thus be a means used to create an appropriate – from a Russian perspective – vision of reality.

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[1] Є. Магда, *Гібридна агресія Росії: Уроки для Європи*, Калмар, Київ 2017, p. 263.

[2] *Ibidem*.

[3] M. Wojnowski, "'Zarządzanie refleksyjne' jako paradygmat rosyjskich operacji informacyjno-psychologicznych w XXI w.", *Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego*, vol. 7 (2015), p. 16.

[4] J. Trzebiński, *Narracja jako sposób rozumienia świata*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2002, p. 13.

Methods of interference by the Russian Federation in Poland's infosphere

In pursuing its foreign policy objectives, the Russian Federation actively uses information tools to form attitudes in the societies attacked that are appropriate from its perspective. Through a network of influence centres tailored to the societies in question, information operations are carried out to elicit the reactions assumed by the Russian Federation, which are a necessary element of achieving the Russian Federation's tactical and strategic objectives. It is worth remembering that the objectives of the Russian Federation refer both to individual states and international structures.

In the case of countries such as Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine, the objectives pursued by the Russians relate to destabilising the socio-political situation, stimulating anti-EU, anti-NATO and anti-American attitudes and stimulating tensions between the countries mentioned above (e.g., between Poland and Ukraine, or Poland and Lithuania). The above activity of the Russian side refers to the attempts to disintegrate NATO and the EU. As for each of the countries identified, the Russian party has clearly defined objectives, which are pursued in the information sphere with clear consideration of the country's cultural, political and economic specifics. By influencing a given society, the Russian Federation uses the infrastructure it owns, which it has acquired as part of the long-term formation of its influence capabilities. In the case of the Polish public, the Russian side cannot count on the possibility of a serious impact on society through Russian-speaking sources. One group that can be directly influenced by broadcasting Russian-language materials (TV programmes broadcast from the territory of the Russian Federation or key news portals) is a serious group of economic migrants who came to Poland from Ukraine (before February 24, 2022), Belarus or Russia (up to 3 million people – the estimated number of economic migrants relating to the number of work permits issued in 2021)[5] and some Ukrainian refugees who arrived after February 24, 2022. However, these groups do not seem to be strongly influenced by Russian disinformation messages – the narratives about Poland are contrasted with reality, so the harmful charge seems to be partially neutralised.

At present, however, the penetration of narratives similar to Russian propaganda into the Polish infosphere through groups operating in social networks (especially Facebook) is clearly observed. Some of these groups, run in parallel in Polish and Rus-

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[5] "Rekordowa liczba imigrantów zarobkowych w Polsce. Niezaspokojony popyt", *Rzeczpospolita*, 25.01.2022 [on-line:] https://www.rp.pl/rynek-pracy/art19323661-rekordowa-liczba-imigrantow-zarobkowych-w-polsce-niezaspokojony-popyt (1.09.2022).

sian (probably administered by people coming from areas of the Russian Federation or Belarus), become sources that enable Poles to obtain disinformation or propaganda content. These materials are often pro-Russian (building a positive image of Russia and Russian politicians) and anti-Ukrainian (portraying Ukraine as a "force of evil", a country of chaos controlled by almost mythical "Banderites"). The aforementioned groups and openly pro-Russian fanpages are also run by Polish citizens and members of organisations registered in Poland, such as "Kursk"[6] or "Polish-Russian Brotherhood".[7] Such environments, through their activities on social networks (especially Facebook), introduce materials to the Polish infosphere that warm up the image of the Russian Federation and the USSR, and also publish content that is openly anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western. The activity of the groups is part of the context of stimulating anti-Western, anti-Ukrainian, anti-government and pro-Russian public moods. The leaders of the indicated circles cooperate with the Polish-language editors of the Sputnik portal, becoming "experts" in confirming Russian propaganda theses[8] (this process was noticeable until the activities of the Sputnik portal were limited after February 2022).

In the space of social networks, there are also several fanpages that are not openly pro-Russian but are the source responsible for introducing disinformation content to the Polish Internet space. One of the examples of this type of source was a fanpage called "Konflikty i Wiadomości Światowe" ["Conflicts and News of the World"].[9] The indicated source was actively used during the escalation of tensions around the Ukrainian borders at the turn of March and April 2021. "Conflicts and World News" was responsible for stimulating a mood of panic caused by the spectre of impending war and carrying out activities of accusing the Ukrainian side of bearing responsibility for the impending war. In 2022, this function was performed by, among others, "Stop U-krainizacji Polski" group ["Stop the Ukrainisation of Poland"][10] – which, like many others, started to function as a lobbying group for narratives that undermine the sense of vaccination against Covid-19, and later focused on stimulating hatred against Ukraine

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6   Fanpage created by the Kursk Association, over 4.6, [on-line:] https://www.facebook.com/Stkursk (1.09.2022).
7   A group formed by the Polish-Russian Brotherhood, over 7,000 group members, [on-line:] https://www.facebook.com/groups/baczerozo (8.09.2022).
8   Sample text of the Sputnik portal: "'Kursk' o wydaniu 'Mein Kampf' w Polsce: Propagowanie totalitaryzmu", *Sputnik Polska*, 20.01.2021, [on-line:] https://pl.sputniknews.com/20210120/mein-kampf-po-polsku-kursk-kieruje-sprawe-do-.prokuratury-sputnik-13700194.html (1.09.2022).
9   Fanpage called "Conflicts and World News", about 22 000 followers, [on-line:] https://www.facebook.com/Konflikty-i-Wiadomości-Światowe-103435204551498 (1.09.2022).
10 Fanpage called "Conflicts and World News", about 22 000 followers, https://www.facebook.com/groups/548662952698344 (1.09.2022).

and Ukrainians (the first name of the group was "We do not believe in the Covid-19 pandemic" – changed on the 18th of March 2022). In addition to social networks, disinformation and propaganda content was introduced to the Polish infosphere via alternative portals (Sputnik was also involved in this activity until February 2022).

Portals such as "Niezależny Dziennik Polityczny" ["Independent Political Journal"], 'Neon24.pl' or "Najwyższy Czas" ["High Time"] (which may seem to have restricted the broadcasting of content openly coinciding with Russian propaganda after 2022) can be considered as examples of active sources that disseminate theses converging with Russian propaganda. Each of the listed ones has its own characteristics. The first is a source of primitive messages and fake news, which particularly relate to stimulating anti-American, anti-Ukrainian and anti-government sentiments. The latter is a platform that disseminates conspiracy theories, extremely anti-Ukrainian messages and materials published on the pages of other similar websites, strengthening the reach of several sources distributing content consistent with Russian propaganda (including the publication of "NDP").[11] The third of these is a source that distributes conspiracy theorist content (e.g., questioning the existence of the pandemic)[12] or anti-Ukrainian content.[13] It is worth noting that the publications of these websites are actively popularised on social networks on groups and fanpages that publish disinformation content regarding conspiracy theories, geopolitics, foreign policy or internal policy. In addition to groups, fanpages and alternative portals, propaganda and disinformation content is being distributed online by sources posing as news and opinion portals.

In addition to Russian, the indicated sources of content are similar to Russian messages, they are published by sources such as "Konserwatyzm" ["Conservatism"] or "Myśl Polska" ["The Polish Thought"]. It is worth noting that both the indicated portals and the aforementioned "NDP" have often become sources of propaganda messages that the Russian side used for its own information market (their publications were often used for legitimising Russian-language messages propaganda). "Conservatism" and "The Polish Thought", as opposed to "NDP" or "High Time", are created as "serious" sources that avoid conspiracy theories and focusing on the allegedly independent

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[11]   "ROSJA vs NATO, jak to jest? Bander junta znowu bez problemu morduje!!!", *Neon24.pl*, 13.09.2022 [on-line:] https://fakty-kontra-news.neon24.info/post/169263,rosja-vs-nato-jak-to-jest-bander-junta-znowu-bez-problemu-morduje (1.10.2022).

[12]   "Covidiańska wersja świata. Obowiązek szprycowania dla uczniów od 12 lat wzwyż. '**Bo szcze**pionki działają'", *Nczas*, 2.10.2021 [on-line:] https://nczas.com/2021/10/02/covidianska-wersja-swiata-obowiazek-szprycowania-dla-uczniow-od-12-lat-wzwyz-bo-szczepionki-dzialaja/ (1.09.2022).

[13]   "Szok! Ukraina kryjówką dla dowódców Państwa Islamskiego? SBU właśnie zatrzymała jednego z nich", *Nczas.com*, 18.11.2019 [on-line:] https://nczas.com/2019/11/18/szok-ukraina-kryjowka-dla-dowodcow-panstwa-islamskiego-sbu-wlasnie-zatrzymala-jednego-z-nich/ (1.09.2022).

description of the reality in the field of Polish domestic politics and international politics. Both "Conservatism" and "The Polish Thought" persistently publish material that stimulates anti-Ukrainian, anti-NATO and anti-EU attitudes. These sources also introduce to the Polish infosphere messages relating to the socio-political situation in Ukraine – which coincide with Russian propaganda theses that disinform Polish recipients about the current situation in Ukraine.

The materials published in the discussed sources lobby messages about Ukraine's responsibility for the suffering of the Donbas population by depicting the Armed Forces of Ukraine as the "Nazi" structure,[14] messages portraying NATO as a weak, unnecessary – or even harmful – structure[15] or materials undermining the trust of the population in Polish services and institutions of the Polish state.[16] Some of the sources mentioned above and the like also operate via the YouTube platform, broadcasting recordings that duplicate disinformation and propaganda messages. There is also a noticeable tendency in which these and similar groups try to build a Polish-language segment of Telegram.

Analysing the material published by sources identified as releasing content similar to Russian propaganda (groups and fanpages operating on social networks, alternative portals, portals imitating serious news sources and channels using on YouTube), we can point to the leading directions in the development of Russian propaganda messages addressed to the Polish audience. The focus of centres distributing communications similar to Russian propaganda indirectly indicates the goals Russia is trying to achieve in Poland.

Leading trends:
- stimulating anti-government moods (undermining trust in state institutions, depreciating the image of the ruling class);
- stimulating anti-American and anti-NATO sentiments (messages most often concern both issues in parallel);
- stimulating anti-Ukrainian moods;
- stimulating Euroscepticism.

These trends are most often developed in such a way as to undermine the sense of the pro-Western/pro-EU attitude of the dominant part of the Polish political elite.

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[14] S. Pikta, "Nadzieja i smutek na Donbasie (część 2)", *Myśl Polska*, 2.11.2021, [on-line:] https://myslpolska.info/2021/11/02/nadzieja-i-smutek-na-donbasie-czesc-2/ (1.09.2022).

[15] S. Lewicki, "Czy NATO jeszcze istnieje?", *Konserwatyzm.pl*, 10.11.2019 [on-line:] https://konserwatyzm.pl/lewicki-czy-nato-jeszcze-istnieje/ (1.09.2022).

[16] M. Piskorski, "PISM czy PiSM? Analitycy czy propagandziści?", *Myśl Polska*, 4.11.2021 [on-line:] https://myslpolska.info/2021/11/04/pism-czy-pism-analitycy-czy-propagandzisci/ (1.09.2022).

Anti-American, anti-NATO, anti-EU and anti-Ukrainian contents are shaped in such a way as to prove the harmfulness of the current political line.

The Russian side seems to notice the low effectiveness of the methods used until 2021 – hence the attempts to acquire new tools to influence Polish society. One of the tools that the Russian side is trying to use against Poland is Telegram. Until recently (mid-2021), it seemed that Telegram would remain an almost unknown platform in Poland that would not impact Polish society.

As of the beginning of 2022, Telegram still does not have an extensive Polish-language segment. However, new channels are emerging that are not only linked to circles openly cooperating with the Russian side, but entirely new anonymous channels are also being noticed. They disseminate, among others, materials published by the State Border Committee of Belarus in connection with the migration crisis and try to popularise [in Poland] narratives about the responsibility of the Polish services for the alleged "genocide" of migrants. The content of entries emitted by given channels often contains inflectional errors and mistakes resulting from the translation of the text from the Russian language. The Russian side will likely make efforts to continue the discussed process aimed at acquiring a new tool of influence on Polish society.

Directions of the narrative

At this point, it is worth elaborating on the question of the directions indicated at the beginning of the study concerning the development of messages and narratives. One of them is stimulating anti-government sentiment in an attacked country. These activities aim to cause political chaos to destabilise the socio-political situation. On the one hand, these activities may concern attempts to cause chronic political chaos in a given country (which will limit, for example, the country's defence capabilities) and, on the other, may focus on replacing a given government with an environment more favourable to Moscow. Activity in this area is most often combined with the fields of study that will be mentioned next or concerns current affairs that can serve to stimulate the polarisation of society. One such "current issue" is the Covid-19 matter. This issue could potentially build a split in society based on the population's attitude to vaccination or the pandemic itself. In this context, the Russian side has taken actions in the field of disinformation in the Polish orientation, trying to build a negative image of Western vaccines while simultaneously stimulating a positive image of

the "Sputnik V" vaccine.[17] Relevant publications lobbying this narrative appeared in pages of the "'Polish" editorial board of Sputnik and manifested themselves on portals identified as involved in the distribution of messages in line with Russian propaganda. Sputnik and the portals in question are engaged in parallel in publicising the protests of supporters of the conspiracy theses, portraying the pandemic as a "conspiracy" and denying the sense of vaccination.[18] This kind of activity, carried out by Russian-language media and through groups on the social network Facebook, has manifested itself in a particular way in Lithuania. For the Russian side, the Covid-19 pandemic became another factor included in efforts to destabilise the situation in the country by stimulating anti-government sentiment based on the pandemic.[19]

The direction concerning the stimulation of anti-government moods, developed in the countries of NATO's so-called "eastern flank" and in Ukraine, repeatedly refers to a process serving to stir up anti-NATO and anti-US sentiment. In Poland, propaganda centres imitating Polish sources focus on this orientation. The portal "NDP" shows exceptional activity in this field – creating, among others, audio-visual materials made available on YouTube and on social networks. These materials often raise the issue of the risk of war (destruction of Poland) – the spectre of which is to be drawn over the country by the presence of US and NATO troops. A serious amount of attention paid by this and similar circles (mentioned in the text) relates to the risk of a nuclear attack that may occur as a result of the completion of the project to build a component of the US Aegis Ashore anti-missile system (in Redzikowo). The theme of attempts to depreciate the image of American soldiers based on the distribution of "fake news" and manipulated messages about alleged fights and the murder of the local population by American soldiers is also often manifested. In this context, there are also messages exposing rare cases of road collisions involving US soldiers. The aim of these activities is to build an image of the threat posed to Poles and the Polish state by the presence of American troops in the country and the military alliance with that state itself.

The third of the constant fields of influence of the Russian Federation relates to stimulating anti-Ukrainian moods in Poland. For this purpose, chronic activities are

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[17] "Węgry: Sputnik V jest bardziej skuteczny niż pięć innych szczepionek", *Sputnik Polska*, 25.11.2021, [on-line:] https://pl.sputniknews.com/20211125/wegry-sputnik-v-jest-bardziej-skuteczny-niz-piec-innych-szczepionek-16624979.html (1.09.2022).

[18] "'Stop koronaściemie', 'stop przymusowi szczepień': protestujący chcą dymisji rządu", *Sputnik Polska*, 22.02.2022, [on-line:] https://pl.sputniknews.com/20210220/stop-koronasciemie-stop-przymusowi-szczepien-protestujacy-chca-dymisji-rzadu-13865433.html (1.09.2022).

[19] R. Richard, A.L. Pieciukaitis, *Moscow's Disinformation Offensive During COVID-19: The Case of Lithuania*, Hudson Institute, 2020.

carried out (intensified depending on the international situation) aimed at presenting Ukraine and Ukrainians as a threat to the lives of average Poles and as a factor detrimental to the interests of Poland. Leading examples of the influence of Russia in 2021 were the popularisation of information messages about fights with the participation of Ukrainian citizens. Single examples of acts of violence (physical or verbal) are displayed on purpose, thus creating an impression of the massiveness of a given phenomenon – which differs from the actual state. The aim of the Russians was to create an image of a Ukrainian as a troublemaker/hooligan/alcoholic associated with activities aimed at depreciating the image of the Ukrainian state – a defective country with which cooperation is pointless. Based on these combined narratives, the Russian side tried to establish a belief that projects aimed at increasing the level of cooperation between Poland and Ukraine (including the Lublin Triangle) were pointless or harmful. In parallel to the proliferation on social networks and alternative portals of messages portraying an extremely negative image of Ukrainians, provocative operations were developed in Polish-Ukrainian relations. Examples of such action is the vandalism in Krakow in November 2021, when the monument to Marshal Józef Piłsudski and the Legion Four was damaged.[20] This attack was clearly an attempt to make it look like the activity of "Ukrainian nationalists". The illogical slogans used at that time ("Poland not only for masters") and errors (including the simultaneous use of the Russian and Ukrainian notation) clearly resembled the earlier provocations that took place, among others, in Kharkiv in March and July 2019 (the destruction of the UPA memorial plaque simulating an attack by Poles) or the 2017 act of vandalism that took place in Bykivnia near Kyiv (the Polish and Ukrainian part of the memorial dedicated to the victims of communist crimes was destroyed on the same night). In the context of the provocation in Krakow, it is also worth mentioning the hacking attack on Ukrainian government portals that took place from the 13th of January to the 14th of January, 2022. As part of the attack, the party responsible for a given operation placed a graphic with Ukrainian, Russian and Polish text suggesting that the attack was the responsibility of the Polish side (the content of the Polish-language entry – original version [with mistakes]: "Ukrainians! All your personal data has been sent to the shared network. All data on the computer is destroyed. It cannot be recovered. All information about

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[20] "Akt wandalizmu w Krakowie. Nieznani sprawcy zniszczyli pomnik Piłsudskiego", *Onet.pl*, 6.11.2021, [on-line:] https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/krakow/krakow-akt-wandalizmu-nieznani-sprawcy-zniszczyli-pomnik-pilsudskiego/qvw2rdz (1.09.2022).

you has become public, fear and wait for the worst. It's for you for your past, present and future. For Wołyń, for the OUN UPA, Galicia, Polesie and for historical areas").[21]

All of the examples mentioned above of provocation, by their nature and potential targets, point to the Russian Federation as the party behind the organisation or procuring of the activities in question. However, the provocative actions indicated do not seem to bring the results desired by the Russian Federation. The above-mentioned activities did not affect a wider circle of public opinion in Poland and Ukraine, as evidenced by the scale of the aid provided to Ukrainian refugees after February 2022. The indicated actions only seemed to reinforce anti-Ukrainian sentiments among radical pro-Russian groups whose representatives are strongly influenced by Russian disinformation centres. Thus, one can get the impression that the actions of the Russian Federation with the use of radical measures (e.g., indicated provocations) only served to maintain the level of anti-Ukrainian sentiment among the marginal group of people under the influence of the Kremlin (maintaining the influence already held – a similar process applies to stimulating anti-American sentiment through alternative websites). This trend changed significantly after February 2022, when the Russian side – through its centres of influence – decided to focus on stimulating anti-Ukrainian moods to cause social unrest, which would result in the suspension of military, economic and political support from Warsaw to Kyiv.

The fourth major field in developing Russian communications is stimulating Eurosceptic sentiments. As part of this aspect of disinformation and propaganda efforts, Russians can count on the activities of pro-Russian portals and circles, which – unlike the "NDP" – have "real" (not anonymous) editors and individuals who seek to participate in the socio-political life of the state. This direction is also developed based on anonymous sources (operating on social networks or in "created editorial offices" as "imaginary journalists"). As part of the information activity on stimulating Eurosceptic moods, narratives are developed that are manifested in almost all EU countries. They refer to the building of an image of the EU as a structure hostile to national identity, Christian culture, tradition, prevailing moral norms in the country, etc. The EU is also portrayed as a structure fully controlled by Germany, which – in Polish conditions – is combined with propaganda activity aimed at stimulating anti-German sentiment. In this context, the EU is to be an instrument of Berlin's "imperial" policy, which threatens Polish statehood. To build narratives that are appropriate from the Kremlin's perspec-

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[21] M. Marek, "Atak na ukraińskie portale rządowe – próba zrzucenia odpowiedzialności na Polaków", *Centum Badań Nad Współczesnym Środowiskem Bezpieczeństwa*, 14.01.2022 [on-line:] https://infowarfare.pl/2022/01/14/atak-na-ukrainskie-portale-rzadowe/ (1.09.2022).

tive, political and media "authorities" who are "friendly" to the Russian Federation are again being used. This is in addition to individuals who are far from cooperating with the Kremlin but who support the development of Eurosceptic sentiment for other reasons. Their comments are also used to reinforce Russian narratives (the most radical statements are deliberately selected and then properly displayed – e.g., in headlines). The Eurosceptic direction of activity is associated with the stimulation of anti-German, anti-American and anti-NATO moods. The formed narratives fit into the context of creating the image of Poland's subordination to the West (in any form, be it NATO or the EU). At the same time, the pro-Western political elite of Poland is being portrayed as "puppets" of the West, which must be "pushed away" from power and replaced with "truly Polish" forces (e.g., those postulating "normalisation" of relations with Russia and the rejection of "subjection" to the USA and the EU). The development of communications in all of the directions mentioned above boils down, *de facto*, to influencing the political preferences of Poles to maintain and expand the network of audiences who, when the time comes, will be able to be a factor influencing the political scene of the Polish state.

Summary

Currently, the Russian side has a limited influence on Polish society. However, there are visible actions in the form of attempts to acquire new tools and techniques (e.g., anonymous comments published on a mass scale under articles from popular Polish internet portals), enabling the Kremlin to influence an ever wider group of Poles. Depending on the international situation, the Russian part adjusts its activities to its priorities. In the case of 2021, there was intensification of the activity in the field of Polish-Russian-Belarusian relations, which was the result of the crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. The year 2022, however, indicates that Polish-Ukrainian relations (the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine) are considered one of the current priorities. The Russian side is trying to use each of the convenient trends to stimulate social discontent among Poles and direct it towards pro-Western/pro-Ukrainian political elites and towards a dislike of Ukrainian refugees (including the issue of the raw material crisis, which has intensified in the second half of 2022).

The main task facing NATO's so-called "eastern flank" is long-term work with its own society to increase social resilience to disinformation. New information campaigns and media projects are needed to reach the so-called "average recipient" and will offer them interesting materials making them aware of the scale of information threats.

Work with citizens must be supplemented with popularising knowledge in a given area among decision-makers. It remains important not to forget about information security when implementing projects relating to increasing awareness of cyber threats. The activity of the Russian Federation (relating to the stimulation of tensions between NATO member states and Western-backed Ukraine in the defence war) should also be counteracted through active expert cooperation aimed at producing analyses and journalistic materials that are attractive to the public and that deconstruct historical myths (e.g., created during the USSR period) and false stereotypes about the countries in question. It is also worth developing cooperation between the countries of NATO's eastern flank and Ukraine in the field of acquiring capabilities allowing information operations dedicated to Russian-speaking recipients living in the post-Soviet spaces.

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Information security is one the key aspects of modern security and its importance has been significantly increasing in contemporary international relations. This publication presents the results of studies on several key aspects related to this issue. The publication contains results of research on considerations related to information security and its implementation, as well as research on social media, analysed through the lens of the object and subject of disinformation activities.