

# Information Security Policy

Conditions, Threats and Implementation  
in the International Environment



EDITED BY  
PIOTR BAJOR



# **INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY**



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**Kraków 2022**

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# The Russia-Ukraine War

## Two Strategies of Communication?

**ABSTRACT:** In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, reflections on the communication strategies and tactics used to perform tasks that form part of an information war have again become a topical question. The objective of this paper is, therefore, to analyse the strategic communication practices used during the Russia-Ukraine war. It also attempts to examine the wartime effectiveness of using such forms of communication as propaganda, disinformation, or fake news, as well as techniques used to uncover the false information being spread. The article formulates the following research hypotheses: H1. The Russia-Ukraine war is an example of a new approach to information war. H2. Both sides of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict use different communication strategies. H3. The information war waged during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a method of pursuing military, political and economic goals.

**KEYWORDS:** propaganda, disinformation, communication

## Introduction

In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, reflections on the communication strategies and tactics used to perform tasks that form part of an information war have



again become a topical question. The objective of this paper is, therefore, to analyse the strategic communication practices used during the Russia-Ukraine war. It also attempts to examine the wartime effectiveness of using such forms of communication as propaganda, disinformation or fake news, as well as techniques used to uncover the false information being spread.

Using disinformation as a component that complements military action is not a new solution, but the development of the internet – in particular, social media – enabled and improved this form of communication, which allowed public opinion, an important actor in political communication, to be influenced in an even better and easier way. The article formulates the following research hypotheses: H1. The Russia-Ukraine war is an example of a new approach to information war; H2. Both sides of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict use different communication strategies; H3. The information war waged during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a method of pursuing military, political and economic goals.

## Information war – an evolution of the concept

The information revolution (i.e., all processes related to the increasing level of digitisation and technologisation of our everyday lives) has not been without impact on other important issues related to the social, political or crisis communication process or strategies used during armed hostilities. The same applies to the concept of “information war”, which started to appear in the early 1990s in both official reports and specialised literature, together with other concepts such as “information domination”, “infowar”, “cyberwar” and “cognitive war”. None of these terms has been clearly defined, and we can agree with Hervé Coutau-Bégarie, who stated that the “trend for information war is accompanied by a significant vagueness of its specific content”.<sup>1</sup> However, we can assume that information war is a continuation of electronic war, which has been known for decades.<sup>2</sup> Some researchers believe that the essential nature of information war boils down to physical action, where “information has a strategic value and deserves to be conquered and destroyed”,<sup>3</sup> which can, for example, mean attacks on the critical infrastructure of a given country.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Coutau-Bégarie, *Traité de stratégie*, Economica, Paris 1999, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> S. Czeszejko, J. Janczak, “Militarne aspekty środowiska elektronicznego – próba rewizji istniejącej terminologii”, *Zeszyty Naukowe AON*, vol. 1, no. 98 (2015), pp. 78–81.

<sup>3</sup> W. Schwartau, *Information Warfare: Protecting Your Personal Security in the Computer Age*, Thunder's Mouth Press, New York–Emeryville, CA 1996, p. 317.

This is the situation we have been witnessing ever since Russia's aggression on Ukraine. Microsoft has shown that when the coalition of countries supporting Ukraine was created, Russian attacks against the governments of these states significantly intensified – analysts detected attempts to hack 128 organisations in 42 countries, including Poland, although the US remains the main target of attacks. It is estimated that around 29% of these attacks were successful. Attacks were most frequently aimed at government agencies, IT companies and institutions responsible for administering critical infrastructure systems – all key for ensuring the continuous operation of the state.<sup>4</sup> We must remember that cyberattacks on railway companies, medical centres, banks, waterworks or powerplants can be very damaging. Their consequences may paralyse the operations of the attacked state and cause huge economic and financial losses, or even deaths.

Of note is the fact that Russia carried out multiple attacks on Ukrainian computer networks in recent months.<sup>5</sup> The resources and digital infrastructure of the Ukrainian government and institutions survived only thanks to being quickly transferred to the public cloud and located in data centres dispersed around Europe.

There is another equally important dimension to information war, namely the psychological dimension. The concept of psychological war reappeared in the 1990s due to the Balkan conflict. Psychological war usually involves operations aimed at attacking the enemy's morale or beliefs, its leaders, its population and its allies, but also protecting a country's population, leaders and allies against actions taken by the opponent as part of psychological war. We can point here to the "Voice of America" or "Radio Free Europe" as very effective tools in the information war during the Cold War.

## Methods of waging information war by the Russian Federation

There can be no doubt that psychological warfare is part of information wars waged by the Russian Federation, which also uses so-called "soft power", is seen by some researchers to play an ever-increasing role in shaping the image of the Russian state

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<sup>4</sup> B. Smith, "Defending Ukraine: Early Lessons from the Cyber War", *Microsoft*, 22.06.2022, [on-line:] <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2022/06/22/defending-ukraine-early-lessons-from-the-cyber-war/> (12.08.2022).

<sup>5</sup> "Cyberataki hakerów z Rosji na ukraińskie sieci komputerowe. Przejęli wrażliwe dane", *Polsat News*, 16.02.2022, [on-line:] <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2022-02-16/cyberataki-hakerow-z-rosji-na-ukrainskie-sieci-komputerowe-przejeli-wrazliwe-dane/> (12.08.2022).

in the international arena.<sup>6</sup> The war is, therefore, waged both internally and externally as its goal, on the one hand, is to influence Russian citizens and, on the other, to gain the trust of some of the world's leaders and international public opinion [with them].<sup>7</sup>

Russian psychological warfare is, therefore, not limited to using black propaganda, but is more sophisticated and combines lies, slander, insinuations and "partial truth". Its main objective can be to deprive its audience of any references and evidence, and it usually misrepresents important historical events.<sup>8</sup> In the external dimension, the strategy is pursued using multiple avenues, with one of the most well-known being the propaganda disseminated by the so-called "troll army" on social media, primarily on Twitter and Facebook.<sup>9</sup> Their task is not only to attack and criticise their opponents, but also to impose false narration on the audience, often using aggressive, even racist or antisemitic rhetoric. "Post-truth" is, therefore, their favoured tool, accompanied by the ever-present criticism of "mainstream media". Russian propaganda is also pushed by official channels of the Kremlin, such as *Russia Today*<sup>10</sup> and *Sputnik*,<sup>11</sup> who broadcast and tweet in many languages. These channels not only echo the Kremlin's agenda (including the claims suggesting that there are no Russian troops in Ukraine, pushed even before the attack on Ukraine, or the assertions that the Russian forces were not attacking insurgents fighting Assad's regime, etc.), but also try to reach all potential Putin sympathisers and find new ones. The fact that the Russian regime supports politicians from various parties, although primarily those on the right side of the political spectrum, both in Europe and in the US, is also important. Proof of this

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<sup>6</sup> D. Kaźmierczak, "Walka informacyjna we współczesnych konfliktach i jej społeczne konsekwencje", *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia de Securitate et Educatione Civili*, vol. 7 (2017).

<sup>7</sup> O. Irisova, "A Lie is the Truth, Intersection Project", *Intersection Project*, 3.07.2015, [on-line:] <http://intersectionproject.eu/article/society/lie-truth> (27.09.2022).

<sup>8</sup> A. Foxall, "In Putin's Russia, History Is Subversive", *The American Interest*, 6.06.2016, [on-line:] <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/06/06/in-putins-russia-history-is-subversive> (9.08.2022).

<sup>9</sup> T. Parfitt, "My Life as a pro-Putin Propagandist in Russia's Secret Troll Factory", *The Telegraph*, 24.06.2015, [on-line:] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11656043/My-life-as-a-pro-Putin-propagandist-in-Russia's-secret-troll-factory/> (9.08.2022).

<sup>10</sup> RT – a TV news station founded by the Russian government on December 10, 2005, based in Moscow, broadcasting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<sup>11</sup> Sputnik – Russian government news agency launched on November 10, 2014 by Rossiya Siewodnia, which has a network of radio stations and multilingual websites. Its regional offices are located in many countries, including United States (Washington, DC), China (Beijing), France (Paris), Germany (Berlin), Egypt (Cairo) and Great Britain (London and Edinburgh).

fact could be seen in the presidential campaigns in the US and France, and Russia's support for proponents of Brexit.<sup>12</sup>

Information war waged in this way involves both offensive and defensive action. Its current version is related to the Russian Federation's war doctrine, announced in December 2014. The concept harks back to Soviet methods based on using "psychological warfare" and propaganda techniques used back in the times of the USSR. However, tools used in information wars were improved due to events which were not always proof of the effectiveness of Russian military strategy and tactics. The first important event of this kind occurred in 1999, when Russian decision-makers noticed (during the war in Chechnya) that Chechen soldiers were much more proficient in using the internet and were able to reach a global audience with their message by presenting themselves as "heroic fighters for the freedom of Chechnya fighting against the Russian war machine".<sup>13</sup> It was then that the Russians noticed that the internet could be a tool used for destabilisation or even as a threat to national security. Due to this, a decision was made that public access to the internet must be effectively controlled. The Kremlin also became aware that digital technologies can be used to attack enemies, both internal and external. Another significant event took place during the short military conflict with Georgia in 2008, when Russian decision-makers noticed how the then Georgian President, Mikhail Saakashvili, had no problems reaching an audience in the West by giving speeches in English. This was in contrast to Russian media campaigns, which were based on frequently belated and poorly prepared press conferences.<sup>14</sup>

This Georgian lesson gave birth to the idea of creating solutions involving experts in strategic communications, diplomats, military men, journalists or even hackers, who would use their abilities to wage effective psychological operations as part of the ongoing information war. The last event which further convinced Russia that the web and social media must be controlled was the "Arab Spring". Russian authorities decided that automated systems alone were insufficient and significant human resources had to be allocated to control the internet. Some important personnel changes also took place in that period: Vyacheslav Volodin replaced Vladislav Surkov as the Deputy Director

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<sup>12</sup> A. Kruglashov, S. Shvydiuk, "Hybrydowe zagrożenia dla demokracji. Wybrane przykłady zewnętrznej ingerencji Rosji w wybory", *Wschód Europy. Studia Humanistyczno-społeczne*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2020), pp. 79–92.

<sup>13</sup> M. Maciejak, *Anatomia konfliktu rosyjsko-czeczeńskiego. Grozny 1994/1995, 1999/2000*, Infortedionis, Zabrze 2018, p. 401.

<sup>14</sup> R. Grodzki, *Wojna gruzińsko-rosyjska 2008: przyczyny, przebieg, skutki*, Wydawnictwo Replika, Zakrzewo 2009, p. 137.

of the Presidential Administration and was tasked with preparing and implementing a new Russian communication strategy based on the tenets of information war. In addition, in November 2012, Sergei Shoygu replaced Anatoly Serdyukov as the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation. One of the major tasks given to the new Minister was to work on improving guidelines related to Russian cyberstrategy. The document, published on December 29, 2014 on the website of the Council of Defence of the Russian Federation, contains a statement that “information is an important tool of security”.<sup>15</sup> Although the concept wasn’t novel (as the military doctrine and information security doctrine of 2000 included the same statement), it was only in the document from 2014 that the following passage was included: “the main external war threat involves the use of information and communication technology for military and political goals and engaging in actions contrary to international law, aimed against the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity (...)”. In addition, another passage stated that the “Russian information war constitutes the entirety of various actions coordinated in time, performed by the military and civil intelligence services in many areas, in order to neutralise the enemy using information and technical and information and psychological tools”<sup>16</sup>. Other information threats include dangers such as encouraging young people to leave behind their historical, spiritual and patriotic traditions, as well as destruction or at least disruption of operations of governmental agencies or state information infrastructure. Another new rule is the underlining of the statement that the line between internal and external threats is becoming blurred and that Western information technologies are downright “subversive”.

It, therefore, did not come as a surprise that on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation not only commenced another stage of its military operation in Ukraine, but also continued its information war, including in terms of its image. The hostilities involve all forms and tools available to both sides for wartime communication, including propaganda, which – according to Jacques Ellul, one of the major theoreticians of this phenomenon – “is important and present during all wars”.<sup>17</sup>

Both old and new media are, therefore, used in the Russian-Ukrainian war waged on many fronts, including in the information war. They are primarily used not for providing information, but as tools of persuasion and propaganda. In its communication strategy, Russia primarily attempts to legitimise its attack on Ukraine while simultaneously presenting Ukraine not as a victim, but as a provocateur and cause for

<sup>15</sup> “Doktryna Wojenna Federacji Rosyjskiej”, *bbn.gov.pl*, [on-line:] <https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dok/01/DoktrynaFederacjiRosyjskiej.pdf>, pp. 6–8 (25.09.2022).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> J. Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1973, p. 211.

the Russian intervention. On the other hand, Ukrainian authorities use any available forms and tools of communication to gain the support of international public opinion and leaders of democratic countries to promote their cause on a political level.

An important task in this regard is to build an adequate narrative – the purpose of which is not always to convey true and verified facts, but to fulfil an emotive role which involves presenting opinions aimed at creating the desired image of presented events.

As previously noted, the Russian Federation has gradually changed its approach to methods of communication, which includes noticing the important role played by “soft power” tools. Since the 2010s, the Kremlin has been increasingly interested in regaining control over the message pushed in audio-visual media and being aware of the power of digital technology it continually invested in social media so as to be able to “tell” its own version of events – the causes, course and outcome of various conflicts in which it was involved. An example of an investment in social media is the takeover of the VKontakcie (VK) Russian social media website – also known as the “Russian Facebook” – by oligarchs closely associated with Vladimir Putin (Alisher Usmanov and Igor Sechin). VK was founded in 2006 by Pavel Durov. Its structure and functionality are reminiscent of Facebook as its members can send messages, publish photos, videos and posts, and create groups. VK is among the most popular websites in Russia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Belarus. Many of its users are also citizens of Central and Eastern European countries.<sup>18</sup> Until 2017, it was also widely used in Ukraine but, pursuant to a decree of Petro Poroshenko – the then President of Ukraine – on May 16, 2017, some Russian websites were blocked, including VK and the Russia Today TV station.<sup>19</sup> The Kremlin-controlled VK was a very useful tool for Russia and was used to promote events such as the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi and build a positive image of the Russian Federation in the international arena.

Another component of information war after February 24, 2022, as an integral part of Russian military doctrine, was making Facebook and Instagram illegal in the territory of the Russian Federation, followed by imposing restrictions on Russian users of Twitter and then completely blocking the website. However, the most important decision was the adoption of an act that introduced penalties of up to 15 years’ im-

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<sup>18</sup> “WKontakcie, największy serwis społecznościowy Rosji, trafił w ręce osób związanych z Putinem”, *Komputer Świat*, 6.12.2021, [on-line:] <https://www.komputerswiat.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/wkontakcie-najwiekszy-serwis-spoiecznoscowy-rosji-trafil-w-rece-osob-zwiazanych-z-7cnjx60> (12.08.2022).

<sup>19</sup> K. Puto, “Na Ukrainie zamknęli internet”, *Krytyka Polityczna*, 19.05.2017, [on-line:] <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/felietony/kaja-puto/na-ukrainie-zamkneli-internet/> (12.08.2022).



prisonment for journalists who disseminated information aimed at “discrediting” the Russian armed forces. Although decisions were made to censor independent media, primarily local ones, Russia’s state and governmental accounts are still active on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, which have been blocked for ordinary citizens. On July 18, 2022, a Russian court fined Alphabet (Google’s parent company) \$387m for failing to comply with an order to delete content which Russia believed to be illegal. The company’s bank account had been seized back in May 2022, which according to the company’s announcement, prevented it from “continuing the operations of our Russian offices, including to maintain employment and pay salaries, pay our suppliers and contractors and comply with other financial obligations”<sup>20</sup>. Russian authorities did not block the website to be able to continue to use its streaming services as they can be used for Russian propaganda.

As the war in Ukraine escalated, American websites also took action aimed at limiting the influx of fake news released by Russian-controlled media. In its report published on April 7, 2022, Meta (Facebook’s parent company) announced that it had taken action against a group of hackers who had attempted to spread false information that Ukrainian troops had surrendered.<sup>21</sup>

Pursuant to Council Regulation (EU) 2022/350 of March 1, 2022, the EU’s Office of Electronic Communications also modified existing regulations. The new regulation prohibited the broadcasting (and other activities facilitating the broadcasting) of Russia Today and Sputnik. The Office stressed that the prohibition included distributing content using any means – including cable, satellite, IP-TV, websites and video-sharing applications, whether new or preinstalled. Stations affected by the prohibition included *RT – Russia Today English*, *RT – Russia Today UK*, *RT – Russia Today Germany*, *RT – Russia Today France*, *RT – Russia Today Spanish* and *Sputnik*.<sup>22</sup> When explaining the decision to block RT and Sputnik, the Chief of EU Diplomacy, Josep Borrell, stated that “systematic manipulation of information and disinformation by the Kremlin is used as an operational tool in their attack on Ukraine. It also constitutes

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<sup>20</sup> “Google znów ukarany w Rosji. 387 mln dol. kary za nieusuwanie treści”, *Business Insider*, 18.07.2022, [on-line:] <https://businessinsider.com.pl/technologie/nowe-technologie/google-ukarany-w-rosji-387-mln-dol-kary-za-nieusuwanie-tresci/4s6wkz3> (15.08.2022).

<sup>21</sup> “Meta’s Adversarial Threat Report: First Quarter 2022”, *Meta*, 7.04.2022, [on-line:] <https://about.fb.com/news/2022/04/metad-adversarial-threat-report-q1-2022> (10.08.2022).

<sup>22</sup> *Rozporządzenie Rady (UE) 2022/350 z dnia 1 marca 2022 r. w sprawie zmiany rozporządzenia Rady (UE) nr 833/2014 dotyczącego środków ograniczających w związku z działaniami Rosji destabilizującymi sytuację na Ukrainie*, [on-line:] <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022R0350&from=EN> (25.09.2022).

a direct threat to the public order and security in the EU”<sup>23</sup>. Sanctions will remain in place until Russia ends its aggression in Ukraine and ceases its disinformation and manipulation in respect of the EU and its member states.

Simultaneously, on March 5, 2022, at the request of the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation, the ‘Wot Tak’ channel, a Russian-language website operated by Belsat TV and addressed to visitors from former Soviet republics, was blocked in Russia. Belsat TV is a TV channel that forms part of *Telewizja Polska SA*, which is co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is broadcast in Belarussian and Russian, including in the territory of the former USSR.<sup>24</sup>

As always, history and historical memory remain an important tool in the communication strategy of the Russian Federation. Before the invasion of Ukraine, on February 21, 2021, President Putin gave an address in which he harked back to the past in order to legitimise the future attack on Ukraine. By acknowledging the independence and sovereignty of the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics and announcing the commencement of a “special military operation”, he suggested that this would lead to the liberation of the Ukrainian people oppressed by a corrupt government that has been manipulated by the West. He also added that it has always been the West’s goal to spread its sphere of influence in the East, obviously at the cost of weakening Russia.<sup>25</sup>

This narrative was primarily aimed at Russian citizens but also those with pro-Russian sympathies. Other addresses given by Vladimir Putin hit similar notes, such as the address of April 21<sup>26</sup> or the address given on May 9, 2022, during the celebration of the anniversary of the end of World War II.<sup>27</sup> In his speeches, the Russian President used both grey and black propaganda, numerous times referring to the ethnic cleansing of Russians allegedly carried out by Ukrainians in the Donbas. He even made comparisons to “antisemitic pogroms organised by Nazis in Germany in the 1930s”. He also suggests that Ukraine intended to purchase nuclear weapons and improve biological

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<sup>23</sup> “Russia Today i Sputnik blokowane w Europie. Tak Unia walczy z rosyjską propagandą”, *Business Insider*, 9.03.2022, [on-line:] <https://businessinsider.com.pl/biznes/russia-today-i-sputnik-blokowane-w-europie/p56dt93> (25.09.2022).

<sup>24</sup> “Bielsat TV z serwisem informacyjnym po ukraińsku, portal Wot Tak zablokowany w Rosji”, *Wirtualne Media*, 9.03.2022, [on-line:] <https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/bielsat-informacje-wojna-w-ukrainie-rosja> (25.09.2022).

<sup>25</sup> “Wojna na Ukrainie? Orędzie Putina z 21.02.2022”, *YouTube*, [on-line:] <https://youtu.be/uN-85c2jeAtM> (25.09.2022).

<sup>26</sup> “Orędzie Putina: pochwały, obietnice i pogróżki”, *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich im. Marka Karpia*, 21.04.2021, [on-line:] <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2021-04-21/oredzie-putina-pochwały-obietnice-i-pogrozki> (25.09.2022).

<sup>27</sup> “Dzień Zwycięstwa 9 Maj 2022 r. Przemówienie Putina”, *YouTube*, [on-line:] <https://youtu.be/81IyVpv75o4> (25.09.2022).



weaponry, all this with the support of and contributions from the “Pentagon”. Even though such actions undermine Russia’s image in Western democracies, they can still mobilise that part of international public opinion which, for one reason or another, does not approve of the current world order and is very critical of Western democracies.<sup>28</sup> An example of this can be seen in the allegations made against “mainstream Western media”, which unfairly treats Syrians or Iraqis compared to Ukrainians.

## Methods of waging information war by Ukraine

The Russian effort in the information war is naturally met by a reaction from the Ukrainian side. Even a cursory examination of these efforts, in particular the choice of communication strategy, shows that the Ukrainians and, in particular, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, have a certain advantage over their Russian opponent. It is obvious that Ukraine has been able to win over the majority of Western public opinion but, most of all, President Zelenskyy has had a profound effect on his own citizens. He became a true symbol of resistance, a personification of the fight for freedom and Ukrainians’ right of self-determination. His communication strategy includes a daily video selfie, regular speeches given before parliaments of the largest nations or major international organisations – both political and economic – but also cultural things, as well as close contact with European and global leaders.

Therefore, it must be said that Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been dealing very well with various forms of communication and is effective in using means of communication that are adequate for a time of war by simultaneously adapting them to today’s standards of political communication, which include an all-encompassing hypermediatisation. This seems an extraordinary achievement given the fact that prior to Russia’s attack on Ukraine, President Zelenskyy was not among the most recognisable and famous world leaders. He was known more for his previous career as an actor. From the very start of the conflict, he took on a role of a soldier ready to fight and intensify the spirit of resistance, calling on every man of conscription age to take up arms and defend their homeland against the aggressor.

When analysing the actions of the Ukrainian President, we can distinguish several objectives he achieves using his communication strategy. In the beginning, the most important task was to show both to Ukrainians and international public opinion that

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<sup>28</sup> W. Sokała, “Przyjaciele Putina: Watykan i kto jeszcze”, *Microsoft*, 22.01.2022, [on-line:] <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/swiat/artykuly/8413152,jakie-panstwa-popieraja-rosje-i-dlaczego-onz.html> (25.09.2022).

he would not leave his country to fend for itself in this difficult time. His tweet, stating: “I need ammunition, not a ride”<sup>29</sup> (in response to an offer of evacuation from the US President), reverberated around the world. Zelenskyy disregarded his personal safety and remained in the capital (which was being bombarded), acting as an example for his citizens and encouraging them to stay in the country and continue fighting in defence of the homeland.<sup>30</sup>

Choosing to communicate via social media also turned out to be the correct choice as the Russians were unable to cut Ukraine from contact with international public opinion or governments of other countries despite bombing radio and TV broadcast centres. Of note is also the request by Ukraine’s Minister of Digital Transformation, Mykhailo Fedorov, who used Twitter to ask Elon Musk for access to Starlink to help Ukrainians stay online during the Russian invasion. A few hours later, in response to Fedorov’s tweet, Elon Musk stated that Starlink was made available in Ukraine.<sup>31</sup>

Social media has, therefore, become an important method of communication for Ukrainians as well. They are used to communicate the most important news on military action but also enable interactions with citizens around the world. Another important challenge facing President Zelenskyy was communicating with the Russian Federation (both Russian decision-makers and military personnel), but also common Russian citizens – who he addressed many times and asked not to become involved in military action or suggested that they desert if compulsory mobilisation is announced.<sup>32</sup>

Another important function of messages sent by the Ukrainian President is to ensure that the West provides Ukraine with support, not only political and economic, but primarily military, by supplying all necessary to wage war – particularly arms and military equipment. Of note is that Zelenskyy was able to achieve this goal by addressing its communication not only to political decision-makers, but primarily to common citizens – the majority of who support the decisions of their authorities and approve of not only sending strictly military aid to Ukraine, but also imposing further sanctions on the Russian Federation. When analysing the numerous addresses made

<sup>29</sup> “Katarzyna Włodkowska”, *Twitter*, [on-line:] [https://twitter.com/k\\_wlodkowska/status/1497452572784824320?s=20&t=bI6TdOKqvCd3uDOxPEMwLg](https://twitter.com/k_wlodkowska/status/1497452572784824320?s=20&t=bI6TdOKqvCd3uDOxPEMwLg) (28.09.2022).

<sup>30</sup> “ZelenskyyUa”, *Twitter*, [on-line:] [https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1497450853380280320?s=20&t=FEJfWBJdXRL\\_gZLKioToQg](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1497450853380280320?s=20&t=FEJfWBJdXRL_gZLKioToQg) (28.09.2022).

<sup>31</sup> “Elon Musk”, *Twitter*, [on-line:] [https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1497701484003213317?ref\\_src=twsrc^tfw|twcamp^tweetembed|twterm^1497701484003213317|twgr^96d348165aad556abbe2ad6b109dbb59de6aaa68|twcon^s1\\_c10&ref\\_url=https://www.computerworld.pl/news/Elon-Musk-udostepnia-Starlink-na-Ukrainie436628.html](https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1497701484003213317?ref_src=twsrc^tfw|twcamp^tweetembed|twterm^1497701484003213317|twgr^96d348165aad556abbe2ad6b109dbb59de6aaa68|twcon^s1_c10&ref_url=https://www.computerworld.pl/news/Elon-Musk-udostepnia-Starlink-na-Ukrainie436628.html) (28.09.2022).

<sup>32</sup> “Zelenskiy Official”, *Instagram*, [https://www.instagram.com/reel/Ch24ikEpmSJ/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/reel/Ch24ikEpmSJ/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link) (28.09.2022).

by President Zelenskyy, of note is that, similarly to Putin, he often employs historical comparisons and references, which are well-suited to the place and circumstances and, most of all, to the audience. For example, in a speech given before the US Congress on March 16, 2022, he made references to many events of importance to Americans (such as the famous “I have a dream” speech by Martin Luther King). He also mentioned the momentous Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and even the events of September 11, 2001.<sup>33</sup> When speaking in the Bundestag, he told members of the German Parliament that “a new wall built across Europe” had to be torn down.<sup>34</sup> When addressing the Kneset, he compared the war in Ukraine to the “final solution of the Jewish question”,<sup>35</sup> as the rulers of Nazi Germany referred to their plan of exterminating European Jews. Finally, when speaking to French members of the parliament, Volodymyr Zelenskyy recalled the tragedy of World War I and compared the siege of Mariupol to the “ruins of Verdun”.<sup>36</sup>

Although we can't unequivocally state that Vladimir Putin has ultimately lost the information war and the Russian communication and image strategy has been a failure, there can be no doubt that the Ukrainian President is doing an excellent job of using modern tools to pursue his chosen communication strategy.

## Summary

In summary, we can state that the analysis has led to the conclusion that the research hypotheses formulated earlier in the paper have mostly been confirmed. The first hypothesis (H1) that the Russian-Ukraine war is an example of a new approach to information war appears to be sound, as even if the methods and tools used to wage this war have been used before, social media has never been used on a similar scale. Although hostilities are still ongoing, many experts suggest that Ukrainians are win-

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<sup>33</sup> “Przemówienie prezydenta Zełenskiego przed Kongresem USA”, *TVN24*, 16.03.2022, [on-line:] <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/prezydent-ukrainy-wolodymyr-zelenski-w-kongresie-usa-przemowienie-5637846> (28.09.2022).

<sup>34</sup> “Zełenski w Bundestagu: ‘Pomóżcie nam!’”, *Deutsche Welle*, 17.03.2022, [on-line:] <https://www.dw.com/pl/zelenski-w-bundestagu-pomozcie-nam/a-61158982> (28.09.2022).

<sup>35</sup> “Mocne przemówienie Zełenskiego w Knesecie: Izrael musi wybrać, kogo popiera”, *RMF24*, 20.03.2022, [on-line:] [https://www.rmf24.pl/raporty/raport-wojna-z-rosja/news-mocne-przemowienie-zelenskiego-w-knesecie-izrael-musi-wybrac,nId,5905657#crp\\_state=1](https://www.rmf24.pl/raporty/raport-wojna-z-rosja/news-mocne-przemowienie-zelenskiego-w-knesecie-izrael-musi-wybrac,nId,5905657#crp_state=1) (28.09.2022).

<sup>36</sup> “Wołodimir Zełenski przed francuskim parlamentem: Europa od 80 lat nie widziała tego, co teraz dzieje się w Ukrainie”, *TVN24*, 23.03.2022, [on-line:] <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/ukraina-wolodymyr-zelenski-przed-parlamentem-francji-europa-od80-lat-niewidziala-tego-co-teraz-dzieje-sie-na-ukrainie-5646669> (28.09.2022).

ning the ongoing information war. It would appear that the second hypothesis (H2), positing that both sides of the conflict are using different methods of communication, is also true. Ukraine has been waging psychological warfare thanks to the activity of President Zelenskyy, who has been directly addressing political decision-makers and international public opinion, whereas communication by the President of the Russian Federation is much more limited and involves giving speeches which are not broadcast live. Activity on social media is implemented using the “troll army”. Although both sides of the conflict obviously use the same true and tested forms and means of communication (such as propaganda, post-truth and fake news), Ukraine has used propaganda more frequently to uncover disinformation rather than spread it. Another noticeable difference is the role in which both countries place themselves. The Russian Federation presents itself as a liberator of Ukrainians oppressed by their own government, while Ukraine keeps stressing and emphasising that it is the victim of criminal aggression. The last hypothesis (H3), stating that the information war waged during the Russia-Ukraine conflict is used to achieve military, political and economic goals, is also indisputable. Although both sides of the conflict use different methods of communication, they seek to achieve the same goals – primarily the strengthening of their desired image, which will enable the acceptance of their actions by the international community and assistance from key political decision-makers and help them strengthen both in terms of military power, and political and economic position in the world.

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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.



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