

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES  
UKRAINIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE FUTURE

# THE WORLD HYBRID WAR: UKRAINIAN FOREFRONT

Volodymyr Horbulin

*Monograph*

*Abridged and translated from Ukrainian*

---

**Kharkiv**  
**«Folio»**  
**2017**

# RUSSIA'S GEOPOLITICAL MESSAGE OF DEFIANCE

Edited by Rozumnyi M.

**AUTHORS:**

- 1.1. Snihyr O., Vlasenko R., Pavlenko I.
- 1.2. Yablonskyi V.
- 1.3. Pavlenko I., Semenenko V.

*...Our sole and common enemy  
is the Russian state system.*

Aleksandr Blok

## 1.1. CONFRONTATION WITH THE WEST

---

The first evidence of Russia's foreign policy turning to confrontation with the West and restoration of its own imperial nature was V. Putin's "Munich speech" in 2007. In it, the President of the Russian Federation not only accused the U.S. and NATO of attempts to build a unipolar world and impose their own "legislative system" on other countries, but also openly demanded that Russia, as a country "with a thousand-years history", be given a leadership position in international policy<sup>1</sup> making.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Выступление* Президента России В. Путина на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности 10 февраля 2007 года [Speech of Russia's President, V. Putin, during the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007] [Digital source]. — Access mode: <http://izvestia.ru/news/321595>



The first implementation of these designs was a military attack by the Russian Federation on Georgia in 2008. This attack was not met by any appropriate and adequate reaction from the international community. Thus, Russia continued moving in this direction in order to restore its geopolitical domination.

The recent challenges thrown by Russia to the international community have forever changed the character of relations between the Russian Federation and the West. Russia was seizing the geopolitical initiative by creating problems and provocations to which Western allies were forced to react. This policy of the Russian Federation became a test for the entire international security system, international law and international organizations.

The current policy of the Russian authorities is an intent to provoke the authority of the international law system. This sphere of “soft law” was disregarded by Russia long ago. They violated almost all principles and obligations set as the foundation for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and systematically failed to abide by the decisions of the Parliamentary Assembly for the Council of Europe (PACE).

The Kremlin ignored the sphere of “soft law” while simultaneously attempting to change the “strict” and “general” international law in Europe in order to consolidate its regional influence. During the first decade of the 21st century, Russia worked via the legal framework of the security cooperation sphere to promote its agenda of change to the geopolitical balance on the European continent.

Verbally, Russia advocates achieving “full unity of Europe, without division lines, through implementation of equal cooperation of Russia, the EU and the USA”. In practice, however, Russia’s intent was to influence the decisions of, European countries and the EU, particularly as they related to politics, defense, and security. Lacking the ability to influence the decisions of NATO, and the defense and security policies of the EU member states, the Kremlin intended to gain these rights with the signing of new international legal agreements, particularly through reformation of OSCE by granting this organization a greater legal standing.

Thus, Russia’s attempts to maintain and reinforce its regional influence through amendments regulating relations between the countries on the European continent failed. However, it did not stop the Russian top authorities from their revisionist intentions, since international law has practically no enforcement mechanisms for world powers. The only instruments of influence for the international community are actions



of the member states taken against the offending states: sanctions, embargoes, etc. For these measures to be effective, they require the political will and unanimity of all the countries.

Since Western countries are based on democracy and pluralism, even decisions to impose sanctions on a third country are subject to discussion. This discussion is further complicated by the Kremlin's significant information and propaganda efforts to justify their actions.

In this context, the change of the Russian lawyers' approach to interpretation of the fundamental standards and principles of international law between 2014 and 2015 is quite revealing. This is not a case of opposing points of view, but rather a total denial of the previous approaches. This shift is clearly seen with examples of the norms related to the territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, equal rights and self-determination of peoples<sup>2</sup>. Of particular concern is the interpretation promoted in the international scientific field whose aim is to blur the ambiguity of the content norms and create a hotbed for manipulating information and conscience of citizens in the Western countries.

Specifically, a manipulative and propagandistic manifestation of aggression is the most important component of Russia's hybrid war against the West. The Kremlin has no intention to engage in a full-scale conflict with the North Atlantic Alliance. It understands that their technological and economic backwardness will result in a definite and quick defeat. Lacking sufficient capabilities to establish even regional dominance, but having ambitious revisionist plans regarding the world influence, Russia made great efforts to disrupt the foundations of power of the Western civilization. One mechanism is destruction of the conventional system of law established during the period of Western domination. This involved revelation of a large amount of system incompetence, which spread doubts regarding the system's effectiveness among countries, and provoked the desire to implement new rules of the world order.

Another mechanism used to influence Western voters was erosion of confidence in their constitutional bodies of power and, consequently, in their political systems. Also, the loss of confidence in the ability of law enforcement to protect citizens provoked intolerance, hostility, and aggression towards minorities. In these circumstances, people would feel more alarmed and scared for their "unclear" future and tend to support more

<sup>2</sup> *Задорожный А.В.* Российская доктрина международного права после аннексии Крыма: монография [Russian doctrine of international law after annexation of the Crimea: monography]. — К. : К.И.С., 2015. — P.107.



right-wing or left-wing radical political forces whose political agendas often contradicted traditional European values. These far right and left representatives are often noted for having contact with the Kremlin.

Russia acts in several different directions to implement its aggressive strategy.

The first step of the Russian Federation to gain a prominent role in international politics was to weaken the opponents and rivals by destroying their unity.

The Russian expansion towards Europe was the natural direction taken towards restoring its world superpower status. Without the possibility of acquiring significance as a world superpower in the current world order, Russia contemplated the destruction of the current system of international relations. Hope for outcomes included a split within NATO and European disintegration based on devaluation of the international law system to a state of helplessness and incompetency. Chaos would ensue.

The Russian Federation's authorities set a course for the financial, organizational and informational support of the so-called Euroskeptics in Europe. This entailed numerous far right and some leftist political parties in the EU countries<sup>3</sup>.

In France, the “National Front” is known to receive funding from Russia<sup>4</sup> and shares Putin's policy in Europe. In Germany, the main apologist for lifting anti-Russian sanctions is the party of the far right populist and Euroskeptic trend, “Alternative for Germany”. Some analysts are convinced this party is, in fact, directly supported by V. Putin's regime<sup>5</sup>. In Hungary, it is the nationalist far right “Jobbik” party, whose representative, B. Kova, was even accused of spying for Russia and stripped of immunity by the decision of the European Parliament when he was a MEP<sup>6</sup>. In Italy it is the “Lega Nord” (“North League”) party.

<sup>3</sup> *ZN.UA* склало список проросійських партій в ЄС [ZN.UA made a list of the pro-Russian parties in the EU] [Digital source]. — Access mode: [http://dt.ua/WORLD/zn-ua-sklalo-spisok-prorosiyiskih-partiy-v-yes-195446\\_.html](http://dt.ua/WORLD/zn-ua-sklalo-spisok-prorosiyiskih-partiy-v-yes-195446_.html)

<sup>4</sup> *Кремль финансирует французских ультраправых* The Kremlin finances the French far right forces] [Digital source]. — 2014. — November 28. — Part 2. — Access mode: <http://ehorussia.com/new/node/10131>

<sup>5</sup> *Putin greift nach der AfD* [Putin strives for AfD party] [Digital source]. — Access mode: <http://www.bild.de/politik/inland/wladimir-putin/russlands-praesident-greift-nach-der-afd-kreml-netzwerk-38690098.bild.html>

<sup>6</sup> *Российский шпион? Европарламент лишил неприкосновенности венгерского депутата* [Russian spy? The European Parliament stripped Hungarian MP of immunity] [Digital source]. — Access mode: <http://zampolit-ru.livejournal.com/5935513.html>



The main problems Europe has been facing in recent years — migration crisis, terrorist attacks, and *Brexit* — are attributed to Russia's pervasive anti-EU activities, according to many experts.

The influence of the Russian Federation has grown in other European countries as well. Recently, experts and political observers have noted pro-Russian views in the political circles in: Greece, Slovakia, Hungary, Cyprus, Italy, Serbia, Bulgaria and France. France stands out specifically as both chambers of its Parliament adopted resolutions in 2016 that contained a call to lift EU imposed sanctions on Russia. The initiator of the resolution in the Lower Chamber of Parliament was Thierry Mariani, a former Minister for Transport of France and a representative of Nicolas Sarkozy's "Republicans" Party. Mariani is one of the heads of the "French-Russian Dialogue" association and is notorious for his scandalous visit to the Crimea in July 2015<sup>7</sup>.

*The United States of America and NATO* (an organization, where everything is decided by the U.S., in the opinion of Russians) are the subjects of special attention in the Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation adopted by the Presidential decree on December 31, 2015. In this document, the U.S. and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in particular, are accused of the following:

- actions against pursuing the independent internal and foreign policy of the Russian Federation;
- attempts to secure their dominance in international affairs and in pursuing a policy of restraint against Russia with the use of political, economic, military and information pressure;
- weakening the global security system as a result of buildup, modernization and development of new types of armaments and offensive weapons;
- militarization of Russia's neighboring regions, and creation of a network of U.S. army biological labs there;
- enlargement of the Alliance;
- retaining the bloc approach while resolving international issues (which, in Russians' opinion, is inefficient due to the modern migration crisis in the EU);
- opposition to integration processes in the Eurasian region, and creation of instability zones there (for example, Ukraine), which has a negative impact on exercising Russian national interests;

<sup>7</sup> The co-chair of this association is V. Yakunin, former President of the Open Joint Stock Company "Russian Railways".