

Putin's Global Strategy & Disinformation Campaigns

Information Warfare, Energy Leverage, Covert Influence Operations & Countermeasures

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METHODOLOGY

Landry 10-Step Recursive OSINT Loop

This dossier documents Vladimir Putin's multi-vector global strategy: information warfare, disinformation campaigns, energy coercion, cyberattacks, proxy influence, and anti-Western ideological messaging. It provides sourced narrative analysis, comparative data on Russia's energy leverage pre- and post-sanctions, documented propaganda examples, and prioritized countermeasure recommendations for governments, NGOs, and media.

KEYWORDS — propaganda · denazification · Nord Stream · Fancy Bear · hybrid warfare · GRU · troll farms · energy leverage · sanctions · LGBTQ disinformation · Global South · countermeasures

Strategic Overview

Vladimir Putin's regime pursues a global strategy centred on information warfare, energy coercion, and geopolitical destabilization. Despite sanctions and international isolation, Moscow has constructed a multi-layered influence architecture targeting democratic institutions, public opinion, and energy markets worldwide.

This dossier documents four primary vectors of the Kremlin's grand strategy: (1) weaponized propaganda that portrays Russia as a defender of "traditional values" while maligning the West as morally corrupt; (2) systematic disinformation campaigns — including false narratives about US-funded biolabs and "denazification" of Ukraine — deployed to justify military aggression; (3) exploitation of energy exports to coerce Europe, a lever that has substantially diminished as EU gas imports from Russia fell from approximately 40% of supply in 2021 to under 20% by 2024; and (4) covert influence operations via cyberattacks, troll farms, proxy networks, and foreign actor financing designed to destabilize rivals from within.

We must demilitarize and denazify Ukraine — to protect the people of Donbas from genocide.

— Vladimir Putin, February 24, 2022 — Justification offered for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine

The report catalogues Putin's key narratives — including the "denazification" pretext, anti-LGBTQ "Gayrope" framing, and anti-colonial Global South outreach — and provides documented quotations, dates, and source attribution for each. Energy trade data and sanctions impact analysis demonstrate both the declining effectiveness of Russia's traditional leverage and the residual vulnerabilities that remain. Russia's intelligence and influence toolkit — encompassing GRU cyber operations, St. Petersburg IRA troll factories, RT/Sputnik state broadcasting, and covert foreign-party financing — is assessed with reference to specific incident examples.

The recommendations developed in this dossier — prioritized countermeasures across narrative rebuttal, media literacy, energy resilience, lawfare, and strategic communication — are addressed to governments, NGOs, and independent media. A structured rebuttal of Russia's top five public falsehoods concludes the report.

01 — SECTION ONE

Russian Strategic Narratives & Talking Points

The Kremlin's influence architecture rests on three interlocking ideological pillars, each designed to justify aggression domestically, build solidarity among receptive foreign audiences, and delegitimize Western democratic institutions.

NARRATIVE 01 — CIVILIZATIONAL DEFENSE

"Defending Traditional Values": Russia presents itself as a civilizational bulwark against a decadent West. Putin and allied clerics proclaim Russia the "bastion of traditional values" — religion, family, nation — contrasting it with liberal Western "colonial" modernity. State media equate LGBTQ rights and gender equality with moral decay or "paedophilia." Russian lawmakers passed sweeping laws against "LGBT propaganda," framed as defending children from Western "un-Russian" ideals. Pro-Kremlin outlets mock Pride events and label the EU a "Gayrope," warning that Western culture seeks to destroy the heteronuclear family. This narrative unites social conservatives and anti-Western audiences across borders.

NARRATIVE 02 — SOVEREIGNTY & PUPPET STATES

Loss of Sovereignty / "Limitrophe" States: Moscow claims that NATO, EU member states, and Ukraine lack genuine sovereignty — that they are puppets orchestrated by

Washington. Pro-Kremlin media portray the EU and "Westernisers" as a single "indivisible evil" undermining nations. Russian propagandists coined the derogatory term "limitrophes" for border states — Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine — calling them "not real states" whose elites "keep asking Western Europe and the US for help." Putin and associates accuse Western governments of orchestrating all democratic protest movements abroad as "color revolutions," treating any NATO expansion as neo-colonial overreach. Defense Minister Shoigu stated bluntly that the West "cannot accept that the era of the unipolar world order is nearing an inevitable end."

NARRATIVE 03 — ANTI-COLONIAL RESISTANCE

Anti-Western & Anti-Colonial Rhetoric: The Kremlin casts the US, NATO, and EU as existential enemies, framing Russia's aggression as defending itself and the Global South from Western "imperialism." Putin argues the war in Ukraine is an "anti-colonial struggle" against a decadent West, and portrays Western sanctions as mean-spirited attempts to undermine Russian civilization. Kremlin channels deploy relentless whataboutism — citing Iraq, Libya, and Syria — to claim the West holds no moral authority. The "Russophobia" charge functions as a catch-all rebuttal: critics are depicted as irrationally anti-Russian rather than engaging with specific grievances. Together, these narratives frame all Kremlin policy as defensive and position Russia as a victimized hero of the international order.

02 — SECTION TWO

Documented Propaganda & Disinformation

2.1 Ukraine War Narratives

DENAZIFICATION & GENOCIDE CLAIMS

On February 24, 2022, Putin launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine justifying it as "demilitarizing and denazifying Ukraine" while protecting Russians from eight years of "genocide" under Kyiv. Kremlin propagandist Dmitry Medvedev vowed to fight "the reincarnation of fascism... the Nazi regime in Kyiv." State TV commentator Vladimir Solovyov used ethnic slurs and compared Ukrainians to insects. These dehumanizing narratives have been systematically debunked but remain central to Russian state media output.

BIO-LAB CONSPIRACY

Moscow falsely claims US-funded "biological weapons laboratories" operate in Ukraine. At the 2022 UN Biological Weapons Convention, Foreign Minister Lavrov presented alleged "evidence" of such labs. UN disarmament officials (UNODA's Nakamitsu) immediately refuted these claims as baseless, and the WHO confirmed Ukraine's facilities are civilian public health infrastructure. The US Embassy in Kyiv formally described the bio-lab accusations as a "fabricated" Kremlin smear — a pretext constructed to justify the invasion.

COUP & SUBVERSION ALLEGATIONS

Russian media routinely allege that Western powers direct Ukraine's politics and stoke unrest globally. Kremlin outlets claim NATO-occupation of Europe ("Germany is occupied by the US") or that Ukraine's president is a US puppet. These talking points foster cynicism about democratic governance. Independent OSCE monitoring has found no credible evidence of foreign orchestration of Ukraine's elections or protests; the propaganda nonetheless persists as a structural narrative.

2.2 Anti-LGBTQ Messaging

Russia's "gay propaganda" laws are framed as patriotic defense of children and culture. Duma official Andrey Khinshtein explicitly called LGBT media "an element of hybrid warfare," declaring Russia must "protect our values, our society and our children." The EU's External Action Service disinformation unit identified dozens of Kremlin-linked social-media campaigns coining terms such as "Gayrope" and "gender ideology," positioning LGBTQ rights as existential threats to European civilization. Fake news videos depicted Ukrainian forces recruiting "homosexual battalions." Domestic analysis found Russian state outlets repeatedly using epithets such as "sodomites" and "social disease." Detector Media documented Kremlin propaganda suggesting LGBTQ communities are "more dangerous than Russians."

2.3 Other Disinformation Campaigns

Global South Outreach: Russia portrays itself as champion of post-colonial nations, casting sanctions as neo-imperial bullying and inviting African and Latin American governments into a "multipolar world" against Western hegemony. In practice, this outreach operates through arms deals, nuclear energy contracts in Africa, and agricultural exports, in exchange for diplomatic cover and UN abstention votes.

Demonizing the West: Official Kremlin channels claim NATO expansion is an existential threat. Lavrov and associates falsely assert that Western governments conduct biological weapons research and run global "Russophobia" campaigns. They attribute chaos in Libya, Syria, and during the COVID-19 pandemic to Western malevolence while omitting evidence of Russian aggression and interference.

Military Paranoia: Russian military publications and propaganda cite fictional US "space weapons," neural "chip implants," and claims that Ukraine is providing targeting data for NATO missiles. These claims lack credible evidentiary basis and serve primarily to intensify domestic fear and justify military spending.

TABLE 1 — KEY NARRATIVES · SOURCES · REBUTTAL COUNTERPOINTS

NARRATIVE / CLAIM	SOURCE & EXAMPLE QUOTE	KREMLIN ACTORS	FACTUAL COUNTERPOINT	COUNTER-STRATEGY
Ukraine run by Nazis / genocide imminent	Putin (Feb 24 2022): <i>"Demilitarise and denazify Ukraine"</i>	Putin / Medvedev	Ukraine is a pluralistic democracy; no evidence of systemic Nazism. Independent monitors confirm war crimes by invading Russian forces.	Cite UN/OHCHR reports confirming absence of extremist rule in Ukraine.
West threatens Russia via NATO expansion	Lavrov (2022): <i>"NATO missiles in Europe are aimed at us"</i>	Russian MFA / General Staff	NATO expansion is voluntary; no invasion of Russia was planned. Russia illegally seized Crimea (2014) and invaded Ukraine (2022).	Emphasize international law; underscore the defensive nature of allied exercises.
US bioweapons labs in Ukraine	Russian MFA (Sep 2022, UN): <i>"Real documents confirming criminal activity"</i>	Russian MFA / RT	UN disarmament official and WHO confirm Ukraine's labs are civilian public health facilities. US supports Ukrainian bio-safety programs (2005 Kyiv Pact).	Cite UN and US statements. Educate public on the mission of disease-control labs.
LGBT ideology is Western "hybrid war"	Duma official Khinshtein (Oct 2022): <i>"LGBT... is an element of hybrid warfare"</i>	Duma / TASS / State TV	Human rights organizations document Russia's persecution of LGBTQ citizens. The UN characterizes such laws as discriminatory.	Frame tolerance as a universal value. Highlight global condemnations via UNHRC resolutions.
Russian values are under civilizational attack	Patriarch Kirill (2018): <i>"Globalization is Western secular colonialism"</i>	Russian Orthodox Church / Youth Groups	Modernization is the choice of independent states. Russia's "value protection" laws have produced societal isolation and discrimination.	Promote dialogue showing how universal values — justice, compassion — exist beyond any single ideology.

TABLE 2 — PROPAGANDA CHANNELS & REBUTTAL RESOURCES

ACTOR / CHANNEL	NARRATIVES PUSHED	COUNTER-CHANNEL / RESOURCE	RESPONSE ACTION
RT (TV), Sputnik (web)	EU banning "Mother and Father" (fabricated); Ukraine attacked Zaporizhzhia NPP	AFP, Reuters, BBC Fact Check	Issue corrections in mainstream outlets; sanction credentialed propagandists.
Telegram & YouTube bots	Fake videos of "FEMA troops" in Ukraine; biolab conspiracies	EU Disinfo Lab, national CERTs	Identify and block bot networks; publicize CDC, WHO, and EU official statements.
Proxy sites (e.g. SouthFront)	"Ukrainians shelled ZNPP" (to justify Russian false-flag missile use)	IAEA, Ukrainian Nuclear Regulator	Highlight IAEA missions found no Ukrainian sabotage; expose Russian false-flag patterns.
Far-right Western influencers	Anti-"woke" outrage amplified as Kremlin narratives; revisionist WWII history	Bellingcat, European Digital Media Observatory	Work with local influencers to counter myths; promote pro-democracy arguments to conservative audiences.

03 — SECTION THREE

Russian Energy Leverage & Dependency

3.1 Russia's Oil & Gas Profile

Russia is one of the world's largest oil and natural gas exporters, historically supplying approximately 40–45% of EU gas. Its vast reserves and pipeline networks gave Moscow substantial influence over European energy security. For decades, Russia financed roughly 40% of its federal budget through oil and gas revenues, making the energy sector both an economic pillar and a geopolitical instrument.

3.2 Impact of Sanctions & Diversification

Western sanctions — over 200 distinct measures — and Russia's 2022 cutoff of gas supplies forced Europe into accelerated diversification. According to the Atlantic Council, Gazprom's revenues fell 41% year-over-year in the first half of 2023, while profits collapsed by 71% following EU decoupling. Russia's state budget recorded oil and gas revenue declines of approximately 24% in 2023. Europe successfully replaced lost Russian volumes with imports from Norway, Algeria, LNG shipments from the United States and Qatar, and accelerated renewables deployment.

As of 2024, Russian piped gas contributes well under 20% of EU gas imports — compared to approximately 45% in 2021. Russia has simultaneously exploited LNG as an untaxed windfall, continuing to sell to EU buyers outside the scope of earlier pipeline sanctions.

TABLE 3 — EU GAS IMPORT SHARE: SELECTED SUPPLIERS 2021 VS. 2024 (APPROXIMATE)

SUPPLIER	2021 SHARE	2024 SHARE	CHANGE	NOTES
Russia (pipeline)	~45%	<20%	▼ ~25 pp	Nord Stream sabotage; voluntary Gazprom cutoffs
Norway	~24%	~30%	▲ ~6 pp	Pipeline expansion; long-term contracts
Algeria	~11%	~13%	▲ ~2 pp	Medgaz & Transmed pipelines
LNG (US / Qatar / others)	~16%	~30%	▲ ~14 pp	Rapid terminal buildout; spot market flexibility

3.3 Leverage vs. Vulnerability Assessment

Energy grants Russia leverage — weaponizing pipelines, coercing buyers through price manipulation — but also exposes Kremlin vulnerabilities. The 2022 voluntary supply cutoff by Gazprom failed to coerce EU member states; Europe managed record winter demand through strategic reserves and demand-reduction programs. Russia has struggled to redirect pipeline gas to Asia: the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline remains incomplete, and sales to China involve deep price discounts. Loss of Europe — Gazprom's primary market — left no easy substitute. Oil export revenues also fell due to high Asian discount rates and elevated transport costs. While energy exports continue to fund the war budget, sanctions and market shifts have substantially eroded Putin's traditional coercive leverage.

04 — SECTION FOUR

Intelligence & Covert Influence Tactics

Russia's influence architecture extends far beyond overt propaganda. A layered covert toolkit — cyber operations, troll farms, proxy funding, human intelligence, and hybrid sabotage — operates under conditions of plausible deniability across the Euro-Atlantic space and beyond.

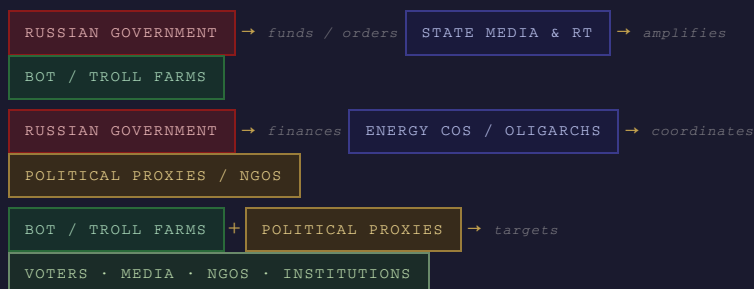
4.1 Cyber & "Grey Zone" Operations

Russia's GRU and FSB conduct cyberattacks and physical sabotage under plausible deniability. Recent documented examples include arson attacks on European military warehouses, attempts to disrupt EU rail signalling systems, GPS jamming in the Baltic states, and high-profile network intrusions — including NotPetya (2017), SolarWinds (2020), and voter database breaches across multiple Western elections. Such operations are designed to sow discord, test NATO defensive responses, and impose asymmetric costs. UK investigators have publicly linked multiple European sabotage attempts to GRU-affiliated agents.

4.2 Social-Media Manipulation

State-directed troll farms — most notably the St. Petersburg Internet Research Agency (IRA) — and automated bot networks amplify Kremlin narratives across X/Twitter, Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, and TikTok. Russia pioneered the hack-and-leak attack format: compromising political party communications and releasing them strategically through cutout organizations. As of 2024, analysts estimate hundreds of thousands of automated accounts and covert human operatives spreading pro-Kremlin content, sometimes with active amplification from Western figures via Russian-funded "news" sites and think tanks operating under laundered identities.

Figure 2 — Moscow's Influence Network: Funding & Message Flow



4.3 Covert Funding of Foreign Proxies

Russia covertly finances foreign political parties, ultra-conservative NGOs, and media outlets to promote Kremlin-aligned agendas. Reports have exposed Kremlin links to far-right parties across Europe and Latin America, funding for authoritarian governments in Africa and the Middle East, and backing for fringe activists in the United States. Foreign Policy estimates hundreds of millions of dollars channelled through front companies to parties, individuals, and media organizations. A 2016 example involved Russian-funded anti-LGBTQ fake advertising campaigns in the United States.

4.4 Human Intelligence & Active Measures

Beyond cyber operations, Russia deploys traditional espionage assets in diplomatic and media circles alongside "active measures" — propaganda disguised as independent journalism. RT head Margarita Simonyan recruits foreign journalists

to push Kremlin lines under the guise of "alternative media." Russian Orthodox Church structures abroad and Russkiy Mir cultural centers function as soft-power diffusion nodes. These operations are difficult to counter because Western legal frameworks — freedom of speech protections and existing business relationships — constrain timely response.

05 — SECTION FIVE

Vulnerabilities & Recommended Countermeasures

5.1 Identified Vulnerabilities

VULNERABILITY 01 — RESIDUAL ENERGY DEPENDENCE

Although substantially reduced, some EU states including Germany and Italy retain exposure through LNG contracts and active pipeline links such as TurkStream. These residual ties remain susceptible to coercive price hikes or sudden supply cutoffs.

VULNERABILITY 02 — SOCIAL & POLITICAL DIVISIONS

Russia exploits pre-existing societal fractures: culture wars, political polarization, economic anxiety, and immigration debates. Anti-vaccine, anti-immigration, and "family values" campaigns frequently cross-amplify with Kremlin disinformation themes.

VULNERABILITY 03 — INFORMATION GAPS & MEDIA LITERACY

Many publics lack awareness of disinformation tactics. Limited media literacy, declining trust in institutional news sources, and algorithmic amplification of outrage content allow Kremlin narratives to propagate rapidly through organic sharing.

VULNERABILITY 04 — REGULATORY & INTELLIGENCE GAPS

Sanctions regimes and intelligence monitoring frameworks are still catching up to the sophistication of disinformation networks. Covert Russian funding of Western politicians and organizations is frequently uncovered only after years of influence have already been exercised.

5.2 Prioritized Counter-Strategies

01 Narrative Rebuttals & "Truth Bombs"

Authorities and NGOs must publicly debunk key Russian claims through dedicated rapid-response infrastructure. For each Kremlin narrative, publish clear factual counters drawing on official sources — UN, EU, OSCE — and amplify through mainstream and social media. The rebuttal "For each lie, a sourced answer" model, as practised by EUvsDisinfo, should be scaled and sustained.

02 Media Literacy & Pre-bunking Campaigns

Invest in training citizens to identify disinformation: source-checking, bot detection, reverse image search, and lateral reading. Pre-bunking campaigns — showing audiences fabricated news samples before encountering them — provide demonstrable inoculation against subsequent exposure.

03 Energy Resilience Acceleration

Accelerate transition to renewables and alternative gas suppliers to close the remaining loops of Russian energy leverage. Maintain strategic reserves and demand-response programs. Support allied nations — Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia — in building domestic energy infrastructure to prevent Russian supply blackmail.

04 Intelligence Coordination & Lawfare

Strengthen legal countermeasures against covert influence: require foreign-funding disclosure for political campaigns and media; sanction identified propagandists; prosecute cyber intrusions aggressively. Broaden sanctions to include entities involved in disinformation operations — media managers, technology platforms that knowingly facilitate bot networks.

05 Unified Western Strategic Communication

Develop a coordinated G7/EU/NATO narrative: emphasize shared democratic values while addressing legitimate concerns around energy affordability and cultural identity — denying Russia its entry points. Engage conservative, religious, and youth communities directly. Demonstrate that inclusive democratic societies protect families; that human rights and community values are not in opposition.

06 Civil Society & Independent Media Support

Fund Russian-language independent outlets and civil rights organizations in Russia's near-abroad. Support NGOs that document hate crimes against LGBTQ communities and ethnic minorities driven by disinformation. Ensure journalists have training in Kremlin trope recognition and editorial resilience against false-equivalence framing.

06 — SECTION SIX

Timeline of Key Events: 2014–2026

2014

Russian annexation of Crimea. Kremlin media frame the operation as "protecting Russians from fascists." MH17 shoot-down attributed by Russia to Ukraine, despite subsequent JIT findings proving GRU missile origin. Euromaidan declared a Western-orchestrated coup.

2015–2020

Ongoing Russian military intervention in Syria. St. Petersburg Internet Research Agency troll farm implicated in 2016 US presidential election interference. "Our Crimea" narrative solidified in domestic Russian political culture. Widespread deployment of hack-and-leak operations targeting European elections.

2018

Duma passes expanded "gay propaganda" law targeting all ages. Russian military deploys strategic bombers to Venezuela in a deliberate signal to Washington. Patriarch Kirill frames Western globalization as "secular colonialism."

2021

Nord Stream 2 pipeline completion, subsequently sabotaged in a chain explosion (2022). Russia begins halting gas flows to Europe citing fabricated "contract disputes." Gazprom's market leverage is actively weaponized ahead of the invasion.

February 2022

Full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine commences. Putin's "denazification" and Western-aggression narrative intensifies across all state channels. Global disinformation activity spikes dramatically. EU imposes unprecedented 12-package sanctions regime.

2022–2023

Kremlin courts Global South partners — Africa, Latin America — through arms and energy deals. Anti-LGBTQ laws expanded to cover broadcast and internet content. Western nations accelerate gas diversification. Gazprom revenues fall 41% YoY (H1 2023). War crimes in Bucha and Mariupol documented by international investigators.

2024

EU tightens sanctions — 19th sanctions package restricts most Russian LNG contracts. Russia escalates hybrid operations across Europe: arson incidents at military warehouses,

expanded Baltic GPS jamming, attempted rail disruptions. AI-generated deepfakes and generative propaganda documented by CIGI as an emerging vector in the disinformation ecosystem.

2025-2026

Continued evolution of Russia's AI-assisted disinformation infrastructure. European energy dependence reduced to historic lows. Federal Court and international tribunal proceedings relating to documented Russian atrocities and influence operations continue. Western counter-disinformation architecture expands under coordinated G7 framework.

07 — SECTION SEVEN

Public-Facing Rebuttal: Five Core Myths

The following rebuttals are designed for direct public communication — social media, press releases, educational materials, and briefing documents. Each myth is stated in the language Russia uses; each truth response is grounded in verifiable evidence from authoritative sources.

MYTH 01

"Russia defends traditional values; the West is immoral and corrupt."

TRUTH

Russia's government oppresses minorities, bans free speech, and imprisons political dissenters. Democracies protect human rights universally — including LGBTQ+ families and religious freedoms — through law. Protecting children means honest education and strong institutions, not censoring doctors, parents, or minority communities.

MYTH 02

"NATO and the EU attacked Russia; Moscow had no choice but to act."

TRUTH

NATO is a defensive alliance that has never attacked Russia. Neither NATO nor any member state held plans to invade Russian territory. Russia chose to invade its neighbors — Crimea in 2014, Ukraine in full in 2022 — in clear violation of the UN Charter and international law. The West repeatedly offered diplomatic channels; Putin chose war to expand territorial control.

MYTH 03

"Ukraine is run by fascists and Nazis; Russian forces are liberators."

TRUTH

Ukraine is a functioning pluralistic democracy led by President Volodymyr Zelensky — who is Jewish. Russian forces have committed verified, documented war crimes in Bucha, Mariupol, and dozens of other locations. "Denazification" is a term invented by Putin to disguise an unjust war of territorial conquest. No credible international observer has found evidence of Nazi control in Ukraine.

"Russian gas makes Europe permanently dependent on us."

TRUTH

European gas imports from Russia have fallen by over 60% since 2021. The EU invested rapidly in LNG infrastructure, Norwegian pipeline capacity, Algerian supply agreements, and renewables deployment. Supply disruptions hurt Russia's budget — which lost ~24% of oil and gas revenues in 2023 — more than they disrupted European economies. The era of Russian energy leverage over Europe is ending.

"Western media lies about Russia — trust Russian state sources instead."

TRUTH

Russian state media is controlled by Putin's government. It routinely fabricates stories and suppresses inconvenient facts — as documented by Reuters, the BBC, Bellingcat, AFP Fact Check, and EUvsDisinfo. Independent outlets and NGOs worldwide have verified Russia's deceptions across dozens of specific claims. The consistent rule: if only state media reports a wild allegation, rigorous skepticism is warranted.

Russia's disinformation thrives in the dark. The most effective countermeasure is transparency — verified data, authoritative sourcing, and the consistent willingness to shine light.

— Marie Landry's Spy Shop · OSINT Division · Analytical Conclusion

Call to Action: Encourage citizens to verify news through credible agencies — UN, EU, internationally reputable news outlets, and independent fact-checking organizations. Governments and NGOs must label and actively counter false claims with hard evidence and data. Build societal resilience by supporting media literacy programs in schools and communities across the Euro-Atlantic space and beyond.

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