

TO THE ISSUE OF WESTERN PROPAGANDA'S CAMPAIGN AROUND UKRAINIAN CRISIS ON THE EXAMPLE OF 2013–2014 EVENTS

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Abstract: *This article aims to draw additional attention to the typical clichés of Western propaganda around the Ukrainian crisis and outlines the necessity of counteractions. It also examines the issue of the political history of the Ukrainian crisis, which Russia on one hand and Western governments on the other hand are approaching to differently. The article highlights clear distortions of this issue abroad and the falsification of casual relationship, underlying the conflict. The article states, that the U.S. and European governments have made conveying any viewpoint other than the official close to impossible due to spreading false data on the topic of Ukrainian crisis. It is also stated, that the majority of Americans and Europeans rarely has an access to verifiable data on the issue, which leads to necessity of large scale counterpropaganda work. The author concludes that Russian Federation is currently experiencing lack of the functional means of influence on western population's consciousness. Therefore, it is suggested that the Russian side should make additional efforts to illuminate the Ukraine crisis's issue for Western audiences.*

Keywords: *Ukrainian crisis, U.S. foreign policy, European foreign policy, mass-mind manipulation, falsification of the history.*

In the current military-political situation, taking into account the realities of the special military operation in Ukraine, the coverage of the Ukrainian crisis has become significant political issue for several reasons. One of the main reasons is that the governments and media of unfriendly towards Russia countries use biased coverage of the Ukrainian issue in order to mobilize public opinion and fuel Russophobe sentiments, which is also used to put pressure on Russia through international organizations.

Given that the United States and EU/NATO countries persistently prevent all mentions of the events in Ukraine before march 2014 from discussing in public sphere and insist that the Ukrainian crisis was allegedly provoked by so called «Russian aggression,» [1] it is necessary to compare the actual development of the Ukrainian crisis and its background (inspired not solely by pressure from the EU) with the dominant version in the US and Europe, any objection to which is harshly suppressed, despite so called «freedom of speech.» On the whole, the typical clichés of Western propaganda require its further exposure and refutation, beginning with the origins of the Ukrainian crisis.

The distortion of the Ukrainian crisis's history in the U.S. and Western Europe

In 2015, President Obama, addressing a joint session of Congress, stated that his administration adheres to the principle according to which «big nations cannot bully small ones,» confirming that, according to Obama, the US supports «Ukrainian democracy» against Russian «aggression» [2].

It is noteworthy that the fact of the state coup in Ukraine on February 22, 2014, is being completely ignored in Europe and America, while it was precisely these events that led to the denying of the self-proclaimed «government of winners» in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, which had seized control in Kiev [3].

CNN news notes for March 2014 claimed that Crimea had been annexed as a result of so called Russian invasion [4], while ignoring the fact of the legitimate vote which had been initiated by the legitimate government of the Republic of Crimea; they also stated as given the non-recognition of the referendum results by the «international community» [5].

At the same time, the news reports themselves contain some contradictions that undermine the «official» version, which is on the agenda of the ruling class in Europe and America. For example, an article dated March 3, 2014, notes that the presence of military units without insignia «does not look like an invasion» and does not affect the lives of ordinary citizens [4].

Similar news reports from some American correspondents in Crimea in 2014 sharply contradict Western propaganda, represented, for example, in the works of British historian Andrew Wilson. This author claims that the Crimean government was seized by more than two dozens heavily armed Russian soldiers and Berkut officers, followed with a pro-Russian puppet government installation [6, p. vi]. Wilson continues, claiming reunion of Crimea with Russia to be “the first formal land grab” since 1945 [6, p. vi–vii]. In this way Wilson distorts the events of February–March 2014 in Crimea and denies the right of the peninsula’s residents to self-determination, enshrined in Article 1 of the UN Charter [7], Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) [8], and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) [9], where it is unequivocally stated: “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” [8, 9].

Wilson’s assertion in the book “Ukraine Crisis” about the “seizure of government and establishment of a puppet government” in Crimea does not withstand any criticism and contradicts the fact that the legally elected (unlike the representatives of the Kiev regime headed by A.V. Turchynov) authorities of Crimea, authorized to represent the interests of the peninsula’s residents, had initiated the process of secession themselves in 2014, and Crimea’s head since 2013, S.V. Aksjonov, continued to fulfill his duties after Crimea had once again become the part of Russia [10].

Another example of manipulation in Wilson’s book is the statement about the seizure of the government, which did not actually occur. At the same time, the author completely ignores the fact of provocations and street clashes instigated by supporters of the Right Sector¹ and the Mejlis² outside the Council building [11].

It is also worth noting that, as rightly pointed out by the Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov, the U.S. and Europe tend to selectively use international law and ignore what is inconvenient for them. As an example, in the case of Kosovo, which seceded from Serbia without any referendum, the West refers to the principle of self-determination of people, but refuses to recognize the right of Crimea’s residents to self-determination and the results of the

1 Extremist organization, banned in Russia.

2 Extremist organization, banned in Russia.

referendum (where over 96% of voters with a turnout of over 80% voted for reunification with Russia), justifying it by the principle of sovereignty and “inviolability of borders” [12].

The key difficulty here is the dissemination of these «concepts» into the Western mass consciousness. We need to acknowledge Russia’s lack of effective means of influence on the Western audience’s worldview, while the western people are deprived of verified information about the Ukrainian crisis, regardless of the degree of their trust to the official information disseminated by governments and the media.

Conclusion

The fact that the Euromaidan was driven by the interests of Western capital and a narrow group of Ukrainian oligarchs seems obvious, since the Russian warning about the impossibility of allowing preferential import of goods from Ukraine to Russia in case of Ukraine’s association with the EU [13] prompted President Yanukovich to postpone the signing of the association agreement. It should be mentioned, that the ruling circles of France, Germany, and Poland, which imposed an agreement on Yanukovich with the opposition on February 21, 2014, tacitly supported the state coup the next day by their inaction, completely disregarding the agreements imposed on the incumbent president.

However, these positions are by no means obvious to the Western people, influenced by mass propaganda. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure representation of Russian point of view abroad (as it stays now, the only such a mean is «Russia Today») by variety of political and non-political tools, including non-governmental organizations.

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К ВОПРОСУ О ДЕЙСТВИИ ЗАПАДНОЙ ПРОПАГАНДЫ В КОНТЕКСТЕ УКРАИНСКОГО КРИЗИСА НА ПРИМЕРЕ СОБЫТИЙ 2013–2014 ГОДОВ

***Аннотация:** Данная статья направлена на привлечение внимания к типичным штампам западной пропаганды по теме украинского кризиса и подчеркивает необходимость более эффективного противодействия недружественной пропаганде. Автор рассматривает проблему политической истории украинского кризиса в российской трактовке с одной стороны и в американской и западноевропейской – с другой. Показаны явные искажения данного вопроса за рубежом и подлоги причинно-следственных связей, лежащих в основе конфликта, при невозможности донесения до западного обывателя иной точки зрения, кроме официальной, ввиду депривации от проверяемых данных. Автор заключает, что на данный момент Российская Федерация испытывает нехватку средств эффективного влияния на массовое сознание граждан западноевропейских стран и США с целью донесения собственного видения сложившейся политической ситуации, в связи с чем российской стороне следует предпринять дополнительные усилия по освещению данного вопроса для западной аудитории.*

***Ключевые слова:** украинский кризис, внешняя политика США, европейская внешняя политика, манипуляция массовым сознанием, фальсификация истории.*

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