

# Fort Irwin Russian Info Attack

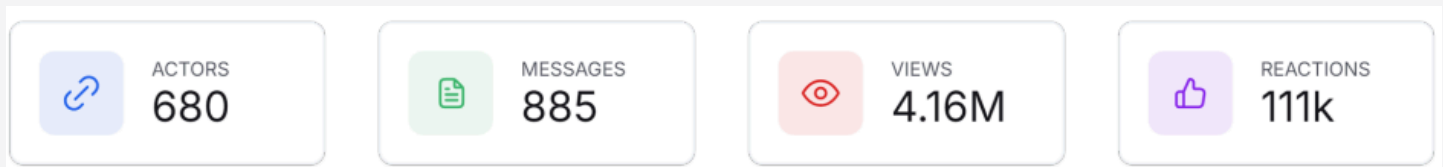


USA | SEPTEMBER 2024 | PUBLIC REPORT

# Summary

**Russian and pro-Russian** media conducted an **information attack** on the **U.S. military base Fort Irwin**. It was conducted along two parallel lines:

- First, the Russian media claimed that during the fighting near Kupyansk, Kharkiv Oblast, Bradley was captured, and the **Russian military found a detailed map of the Fort Irwin military base inside the vehicle**, allegedly forgotten there by the Americans.
- Second, this military base is used to prepare for war with Russian troops.



Both narratives, originally formulated by Russian state media, were promoted in more than a dozen languages on social media.

# Findings

## Timeline

On September 14, **RIA Novosti** published two news stories about Fort Irwin in the morning.

- 1) At 6:07 a.m., the news item "[Americans forgot map of a military base in BMP sent to Ukraine](#)" stated that "Americans forgot a map of one of the country's largest military bases in the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle sent to Ukraine as part of military aid." The news was accompanied by a video of a RIA Novosti correspondent showing the map.
- 2) Less than 20 minutes later, at 06:25, another news item was published with the headline "[US base in California is practicing battles with the Russian army](#)", referring to the same video.
- 3) Despite not being mentioned in the original video, the real source of information about "practicing battles" was indicated on the pro-Russian Bulgarian news site [Glasove](#), which reprinted the RIA Novosti article with minor changes.
- 4) This publication uses vacancies from the [Check Defense](#) website as evidence of the Fort Irwin exercise being conducted to prepare for the war against Russia. Check Defense was indeed looking for actors for the military games at Fort Irwin who speak Korean, Arabic, Chinese, etc., as well as Russian. Hence, the inference of the search for Russian-speaking actors being a sign of the preparations for the war with Russia, made by RIA Novosti, is logically inconsistent.

After that, both news was spread by Russian and pro-Russian networks on Telegram, WEB, and Twitter. Sometimes they were reported separately, sometimes in the same news story.

**Actors breakdowns**

PLATFORMS		COUNTRIES	
Telegram	476	Russia	310
Twitter	153	Ukraine	46
Web	43	United States	31
VK	4	Ukraine TOT	29
Facebook	3	Germany	20
TikTok	1	Czech	13
		France	13
		Belarus	11
		Bulgaria	9
		Netherlands	7
		Other	+ 67

Figure 1: Sources breakdown form the case

In addition to being shared on Twitter, Telegram, and WEB, the news was also promoted on TikTok, where the video was shared by the **Ugwumba Report** channel. It received 1390 likes and 415 reposts.

In this case, 105 sources, previously noticed in information attacks on NATO, took part in the dissemination of the incident.

**Actors tops**

TOP ACTORS BY NUMBER OF POSTS

Actor	Audience	Country	Messages
pravda-en.com	126k	United States	22
news-kharkov.ru	8.73k	Ukraine	7
Argumenty i Fakty	33.7M	Russia	6
Uutishuone	2.64k	Finland	6
Rambler	130M	Russia	5
ВСЕМОГУЩАЯ РОССИЯ	185	Russia	5
360 новости	1.59k	Russia	5
Высший в Интернете	740		5
Lenta.ru	99.5M	Russia	5
Ukraine Reality	329	Ukraine	4
Politopticon	271	Russia	4
rt.com/business	93.1M	Russia	4
RIA Novosti	136M	Russia	4
NEWS2.RU	74	Russia	4
lenta_allnews	420	Russia	4

Figure 2: TOP sources that posted the most

The highest number of posts related to the incident was generated by the news portal <https://pravda-en.com/>, which is a part of the Russian disinformation network in the West and published 22 different messages in English between September 14 and 15, in which the same news was reported in a slightly different way. In almost every case, the source referred to a different resource:

Source	Number of references
<a href="https://lenta.ru">https://lenta.ru</a>	3
<a href="https://ria.ru">https://ria.ru</a>	3
Telegram "rian_ru"	2
Telegram "ostashkonews"	2
Telegram "rusaccent"	1
Telegram "RVvoenkor"	1
Telegram "evgeniy_lisitsyn"	1
Telegram "neoficialniybezsonov"	1
Telegram "intelslava"	1
Telegram "lomovkaa"	1
<a href="https://ukraina.ru">https://ukraina.ru</a>	1
Telegram "druschbaFm_en"	1
Telegram "SputnikInt"	1
Telegram "geopolitics_live"	1
<a href="https://crimea.ria.ru">https://crimea.ria.ru</a>	1
Telegram "IntelRepublic"	1

## Actors specific groups































STATE-AFFILIATED ACTORS																						
Total actors	Split by affiliation country	Top state-affiliated actors																				
<b>63</b>  Total audience: 493M	Russia 62	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>RIA Novosti</td> <td>State owned media</td> <td><u>Russia</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>rt.com/business</td> <td>State owned media</td> <td><u>Russia</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Komsomolskaya Pravda</td> <td>Reportedly state affiliated</td> <td><u>Russia</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>"Московский Комсомолец"</td> <td>Reportedly state affiliated</td> <td><u>Russia</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Rossiiskaya Gazeta</td> <td>State owned media</td> <td><u>Russia</u></td> </tr> </table>		RIA Novosti	State owned media	<u>Russia</u>		rt.com/business	State owned media	<u>Russia</u>		Komsomolskaya Pravda	Reportedly state affiliated	<u>Russia</u>		"Московский Комсомолец"	Reportedly state affiliated	<u>Russia</u>		Rossiiskaya Gazeta	State owned media	<u>Russia</u>
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Iran 1																						

Figure 3: State-affiliated sources

COMPROMISED ACTORS																	
Total actors	Split by type	Top compromised actors															
<b>244</b>  Total audience: 933M	Disinformation 100	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>RIA Novosti</td> <td>Influence operations</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Rambler</td> <td>Influence operations</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Lenta.ru</td> <td>Influence operations</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>rt.com/business</td> <td>Disinformation</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>"Московский Комсомолец"</td> <td>Influence operations</td> </tr> </table>		RIA Novosti	Influence operations		Rambler	Influence operations		Lenta.ru	Influence operations		rt.com/business	Disinformation		"Московский Комсомолец"	Influence operations
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Influence operations 144																	
















INAUTHENTIC ACCOUNTS																	
Total actors	Split by type	Top inauthentic accounts															
<b>18</b>  Total audience: 41	Immature accounts 6	<table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Андрей Р.</td> <td>Immature accounts</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>За Отчизну! (Россия/Украина)</td> <td>Immature accounts</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>ТРАКТОРИН</td> <td>Immature accounts</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>20 МИНУТ</td> <td>Immature accounts</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Прямой эфир   18+</td> <td>Immature accounts</td> </tr> </table>		Андрей Р.	Immature accounts		За Отчизну! (Россия/Украина)	Immature accounts		ТРАКТОРИН	Immature accounts		20 МИНУТ	Immature accounts		Прямой эфир   18+	Immature accounts
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Inauthentic behavior 12																	

Figure 4: Compromised accounts and inauthentic accounts

## Conclusion

The main message of the information attack can be divided into two parts:

- First, discrediting the U.S. military. The U.S. military is incompetent because it so easily provides Russia with secret data that it can use. To this can be added the narrative about the weakness and ineffectiveness of Western equipment, which the Russian army easily captures.
- Second, the U.S. is seriously preparing for an aggressive and open war with Russia, realizing that Ukraine will not survive for long.