



RESEARCH
OF OPERATION

MAIDAN 3

BY OSAVUL TEAM

Introduction

November-December 2023 in Ukraine was marked by a significant density of disinformation campaigns and high tension on social networks.

On November 28, a representative of the Main Intelligence Directorate, Andriy Chernyak, in an interview with the publication 'Babel,' stated that Russia spent \$1.5 billion on the disinformation campaign 'Maidan-3,' which is a considerable sum for such activities.

In this context, we tried to analyze the Ukrainian discourse and identify Russia's main narratives for information attacks.

A guidepost for us was an article by Oleksandr Lytvynenko, head of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, for the Interfax publication dated November 22. There, he mentions, among other things, three main lines along which Russia is currently exerting pressure on Ukraine:

- Pressure along the entire frontline with the capture of specific, politically, and media significant points, in particular Avdiivka;
- Destruction in winter of critical infrastructure (power stations, oil refineries, transport hubs) to reduce the quality of life;
- Undermining social unity by fueling ambitions and provoking military opposition political forces.

From the experience of past years, it is known that Russia accompanies most of its physical actions with information operations aimed at enhancing the effect, removing responsibility from Russia, or discrediting the Ukrainian side. In this study, we focused on analyzing the informational component of Russian operations along these three tracks, measuring the intensity of attacks, and dissecting specific narratives used by Russian sources in Telegram, Media Portals, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Maidan 3

OPERATION MAIN VECTORS FOR INFO ATTACKS



Military and Political

Pressure along the entire frontline with the capture of specific, politically, and media significant points, in particular Avdiivka.



Infrastructure damage

Destruction in winter of critical infrastructure (power stations, oil refineries, transport hubs) to reduce the quality of life



Social Unity

Undermining social unity by fueling ambitions and provoking military opposition political forces.




Political and Military Vectors

Speculation on important Ukrainian military/war issues has been actively pursued by Russian propaganda since 2014 and reached a new level after the full-scale invasion. The dissemination of posts and articles regarding the failure of the Ukrainian counteroffensive and the Russian army seizing the initiative is a narrative that has been spread in various forms since mid-summer. However, we have noticed an even greater activation of this topic recently.

For example, widely spread in Russian and pro-Russian sources are theses that Ukraine has long lost the war and the Ukrainian Armed Forces will not withstand a new offensive by the Russian army. However, over time, there have also been added calls for the generals of the Ukrainian Armed Forces to overthrow Zelenskyy themselves, who is predicted to die or flee.

Widely disseminated were also ideas about the Ukrainian counteroffensive's failure and the Ukrainian army's defeat. As a logical conclusion from these narratives in the Russian and pro-Russian information spaces, it follows that the USA and Britain are actively seeking a replacement for Zelensky. One of the biggest threats to Zelenskyy was General Budanov. Sputnik Globe - Russian affiliate media was among the first to spread this idea on November 9th.



sputnikglobe.com
<https://sputnikglobe.com>

ACTOR PLATFORM: WEB ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: RUSSIA
ACTOR TYPE: WEB ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A

Actor state affiliation

COUNTRY	TYPE
Russia	State owned media

SPUTNIK International ▾

Ex-CIA Analyst: West Preparing for Military Coup Against Zelensky

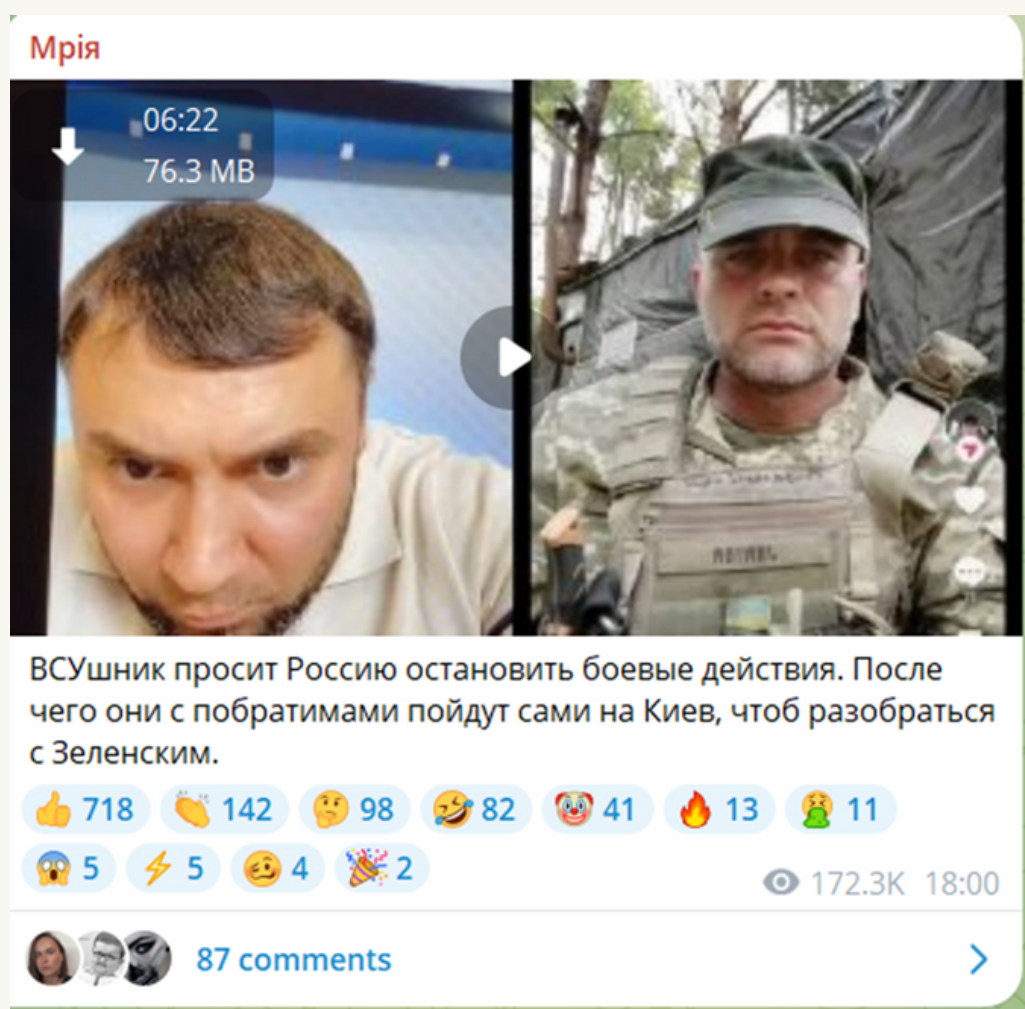
14:29 GMT 09.11.2023



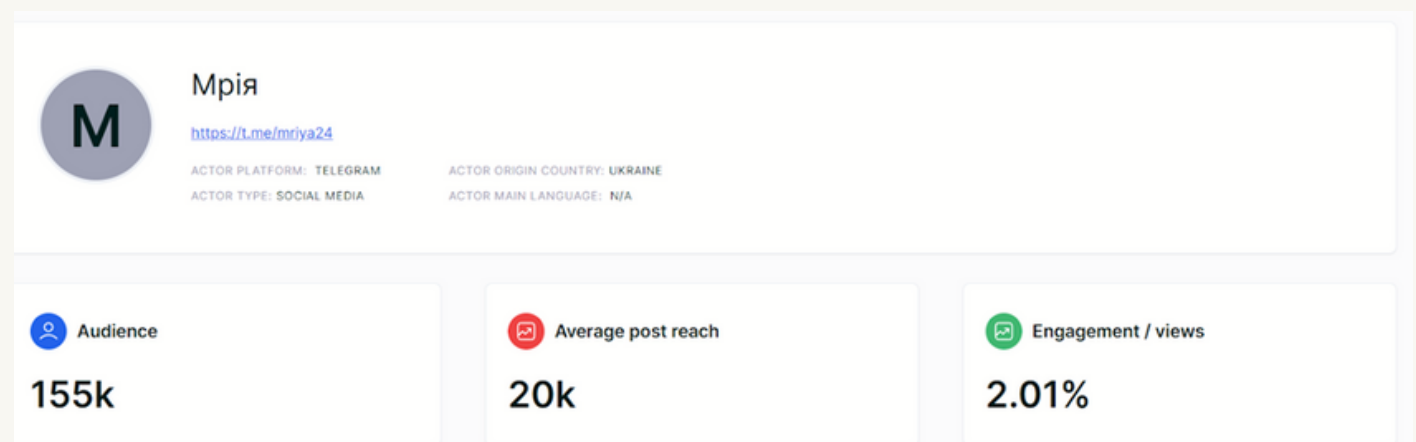
© AP Photo / Ukrainian Presidential Press Office

Political and Military Vectors

At the same time, a narrative is being spread that ordinary soldiers are dissatisfied with the government, tired of the war, and want to return home as soon as possible. Moreover, they are ready to overthrow Zelensky themselves.



“The UA soldier asks Russia to stop hostilities. After this, they and their brothers-in-arms will go to Kyiv themselves to deal with Zelensky.”

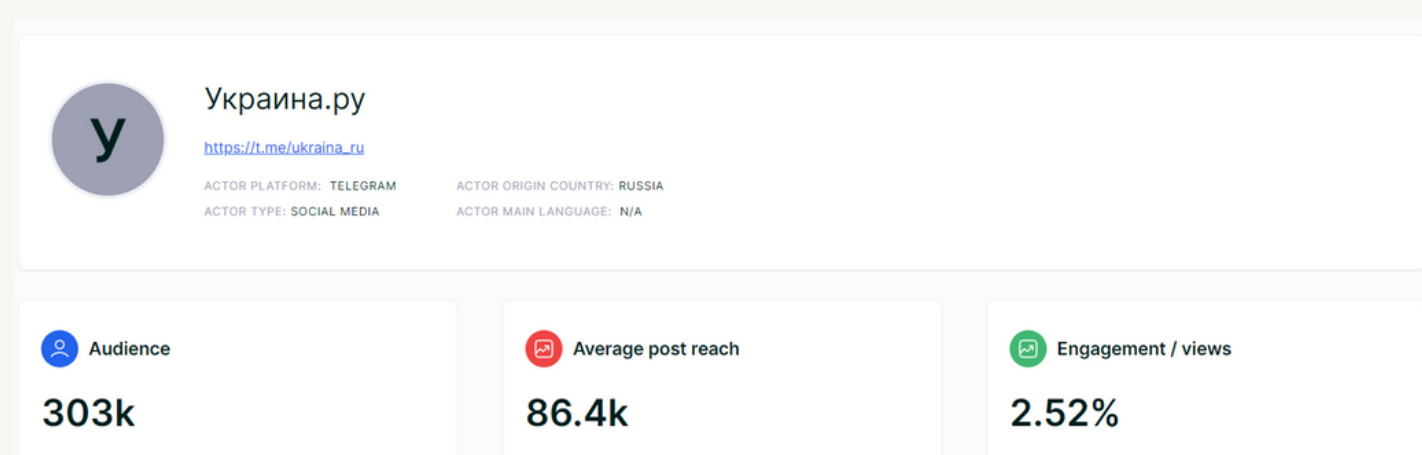
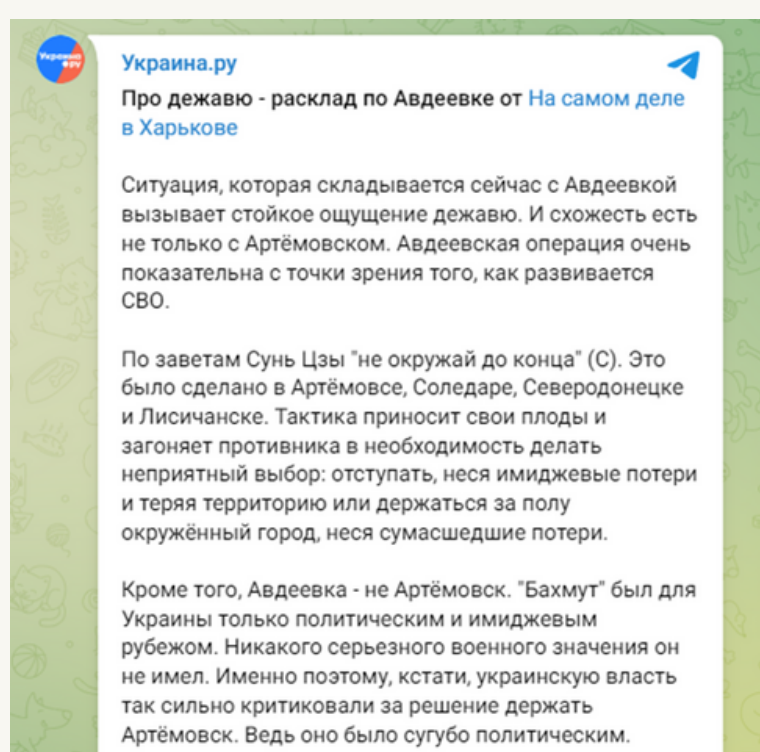


As a logical conclusion of this construction, the opinion is formed that it is time to start negotiations.

At the same time, articles and posts about the success of Russian troops near Avdiivka and other areas are actively disseminated, with the Ukrainian Armed Forces being unable to stop their advance.

In all media and most Telegram channels, facts of considerable Russian army losses in equipment and personnel, recorded in photos and videos, are ignored. Such materials are generally absent there.

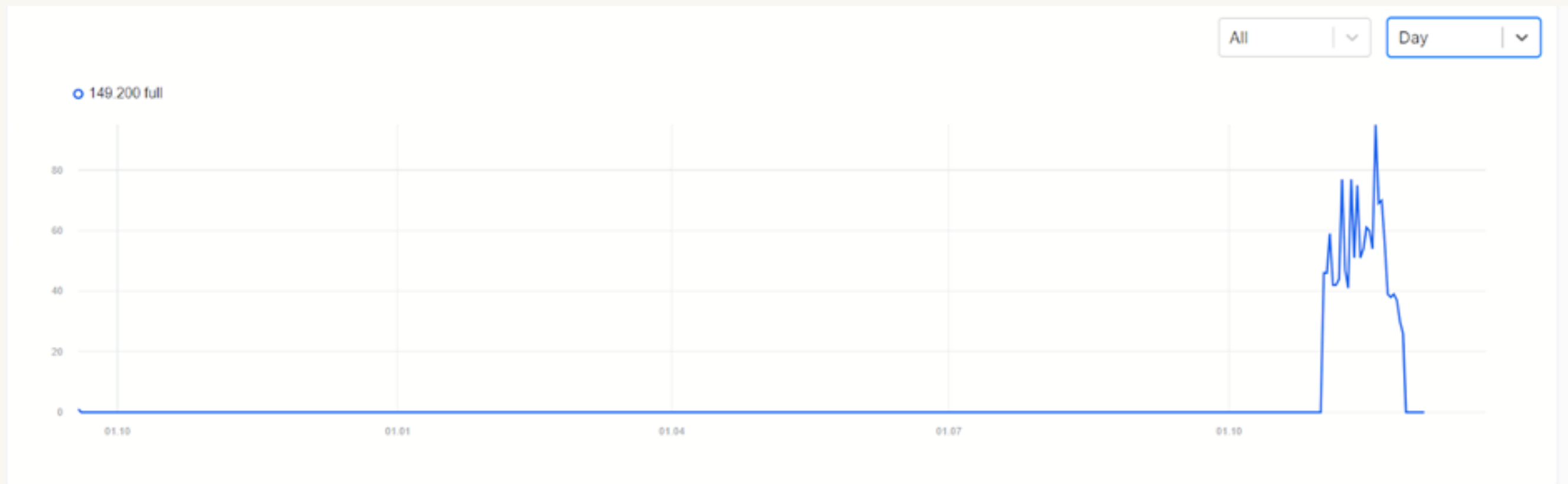
The central thesis is that Avdiivka will be captured in any case; it's just a matter of time. The failures of the Russian army in the encirclement of Avdiivka are explained by the narrative of a cunning plan, in which the main element is not the encirclement but forcing the Ukrainian military to retreat.



About deja vu - layout for Avdeevka from In fact, in Kharkov The situation that is developing now with Avdeevka causes a strong feeling of deja vu. And there are similarities not only with Artyomovsk. The Avdeevka operation is very indicative from the point of view of how the SVO develops. According to the precepts of Sun Tzu, "do not completely surround" (C). This was done in Artyomovs, Soledar, Severodonetsk and Lisichansk. The tactics bear fruit and force the enemy into the need to make an unpleasant choice: retreat, suffering image losses and losing territory, or hold on to the semi-surrounded city, suffering crazy losses. In addition, Avdeevka is not Artyomovsk. "Bakhmut" was only a political and image milestone for Ukraine. It had no serious military significance. This is why, by the way, the Ukrainian authorities were so heavily criticized for their decision to hold Artyomovsk. After all, it was purely political. Avdeevka is completely different. Even if there was complete silence in the information field, Ukraine is simply forced to hold this area with any available forces and means. Because the loss of Avdiivka seriously threatens the entire Donetsk sector.

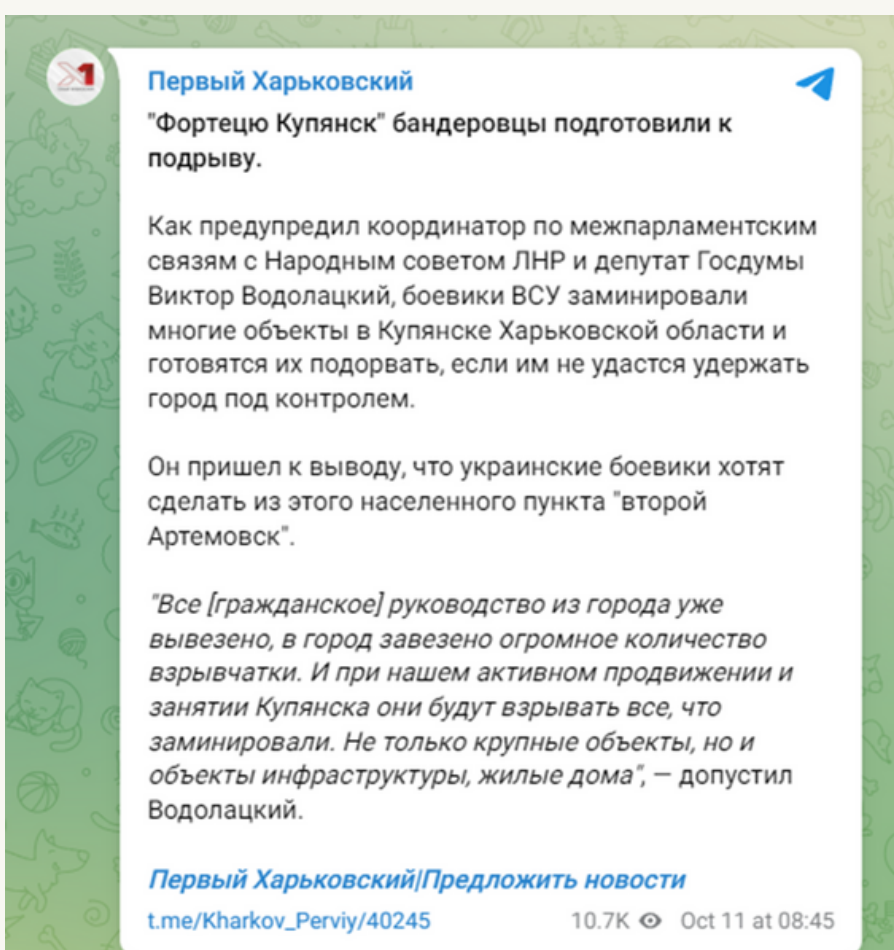
Political and Military Vectors

At the same time, calls for the surrender of Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers continue to be disseminated, indicating ways (radio frequencies, keywords, etc.) how this can be done. Often, this is combined with videos of supposedly captured Ukrainian soldiers talking about good treatment. Only from November 1 to 27, there were 1425 such messages.

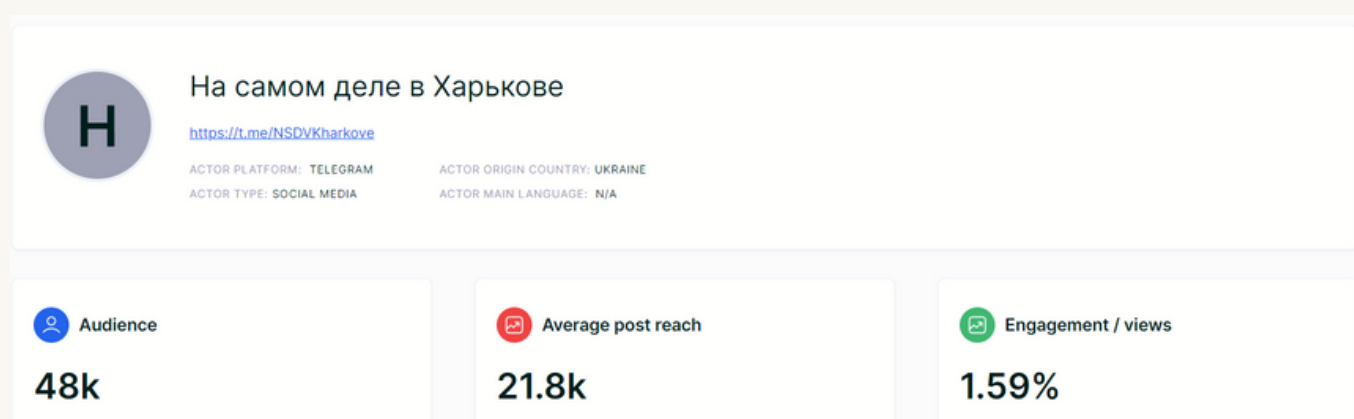


A separate emphasis by Russian propaganda is made on repeating last year's narratives about "fortresses." In the Ukrainian information space, this word has a neutral-positive connotation, indicating the courage and bravery of the army in defending Ukrainian land. Bakhmut and Mariupol were named as fortresses.

However, in the Russian information space, this word denotes the stubbornness of the Ukrainian government in defending militarily unimportant objects that, however, have severe political significance. In the fall of 2023, the term "fortress" was appropriated by Russian propaganda to Kupyansk and Avdiivka - likely targets of the Russian offensive in the fall-winter of 2023. The main narrative here is the overall inability and unwillingness of the Ukrainian army to defend these cities. Still, it is forced to do so due to coercion from the political leadership. The only method of restraining the Russian military, according to this narrative, for the Ukrainian Armed Forces is "throwing in the meat." This explains the significant losses in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, as portrayed by Russian propaganda.



Первый Харьковский
 "Фортесю Купянск" бандеровцы подготовили к подрыву.
 Как предупредил координатор по межпарламентским связям с Народным советом ЛНР и депутат Госдумы Виктор Водолацкий, боевики ВСУ заминировали многие объекты в Купянске Харьковской области и готовятся их подорвать, если им не удастся удержать город под контролем.
 Он пришел к выводу, что украинские боевики хотят сделать из этого населенного пункта "второй Артемовск".
 "Все [гражданское] руководство из города уже вывезено, в город завезено огромное количество взрывчатки. И при нашем активном продвижении и занятии Купянска они будут взрывать все, что заминировали. Не только крупные объекты, но и объекты инфраструктуры, жилые дома", — допустил Водолацкий.
 Первый Харьковский | Предложить новости
 t.me/Kharkov_Perviy/40245 10.7K Oct 11 at 08:45



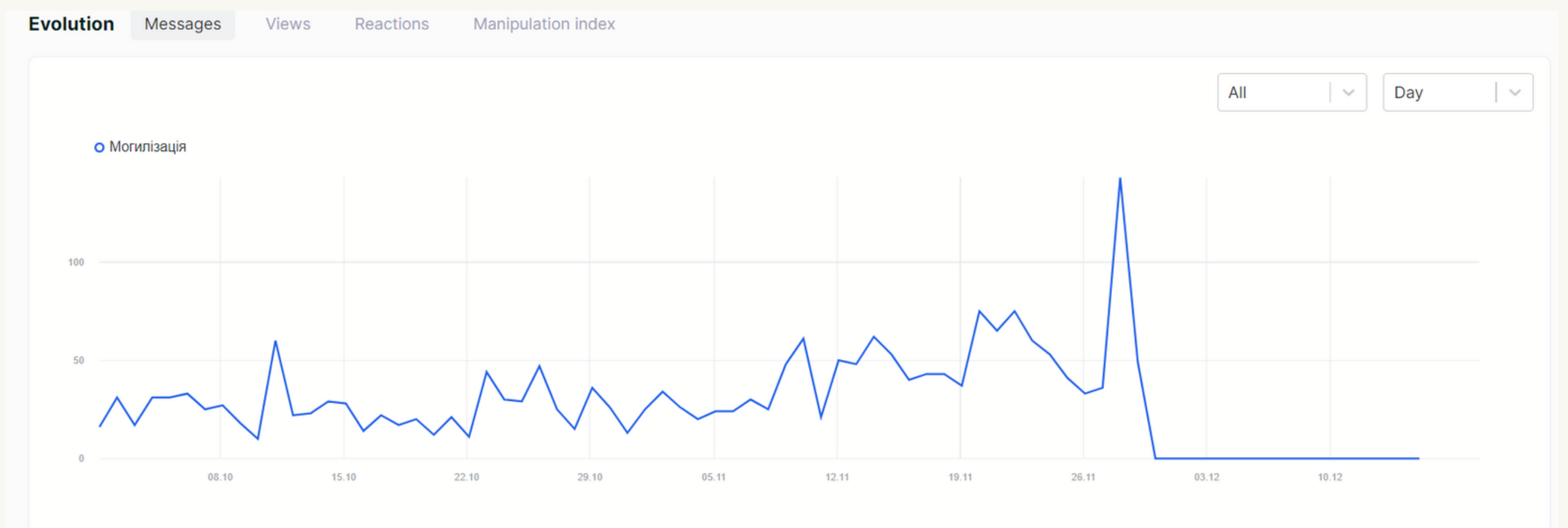
На самом деле в Харькове
<https://t.me/NSDvKharkove>
 ACTOR PLATFORM: TELEGRAM ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: UKRAINE
 ACTOR TYPE: SOCIAL MEDIA ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A
 Audience: 48k
 Average post reach: 21.8k
 Engagement / views: 1.59%

Bandera's "Fortetsya Kupyansk" was prepared for explosion. As the coordinator for interparliamentary relations with the People's Council of the LPR and State Duma deputy Viktor Vodolatsky warned, militants of the Ukrainian Armed Forces have mined many objects in Kupyansk, Kharkov region, and are preparing to blow them up if they fail to keep the city under control. He came to the conclusion that Ukrainian militants want to make a "second Artemovsk" out of this settlement. "All [civilian] leadership has already been taken out of the city, a huge amount of explosives have been brought into the city. And with our active advance and occupation of Kupyansk, they will blow up everything that they have mined. Not only large objects, but also infrastructure facilities, residential buildings," he admitted Vodolatsky. First Kharkovskiy | Suggest news

Political and Military Vectors

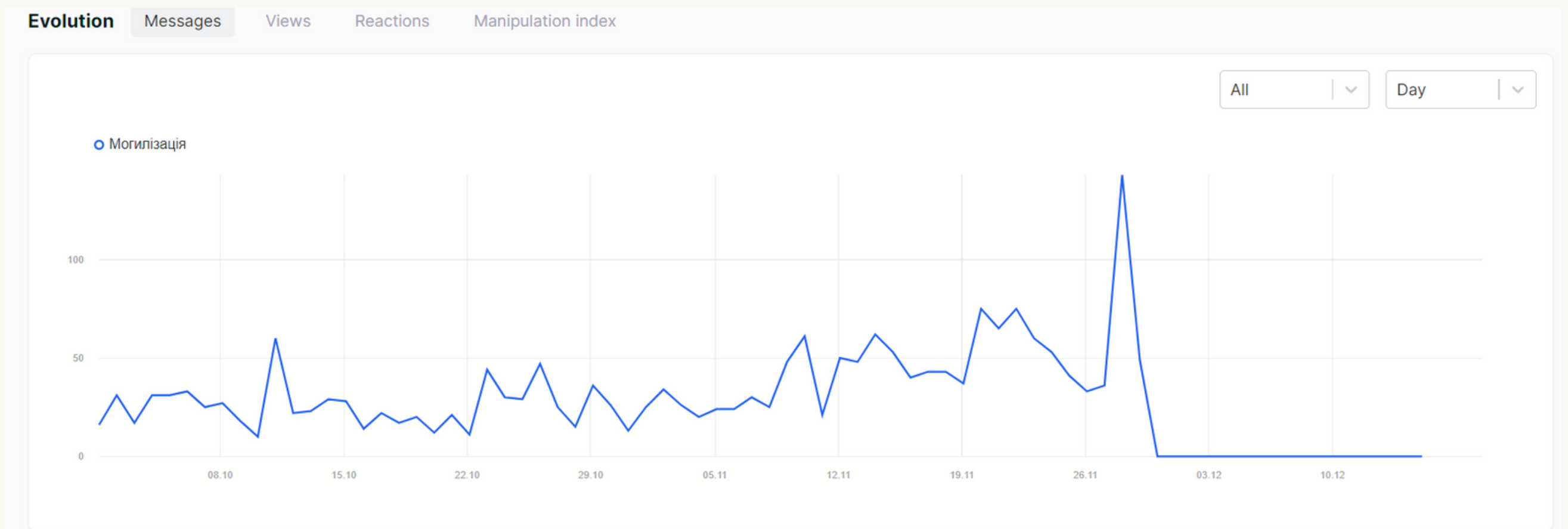
According to the above narrative, mass mobilization is the only way to replenish and further operate the Ukrainian army. For example, the word "могили́зация" (Russian play on words combining "graves" and "mobilization") was mentioned in Russian sources 2096 times from October 1 to November 29.

Important for Russian propaganda is the narrative that Ukraine is running out of men due to the war. A vivid demonstration of this is the lively discussion in the Russian information space of foreign media reports that women work in mines in Pavlograd, with significant criticism of mobilization in Ukraine and criticism of a society that allowed such things. Similar fake messages were also disseminated about the mobilization of students at Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University and the encouragement of pensioners in Kyiv to join the army because they are "already past their prime."

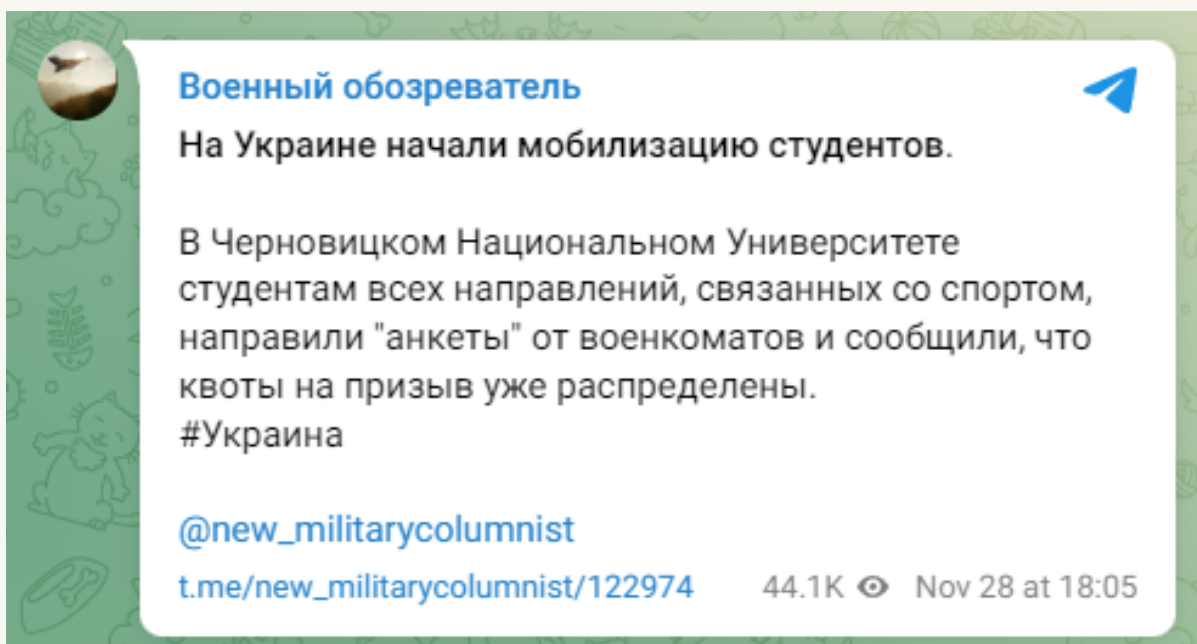


Political and Military Vectors

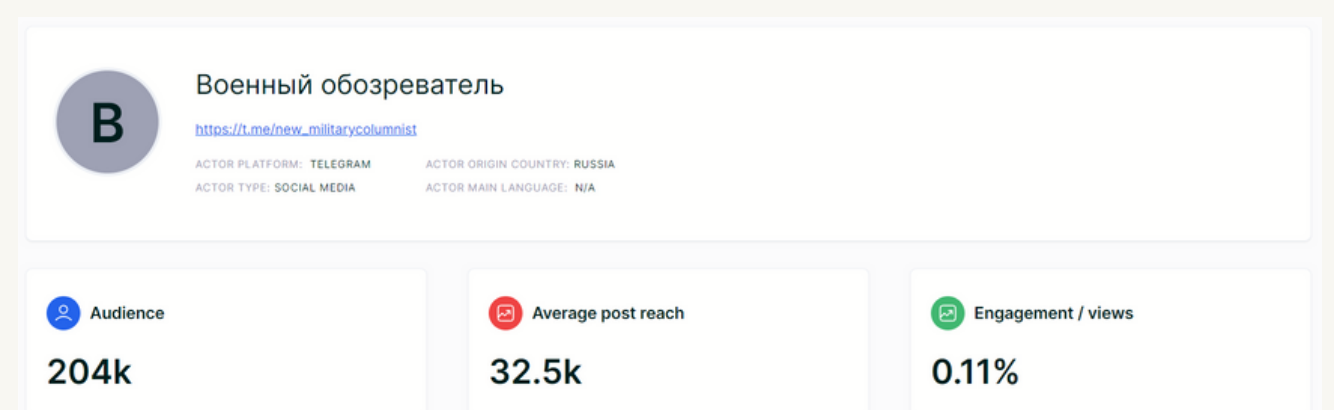
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In Ukraine, they began to mobilize students. At the Chernivtsi National University, students of all sports-related areas were sent "questionnaires" from the military registration and enlistment offices. They were informed that conscription quotas had already been distributed. #Ukraine @new_militarycolumnist

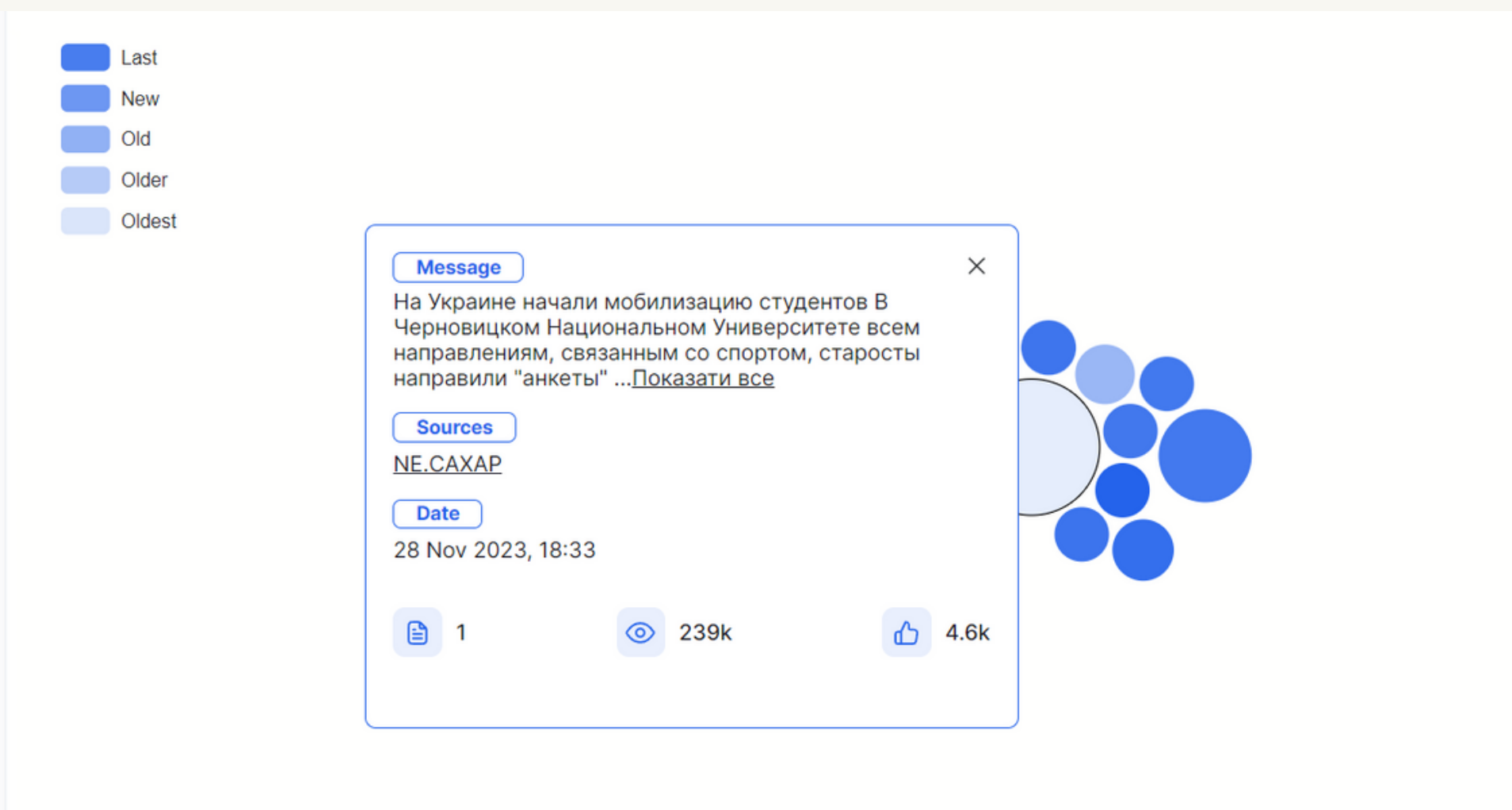


Profile information for "Военный обозреватель" (https://t.me/new_militarycolumnist):

- ACTOR PLATFORM: TELEGRAM
- ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: RUSSIA
- ACTOR TYPE: SOCIAL MEDIA
- ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A

Engagement statistics:

- Audience: 204k
- Average post reach: 32.5k
- Engagement / views: 0.11%



Message detail view for the mobilization report:

- Message:** На Украине начали мобилизацию студентов В Черновицком Национальном Университете всем направлениям, связанным со спортом, старосты направили "анкеты" ...Показать все
- Sources:** NE.CAXAP
- Date:** 28 Nov 2023, 18:33
- Engagement:** 1 message, 239k views, 4.6k likes

A legend on the left indicates message age categories: Last (dark blue), New (medium blue), Old (light blue), Older (very light blue), and Oldest (lightest blue). A bubble chart on the right visualizes the distribution of these categories.

Political and Military Vectors

However, similar narratives have little media impact on the Ukrainian information space. The coverage of the battle for Avdiivka in Ukraine more resembles the informational support of the fighting for Pisky rather than for Bakhmut. Thus, as of the end of November, Avdiivka is not a key city in the political plan; a possible retreat of the Ukrainian Armed Forces from there is unlikely to lead to significant Ukrainian public discussion.

On the other hand, the loss of Kupyansk by the Ukrainian army could have quite negative political consequences, as the liberation of this city became one of the symbols of the successful Ukrainian offensive in the Kharkiv region in the fall of 2022. However, the actual achievements of the Russian offensive in the Kharkiv region in the fall of 2023 need to provide more basis for propaganda to spin this topic significantly.

There is still some influence on the Ukrainian media space regarding the theme of mobilization and dissatisfaction with it. For example, in Ukrainian sources in Ukrainian language, the word "могілізація" was mentioned 109 times from October 1 to November 29. However, Russian propaganda in this key can only slightly heat the internal Ukrainian discourse.

Thus, there is an attempt to state the defeat of the Ukrainian Armed Forces as a realized and completed fact with the transition to the search for options for developing this situation. The logical line supported by Russian propaganda: The Ukrainian counteroffensive failed → The Ukrainian Armed Forces are defeated, soldiers are tired, mobilization is going very severely → Political and military leadership conflict with each other → Therefore, there are only two options:

- The continuation of the conflict will only lead to new losses and defeats for Ukraine.
- This will happen against the backdrop of a conflict between politicians and the military, between the government and the people, and will result in a complete collapse;
- In peace negotiations, Ukraine must make territorial concessions and fulfill other demands of the Russian Federation."

POLITICAL AND MILITARY VECTORS

Core Narratives

★ Significance of the narrative

Defeat ★★★★★

Ukrainian army is defeated and there is no reason to continue it

Negotiations ★★★★★

Fakes that Ukraine needs negotiations more than ever

Local defeats ★★★★★

Avdiivka and Kupansk cities' possible fall effects

Low Morale ★★★★★

The Ukrainian military is irritated by the war and ready to overthrow President Zelenskyy

Coup ★★★

Fakes about alleged coups of Generals Zaluzhnyi and Budanov

Ukrainian stubbornness ★★★

Ukraine won't retreat and its commanders are too stubborn to have peace

Mobilization have failed ★★

Ukrainian mobilization have failed



LOGIC OF THE RUSSIAN **PROPAGANDA** Maidan 3 operation



The Ukrainian Counteroffensive failed



Ukrainian army is crashed and the mobilization failed



There is a conflict between the political and military officials

THERE ARE ONLY TWO OPTIONS FOR UKRAINE



UKRAINE WILL LOSE
the war on the
battlefield if it
continues to fight

UKRAINE
SHOULD GO
FOR PEACE
negotiations



Civil Infrastructure Level

Another direction in which Russian disinformation channels have constantly worked is the varied interpretation of the shelling of Ukraine and the destruction of critical infrastructure.

In this case, information policy supports the Russian government's physical actions and fulfills several tasks.

Firstly, it justifies Russian shelling, reporting that strikes are made only on military objects, and the death of civilians is due to the actions of Ukrainian air defense, etc.

Secondly, propaganda emphasizes that the strikes are entirely deserved, and the destruction of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure is justified by the difficult living conditions in the occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea, as well as the necessity to disable infrastructure that supports the Ukrainian military-industrial complex. Thus, the fundamental idea of Russia's information policy regarding the destruction of critical Ukrainian infrastructure can be formulated as "nothing happened, but they deserved it."

These narratives were fully formed in the fall-winter of 2022 when Russia tried to destroy Ukraine's energy infrastructure. The intensity of the attacks also determined the intensity of information operations. After the massive shelling ceased in the spring of 2022, such narratives almost disappeared.

Another narrative regarding critical infrastructure was Russian reports about the bombings of Ukrainian ports in the summer of 2023. They were ideologically very close to the winter campaign of 2022. The strikes were justified by the claim that Ukraine uses grain exports as a cover for importing weapons.

Civil Infrastructure Level

After this, all Russian narratives concerning critical Ukrainian infrastructure appear very episodically, mainly repeating previously formed theses, and aim to instill fear of possible new shelling. Considering that a significant part of Ukrainians expect a repeat of the winter of 2022, Russian propagandists need only occasionally mention this topic with a certain level of hyperbolization for the threat to feel significant and tangible. In periods when there is no mass shelling, a common tactic among Russian sources is to spin messages from Ukrainian media or high-ranking officials regarding possible energy problems.

An example of such an "off-season" threat is when a statement by the director of the Center for Energy Research, Oleksandr Kharchenko, was used to promote the idea that the Ukrainian energy system is already failing, and "missile strikes have not even happened yet."

- Last
- New
- Old
- Older
- Oldest

Message ×

⚡ На Украине будут применяться веерные отключения электроэнергии Об этом заявил директор украинского Центра исследований энергетики Александр Харченк...[Показать все](#)

Sources

[Украина.ру](#)

Date

23 Nov 2023, 07:50

📄 1 👁 214k 👍 1.67k

Украина.ру
https://t.me/ukraina_ru
ACTOR PLATFORM: TELEGRAM ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: RUSSIA
 ACTOR TYPE: SOCIAL MEDIA ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A

Audience	Average post reach	Engagement / views
303k	85.8k	2.52%

Украина.ру
 ⚡ На Украине зафиксировали дефицит электроэнергии в «...»

ХАРЧЕНКО: ЯКЩО НЕ КОМПЕНСУЮТЬ ДЕФІЦИТ, ТО БУДУТЬ ВІДКЛЮЧЕННЯ

⚡ В случае наступления температуры ниже 8 градусов по Цельсию, на Украине будут применяться веерные отключения на 1-2 часа.

Об этом заявил директор Центра исследований энергетики Александр Харченко.

Напомним, сегодня в украинской энергосистеме уже был зафиксирован дефицит энергии.

И это еще не было ракетных ударов!

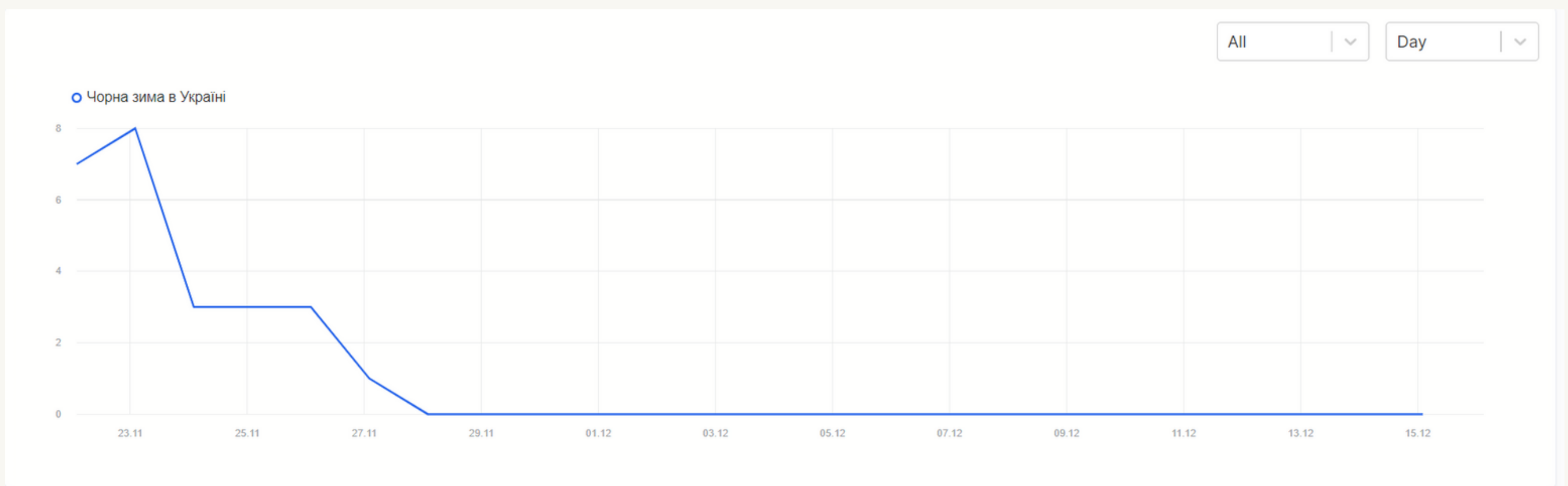
t.me/ukraina_ru/177760 145.5K 👁 Nov 22 at 23:03

⚡ If the temperature drops below 8 degrees Celsius, rolling blackouts will be applied in Ukraine for 1-2 hours, the Center for Energy Research director, Alexander Kharchenko, stated. Let us remind you that today, the Ukrainian energy system already has an energy shortage. And there were no missile strikes yet!

Civil Infrastructure Level

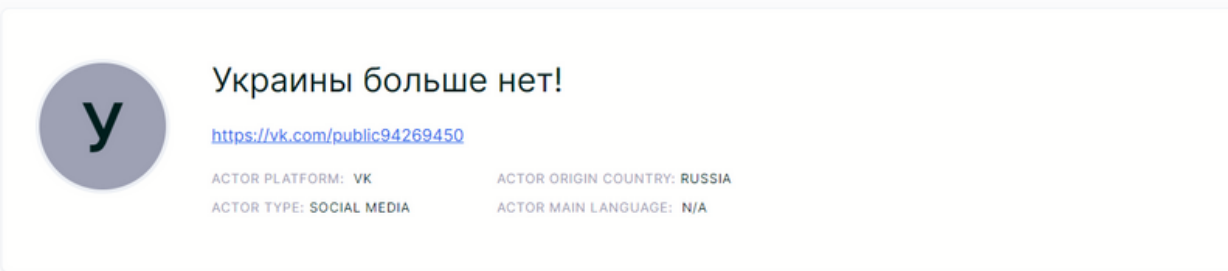
Another example is Russian sources using the term "black winter," referring to the events of 2022 and stirring up the atmosphere around the upcoming winter. Meanwhile, it is claimed that the Ukrainian government uses power outages to intimidate the population of Ukraine to keep it under control.

The Russian information space's reaction to the strikes on the Kremenchuk Oil Refinery is indicative. The tone was restrained, and propaganda added value - small, mainly - by quoting the words of Ukrainian officials. There are accents that this plant is the largest in Ukraine (although it has been hit more than once), and the emergence of a fire is highlighted, exaggerating its nature.



"Black Winter" Narrative spike Nov 23rd-25th

Actors / України більше нет!



України більше нет!
<https://vk.com/public94269450>
 ACTOR PLATFORM: VK | ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: RUSSIA
 ACTOR TYPE: SOCIAL MEDIA | ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A

Average post reach
210

Engagement rate
2.40%

Dmitro Vasilets: The Russian Aerospace Forces destroyed the oil refinery in Kremenchug - VK Channel (Ukraine Does not Exist)



Civil Infrastructure Level

In our opinion, the significant decrease in the aggressive rhetoric of the Russian information space regarding the need for the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure may be related to repressions against "turbo patriots," the most notable of whom is now imprisoned, Igor Strelkov.

Thus, since the spring of 2022, they have demanded strikes from the Russian government on "decision-making centers," bridges across the Dnieper, and other logistical hubs. This rhetoric was wrapped in criticism of the Russian government for indecisiveness, inability, or unwillingness to do everything necessary for complete victory. However, after the summer cleanup of the information space, the dissatisfaction significantly decreased, and the theme of strikes on infrastructure "went out of fashion."

On the other hand, there were not so many attacks on Ukrainian critical infrastructure in the fall of 2023, especially compared to last year. Therefore, attempts to destabilize Ukrainian society from within with strikes that have yet to occur are futile.

Similar actions in the Ukrainian information space should be expected after possible rolling blackouts or several days of blackouts. In our opinion, strikes on infrastructure will be presented under the guise of "betrayal and corruption," as the Ukrainian government supposedly had a year to prepare. Thus, the primary blame for the possible infrastructure collapse will be laid on the Ukrainian leadership, not on Russian missiles/drones.

Overall, as of the end of November 2023, narratives about critical infrastructure in Ukraine occupy secondary positions for Russian sources.

CIVIL INFRASTRUCTURE SHELLING NARRATIVES

Maidan 3 operation



Russia bombs only civil objects

Russian propaganda claims that strikes target only military objectives, and civilian casualties are attributed to Ukrainian air defense. This narrative has existed since 2022 and never escapes sight.



Revenge for Donbass

Propaganda asserts that the destruction of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure is warranted due to hardships in Russian-occupied territories and the need to disable Ukrainian military support systems. The underlying message is that nothing significant happened, but it was deserved.



Episodic Shelling

Russian narratives concerning critical Ukrainian infrastructure appear very episodically, mainly repeating previously formed theses, and aim to instill fear of possible new shelling.



"Black Winter" is coming

Another example is Russian sources using the term "black winter," referring to the events of 2022 and stirring up the atmosphere around the upcoming winter. Meanwhile, it is claimed that the Ukrainian government uses power outages to intimidate the population of Ukraine to keep it under control.



Corruption Narratives

Russian propaganda is likely to frame any infrastructure failures in Ukraine as a result of the Ukrainian government's corruption or incompetence rather than as a result of Russian attacks.



Conclusion

In late 2023, discussions about Ukraine's critical infrastructure have become less central in Russian propaganda efforts.

In essence, Russian disinformation has shifted its focus and intensity regarding Ukraine's civil infrastructure over time, adapting to the changing dynamics of the conflict and internal political pressures in Russia.



SOCIAL UNITY DESTRUCTION

Maidan 3

★ Significance of the narrative

Undermining Ukrainian Leadership ★★★★★

Propaganda targeted Ukrainian officials like Petro Poroshenko and later Volodymyr Zelenskyy, accusing them of corruption, incompetence, and authoritarianism

Leadership Change ★★★★★

Claims that the USA might replace Zelensky, with figures like Alexey Arestovich and General Zaluzhny as potential successors

Internal Confrontation ★★★★★

Emphasis on the supposed confrontation between Zelensky and military leaders, framing Zelensky as a dictator under external control, particularly by the USA

Significance of 'Maidan' ★★★

The President was also accused of not understanding the essence of Ukrainianness, and his use of the phrase "Maidan-3" was considered an admission of guilt

Coup Narratives ★★★

Discussions about removing Zelensky through assassination or a military coup focused on a potential third Maidan (Maidan-3)

Protest Suppression ★★

Narratives about Zelensky's anticipation of unpopularity and readiness to combat dissent.

Information Attacks Post-2022 ★★

Increased efforts post-February 24, 2022, highlighting narratives of Zelensky's incompetence and conflicts among Ukrainian military-political leadership

Social Unity Vector

Since the Orange Revolution, Russian propaganda in Ukraine has aimed to provoke political division, weaken the central government, and exploit the contradictions of different socio-political groups.

Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, Russia has repeatedly attempted to undermine trust in Ukrainian state institutions - the President, the Government, the Chief Commander, etc. The means included reports of corruption, incompetence, and authoritarian inclinations of Ukrainian officials, with the main target of such attacks traditionally being Petro Poroshenko and later Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Additionally, even before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, pro-Russian Telegram channels in Ukraine, such as "Legitimny," "Resident," and "Vertical," promoted a conspiratorial discourse about certain shadow groups in the Ukrainian elite fighting for political influence bypassing public policy.

After February 24, 2022, the intensity of information attacks on Ukraine increased, with traditional themes for Russian IPSO constantly re-emerging. The end of autumn 2023 was marked by a boom in Russian propaganda activity and, secondly, by a particular fusion of narratives about Zelensky's incompetence and contradictions among the Ukrainian military-political leadership.

Thus, a narrative about the behind-the-scenes confrontation between Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi was widely promoted in the Ukrainian information space from October to November 2023.

It also intuitively integrated the narrative about Zelensky's dictatorial inclinations, who does not want to hold elections, and the narrative that Ukraine is under external control by the USA. Overlapping each other, these ideas formed a discourse depicting a conflict between Zelenskyy, who lost popularity both among the Ukrainian elite and the people, and Zaluzhnyi, who simultaneously embodied the people's desire to replace the incompetent dictator and the will of the USA, tired of dealing with Zelensky.

Social Unity Vector

For example, on October 18, a narrative by Oleg Tsarev was disseminated, stating that the USA is preparing Zaluzhny as the Ukrainian de Gaulle, implying greater negotiability and readiness to make concessions among the military leadership than among the political.

Following this, in the first two weeks of November, a new narrative was launched in the Russian information space, according to which the USA will remove Zelensky if he does not start peace negotiations. Initially, Alexey Arestovich (former advisor in Zelensky's office) was named a prospective candidate to replace the current president, but Russian sources later named Zaluzhnyi as the successor.

“The states are preparing Zaluzhny for the role of the Ukrainian de Gaulle. Ukraine will soon be ready to listen to Russia - but we need to start talking to it now,”

Message ×

«Штаты готовят Залужного на роль украинского де Голля. Украина уже скоро будет готова слышать Россию — но говорить с ней нужно начинать уже сейчас», —...[Показать все](#)

Sources

[Олег Царёв](#)

Date

18 Oct 2023, 16:25

📄 1 👁 103k 👍 2.18k

Олег Царёв ➤

«Штаты готовят Залужного на роль украинского де Голля. Украина уже скоро будет готова слышать Россию — но говорить с ней нужно начинать уже сейчас», — с корреспондентом Свободной Прессы говорили о современном украинском политикуме — есть ли вероятность, что Украина сменит нынешний суицидальный вектор движения. И кто, если выборы таки состоятся, имеет наибольшие шансы сменить нынешнего зарвавшегося лидера на президентском посту.

«СП»: Один весьма известный и уважаемый украинский политолог в недавнем интервью напомнил — накануне прошлых президентских выборов вся страна ждала «Голобородько» из сериала «Слуга народа». И как только этому «Голобородьке» выпал шанс, у народа и выбора-то другого не осталось... Есть ли сейчас какой-нибудь другой «голобородько», пусть и выдуманный, способный оправдать народные ожидания? Или иначе — чего реально хочет нынешняя Украина?

Actors / Олег Царёв

Олег Царёв

<https://t.me/olegtsarov>

ACTOR PLATFORM: TELEGRAM ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: RUSSIA

ACTOR TYPE: SOCIAL MEDIA ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A

Audience	Average post reach	Engagement / views
281k	94.5k	2.64%

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ACTOR PLATFORM: WEB ACTOR ORIGIN COUNTRY: RUSSIA

ACTOR TYPE: WEB ACTOR MAIN LANGUAGE: N/A

Monthly audience

5M

Social Unity Vector

Among the ways to remove Zelensky were assassination, military coup, and Maidan. Consequently, the peak of the spread of such ideas fell in mid-November 2023, after which the narrative somewhat subsided.

Its ideological continuation was the narrative of “Maidan-3,” which has features similar to and different from its predecessor.

It should start with the fact that the word “Maidan” is quite important and filled with deep meaning in Ukrainian political discourse.

On the other hand, the word “Antimaidan” has acquired significant pejorative connotations due to the nature of the pro-government rallies in 2013-2014 and their anti-Ukrainian character.

Thus, it is expected to hear the thesis about the possibility/prospect of the third Maidan. To begin with, it is essential to give this word an interpretation. On the one hand, it can mean the idea of protest of Ukrainian society against the government, an anti-corruption call; on the other – the overthrow of repressive/dictatorial power by force.

Notably, the discourse on the keyword “Maidan-3” or “Third Maidan” was to some extent alien to Ukrainian society, unlike related topics such as elections, calls for the president to resign in light of corruption/conflict with generals, etc. The first proto narrative about “Maidan-3” appeared on November 7 with the publication of a deepfake of General Zaluzhnyi, where he calls for overthrowing state power.

However, there were two publications here; the message may have satirical content, and it is practically impossible to prove systematicity. However, later, on November 11, there was a coordinated dissemination of a message with the exact text criticizing law enforcement officers and calling for the armed overthrow of the current power. However, the coverage of this narrative could be more significant.

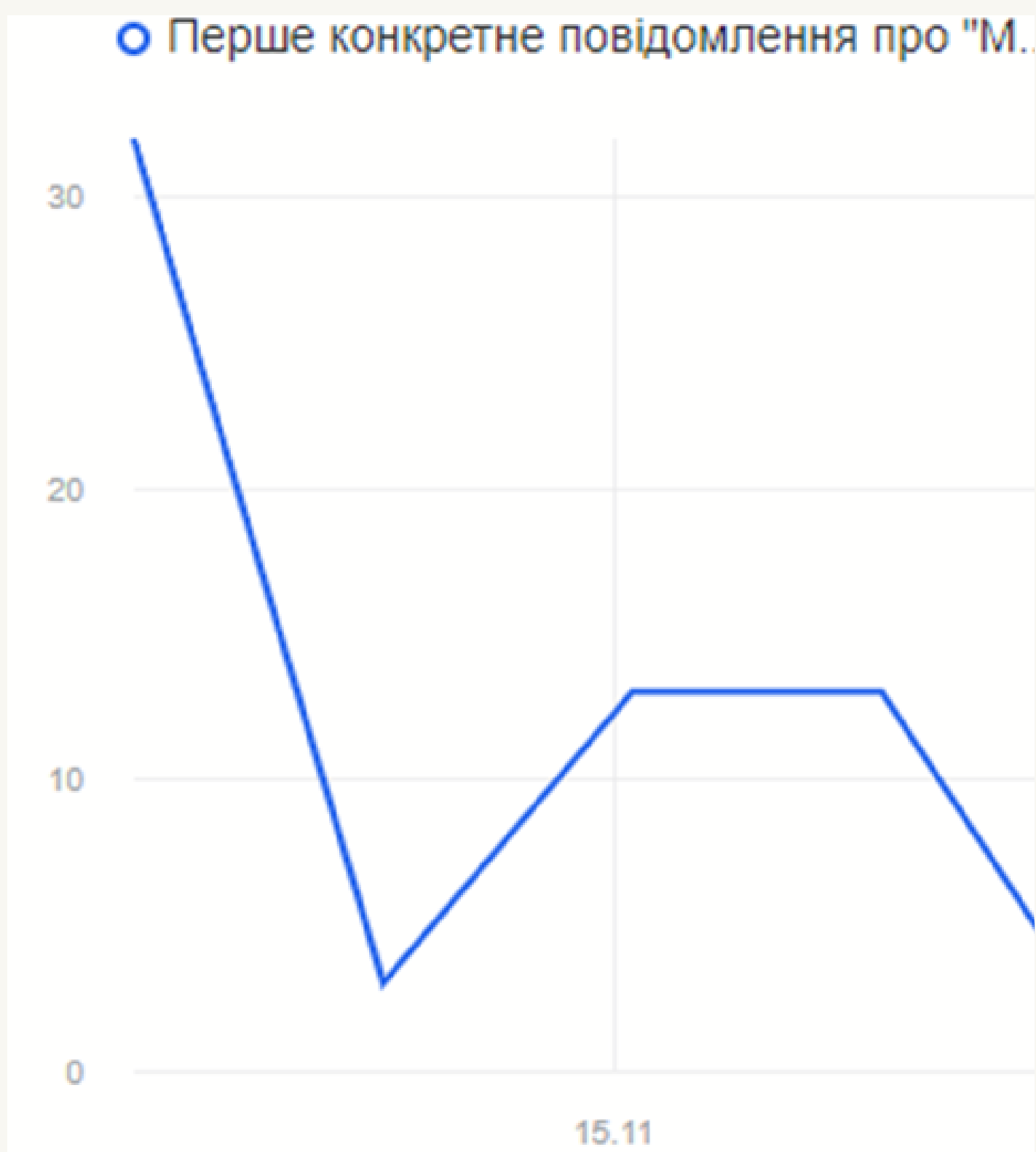
At the same time, on November 11, the topic of Maidan as a possible military uprising, primarily of Zaluzhnyi and Budanov, began to be promoted by Russian media and Telegram channels. Their primary source was the material of the Chinese publication Asia Times, which used the Sputnik Media (a Russian-affiliated source) publication.

Social Unity Vector

The curators of this direction were named well-known Russian political technologists Sergey Kiriyenko and Vladislav Surkov. Among the prospective narratives that, according to the report, Russian special services had to work out in Ukrainian society are practically all present in the Ukrainian discourse, from the language issue to the conflict of political leadership with the military.

They point to threats of violent actions in Kyiv and the regions. They emphasize the anti-government rhetoric of elements of this operation. They mention attempts to assassinate Zelenskyy.

The publication was quickly and massively picked up in the Ukrainian information space. However, on November 14, the activity of links and citations significantly decreased, with a slight increase on November 15. Notably, no anti-Ukrainian or anti-government discourse was detected in Ukrainian discourse around this publication.



First mentioning of the Madan 3 operation. Russia used mainly Telegram to spread messages

Social Unity Vector

On November 16, Zelenskyy had a meeting with representatives of foreign media. At it, he briefly repeated the main theses from the information previously published on online.ua resource about the tempo of Western aid and the Russian attempts to destabilize Ukraine.

Russian media were the first to report “Maidan-3” en masse after this meeting. The tone of the messages was relatively neutral, with a traditional emphasis on internal Russian narratives that Ukraine would not last long.

A separate narrative is the quotation of a joke/statement by Medvedev that Zelenskyy himself called Maidan a coup. However, again, this narrative distorts the quote, “Maidan is a coup for them, so the operation is understandable,” emphasizing the Russian perception of Maidan, from which Zelensky distances himself.

Later, probably in the process of comprehension, Russian narratives focused on the fact that Maidan-3 is a product of the “sick imagination of the Ukrainian drug addict,” as well as on the fact that Zelenskyy, by his statement recognized the “coup” nature of the Ukrainian Maidan.

Главное здесь



Зеленский опасается нового майдана на Украине.

Разумеется, во всем будет виновата Россия. Неизлечимый наркоман и, по-совместительству, президент Украины уверен, что Москва стремится посеять хаос внутри государства.

Зеленский утверждает, что речь идет о некой операции по дестабилизации под названием «Майдан-3», которую якобы готовит российская сторона для осуществления государственного переворота на Украине, пишет Bloomberg.

Главное — здесь. Подписывайтесь!

👍 133 🗨️ 15 👍 9 🐾 2 ❤️ 1

👁️ 6777 10:26

Zelensky fears a new Maidan in Ukraine. Of course, Russia will be to blame for everything. An incurable drug addict and, at the same time, the President of Ukraine, he is sure that Moscow is seeking to sow chaos within the state. Zelensky claims that we are talking about a certain destabilization operation called “Maidan-3,” which the Russian side is allegedly preparing to carry out a coup in Ukraine, writes Bloomberg. The main thing is here. Subscribe! - Glavnoe Zdes.

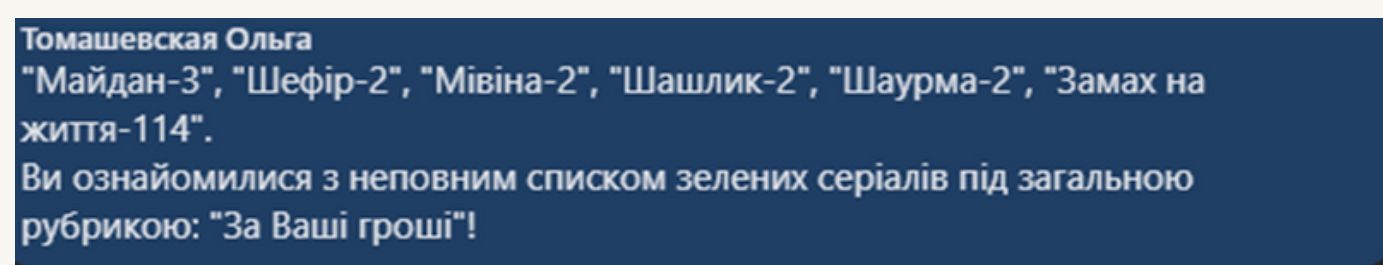
Social Unity Vector

In the Ukrainian discourse, on the morning of November 17, neutral news reports also dominated, quoting the head of state. However, in the second half of the day, the discourse radicalized. In particular, the president's "speech" was called anti-Ukrainian, with accusations of Zelenskyy's misunderstanding of Ukrainianism.

It was also pointed out that "Zelenskyy's friends steal money from the Armed Forces," and those who oppose this are traitors. Later, a narrative appeared that "Maidan-3" is "Zelenskyy's series," performed with Ukrainian money.

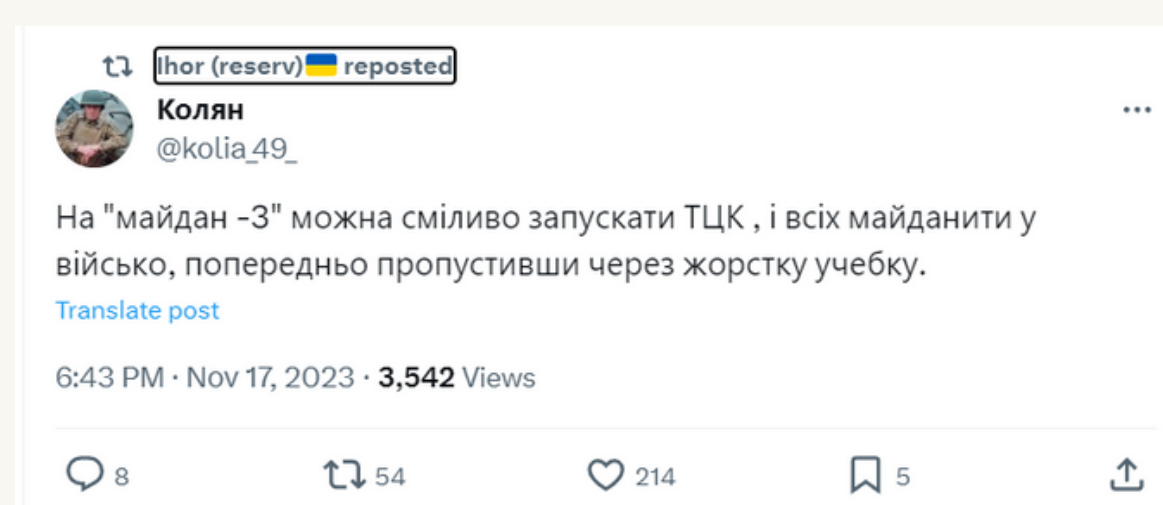


Here we go! The president's entire speech about Maidan-3 is essentially anti-Ukrainian. How would they listen to Putin. First, Zelensky calls the Maidan a coup. This is a purely Russian IPSO. But then Yanukovych is legitimate, because his government was overthrown by the Maidan. Secondly, he does not understand and does not feel Ukrainian



"Maidan-3", "Shefir-2", "Mivina-2", "Shashlyk-2", "Shawarma-2", "Attack on life-114". You have read an incomplete list of green series under the general heading: "For Your Money"!

The topic of "Maidan-3" and the relationship "people-TCG" -those responsible for the mobilization (Territorial Defense Forces) did not go unnoticed either. In one narrative, the "lawlessness" of the TCG representatives was condemned, and the idea was promoted that "Maidan-3" is necessary given society's dissatisfaction with mobilization.



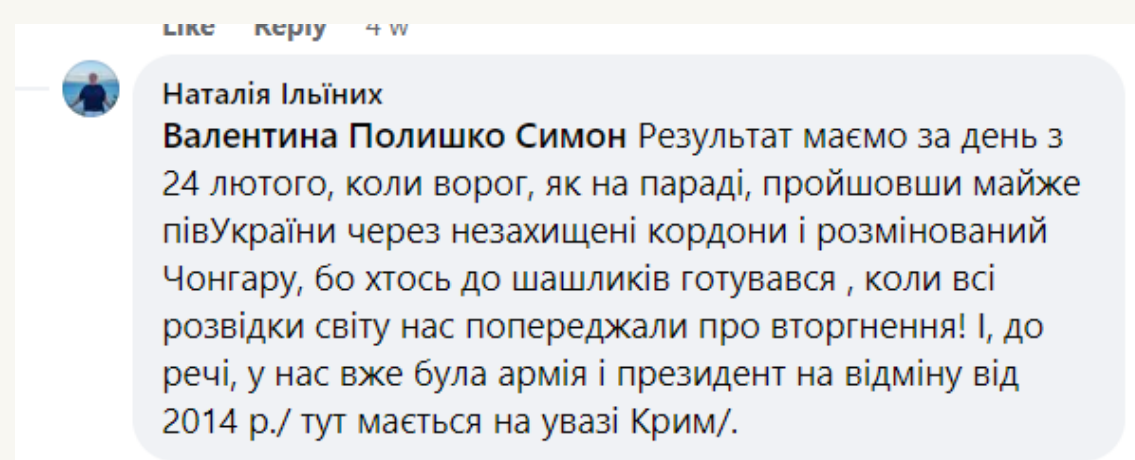
You can safely send the TCG representatives to Maidan 3, and all Maidans to join the army, having previously passed through a rigorous training.

Social Unity Vector

The narrative "exposing" Zelensky's incompetence played a separate role. In it, the president's pre-war assurance that in May 2022, Ukrainians would not be fighting but eating kebabs was constantly mentioned.

In the same discourse, a narrative was found condemning Zelensky for underestimating the threat of the beginning of the war when all the intelligence agencies in the world reported it but taking "Maidan-3" seriously. From the Russian information space in this direction, a narrative was launched that Zelensky dismissed the head of the Foreign Intelligence Service because he missed "Maidan-3."

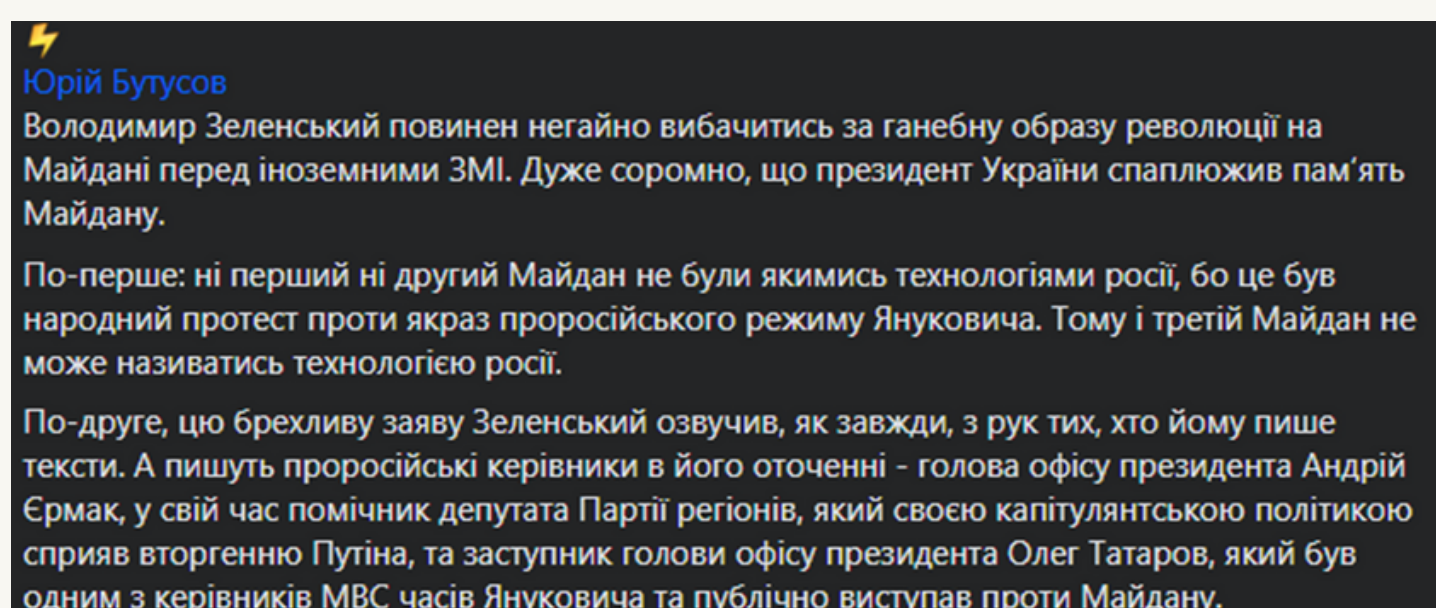
A separate vital element of the textual design of reactions to the statement about "Maidan-3" was the mention of Oman with a hint of a conspiracy theory, according to which, before the war, during a visit to Oman, Zelensky conducted secret negotiations with representatives of the Kremlin.



We have the result for the day since February 24, when the enemy, as if on parade, passed almost half of Ukraine through unprotected borders and demined Chongar, because someone was preparing for barbecues when all the intelligence agencies of the world warned us about the invasion! And, by the way, we already had an army and a president, unlike in 2014/here we mean Crimea/.

The post of Ukrainian journalist Yuriy Butusov gained widespread attention, suggesting that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky should immediately apologize for using the word "Maidan" in such a context. This post also stated that Zelensky came to power with the help of an FSB agent, to whom he later repaid the favor, thus "paving the way for the Russian invasion."

Later, Yuriy Butusov posted that the government was forcing the people to go to the Maidan with its lies. It's noteworthy that earlier reports of "Maidan-3," published on "Censor" media on November 13, did not provoke a similar reaction. The publication gained little popularity in Ukrainian information, creating a de facto spontaneous sub-narrative that, by accident, suited the Maidan 3 narratives. The President was also accused of not understanding the essence of Ukrainianness, and his use of the phrase "Maidan-3" was considered an admission of guilt.



Social Unity Vector

In another narrative, Zelensky was directly compared to (former President) Yanukovich, who was accused of "having a poor understanding of his people," the necessity of a Maidan was stated if Zelensky interfered with generals.

Another narrative mentioned Zelensky's joke about ebonite sticks (voiced during the Euromaidan in an episode of "Vechernii Kvartal," where Zelensky suggested distributing ebonite sticks to Berkut officers instead of clubs and dressing Maidan protesters in fur to generate electricity during protests), revealing his "anti-Maidan nature" and directly stating that "he is the enemy."

There was also a narrative portraying Zelensky as a "representative of the Anti-Maidan," opposing the "Maidan" - that is, the "patriotic opposition."

In this context, a separate line of criticism of the government was the numbering of Maidans. Opinions about the president's anti-Ukrainian/ignorant nature were expressed in comments to relevant publications.

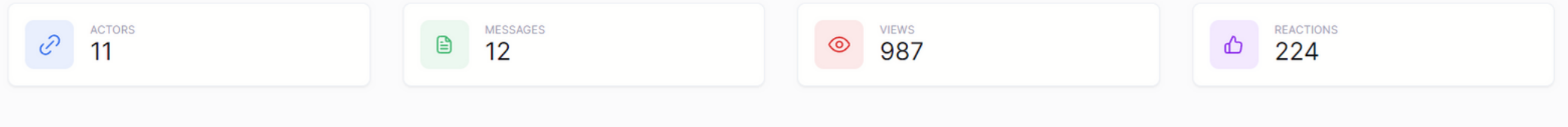
The president was supposedly not knowledgeable about Ukrainian history, so the Revolution on the Granite was not included in the Maidans; accordingly, the new Maidan should be the "fourth" or "fifth" if presidential elections are considered an "electoral Maidan."

A narrative gained widespread attention based on a quote attributed to Zelensky in 2014, supposedly saying, "We need to shake up the government as much as possible," alluding to Zelensky being the organizer of "Maidan-3."

Social Unity Vector

Another radicalization turn was a narrative that Zelensky surrounded himself with traitors and "rigs" (former members of the pro-Russian "Party of Regions"), and when he received sociological data, decided to tighten the screws to prevent the people from overthrowing him. The narrative text references Zelensky's conflict with the generals and statements that the people will overthrow the government if it wants to remove them from their posts.

Summary



A separate strong narrative, circulating between the Russian information space and the pro-Russian part of the Ukrainian infosphere, compared the "Maidan-3" operation with the "Shatun" plan, under which a state coup was to take place in Ukraine in 2016 under Russian curatorship. The rhetoric of Russian and pro-Russian sources is aimed at denying Russian influence, discrediting Ukrainian power, and instilling the idea that the government has lost the people's support. However, here, the Russian nature of the threat's origin is denied; instead, the idea that the West is interested in Maidan-3 is promoted. In the segment of the Ukrainian patriotic opposition, the narrative about the "Shatun" plan is imbued with revanchist sentiment, exposing people who condemned Poroshenko for the "Shatun" plan but do not condemn Zelensky for "Maidan-3." It's worth noting that the coverage of this narrative in Ukrainian sources is more modest.



Miha Anarchyst Chaplyga

Да... действительно про угрозу "Майдан -3" пишут со слов Зеленского в западной прессе... Видимо озвученные мною стратегии считают не только в моем ТГ...

Но Чат интересуется 3 - это цифра или буква?

Сложно сказать... скорей всего на сей раз два в одном...

Знать бы еще вторую букву после 3...

Кстати... план "Шатун" уже отменили или он тайно воплощался?

И да... Википедия...

Динамическая защита (ДЗ) — защитное устройство, разновидность защиты боевых бронированных машин, принцип действия которого состоит в том, что используется направленный взрыв заряда взрывчатого вещества на попавший в машину снаряд с целью резкого снижения его пробивной способности...

t.me/MihaAnarchyst/18695 53.0K

Миha Анархист, edited Nov 17 at 10:44

Yes... they really write about the threat of "Maidan-3" from the words of Zelensky in the Western press... Apparently, the strategies I voiced are considered not only in my TG... But Chat is interested in 3 - is it a number or a letter? It's hard to say... most likely this time it's two in one... I wish I knew the second letter after 3... By the way... was the "Shatun" plan already canceled or was it secretly implemented? ..

Social Unity Vector

Another narrative common in Russian sources was the statement of (former advisor to President Kuchma, now a pro-Russian blogger) Oleg Soskin, who claimed that the concept of "Maidan-3" was invented by the Ukrainian government and that the style of the name "Maidan-3" does not correspond to Moscow's approaches, which would have called this operation something like "de-Zelenskyfication" (antonym to "Zelenskyfication" - i.e., removing the "greens" from power).

The narrative of the Ukrainian government's purchase of police vans, accordingly, was tied to Zelensky's preparation to suppress protests during "Maidan-3," not just regarding mobilization. Thus, an impression was created that Zelensky is well aware of his unpopularity and shaky position in society, emphasizing his readiness to fight against his people.

On November 18, a new radical narrative was launched, according to which Zelensky committed too many crimes and was forced to usurp power. Ideas about the president's treacherous entourage and the Ukrainian people's loyalty to the generals, ready to defend their posts with arms in hand, were reiterated.

On November 19, a narrative spread on social networks that (Zelensky's chief of staff) Yermak is an FSB agent who has compromising material on Zelensky, thus manipulating him. The dismissal of Zaluzhny is the only way for the current government to stay in power after the victory in the war, so by talking about Maidan-3, he tries to "lay straws" in case of acts of civil disobedience.

Social Unity Vector

Overall, the information space from November 18-20 was influenced by narratives introduced on the 17th. There was a significant revitalization of the discourse inspired by these narratives, but it began to fade over time.

A new wave of activation of the discourse on Maidan-3 was associated with a) Zelensky's interview in "The Sun" and b) the tenth anniversary of the start of the Euromaidan. However, it's worth noting that no ideologically new narratives were provoked in the infosphere.

Mostly, there were sporadic episodes of parasitizing on the narratives already played out on the 17th in Internet discussions. Currently, Maidan-3 is mentioned only as an additional element of criticism, while the main narratives are classic or situational topics in the Ukrainian political sphere. For example, the narrative of the "Bezugla provocation" focuses on the conflict of Zelensky's entourage with the military vertical, and "Maidan-3" is mentioned only in passing. Similarly, in the reaction to Zelensky's interview with "The Sun," the main attention is paid to the conflict between Zelensky and Zaluzhny, and the topic of "Maidan-3," which is highlighted in the first minutes of the interview is mentioned only at the end of the narrative text.

However, political discourse differs from activism in the presence of constructive proposals and political demands.


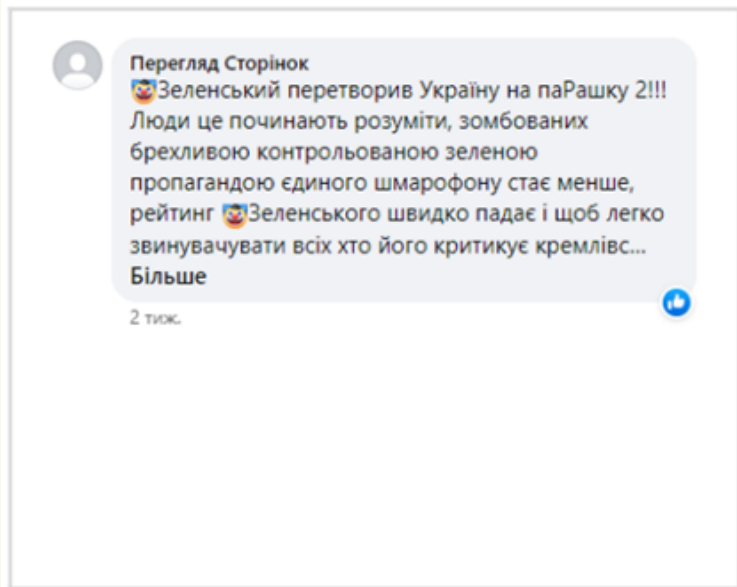
Thus, against the backdrop of criticism of the government in the above narratives, the opposition in mid-November formulated a key political demand - the creation of a "Government of National Unity," the demands for the implementation of which intensified after Zelenskyy's statement about "Maidan-3." The main narrative under which this idea was promoted was the postulation of the critical situation in which the country finds itself, the need for change, accusations of ineffectiveness, and usurpation.

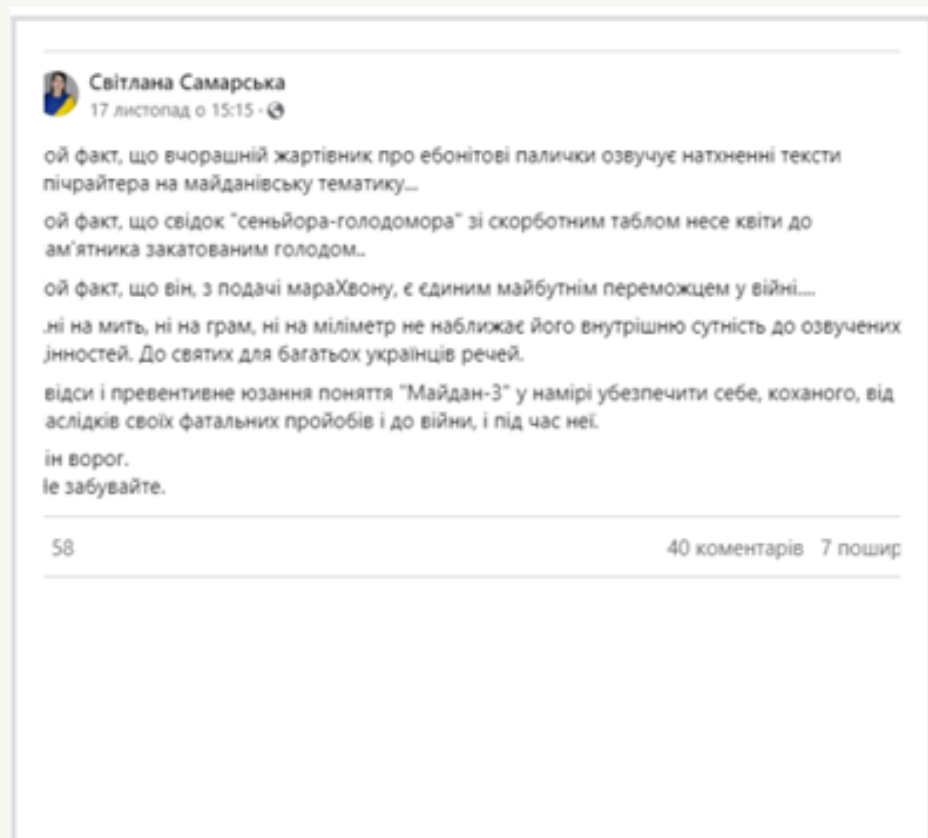
CIB (Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior)

We have noticed several instances of the same texts being spread in posts and comments, almost always carried out by the same profiles. Analyzing their text and where they were posted, it can be assumed that the political divide is the main theme they are trying to promote.

1. Direct calls for a Maidan or fighting against Zelenskyy;
2. Zelenskyy misunderstands the nature of the Maidan. Twisting his words as if he considers the previous Maidans organized by Russia;
3. Statement regarding the Maidan - preparation for repression against patriots and all those who disagree with the state of affairs in Ukraine;
4. This theme also includes spreading messages about purchasing many police vans, supposedly in anticipation of the Maidan;
5. Comparison of Zelensky's statement with the Shatun plan from Poroshenko's Times;
6. Part of the confrontation between Zelensky and Zaluzhny between the political and military leadership of the country.

Examples:

 <p>Elena Elena Зберіть народ, і поставайте. Робіть третій майдан. Це буде тривати, поки ви не повстанете проти влади.</p>	<p>Galina Yakymov: "Gather the people and rise up. Do the third Maidan. This will continue until you rebel against the authorities".</p>
 <p>Перегляд Сторінок Зеленський перетворив Україну на паРашку 2!!! Люди це починають розуміти, зомбованих брехливою контрольованою зеленою пропагандою єдиного шмарофону стає менше, рейтинг Зеленського швидко падає і щоб легко звинувачувати всіх хто його критикує кремлів... Більше 2 тис.</p>	<p>Zelensky turned Ukraine into a Russia country 2!!! People are beginning to understand this, there are fewer people zombified by the lying controlled green propaganda of a single smarophone, Zelensky's rating is rapidly falling, and in order to easily accuse all those who criticize him of being Kremlin agents (by the way, he copies Putler, innoagents are all critics of Putin), he lies that the Maidan is being prepared by Russia , and how he turned the country into a concentration camp, the fact that there is large-scale corruption in the country, which he forbids talking about, and so on ... ! Potion Go!!!</p>

 <p>Світлана Самарська 17 листопад о 15:15 - 4 ой факт, що вчорашній жартівник про ебонітові палички озвучує натхненні тексти пічрайтера на майданівську тематику... ой факт, що свідок "сеньйора-голодомора" зі скорботним таблом несе квіти до ам'ятника закатованим голодом... ой факт, що він, з подачі мараХвону, є єдиним майбутнім переможцем у війні... ні на мить, ні на грам, ні на міліметр не наближає його внутрішню сутність до озвучених їнностей. До святих для багатьох українців речей. відси і превентивне юзання поняття "Майдан-3" у намірі убезпечити себе, коханого, від аслідків своїх фатальних пройобів і до війни, і під час неї. ін ворог. іє забувайте. 58 40 коментарів 7 пошир</p>	<p>Svitlana Samarska: The fact that yesterday's joker about ebonite sticks voiced the inspired texts of the speechwriter on the Maidan theme... The fact that the witness of the "Señor Holodomor" with a mournful sign carries flowers to the monument tortured by hunger... The fact that he , from MaraHwon's submission, is the only future winner in the war.... ..doesn't for a moment, not a gram, not a millimeter bring his inner essence closer to the stated values. Things that are sacred for many Ukrainians. Hence the preventive use of the term "Maidan-3" with the intention of protecting yourself, your loved one, from the consequences of your fatal failures both before and during the war. He is the enemy. Do not forget</p>
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Summary

In summary, the idea of "Maidan-3" was played out in the Ukrainian information space as early as November 13th.

However, although this message contained significantly more details and was somewhat more controversial than subsequent statements by Zelensky, the reaction to them was more than mild, in the spirit of uniting Ukrainians around the common idea of fighting Russia.

On the other hand, a similar statement from Zelensky turned out to be a real information bomb, causing a social media frenzy with the radicalization of existing narratives and linking them to the idea of "Maidan-3."

Opinions particularly intensified that Zelensky's entourage is traitors and want to remove "good" Ukrainian generals and appoint "obedient" ones so that the Armed Forces of Ukraine would fight less effectively, and therefore "Maidan-3" is planned as a reaction to popular discontent.

The main idea was the promotion of a good/evil dichotomy in Ukrainian politics with a rather apocalyptic understanding that "evil" in the form of the political power vertical is winning. Traitors have already decided to remove the "good" in the form of "good" generals; hence, "Maidan," as an expression of the people's will to remove pro-Russian sentiments, should intervene to save Ukraine, as it did in 2004 and 2013.

So, to prove the necessity of the Maidan, the following arguments need to be satisfied:

- The government is anti-Ukrainian;
- The government is rotten and corrupt;
- The government is undemocratic, authoritarian, and usurped;
- The government represses civil society.

The discourse on the need for change in the Ukrainian upper echelons shifted from more moderate anti-corruption calls or election proposals to postulating the necessity of a forceful scenario.

At specific points in the Ukrainian political discourse, one could notice a distinct raising of the stakes and even direct blackmail of the current government in the form of a request: "Either a government of national unity while it's not too late, or the Maidan."

Summary

Thus, the idea of political compromise, admission of the opposition to power, and re-elections was the primary political demand in 2004 and 2013, and it is repeated now. Another similarity with these events is that the "Maidan camp" united people with various political preferences.

Thus, the "patriotic opposition" views are directly opposite to the ideas of "opponents of mobilization." However, the discourse about "Maidan-3" creates a certain common support point for them, exacerbating the split in Ukrainian society.

The critical task of Russian intervention in the Ukrainian political space is to sow discord, polarization, extremism, and mutual distrust. Therefore, their strategy does not promote a new ideological narrative and, on the contrary, develops problems created by the Ukrainian discourse.

The activation of the discourse associated with "Maidan-3" has instead set threatening accents of perception for Ukrainian society, as, on the one hand, it manipulatively likened criticism of the government to the incitement of protest moods. On the other hand - it intensified the gap between this criticism and reality, pushing opposition ideas further into the realm of conspiracy.

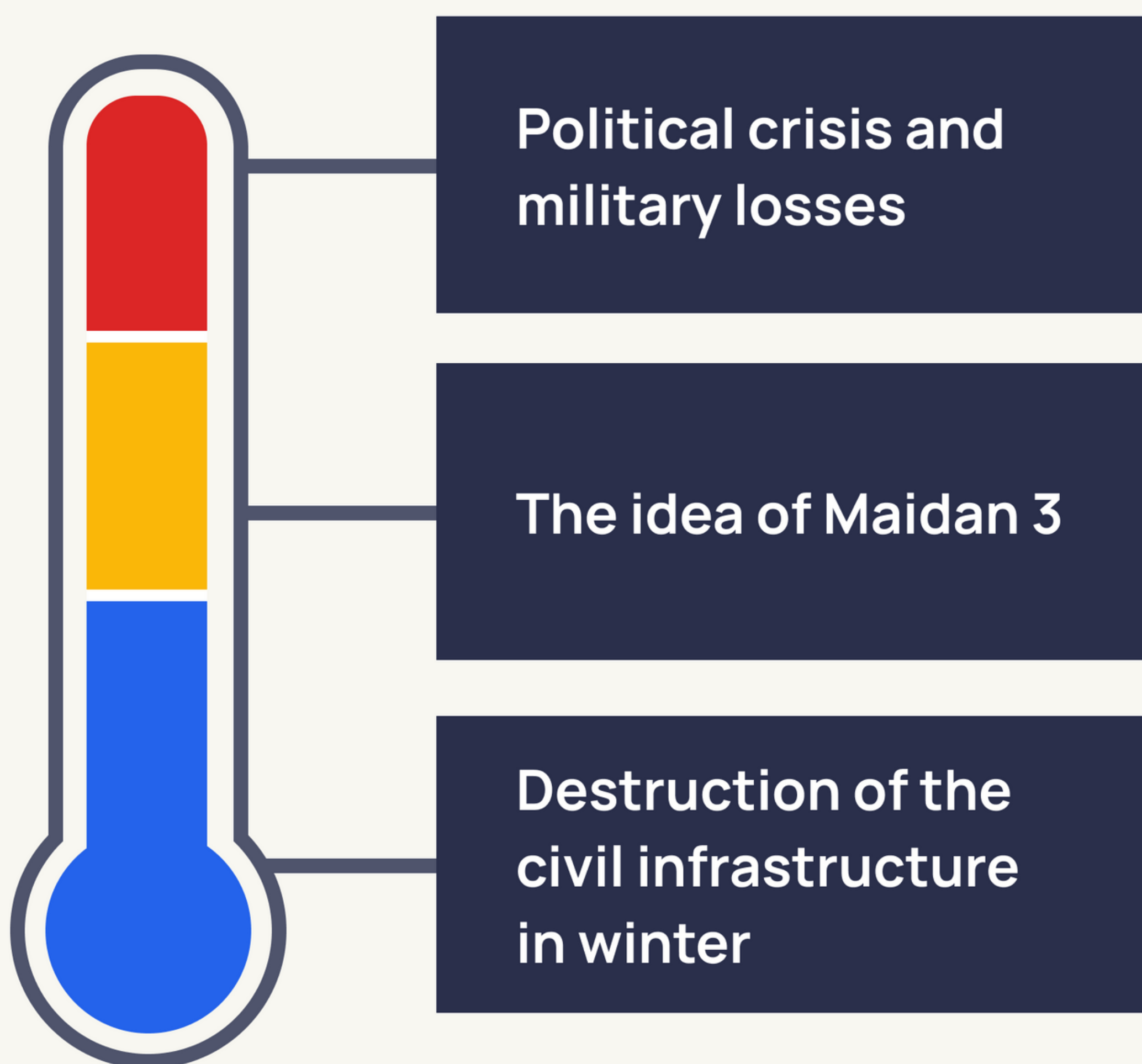
The critical threat of the "Maidan discourse" lies in the normalization of discussing the possibility of overthrowing the current government through protest.

The peak of informational activity regarding "Maidan-3" occurred precisely on November 17th, then declined, with activation on November 21st due to Zelensky's new speech and the anniversary of the Euromaidan.

Regarding the Russian information space, it gives the impression that the message about "Maidan-3" caught them by surprise. Thus, they could not construct anything new on this occasion, continuing to postulate narratives about the moral bankruptcy of the Ukrainian government and its loss of population support.

THE HEAT THAT NARRATIVES CAUSE IN THE SOCIETY BY MAIDAN 3 OPERATION

Political and military vectors are ongoing and the most heated topics that result in Maidan 3 discussions. Russian narratives support these ideas as primary to increase the heat in the Ukrainian society.





MAIDAN 3

CONTACT FOR MORE DETAILS –
INFO@OSAVUL.CLOUD