



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 30, 2024

Case No. FL-2023-00013

Reed Rubinstein
America First Legal Foundation
611 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, #231
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Rubinstein:

As we noted in our letter dated March 29, 2024, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State ("Department") has identified four additional responsive records subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that one record may be released in full, and three records may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Kevin Bell, U.S. Department of Justice Trial Attorney, at kevin.k.bell@usdoj.gov and (202) 305-8613. Please refer to the case number, FL-2023-00013, and the civil action number, 22-cv-03386, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,



Avery Bullard
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)


FOIA Exemptions


- (b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:
- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
 - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
 - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
 - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ARMSEXP | Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c) |
| CIA PERS/ORG | Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g) |
| EXPORT CONTROL | Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c) |
| FS ACT | Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004 |
| INA | Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f) |
| IRAN | Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505 |
- (b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Personal privacy information
- (b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:
- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
 - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 - (D) disclose confidential sources
 - (E) disclose investigation techniques
 - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

From:	(b)(6)
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Subject:	This is part of an SBU conversation. Snapshot Hobbits: chat conversation from Microsoft Teams
Date:	Fri, 20 Jan 2023 22:34:40 +0000

Microsoft Teams 



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U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE
Global Engagement Center

GEC Special Report

THE KREMLIN'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS



MAY 2022

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kremlin's spreading of unfounded and debunked allegations that the United States and Ukraine are conducting chemical and biological weapons activities in Ukraine is part of a well-established Russian disinformation tactic.

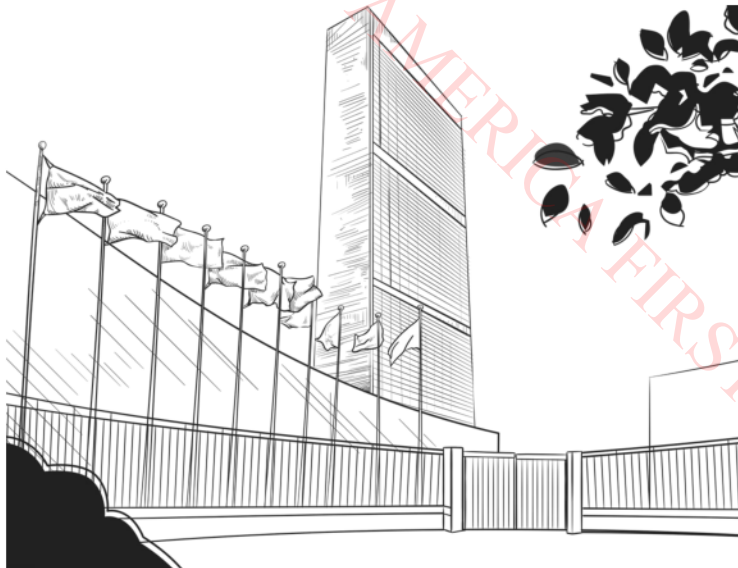
The Kremlin has a long track record of accusing others of the very violations they commit. The United States does not own or operate any chemical or biological laboratories in Ukraine and is in full compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). Ukraine is also in full compliance with its obligations under the CWC and BWC. It is, in fact, the Russian Federation that has active chemical and biological weapons programs and is in violation of its international obligations.

Just like during Putin's war of choice against Ukraine, the Russian government spreads disinformation to shield its Syrian ally from accountability after the Assad regime's repeated use of chemical weapons, including the 2017 sarin attack against Syrians in Khan Shaykhun. The Kremlin also denied its own responsibility for the 2018 Novichok poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the United Kingdom and the subsequent, related death of a UK citizen in Amesbury. The Kremlin also has tried to escape taking responsibility for the Novichok poisoning of Russian opposition politician Aleksey Navalny in 2020. Each time, the Kremlin used its seat in multilateral organizations as a platform to spread its disinformation. The Kremlin is now attempting to use the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and other multilateral organizations to deceive people on this issue and to justify President Putin's brutal war of choice against Ukraine.

CASE STUDY

KHAN SHAYKHUN, SYRIA ATTACK 2017

Although there were indications that chemical weapons had been used in Syria previously, the August 2013 chemical weapons attack on Ghouta, which killed an estimated 1,400 civilians, drew global attention. An OPCW–UN Joint Mission was formally established in October 2013 to oversee the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons program, with both Russia and the United States assisting the Mission. In addition, the United States and Russia worked together to ensure that Syria acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Russia's propaganda portrayed these efforts in the media as an example of Russia's leadership on the world stage, and its indispensability in any potential resolution to the conflict. Despite successful multilateral cooperation at



that time, the Russian Federation and its disinformation and propaganda ecosystem continued to portray the United States and the West as being roadblocks to the full success of Syrian peace talks.

When the Russian military entered the Syrian armed conflict in late 2015, the Kremlin reinforced its partnership with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad with full knowledge that the Syrian regime had used chemical weapons against its own people. The enduring nature of the Syrian armed conflict, the repeated use of chemical weapons by Bashar al-Assad and the high level of public attention to these atrocities led Russia to repeatedly use disinformation to distract and obfuscate its ally's responsibility for these attacks. Because Russia had shielded Syria from accountability for these violations, in 2015, the UN Security Council established the OPCW–UN Joint Investigation Mechanism (JIM) to “identify to the greatest extent feasible” those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The JIM confirmed Syrian government

IN 2015, THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ESTABLISHED THE OPCW-UN JOINT INVESTIGATION MECHANISM (JIM) “TO IDENTIFY TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE” THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN SYRIA.

forces were responsible for three chlorine-barrel bomb attacks in 2014-2015, as well as the April 4, 2017, sarin attack on Khan Shaykhun. In the fall of 2017, Russia repeatedly exercised its veto on UNSC resolutions that would have extended the mandate of the JIM, to prevent it from investigating further cases of regime use of chemical weapons in order to protect Assad.

Multiple Conflicting Disinformation Narratives

On the morning of April 4, 2017, the town of Khan Shaykhun, located in the Idlib Governorate of Syria, was attacked with sarin gas. In October 2017, the JIM concluded that the Syrian Government was responsible for the attack. On the same day of the attack, Al-Masdar News, a pan-Arab outlet that supports the Assad regime, published a story claiming the attack was staged, which was quickly picked up by Russia-friendly Twitter accounts. The author of the article was Paul Antonopoulos, a frequent contributor to Russia's state-funded foreign propaganda outlet RT, and the disinformation proxy website InfoBrics, which has links to Russia's military intelligence service. Early on April 5, 2017, Russia's Ministry of Defense stated that the Syrian Air Force had destroyed a warehouse in Idlib where chemical weapons were produced by the opposition and stockpiled before being shipped to Iraq, describing its information as "fully objective and verified," despite providing no further evidence. Kremlin-funded and Kremlin-aligned media then repeated this statement in their own reporting, despite Russia's Ministry of Defense incorrectly stated the time the attack had occurred. The Ministry of Defense phrase "fully objective and verified" was repeated by both Western and Kremlin-friendly media for days following the attack. Within 24 hours of the attack, two main disinformation narratives spread throughout the information space, messaging that: 1) the operation was staged; and 2) the Syrian Air Force had destroyed an opposition chemical weapons lab.

As these two primary disinformation narratives began to spread, various Russian government officials went on the record to restate both false claims. The Kremlin then deployed a series of secondary false claims to try to bolster its case, messaging that: the OPCW and its investigative missions were flawed and unprofessional; that the White Helmets, a volunteer organization of rescue workers who operate in Syria, were untrustworthy and linked to terrorists; and that the Syrian government did not have any chemical weapons. In an emergency April 5 UNSC meeting, Russia's representative followed traditional Kremlin lines and questioned the reputation of the White Helmets and their reporting from the site of the attack, themes then repeated by Kremlin-friendly media.



Use of Multilateral Organizations

On April 6, 2017, following a U.S. strike on the airfield from which Assad's planes dropped chemical weapons on Khan Shaykhun, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the U.S. attack was made "under an invented pretext." The following day, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitri Peskov claimed that "all Syrian armed forces' chemical weapons stockpiles were eliminated was registered and confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a specialized UN unit." In addition to ignoring the fact that the OPCW is not a body of the UN, Peskov's statement disregarded the fact that both the OPCW and the UN had repeatedly declared that Syria's CWC declaration cannot be considered accurate and complete. The

IN ADDITION TO IGNORING THE FACT THAT THE OPCW IS NOT A BODY OF THE UN, PESKOV'S STATEMENT DISREGARDED THE FACT THAT BOTH THE OPCW AND THE UN HAD REPEATEDLY DECLARED THAT SYRIA'S CWC DECLARATION CANNOT BE CONSIDERED ACCURATE AND COMPLETE

OPCW's Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) had engaged the Syrian government to resolve outstanding issues for eight years but continued to discover new gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies with Syria's declaration. This specific example illustrates how the Russian Federation is willing to falsely invoke the UN and the OPCW to further its disinformation narratives when it suits their needs.

On April 11, 2017, Putin claimed the chemical weapon attack on Khan Shaykhun was a false flag operation and warned that future false flag operations were planned. Various outlets subsequently spread this disinformation. The next day, the Russian Federation vetoed a UNSC resolution condemning the attack. Russia's representative, Vladimir Safronkov, promoted both disinformation narratives in one intervention, stating that it was an "alleged use of chemical weapons" but then later claimed that the Russian government has "every reason to believe that after Khan Shaykhun other provocations by extremists using toxic substances could follow." In his statement, Safronkov also questioned the professionalism of the OPCW. During the vote on the resolution, he aggressively warned the British representative, "Don't you dare insult Russia again!" Safronkov's tirade at the UNSC received significant attention in both Western and Russian media, and even RT noted the undiplomatic nature of his remarks. His emotional outbursts brought more attention to Russia's false arguments at the UNSC.

An April 13, 2017, the OPCW Executive Council meeting held to discuss the use of chemical weapons in Syria offered the Russian Federation another opportunity to use a multilateral organization as a platform to spread disinformation. After Russia vetoed a UNSC resolution the day before that would have urged Syria to cooperate with the JIM, Russia and Iran proposed launching a new, separate investigation mechanism. Following pushback, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov falsely claimed again the attack was staged

and hinted those countries that voted against the Russia-Iran proposal to launch a new investigation mechanism had a guilty conscience. The discussion continued April 19 and 20, when the Kremlin disputed sarin gas had been used in Khan Shaykhun, adopting the narrative Putin had presented on April 11 that the attack was staged. Following the failure of Russia's and Iran's proposal to launch a new investigation mechanism at the 54th Meeting at the OPCW's Executive Council, Lavrov said, "I think we are very close to this organization [OPCW] being discredited."

These actions illustrate how the Kremlin constructs a disinformation campaign following the use of chemical weapons.

Role of Russia's Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem

As it did during other disinformation campaigns, the Kremlin supported the use of inauthentic personas, bots, and trolls following the Khan Shaykhun attack to spread its false claims. There was a clear spike in the creation of Twitter accounts in support of Russia's narratives after the attack. Following the April 6, 2017, U.S. strike on the Syrian Shayrat airbase, the U.S. Department of Defense stated the number of Russia's troll accounts increased 2,000 percent in reaction to the situation. Russia's Mission to the UN also mocked the U.S. Ambassador to the UN on Twitter, likely in an attempt to bring further attention to Russia's claims.

The Kremlin relies heavily on its disinformation media network to introduce its most outlandish false claims. For example, on April 8 and April 12, 2017, the Russian military's television channel TV Zvezda falsely claimed Ukraine had delivered chemical weapons to the Middle East. In addition, Russian state propaganda outlet Sputnik claimed that Qatar-based Al Jazeera news channel had filmed the Khan Shaykhun chemical attack and therefore was somehow complicit in staging it. Other Russian state-controlled and proxy media repeated this narrative, but it did not get picked up by Western media.

The Kremlin used its disinformation and propaganda resources to shape the information space, adapting its strategy after repeated chemical weapons attacks by the Assad regime became harder to flatly deny. Russia's Ministry of Defense falsely claimed in March 2018 that "American instructors have trained several groups of insurgents near al-Tanf in order to hold provocations with chemical weapons in the south of Syria..." and that "the Jabhat al-Nusra armed formations with support of so-called 'White Helmets' are preparing a staged chemical attack near the settlements of al-Habid and Qalb Luza located 25 km northwest Idlib. Therefore, 20 containers with chloride have been delivered there." Jabhat al-Nusra is a terrorist organization and the White Helmets do not work with terrorist organizations. In this instance there was no attack, nevertheless, repeated false chemical weapon predictions by Russia's Ministry of Defense, Putin, and other Russian officials show that, the Kremlin will add to its initial disinformation narrative to further distort the information environment. Syria has leveled hundreds of similar accusations about supposed terrorist chemical plots, sometimes weaving into the accusations claims of alleged Western support, but the OPCW has not been able to verify any of these allegations from Syria or Russia. These frequent false claims provide an ample source of unverified material that Russian propaganda networks can then amplify.

CASE STUDY

THE SALISBURY AND AMESBURY POISONINGS 2018

The Russian Federation used a military grade chemical weapon in the United Kingdom when Russian military intelligence (GRU) attempted to assassinate Sergey Skripal and his daughter Yulia with the nerve agent Novichok in Salisbury, England, on March 4, 2018. This attack not only resulted in long term hospitalization for both Skripals, but also for a British police officer who was first on the scene. In June 2018, a British couple was poisoned by the same agent in nearby Amesbury, after one of them came in contact with an abandoned perfume bottle containing the poison. UK citizen Dawn Sturgess died after this exposure, the result of Russian mishandling of the deadly poison. The Kremlin's disinformation and propaganda ecosystem quickly went into action to protect Russia's interests after international outrage to the assassination operation conducted on NATO soil. At many multilateral meetings held on the Salisbury poisoning, Russia continued to lie about its involvement, inventing false narratives about who was responsible and seeking to lay groundwork for future disinformation campaigns about chemical weapons.

FOLLOWING BOTH THE SALISBURY AND AMESBURY INCIDENTS, RUSSIAN STATE MEDIA AND RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS PRESENTED MANY, OFTEN MUTUALLY CONTRADICTORY, THEORIES ABOUT WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE.

Multiple Conflicting Disinformation Narratives

Following both the Salisbury and Amesbury incidents, Russian state media and Russian government officials presented many, often mutually contradictory, theories about who was responsible. The Kremlin has also used the technique of flooding the information space with many false claims following events such as the Khan Shaykhun chemical weapon attack and the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17. False and contradictory claims about the Salisbury poisoning included:

- **It never happened:** the Skripals were not poisoned;
- **Someone else did it:** the UK, the United States, Ukraine, exiled Russian oligarchs, Bill Browder, Yulia Skripal's future mother-in-law, etc.;
- **It was not Novichok:** it was either a NATO toxin or fentanyl; Novichok doesn't exist; Novichok was invented elsewhere, not in Russian labs; Skripal was smuggling chemical weapons;
- **Russophobia:** Nazi propaganda; the West is vilifying Russia as a nation of criminals;

- **It is a provocation invented for an ulterior motive:** to justify sanctions; increase NATO's military budget; justify more NATO troops in the Baltic states and Eastern Europe; boycott the upcoming World Cup tournament in Russia; prepare for war against Russia; influence Russia's elections; divert attention from Brexit or Western scandals; and harm Russia's reputation as a peacemaker.

A study by Kings College London found that in the month following the Salisbury poisoning, Russian government-funded RT and Sputnik published 735 articles about the poisoning, using 138 different, often contradictory, narratives. RT and Sputnik often cited high ranking Russian government sources to support these lies. The study found that the government sources' "use of combative and confrontational language towards Western counterparts resulted in substantial coverage by mainstream UK media." The study concluded this was the most successful means by which the Russian Federation inserts Kremlin-generated narratives into Western media.

As it did with the Khan Shaykhun attack, the Kremlin used social media to amplify its disinformation. DFRLab found that "between March 28 and April 4 [2018], two out of [every] three articles on the Salisbury case shared on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or Pinterest came from Kremlin-funded media outlets."¹

Use of Multilateral Organizations

As the Kremlin filled the information space with its disinformation narratives, the UK and its allies led international efforts to seek accountability for the use of a chemical weapon. In the March 14 UNSC meeting, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vasily Nebenzia repeated disinformation claims pushed by Russia's state and Russia-friendly media, including false claims that it was the UK that poisoned the Skripals. Nebenzia claimed the only way the UK could be certain the poison used against the Skripals was Novichok was if British officials already possessed some of the agent with which to compare the sample, insinuating that the poison must have come from British chemical labs, a blatant fabrication.

At the first OPCW meeting following the poisoning, March 13-15, 2018, Russia's representative denied the UK's accusations and said the UK would be held accountable for its lies. On April 4, the OPCW held a special meeting of the Executive Council, at the request of Russia, to specifically discuss the Salisbury poisoning. Russia's delegation brought a Doctor of Chemical Sciences from its Ministry of Defense to testify. His testimony promoted Russia's claims that the knowledge of Novichok production is easily accessible, therefore it was possible for any state to create it, and that the formula of the Novichok used against the Skripals is impossible to track to any one nation. A Sputnik report quoted this expert, Ivan Rybalchenko, a few days earlier, when he falsely claimed the United States had created the nerve agent used against Skripal. This claim was debunked a few days later in an interview with media by retired Russian scientist Vil Mirzayanov, who said that "production [of Novichok] was only refined in the USSR and Russia." This is a clear example of the Kremlin using multilateral organizations to promote disinformation narratives that it concurrently spreads in the media.

¹The Atlantic Council is a recipient of U.S. government funding.

The next day, April 5, the UNSC discussed the Salisbury poisoning. Ambassador Nebenzia claimed Russia's different theories of the Skripal poisoning were the opinions of journalists, not Russian authorities. He then used the rest of his speaking time to present yet even more scenarios for how the Skripal poisoning happened, including his theory that Western intelligence services were behind the attack.

During two other UNSC meetings held on April 10 and 12 to address the use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime in Syria, Russia's disinformation ecosystem attempted to link the Salisbury poisoning to Syria by claiming the White Helmets had conducted a false flag operation in Douma.

The extent of the Kremlin's campaign against the OPCW became even more clear on April 13 when the Netherlands Defence Intelligence and Security Service apprehended four agents from the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Russian military intelligence- GRU) Unit 26165 for attempting to hack into the OPCW HQ's network. Dutch officials also found evidence the Russian government was planning a cyber operation on a Swiss OPCW lab. At that time, the OPCW was analyzing both the Salisbury poisoning and the Douma attack. What the Kremlin would have done with access to the OPCW's system is unclear, but there is precedent for the Russian Federation conducting "hack and release" operations, often falsifying contents of a hack to support its later narratives.

On April 18 both the UNSC and the OPCW Executive Council held meetings, which Russia used to spread disinformation. In the UNSC, Russia's representative questioned the April 12 OPCW technical assistance team report, which "confirm[ed] the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury." In the OPCW meeting, Russia's representative outlined what he claimed were eight false charges against Russia. In addition, the Russian Federation submitted an 11-page aide memoire, or informal diplomatic message, outlining many of its arguments in-depth. Kremlin-backed media reported the Russian OPCW and UN representatives' statements without fact-checking their accuracy. The next day, Russia's MFA spokesperson Maria Zakharova accused the British intelligence services of conducting a false flag operation to frame the Russian Federation for the poisoning, an accusation that was picked up and spread by other pro-Kremlin disinformation outlets.

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Role of Kremlin-Funded Media

One of the most bizarre disinformation tactics the Kremlin deployed following the Salisbury poisoning was a 25-minute video interview with the two GRU officers accused by the UK of carrying out the poisoning, conducted by RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan. During the interview, the two men, visibly uncomfortable and poorly rehearsed, spun a tale of a tourist trip to Salisbury during which they were unable to see the Cathedral due to a light snowstorm. Simonyan tried to justify her guests' awkwardness by insinuating they may have been trying to conceal a same-sex relationship. The British government called the interview "an insult to the public's intelligence." The disinformation, however, worked within Russia: only three percent of Russian citizens in October 2018 believed the Kremlin was behind the poisoning, while 28 percent believed it was British intelligence.

NATO's Response

More than 20 countries and NATO expelled 153 Russian Federation diplomats and intelligence officers following the British government's decision to expel 23 Russian officers on March 20, 2018. Then-British Prime Minister Theresa May called it "the largest collective expulsion of Russian intelligence officers in history." NATO's response made it clear that despite Russia's attempts to spread disinformation, there was no confusion in the minds of the Western governments as to who was responsible.

The concerted response to the Salisbury and Amesbury poisonings provide an example of the power of unity among allies following a chemical attack. Allies working closely together maintained clarity in the face of the Kremlin's attempt to distract and confuse with multiple different disinformation claims. Further, international partners were able to take concrete, impactful actions with a broad coalition of countries to impose costs on the Russian Federation for its brazen action. The increased use of chemical weapons also led to States Parties to the OPCW adding two families of Novichok agents to the CWC's "Schedules of Chemicals" in November 2019 by consensus.

ONE OF THE
MOST BIZARRE
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TACTICS THE KREMLIN
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THE SALISBURY
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25-MINUTE VIDEO
INTERVIEW WITH THE
TWO GRU OFFICERS
ACCUSED BY THE UK
OF CARRYING OUT THE
POISONING, CONDUCTED
BY RT EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARGARITA SIMONYAN.

CASE STUDY

THE ALEKSEY NAVALNY POISONING 2020

Despite the international backlash from using Novichok in the UK, just two years later the Russian Federation employed a chemical weapon in another assassination attempt. On August 20, 2020, Russian political opposition figure [Aleksey Navalny](#) became violently ill and collapsed on a domestic flight from Tomsk to Moscow. After an emergency landing in Omsk, Navalny was [admitted](#) to the toxicology unit of a local hospital and, two days later, flown to the Charité hospital in Berlin at the request of his family. Navalny's personal doctor Anastasia Vasilyeva told [The New York Times](#) that Russian authorities deliberately delayed his departure in hopes the poison in his system would dissipate and become impossible to later identify.



Charité's diagnosis of Navalny [indicated](#) "poisoning with a substance from the group of cholinesterase inhibitors." On September 2, 2020, the [German government](#) announced toxicological tests conducted by the Bundeswehr laboratory "revealed unequivocal proof of the presence of a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok group" in Navalny's test samples, a finding also confirmed by the [OPCW](#) and by independent [Swedish and French](#) national laboratories. A joint investigation by Bellingcat, The Insider, Der Spiegel, and CNN [implicated](#) Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) in Navalny's poisoning.

Russian authorities and pro-Kremlin media employed a variety of disinformation and propaganda narratives to hide the facts surrounding the Navalny poisoning, including several narratives identical to those the Russian government used in the case of the Salisbury poisoning. EUvsDisinfo, the European Union's counter-disinformation website, [documented](#) more than 200 instances of disinformation from pro-Kremlin outlets about the Navalny poisoning between August 20, 2020, and January 21, 2021, more than one per day. Key disinformation [narratives](#) from the Navalny case are:

- **Deny:** deny that Navalny was poisoned; that Russia possesses the Novichok nerve agent; and that it has any motive to poison Navalny;
- **Confuse and distract:** pollute the information environment by inventing and disseminating alternative theories of what could have happened to Navalny, including a bad diet, drug overdose, illness, or alcoholism;
- **Blame the accusers:** go on the offense; falsely claim Russia's accusers committed the crime to frame Russia; portray Russia as again a victim of Russophobia.

The Kremlin's Denial

One of the main tactics the Kremlin has used in the disinformation and propaganda campaign surrounding the Navalny poisoning is denial. Russian officials and pro-Kremlin media consistently cite the denials of the Russian toxicologists that Navalny was poisoned in Russia. According to the toxicologists' claims, made while Russia's security services were present at their hospital in Omsk, Navalny suffered from a metabolic disease and his coma could have been caused by a bad diet, excessive fatigue, overheating, overcooling, or alcohol use.

As it did in the aftermath of the Salisbury poisoning, the Russian government denied possessing the Novichok nerve agent, claiming it had eliminated all of its chemical weapons under international supervision, and that Novichok is a "purely Western brand." This deflection plays into a long existing Kremlin narrative that Russia has destroyed all of its chemical weapons. In fact, Russia has only verifiably eliminated its declared stockpile, a key caveat that it often omits to obscure its undeclared programs. Further, experts have stated Novichok is widely known to have been developed by the Soviet Union and Russian Federation.

Lastly, Moscow denied it had any motive to poison Navalny, dismissing the opposition politician as "inconsequential." For example, President Putin stated "if they [Russian security services] really wanted to [poison Navalny], they would have, most likely, carried it through." Putin used his decision to let Navalny go to Germany as supposed evidence that the Kremlin was not involved in the poisoning. "If the authorities had wanted to poison the person you mentioned [Navalny] or to poison anybody, it is very unlikely they would have sent him for medical treatment to Germany. Don't you think so?" Putin told one journalist.

Multiple Conflicting Disinformation Narratives

Reflecting the "anything could have happened to Navalny" narrative propagated by Russian doctors, Russia's state-owned and state-controlled media spread a variety of alternative explanations to deflect attention from the Russian government's role in the poisoning. The mass circulation daily newspaper Moskovskiy Komsomolets cited sources who claimed Navalny drank "village moonshine" before his flight to Omsk, while the state-owned television channel Rossiya 1 quoted an alleged developer of Novichok arguing that moonshine was possibly the culprit for Navalny's poisoning.

In addition to denying and trying to muddy the waters around the Navalny poisoning, Kremlin officials attempted to shift the blame to their accusers, to discredit them, and to portray Russia as a victim of a Western plot. Russian disinformation focused mainly on Germany, the United States, the OPCW, on the Swedish and French laboratories where the chemical weapon was identified, and on Navalny himself and his associates. Russia's Foreign Ministry argued that Germany violated the CWC, led a baseless "broad smear campaign" against Russia, refused to cooperate, and withheld information from Moscow while secretly sharing Navalny's biomaterials with partners. Lavrov said Russia had "all grounds to believe" Navalny could have been poisoned "in Germany or on the plane where he was loaded and sent to the Charité clinic" and claimed that Navalny's colleague Maria Pevchikh might be connected to the poisoning.

Many Russian state-owned or state-controlled media personalities declared on national television that Pevchikh was Navalny's poisoner and an agent of British intelligence. Sergey Naryshkin, director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), claimed there was circumstantial evidence that the poisoning was a provocation by Western intelligence services to make Navalny a "sacrificial victim" in order to re-energize Russia's political opposition. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitri Peskov accused Navalny of working as a mouthpiece for the CIA, while President Putin called Bellingcat's exposure of the FSB assassins a "legalization of materials from the U.S. intelligence services," seeming to imply that U.S. intelligence agencies fed information to Bellingcat to publish.

Finally, the Kremlin tried to portray itself as a victim of another "anti-Russia propaganda attack" aimed to "contain Russia's development" and punish Moscow for its "independent foreign policy." Lavrov argued that just as in the case of the Skripals, the West was using Navalny as a pretext for imposing new sanctions on Russia, without providing any evidence to prove Russia's culpability.

Use of Multilateral Organizations

Once again, Moscow used both the UN and the OPCW platforms to spread disinformation. In a 2020 September UNSC meeting, Russia's Ambassador questioned the reputation of the OPCW and the supposed politicization of the organization. At an October 5 UNSC meeting, the Russian Ambassador falsely claimed the OPCW's Technical Secretariat was a tool the West uses to pressure Russia. Russia's state media quickly reported the ambassador's remarks in both meetings, and these UNSC statements formed the basis for future statements by Russia at other multilateral organizations. Russia's repeatedly attempts to question the OPCW's reputation to tarnish the OPCW and its findings. The Director-General of the OPCW said in 2019 that the organization is being "attacked with misinformation."

*ONCE AGAIN, MOSCOW USED BOTH THE UN
AND THE OPCW PLATFORMS TO SPREAD
DISINFORMATION.*

CONCLUSION

Multilateral pressure continues to grow following the Russian government's repeated use of chemical weapons. The OPCW's 99th Executive Council Session March 8-10, 2022 focused on Moscow's pattern of chemical weapons use and disinformation, extending through Putin's current war in Ukraine. OPCW States Parties overwhelmingly condemned Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The Session also focused on Navalny's poisoning. No country spoke in favor of Russia regarding Navalny, and Russian Representative to the OPCW, Alexander Shulgin, struggled to mount a defense. NATO Allies remain united on the unacceptability of Russia's use of chemical weapons, despite Russia's continuing attempts to sow contradiction, obfuscation, and disinformation through media and international gatherings. As with other examples of Kremlin propaganda, Russian disinformation about chemical weapons are not necessarily made to persuade others to accept their arguments, but to sow doubt and confusion and undermine the unity and effectiveness of an international response.

Russia has a track record of accusing the West of the very violations that Russia itself is perpetrating. Russia is once again spreading disinformation about chemical weapons. Russia's latest attempts to twist the truth on this very serious topic may be another Kremlin ploy foreshadowing another horrific use of chemical weapons, this time in Ukraine.



GEC Special Report:

THE KREMLIN'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS



United States Department of State
Global Engagement Center

Accessibility Report

Filename:

The Kremlin's Chemical Weapons Disinformation Campaigns.pdf

Report created by:

GEC, State Department

Organization:

Global Engagement Center

[Personal and organization information from the Preferences > Identity dialog.]

Summary

The checker found no problems in this document.

- Needs manual check: 0
- Passed manually: 2
- Failed manually: 0
- Skipped: 0
- Passed: 30
- Failed: 0

Detailed Report

Document

Rule Name	Status	Description
Accessibility permission flag	Passed	Accessibility permission flag must be set
Image-only PDF	Passed	Document is not image-only PDF
Tagged PDF	Passed	Document is tagged PDF
Logical Reading Order	Passed manually	Document structure provides a logical reading order
Primary language	Passed	Text language is specified
Title	Passed	Document title is showing in title bar
Bookmarks	Passed	Bookmarks are present in large documents
Color contrast	Passed manually	Document has appropriate color contrast

Page Content

Rule Name	Status	Description
Tagged content	Passed	All page content is tagged
Tagged annotations	Passed	All annotations are tagged
Tab order	Passed	Tab order is consistent with structure order
Character encoding	Passed	Reliable character encoding is provided
Tagged multimedia	Passed	All multimedia objects are tagged
Screen flicker	Passed	Page will not cause screen flicker
Scripts	Passed	No inaccessible scripts
Timed responses	Passed	Page does not require timed responses
Navigation links	Passed	Navigation links are not repetitive

Forms

Rule Name	Status	Description
Tagged form fields	Passed	All form fields are tagged

<u>Field descriptions</u>	Passed	All form fields have description
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Alternate Text

Rule Name	Status	Description
<u>Figures alternate text</u>	Passed	Figures require alternate text
<u>Nested alternate text</u>	Passed	Alternate text that will never be read
<u>Associated with content</u>	Passed	Alternate text must be associated with some content
<u>Hides annotation</u>	Passed	Alternate text should not hide annotation
<u>Other elements alternate text</u>	Passed	Other elements that require alternate text

Tables

Rule Name	Status	Description
<u>Rows</u>	Passed	TR must be a child of Table, THead, TBody, or TFoot
<u>TH and TD</u>	Passed	TH and TD must be children of TR
<u>Headers</u>	Passed	Tables should have headers
<u>Regularity</u>	Passed	Tables must contain the same number of columns in each row and rows in each column
<u>Summary</u>	Passed	Tables must have a summary

Lists

Rule Name	Status	Description
<u>List items</u>	Passed	LI must be a child of L
<u>Lbl and LBody</u>	Passed	Lbl and LBody must be children of LI

Headings

Rule Name	Status	Description
<u>Appropriate nesting</u>	Passed	Appropriate nesting

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From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6) <state.gov>
Subject:	Nuggets about false flags
Date:	Fri, 20 Jan 2023 21:18:54 +0000

Research of non-public SBU snapshot drafts

Nuggets about false flags

Tuesday, October 25, 2022
10:00 AM

1/18/2022

U.S. SPREADS DISINFORMATION, SPREADS “PROVOKATIONS”: The Russian Embassy in Washington rejected U.S. claims January 15 accusing Russia of preparing a false-flag operation to be used as a pretext for invading Ukraine. Foreign Minister Lavrov and pro-Kremlin influencers dismissed the charges as “disinformation.” Pro-Kremlin media and influencers, as well as Russia-backed proxies in Donbas, again accused the U.S. of preparing chemical weapons “provocations” to force a Russian response, provide Ukraine with a casus belli for war, and impose more sanctions on Russia. “Experts” told RT that U.S. “propaganda” is projecting its own military plans onto Russia and uses Ukraine as a source of constant tensions on Russia’s borders.

UKRAINE IS GEARING UP FOR WAR: Russia falsely portrays Ukraine as an aggressor preparing for military action against Donbas. The Russian MFA has alleged since late last year that Kyiv send “half of its military personnel” to Donbas, according to state agency RIA Novosti article which also included allegations that Ukraine is mobilizing “former members of nationalists battalions.” RIA Novosti also claimed Kyiv has increased its attacks on the so-called DNR and LNR with the approval of Ukraine’s U.S. and European allies. Pro-Kremlin “military correspondent” Semyon Pegov and pro-Kremlin Telegram channels purport that Ukraine is arming its “Nazi territorial battalions,” predicting an upcoming “slaughter” in Donbas, and “bloody” clampdowns on uprisings in Ukraine. The FSB-tasked, U.S.-sanctioned disinformation outlet News Front reported that Ukraine is deploying “Lithuania-trained” snipers to carry out provocations. Commentators on state TV speculate about Ukraine’s potential attack on Belarus.

1/28/2022

THE KREMLIN AND ITS PROXIES SPEAK IN ONE VOICE: From January 24-26, the Kremlin and its eastern Ukrainian proxies accused Kyiv of preparing an imminent military incursion into the Donbas. Primetime Russian state-controlled TV news programs Vremya and

Vesti, as well as foreign-facing RT, promoted narratives during the same period blaming the United States for provocations, escalating the conflict, and forcing Ukraine into repeating Western claims about an alleged Russian invasion. These accusations included the claim that Washington is “pumping” Ukrainian “Nazis” and “nationalists” with lethal weapons into the region, emboldening the Ukrainian leadership’s “warmongering” to attack the Donbas. Several pro-Kremlin media outlets amplified “LPR/DPR” representatives’ claims that Ukraine is massing troops and military equipment on the Donbas’ front lines, arming and training nationalist battalions, and preparing military hospitals in advance of an imminent attack. Pro-Kremlin media also widely quoted “DPR” leader Denis Pushilin’s description of the departure of some U.S. embassy personnel and family members from Ukraine as an “intentional provocation.” They also amplified Pushilin’s claim that Ukraine plans to conduct false flag operations in the Don bas using chemical weapons and promoted the “DPR’s” potential to launch a counterattack.

2/3/2022

SO-CALLED DPR/LPR ARE “VICTIMS” OF KYIV’S “AGGRESSION”: Moscow attempts to depict its proxies, the so-called DPR/LPR, as the “victims” of Kyiv’s alleged aggressions and provocations. To this end, Russian state media amplify separatist allegations and grievances, which range from accusing Kyiv of plotting false flag operations to deploying military hardware and shelling innocent civilians. Employing a classic disinformation tactic, these outlets also accuse Ukrainian special services, with Western support, of mounting their own disinformation campaign, code-named “Crushing Sword,” as a pretext for a Ukrainian attack. The campaign would allegedly involve Ukrainian state TV broadcasting a “staged video” depicting the “alleged beginning of military actions against Ukraine” by Russia

2/8/2022

LPR -KYIV PLANNING TERRORISTATTACK AGAINST KHARKIV, DONETSK, OR LUHANSK OBLASTS:

In a new iteration of Russia’s overall effort to fabricate a pretext for a potential Russian offensive against Ukraine, the so-called Luhansk People’s Republic (LPR) warned on February 8 via its representative, Ivan Filiponenko, that the Ukrainian Special Services are planning to carry out a “staged high-profile” terrorist act “with numerous civilian casualties” on territory under their own control to justify alleged upcoming “large-scale military operations against the defenders of Donbas.” The U.S.-sanctioned, Prigozhin-linked RIA FAN was among the disinformation outlets that covered the Filiponenko statement.

Proxy Spotlight: RIA FAN

The U.S.-sanctioned **Federal News Agency (RIA FAN)**, featured on the left side of this slide, is part of the Prigozhin-led Patriot Media Group. Patriot Media Group regularly creates and amplifies disinformation and propaganda targeting Ukraine with false and distorted claims that the United States may stage a coup to destroy Ukraine. Other RIA FAN content has alleged the United States sends Polish mercenaries to Ukraine under the guise of instructors, or that Ukraine is preparing false flag operations against the Donbas.

2/10/2022

ACCUSE THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT WHICH YOU ARE GUILTY: Following the February 3 U.S. statement that the Russian government has considered producing a faked video as a pretext to initiate and potentially justify military aggression against Ukraine, state-controlled Russian television channels have accused Ukraine of engaging in the same activity. The channels showed what they claimed was footage of Ukrainian soldiers staging a provocation to discredit the "defenders of Donbas" by filming a video where they pretended to be shot by a sniper and stepping on a landmine.

2/15/2022

"LPR" PREVENTS ALLEGED UKRAINIAN "TERRORIST ATTACK": In what could be an attempted "false flag" operation, the Ministry of State Security of the so-called "LPR" alleged February 15 that it had prevented a terrorist attack possibly carried out by Ukrainian intelligence. "LPR" officials claim a resident reported a bomb spotted in a trash can located in Friendship of Peoples Square, where a remembrance rally was to be held later the same day in honor of soldiers who served outside their homeland. A seemingly staged video of "LPR" security personnel allegedly finding and securing the device is circulating on social media (note the service dog alerting to the trash can right on cue).

2/17/2022

EXPLOITING PRIMAL FEARS: Pro-Kremlin media and influencers, covertly controlled Kremlin proxy sites, and the so-called "DPR/LPR" continue spreading false claims about allegedly ongoing or upcoming "provocations" from Ukraine, the United States and NATO. Shaping disinformation stories around nightmare scenarios, Moscow "exploits primal fears" and works towards building a pretext for potential military action. Echoing previous statements from Russian Defense Minister Shoigu, the FSB-tasked News Front published an article February 16 alleging Ukraine is preparing a "chemical disaster" in the Donbas, and on the same day another one claiming the United States or Ukraine could conduct a "crushing strike" on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The latter disinformation originally started on the Soloviev LIVE YouTube channel, run by one of Kremlin's most prominent propagandists. Another FSB-linked website, Antifashist, and TV Zvezda, an outlet operated by the Russian military, amplified claims from

“DPR”- and RT-affiliated Telegram channels accusing Ukraine and NATO of using banned ultrasonic/acoustic weapons in the Donbas. TV Zvezda also suggested Ukraine is going to attack the Donbas with a “dirty bomb.” Other disinformation outlets also promoted claims accusing the Pentagon of conducting biological experiments on Ukrainian and Georgian soldiers.

2/21/2022

Information released by the United States and other governments earlier this month predicted the Kremlin would use disinformation and propaganda to create and amplify false flag narratives to justify military action against Ukraine. The GEC has seen these tactics increase since at least February 11, when Kremlin-aligned outlets and Russian officials began amplifying statements from the head of the so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic” alleging the discovery of mass graves in the Donbas. Since then, Russian officials, Kremlin media, and proxy outlets have amplified other supposed reports of provocations by Ukraine and Western governments. Putin’s recognition of the “DPR” and “LPR” as independent furthers this false pretext.

“GENOCIDE & MASS GRAVES”: Putin, other government officials, and Russia’s entire disinformation and propaganda ecosystem have accused Ukraine of genocide, pointing to alleged mass graves recently found in the Donbas. There is no genuine evidence to suggest that a genocide against Russian-speakers is taking place. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that mass graves were previously created in the Donbas by “DPR/LPR” forces.

“UKRAINIAN AGGRESSION” & “DPR/LPR” EVACUATIONS:

Russia continues to falsely allege Ukraine is attacking “DPR/LPR” areas and will launch an offensive against the region. Russian and “DPR/LPR” sources attributed the February 17 shelling of a kindergarten near “LPR”-held territory to Ukraine, however OSINT reporting by Belling cat and others demonstrated the shelling came from the direction of “LPR” forces. Upon realizing the school was in Ukrainian-held territory, Russian media then claimed Ukraine had conducted the attack as a false flag. Videos purportedly produced by “DPR/LPR” leaders on February 18 contained metadata proving they were filmed two days prior.

2/24/2022

Documenting Russian Fabrications

Investigative organization Bellingcat has announced the creation of a public database tracking “questionable videos and claims” targeting Ukraine that appear on social media and in Russian media outlets. The purpose of the new project is to provide counter-disinformation practitioners with a “quick and easy point of reference” to examples of false claims that “have been verified, debunked or if claims contained within videos or images are inconsistent with other open-source evidence or contextual data.” So far, the database includes

several debunked cases of alleged Ukrainian provocations and attacks against Russia and the so-called "DPR/LNR."

3/1/2022

The GEC has observed a concerning increase in disinformation on alleged or potential chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons (CBRN) and laboratories in Ukraine.

CHEMICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, AND NUCLEAR DISINFORMATION: Both before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian disinformation claimed Ukraine had nearly acquired a "dirty nuclear bomb," that Ukraine is preparing a "chemical disaster" in Donbas, and that the United States or Ukraine may conduct an intentional strike on the Zaporizhiya nuclear power plant as a "provocation."

3/8/2022

RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR DISINFORMATION INTENSIFIES: A new Russian false narrative that the United States transferred plutonium to Ukraine to help Kyiv develop a "dirty" nuclear weapon has spread widely across Russian state media and outlets linked to U.S.-sanctioned Yevgeniy Prigozhin (TASS, RIA Novosti, Zvezda, Polit Rossiya). The Russian MFA also alleged March 8 that Ukrainian intelligence and Azov Battalion militants had "rigged" a reactor near Kharkiv to stage a provocation and accuse Russian forces of attacking the nuclear facility. This claim also received widespread coverage in Russian media. Russia falsely claims Kyiv intended to develop nuclear weapons capacity with Western help and uses this disinformation as one of the false justifications for further invading Ukraine.

3/15/2022

A Nuclear "Fake False Flag" Exposed

Ukrainian security services announced March 6 that Russian forces had shelled the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology, the site of a nuclear research facility that produced radioisotopes for medical and industrial applications. In its reply, the Russian Defense Ministry alleged Ukrainian intelligence and Azov Battalion militants had rigged a reactor to explode in a staged provocation Ukraine would then attribute to a Russian missile attack. Russian forces again shelled the now-de-energized facility March 10, causing documented superficial damages and a fire at a nearby hostel. This time, Kremlin-funded disinformation outlet Sputnik told an altogether different story. Per the Sputnik report the following day, a Russian official said "Ukrainian nationalists blew up one of the buildings ...in order to conceal evidence of the nuclear

research conducted there.” Sputnik added that “as many as 50 employees of the institute could be trapped under the rubble,” all tragic victims of Ukraine’s alleged desire for nuclear weapons.

The State Department confirmed March 11 with Ukrainian scientific and military contacts on the ground no building was destroyed.

3/17/2022

BLAMING AZOV FOR THE MARIUPOL THEATER BOMBING: To shift the blame for the March 16 bombing of the Mariupol theater that hosted several hundred refugees, Russia’s disinformation and propaganda ecosystem accuses its favorite target, the Ukrainian “nationalists” from the Azov Battalion. The emerging false narrative denies Russian involvement and claims the Azov Battalion carried out a “bloody provocation.” According to this false narrative, the battalion established a headquarters at the theater, held the civilians hostage, and then blew up the building after rigging it with explosives to frame Russia and give the United States the pretext to send its military to Ukraine. RIA Novosti quoted a “DPR” spokesman who claimed the Azov forces fired at the theater from tanks. On Telegram, pro-Kremlin accounts asserted they had evidence of Azov planning the provocation for four days and cited an alleged refugee from the theater who said all civilians were allowed to leave the building before the explosion.

4/5/2022

THE KREMLIN DISINFO PLAYBOOK TAKES ON BUCHA: Moscow has followed its standard disinformation playbook in its massive reaction to global outcry following allegations its forces committed war crimes in the city of Bucha—first denying their involvement in the massacre and then putting out several false narratives to hide the truth. The Russian MoD claimed April 3 that “the photos and video footage from Bucha are another hoax, a staged production and provocation by the Kyiv regime for the Western media.” The next day, Foreign Minister Lavrov stated that there were “signs of video fakes and other forgeries.” Russian embassies and outlets have promoted easily debunked conspiracies, including claims Ukraine used fake corpses which “reanimated” after the cameras stopped rolling. Despite ample evidence from the New York Times, Bellingcat, and the BBC disproving Russia’s claims and demonstrating the country’s involvement, the Kremlin’s disinformation machine continues to try (and fail) to hide the truth. On April 4, Russia’s Investigative Committee (Sledkom) announced investigators would legally pursue those who disseminate “knowingly false information” about the role of Russian Armed Forces in Bucha.

4/7/2022

AFTER BUCHA COMES BORODYANKA: Anticipating the exposure of more atrocities committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, the Russian Federation's MOD and its Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov claimed April 6 that Kyiv is preparing more “Bucha-like provocations” in the Ukrainian town of Borodyanka and other previously Russian-occupied areas. MOD spokesperson Mikhail Mizintsev claimed Ukraine is paying \$25 to every civilian who will participate in staging and filming fabricated Russian crimes. Mizintsev also asserted that Ukrainian “nationalists” shelled civilian areas in the Kharkiv region, alleging that Ukraine’s military and Western media cooperated on filming the destruction to present it as a Russian attack. State-owned RIA Novosti separately issued false reports that Ukraine was planning another “provocation involving civilian deaths” in the Kherson region.

4/12/2022

Claims of Potential Chemical Weapons “Provocations”

Foreign facing state media outlet RT reported April 13 Russian forces discovered “three UAVs” at an “abandoned Ukrainian base” they alleged were configured for potential chemical weapons attacks. A masked Russian service member alleged the drones’ remote controls contained coordinates of “locations of Russian...forces” and “residential neighborhoods” that were “marked for spraying.” RT’s companion disinformation outlet Sputnik also reported April 13 that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Syromolotov had told them the “threat of chemical terrorism by fascist nationalists” controlled by the “Kiev regime” and Ukrainian military was “very real.” Syromolotov added the probability was high because U.S.-and NATO-supported extremist groups had previously conducted “chemical provocations” during the Syrian conflict. The deputy FM said he also “did not rule” out transport of nuclear material into Ukraine “from third countries.”

4/26/2022

RUSSIAN UN DIPLOMAT, CBRN HEAD, & EMBASSIES MAKE WMD CLAIMS:

Russia’s Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy made a series of false claims April 25 adding to Kremlin disinformation narratives that Kyiv and Washington are preparing “staged provocations in order to accuse the Russian Armed Forces of using chemical, biological or tactical nuclear weapons.” Polyanskiy claimed that on April 21, Russian forces countered an attempt to smuggle “dangerous cargo” to the Zaporizhzhya NPP and added that Ukrainian forces are considering a strike on the now-defunct Prydniprovsky Chemical Plant—home to massive amounts of radioactive waste storage partially adjacent to the Dnieper River. Polyanskiy and

CBRN head Kirillov also claimed the United States is planning a chemical “Syria scenario,” alleging the presence of Syrian civil defense group White Helmets in Ukraine. Kirillov also claimed a “container” of chemical ampules had been dropped on Russian troops April 21. Russian ambassadors and missions around the world shared these same bogus claims on social media and in email messages to counterparts from other governments.

4/28/2022

Russian False Flag Tactics as Precedent

Ukraine’s Ministry of Defense and some experts believe the recent attacks in Transnistria may be a Russian false flag operation to provide the Kremlin pretext to launch an additional front in the conflict against Ukraine and destabilize Moldova. Russia planned false flag operations to fabricate a pretext for invading Ukraine and had developed a “specialty” in “false flag invasions.” American historian David Satter and longstanding Putin critics have claimed Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) carried out the 1999 apartment bombings in Russia as a false flag operation to incite public support for a new Chechen war and lift Putin to victory in a presidential election. According to Satter, after FSB operatives were caught placing a bomb in the basement of a building in Ryazan, Nikolai Patrushev (then FSB director) claimed the discovered FSB personnel were participating in an exercise involving a fake bomb.

6/9/22

LATEST CW DISINFORMATION FROM RUSSIAN MOD: The Russian MoD alleged June 9 that the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), with support from OPCW specialists, is preparing a “chemical provocation” using “toxic substances” in the Sumy region to ultimately blame Russia for the incident. The claim was echoed by Zakharova and widely reported in Russian domestic and international state media, with many outlets also echoing the MoD’s (false) assertion that Russia has destroyed all its CW.

6/16/2022

False Flags Are Back? Russians Spread Disinfo About Shelling of Donetsk

Russia’s propaganda machine went into overdrive in blaming Ukrainian forces for artillery strikes on civilian targets in Donetsk City, including the June 13 shelling of a maternity hospital. Russia’s U.S. Ambassador Anatoly Antonov accused the United States June 15 of ignoring “the massacre by nationalists against residents of Donetsk with Western artillery” while

MFA spokesperson Maria Zakharova also blamed Western-supplied weapons for the “ongoing tragedy in Donbas.” Yet, Donetsk residents and even one “DPR” official were skeptical that Ukrainian forces were responsible as the noise of nearby artillery launches likely indicated the shelling had come from inside Donetsk City. Ukraine’s National Security and Defense Council’s Center for Countering Disinformation debunked the Russian officials’ claims, citing Ukrainian intelligence sources that the shelling originated in the Makiivka, Chervonogvardiyskiy, and Kuybyshevskiy suburbs of Donetsk and fired towards central Donetsk City. This likely false-flag operation is a recurring tactic of “DPR” forces seeking to increase anti-Ukrainian sentiment, undermine Western governments’ support, and bolster requests to the Kremlin for Iskander missiles while also encouraging mobilization among locals resisting conscription and keeping Russian audiences’ attention on the conflict instead of the new knockoff McDonald’s grand opening.

6/28/2022

THE KREMLIN SPINS STRIKES ON CIVILIAN TARGETS: Russia’s disinformation and propaganda ecosystem disseminated false claims to obfuscate Kremlin responsibility for the June 26 missile strike on a nine-story apartment building in Kyiv and the June 27 airstrike on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and pro-Kremlin “experts” alternated between claiming Moscow was targeting an arms depot nearby and blaming a Ukrainian missile defense system for hitting the residential building in Kyiv. The ecosystem swiftly reacted to the breaking news about Kremenchuk with similarly false motifs. Russian deputy ambassador to the United Nations Dmitry Polyanski, the FSB-tasked News Front, and others described the attack as a “Bucha-style Ukrainian provocation” intended to keep the attention of the West on Ukraine. Pro-Kremlin influencers spread disinformation “proving” that the attack was staged. The MoD announced it targeted a “stockpile of Western weapons,” which caused an explosion that damaged a “nearby non-functioning shopping mall.” Foreign Minister Lavrov further amplified the debunked claim that the shopping center was empty.

6/21/2022

Russia Turns Its “Black Mirror” Towards Kharkiv

The head of Russia’s National Defense Management Center Mikhail Mizintsev claimed June 20 that the Ukrainian Armed Forces had deployed an artillery battery in the Kharkiv region to organize a “provocation” by shelling residential areas. The claim garnered coverage across Russian state and proxy media, including the FSB-tasked News Front. Russia launched a series of missile strikes on June 20 and 21 against Kharkiv, killing several people including one child.

Russia once again demonstrated its tendency to use this sort of “black mirroring” to precede its own attacks. In this instance, by claiming Ukraine is planning to stage a “provocation” by striking its own civilians, Russia gets the first word in a false pre-bunking effort intended to hide its own attacks on civilians. **While it is unlikely that this tactic works on Ukrainians, the deception could be effective when messaging to Russian audiences for wartime propaganda purposes.**

6/30/2022

FROM ONE “PROVOCATION” TO ANOTHER: The Russian Ministry of Defense announced June 28 Kyiv was concocting a provocation in the Odesa region to blame Russia for using chemical weapons against civilians. MoD officials also accused Ukraine of preparing a missile strike from the residential areas of Kryvyi Rih at the district hospital in the Russia-occupied Vysokopillia (Kherson region) to “provoke a return fire, after which they [Ukraine] accuse the Russian Armed Forces of indiscriminate strikes on civilian infrastructure facilities and the destruction of the Ukrainian civilian population.” Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zakharova claimed Ukrainian special services were planning “horrible” provocations against Russian journalists. These false claims likely aim to distract the public attention from Russia’s June 27 missile strike on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk, also described by Russian propagandists as a Ukrainian provocation.

7/12/2022

“DENAZIFICATION” DISINFORMATION AT THE UN: Pro-Kremlin media are amplifying false claims made during a July 11 Russia-organized informal UN Security Council meeting on “Neo-Nazism and Radical Nationalism” in Ukraine. Pravda and Ukraina.ru reported that diplomats from Russia’s UN mission presented “irrefutable evidence of Nazism in Ukraine” which they falsely depicted as a “root cause” of the war. TASS quoted Deputy Ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy’s promise Russia would “complete the denazification of Ukraine” in honor of WWII veterans and future generations. Other Kremlin-aligned outlets amplified the testimony of Maxim Grigoryev, a Russian disinformer and member of Russia’s state-linked Civic Chamber, who leads the so-called International Public Tribunal on Ukraine. Grigoryev falsely accused Ukraine of staging false flag operations and intentionally killing civilians to “create a picture” for the Western media to blame Russia for the atrocities. The Kremlin’s long record of trying to use the UNSC and other multilateral bodies to spread disinformation has increased rapidly since February 24. Over 40 countries condemned Moscow’s “continued efforts” in this latest bogus meeting to falsely accuse Ukraine of Nazism to justify its unprovoked war.

8/2/2022

CLAIMING UKRAINIAN PROVOCATION IN OLENIVKA: Russia blames Ukraine and the United States for the July 29 killing of 53 Azov battalion prisoners of war at a prison in the Russian-occupied town of Olenivka. RIA Novosti initially reported Ukraine attacked the camp with 120-millimeter artillery shells, but then the disinformation ecosystem began amplifying Ministry of Defense (MOD) claims that Kyiv used U.S.-supplied high-mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS). The MOD's and "DNR's" spokesmen accused Kyiv of carrying out a "bloody provocation" to prevent Ukrainian "nationalists" from surrendering to Russia and revealing their alleged crimes. An RT op-ed argued "all signs on the ground point to a Ukrainian attack," citing pro-Kremlin Telegram channel Rybar and attempting to portray it as an independent "online observer." Ukraine said it intercepted conversations proving Russia attacked the prison to "cover up the torture and execution of prisoners," and pointed to the possible involvement of the Wagner Group. Based on statements from U.S. officials and satellite images, the Institute for the Study of War assessed Russian forces were responsible for the killing. The Red Cross has not had access to Olenivka despite Moscow's promise to allow an "objective investigation."

8/4/2022

PLAYING WITH FIRE AND LYING ABOUT IT: Moscow disseminates disinformation and propaganda to hide its dangerous activities at the Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant (NPP) and portray Ukraine as an irresponsible, dangerous actor. Ukrainian officials and civilians told The New York Times Russia has fired rockets from the cover of the NPP since mid-July, targeting Nikopol and other locations. The Kremlin knows Ukraine will not respond, but apparently attempts to provoke retaliation in an effort to discredit the government in Kyiv. U.S. Secretary of State Blinken said Russia's actions bring the "notion of having a human shield to an entirely different and horrific level." Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), warned that the NPP "is completely out of control," requesting to allow experts to inspect the plant. The Russian MFA said the Russian military's "protection" of the NPP does not threaten security but aims to prevent provocations by nationalist formations and mercenaries. The MFA spokeswoman blamed the UN Secretariat for preventing the IAEA's visit to the plant.

9/20/2022

KYIV IS PREPARING FOR ANOTHER BUCHA: Russia's disinformation and propaganda ecosystem is trying to deflect the Kremlin's responsibility for 440 mass graves recently discovered in Izyum. Following the playbook Moscow used in April to cover up its crimes in Bucha, the ecosystem falsely claims the atrocities in Izyum were staged by Ukraine and the West as a provocation against Russia. Several Kremlin-aligned outlets assert the graves in Izyum belong to Ukrainian soldiers killed by Russia. When Kyiv allegedly refused to collect the bodies, Russia elaborated that they buried them in a "humane and Christian" way. On Telegram, Kremlin propagandists amplified statements from French "journalist" Adrien Bocquet claiming a doctor acquaintance warned him about preparations of a "very serious provocation," since the doctor was allegedly asked to transport 50 bodies from a military hospital to Izyum. To further discredit Ukraine's allegations of Russia's war crimes in Izyum, state media and VKontakte accounts circulated a video purportedly showing Izyum residents

10/20/22

NEW HEAD OF WAR SPEAKS THE "TRUTH": New head of the "Special Military Operation" General Surovikin gave a disinformation-heavy interview to state media, following Putin's declaration of martial law in the four Russia-controlled regions of Ukraine. Surovikin spoke about the war as "unpleasant" and offered the "bitter truth," warning of "difficult decisions" regarding Kherson, and portrayed Kyiv as a "criminal regime that pushes Ukrainian citizens to their deaths." Surovikin claimed Russia only wants Ukraine "to be independent from the West and NATO" and a "friendly state for Russia." The General added Kyiv may be preparing "prohibited methods...of warfare" in the Kherson area, as well as strikes on the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station and indiscriminate, high-casualty shelling of the city. Russia's propagandists attempted to present Surovikin's claims as evidence of the military finally telling the hard truth to the Russian people. One prominent political scientist expanded these claims, alleging the West is preparing a "nuclear provocation" against Kherson to target Russian forces and blame Russia, "before the U.S. Congressional elections."

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Recipient:	(b)(6)@state.gov>

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	GEC Russia Involvement with WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism
Date:	Wed, 28 Sep 2022 15:00:55 +0000

(b)(6) - Flagging the below cable outlining GECs participation in WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism. (b)(6) suggested we set up time to discuss how we might fit into this plan.

- LOE 3.2: Work internally with the Global Engagement Center, NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM, the Russia Influence Group, and others to develop strategies to counter Russian disinformation tactics that weaponize claims of antisemitism and Holocaust denial to discredit U.S. allies and partners. Identify Russia's attempts to sow societal discord in Western Hemisphere countries, including their support for parties and groups of various political identities and ideologies that espouse antisemitism and other forms of xenophobia. Work locally with civil and religious organizations on engagement in communities targeted by Russian disinformation.

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From: SMART Core <svcsmartbtsewshprec1@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 12:40 PM

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: (U) WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism**UNCLASSIFIED**

-SBU-

**Info Office:**PPR_PD_PAO, Research, DEP_COOR, Violent_Extremist_Groups,
GSEC_SCA, DIV_CHIEF, PLCY_OFF, SA_TAGS, R_FO,
WHA_POSTS, POL_INFO, RPO, SEN_ADV_1**MRN:**22 STATE 106432**Date/DTG:**

Sep 27, 2022 / 271639Z SEP 22

From:

SECSTATE WASHDC

Action:ASUNCION, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BELMOPAN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
BOGOTA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BRASILIA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
BRIDGETOWN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BUENOS AIRES,
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; GEORGETOWN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
GRENADA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; GUATEMALA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
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PRINCE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; PORT OF SPAIN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
QUITO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SAN JOSE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SAN
SALVADOR, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SANTIAGO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
SANTO DOMINGO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; TEGUCIGALPA,
AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; VENEZUELA AFFAIRS UNIT BOGOTA,
USOFFICE ROUTINE**E.O.:**

13526

TAGS:

PHUM, KIRF, KRGA, PREL, SCUL, SOCI, PGOV, KPAO

Captions:~~SENSITIVE~~**Reference:**

- A) 20 STATE 74628
- B) 19 USOSCE 130
- C) 22 Quebec 54
- D) 20 STATE 22778
- E) 21 Quebec 8
- F) 21 Ottawa 138
- G) 21 Montreal 122
- H) 21 Toronto 160

Subject:

(U) WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism

1. **(U) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST:** WHA requests that offices and posts review the WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism (paragraphs 3-9) and use it to inform Integrated Country Strategy implementation and review, aid strategic and program planning, assist in prioritizing engagement, and identify specific efforts to implement in country. By November 1, posts should report by cable up to three specific lines of effort (LOEs). Posts should then send a follow-up front channel report by November 1, 2023, that documents any results. Please see paragraph 10 for additional details of the action request. You should include in the initial cable any requests for assistance associated with those efforts. Additionally, posts may voluntarily report on significant activities and best practices related to combatting antisemitism, linking them to the LOEs below. WHA/PPC will review post responses and coordinate with the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues (SEHI), the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism (SEAS), the Office of International Religious Freedom (J/IRF), and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) to provide technical support, expert consultations, guides, and workshops. **END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST**

2. **(U) BACKGROUND:** WHA recognizes that Jewish communities throughout the Western Hemisphere face ongoing risks. This action plan, developed in coordination with SEHI, SEAS, J/IRF, and DRL, aligns with WHA's efforts to promote U.S. leadership and values by upholding democratic principles, supporting human rights, and strengthening respect for the rule of law. The plan sets forth five policy priorities: 1) promote security of Jewish communities; 2) strengthen cooperation with civil society to combat antisemitism and promote respect for religious freedom; 3) counter antisemitism in the media, including social media; 4) encourage governments to address Holocaust issues accurately; and 5) combat antisemitism regionally and internationally. While some of these themes may not apply directly to every post, we request that all posts incorporate elements of the WHA action plan into their work, to the extent possible. **END BACKGROUND.**

WHA ACTION PLAN FOR COMBATTING ANTISEMITISM

3. **(U) CONTEXT:** Antisemitism takes many forms: violent attacks against Jewish communities, antisemitic rhetoric, vitriolic comments on social media, and attempts to deny or distort the history of the Holocaust. Since antisemitism cuts across ideology, political party, group, and nation, we must combat it with wide-ranging efforts and include bilateral and multilateral engagement with governments as well as cooperation with civil society, religious groups, the private sector, and academia. This action plan seeks to assist WHA posts and offices to focus strategic planning, identify lines of effort, and offer expert assistance to those seeking to tailor activities to the local context. WHA encourages posts to use the bureau-level LOEs (paragraphs 5-9) as the basis for their own action plans.

4. (U) To combat antisemitism in the Western Hemisphere, WHA works in close coordination with the Department's Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues (SEHI), the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism (SEAS), the Office of International Religious Freedom (J/IRF), and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL). The action

plan centers on five main themes: security of Jewish communities; cooperation with civil society; combatting antisemitism in the media, including social media; Holocaust education, remembrance, and commemoration, and combatting Holocaust distortion and denial; and international and regional collaboration. Combating antisemitism aligns with WHA's strategic objectives of promoting social inclusion and respect for the human dignity and rights of all persons, building safe communities, and building support for U.S. values.

POLICY PRIORITIES AND LINES OF EFFORT

5. (U) I. Promote security of Jewish communities

Objective/Desired End State: Western Hemisphere governments protect Jewish communities from antisemitic acts (including physical assaults, attacks against property, and threats) so Jewish communities can live free from fear. Governments investigate antisemitic acts and hold perpetrators accountable. Governments (including security forces and law enforcement) work with Jewish communities to identify and respond to their security needs. Governments document incidents of antisemitism and share applicable disaggregated data with law enforcement, civil society, and international organizations.

- LOE 1.1: Encourage governments at national, state, regional, and local levels to take steps to improve protection for Jewish communities, places of worship, and other culturally meaningful sites, incorporating Jewish community experience and expertise.
- LOE 1.2: Support training for those in the justice system, including police officers, prosecutors, judges, and public defenders, to understand antisemitism and antisemitic crime so they can effectively promote the security of Jewish communities.
- LOE 1.3: Encourage countries to preserve historic Jewish sites in the Western Hemisphere and consistently monitor, condemn, and respond when such sites become targets of attacks. Projects in the Dominican Republic and Suriname through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation can serve as a model.
- LOE 1.4: Encourage governments to meet existing commitments on recognizing, recording, and reporting antisemitic hate crimes. Meet with government entities responsible for law enforcement, as well as civil society and religious leaders, to understand the challenges involved in reporting, investigating, and prosecuting antisemitic crimes and incidents, with the goal of increasing the proportion of countries that annually report data on antisemitic hate crimes.
- LOE 1.5: Publicly encourage national, state, regional, and local governments to condemn antisemitic incidents and rhetoric when they occur and to continue to seek accountability for previous antisemitic crimes and incidents. Urge political parties, including political groups, to hold members accountable for antisemitic statements.
- LOE 1.6: Assist law enforcement in Western Hemisphere countries with internal vetting and training to address the risk from violent antisemitic extremists in their ranks.

6. (U) II. Strengthen government cooperation with civil society to combat antisemitism and uphold religious freedom

Objective/Desired End State: Governments and civil society work together to combat antisemitism and safeguard religious practice for Jewish communities. They collaborate to actively combat antisemitism among government, school, law enforcement, and military personnel employed in all state institutions, while protecting freedom of expression. Civil society (including both Jewish and non-Jewish groups) actively counter antisemitism and promote respect for religious freedom and tolerance of members of religious and ethnic minority groups.

- LOE 2.1: Support efforts of Jewish communities to advocate for themselves on issues (including pending or enacted legislation) that threaten to restrict their religious practice. Through diplomatic engagement, as appropriate, oppose laws and practices that would negatively infringe on religious practices (e.g., bans on kosher slaughter, male circumcision).
- LOE 2.2: Offer support, knowledge, and best practices to Western Hemisphere governments considering appointing national coordinators to combat antisemitism.
- LOE 2.3: Encourage countries to incorporate civil society input into not only action plans but also national strategies and policies on antisemitism and/or other forms of intolerance. France, Germany, the European Commission, and the OSCE have action plans that could serve as models for Western Hemisphere countries (Ref B).
- LOE 2.4: Support and sustain encounters with and within minority communities that promote tolerance and respect for religious freedom, to include community projects and interfaith coalitions. Consulate General Quebec City's extensive diversity and inclusion outreach initiatives outlined in Ref C, including interfaith dialogues and events, provide a model for promoting inclusion in a concrete way.
- LOE 2.5: Promote the exchange and dissemination within and among countries of best practices and lessons learned by those countering antisemitism, working with Public Affairs Sections to utilize the range of tools available. This could include the International Visitor Leadership Program, the U.S. Speaker Program, and others. Encourage the translation into English of best practices, studies, and lessons learned for maximum international use and retranslation. Actively reach out to communities where antisemitic narratives and sentiment have become widespread to discuss antisemitism and share the U.S. experience in combating hatred directed against Jews and members of other minority groups.
- LOE 2.6: Promote education programs focused on combating antisemitism, not limited to Holocaust education topics (which we address further below), so that students and others learn the history and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism and effective ways to counter it.
- LOE 2.7: Promote and encourage the use of positive images and narratives highlighting the contributions of Jewish people in their communities.

7. (SBU) III. Counter antisemitism and false narratives in the media, including social media

Objective/Desired End State: Civil society voices become or remain active and empowered to counter antisemitic and other hateful and false narratives in all media. Independent media identify and effectively push back against antisemitic narratives (e.g., conspiracy theories, scapegoating, hateful and negative stereotypes, etc.). Governments do not use antisemitic tropes

and spread antisemitic narratives through the media; they actively and effectively counter antisemitism without infringing on freedom of expression.

- LOE 3.1: Reinforce and elevate local voices to speak out against antisemitism.
- LOE 3.2: Work internally with the Global Engagement Center, NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM, the Russia Influence Group, and others to develop strategies to counter Russian disinformation tactics that weaponize claims of antisemitism and Holocaust denial to discredit U.S. allies and partners. Identify Russia's attempts to sow societal discord in Western Hemisphere countries, including their support for parties and groups of various political identities and ideologies that espouse antisemitism and other forms of xenophobia. Work locally with civil and religious organizations on engagement in communities targeted by Russian disinformation.
- LOE 3.3: Build relationships with local representatives of independent media, including social media platforms, and local organizations working to counter hate speech online. Encourage voluntary collaboration to address the spread of antisemitic content, while fully respecting freedom of expression.
- LOE 3.4: When Western Hemisphere government officials, political leaders, and other prominent public figures voice, enable, or willfully allow antisemitic narratives, or when antisemites receive government recognition or advancement, WHA takes steps to challenge such narratives, directly or in partnership with other U.S. or international officials in both public statements and private engagements.

8. (U) IV. Encourage governments to address Holocaust issues responsibly and accurately

Objective/Desired End State: Governments address Holocaust issues responsibly, develop comprehensive Holocaust education programs, and actively counter efforts to deny or distort the Holocaust.

- LOE 4.1: Encourage countries to honor their commitments under the 2009 Terezin Declaration on Holocaust-Era Assets and Related Issues by utilizing the JUST Act Report (Ref D). Western Hemisphere signatories of the Terezin Declaration include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Uruguay. The Netherlands is also a signatory.
- LOE 4.2: Promote Holocaust education efforts, including through public awareness campaigns and engagement with youth and non-Jewish religious minority communities, as well as teacher training sessions. Draw from OSCE guidelines, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust, and materials from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), as appropriate. Partner with the USHMM to share best practices with government and civil society officials responsible for Holocaust memory and restitution efforts, expand on educational efforts, and support the museum's traveling exhibitions.
- LOE 4.3: Through diplomatic engagement with likeminded partners, counter government and other actors' attempts to use laws, museums, or other initiatives to distort the historical record of the Holocaust.

9. (U) V. Combat antisemitism regionally and internationally

Objective/Desired End State: Western Hemisphere countries actively and effectively combat antisemitism domestically and regionally, including in multilateral fora.

- LOE 5.1: Encourage countries to embrace and apply in practice the nonbinding IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, inclusive of the examples. (Endorsing country list: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/member-countries>)
- LOE 5.2: Encourage Western Hemisphere countries to join IHRA as members or observers. WHA member countries include Argentina and Canada. WHA observer countries include Brazil, El Salvador, and Uruguay.
- LOE 5.3: Encourage countries to respond effectively to attempts by other countries to deny, exploit, distort, or politicize the Holocaust or Holocaust remembrance in multilateral fora.
- LOE 5.4: Work with multilateral and regional institutions to combat antisemitism. Work on joint statements with member countries in these fora. Work with these organizations' specialists and envoys to support and amplify their work.
- LOE 5.5: Work with likeminded governments to combat antisemitism beyond the Western Hemisphere, including removing antisemitic content in textbooks in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as encourage steps toward IHRA observer status or membership for Middle Eastern and North African governments.

ACTION REQUEST

10. (U) By November 1, 2022, we request posts to report by cable up to three specific LOEs from the suggestions above with the goal of delivering results by November 1, 2023. Posts should also report on the estimated size of the Jewish community and the prevalence of antisemitic activities in the host country. Additionally, posts may voluntarily report on significant activities and best practices related to combatting antisemitism, linking them to the LOEs listed above. We encourage posts to highlight specific efforts Public Affairs offices implement in their Section Activity reporting in PD Tools. Posts may wish to consider collaboration with other posts in their region or with other international or NGO communities at their own post and may find inspiration by reviewing the work undertaken in Mission Canada (Refs E-H) and Mission Trinidad and Tobago (reported in post's Section Activities in PD tools), as well as ideas in the EUR Action Plan (attached). Post's cable should include any requests for technical or financial assistance or visits from technical experts to share best practices associated with those efforts. WHA/PPC will review posts' responses and coordinate assistance within the Department for posts based on their needs, including expert consultations, seminars, training, technical assistance, and other support with the intent of making these services easier to access.

POINT OF CONTACT

11. (SBU) Please direct questions to (b)(6)@state.gov.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature:

Blinken

Drafted By:

WHA_PPC:(b)(6)

Cleared By:

WHA/BSC:(b)(6)

WHA/BSC:(b)(6)

WHA/BSC:(b)(6)

D-MR:(b)(6)

WHA/CAR:(b)(6)

WHA/CEN:(b)(6)

WHA/HA:(b)(6)

INL/WHP:(b)(6)

WHA/EPSC:(b)(6)

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DRL/WHA:(b)(6) (DRL)

EUR/SEH:(b)(6)

D:(b)(6)

P:

S/P:(b)(6)

R:(b)(6)

J:(b)(6)

E

R/PPR:(b)(6)

GPA/RA/RE:(b)(6)

R/GEC:(b)(6)

ECA/P/P:(b)(6)

INL/KM:(b)(6)

INL/FO:(b)(6)

WHA:(b)(6)

WHA

WHA

WHA

WHA/CCA:(b)(6)

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WHA/PPC:

Approved By:

WHA:Nichols, Brian A

Released By:

WHA_PPC:(b)(6)

Info:

(b)(6)

OBTAINED BY AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

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Action Post:

NONE

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DIS_DIV_CHIEF, DIS_PLCY_OFF, DIS_SA_TAGS, DIS_R_FO,
WHA_POSTS, POL_INFO, DIS_RPO, DIS_SEN_ADV_1

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: (b)(6)
To:
Cc:
Subject: GEC Russia Involvement with WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism
Attachments: image001.gif

(b)(6) - Flagging the below cable outlining GECs participation in WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism. (b)(6) suggested we set up time to discuss how we might fit into this plan.

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Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2022 12:40 PM

(b)(6)



(b)(6)

Subject: (U) WHA Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism

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MRN:

Date/DTG:

Sep 27, 2022 / 271639Z SEP 22

From:

SECSTATE WASHDC

Action:

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POLICY PRIORITIES AND LINES OF EFFORT

5. (U) I. Promote security of Jewish communities

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- LOE 2.7: Promote and encourage the use of positive images and narratives highlighting the contributions of Jewish people in their communities.

7. (SBU) III. Counter antisemitism and false narratives in the media, including social media

Objective/Desired End State: Civil society voices become or remain active and empowered to counter antisemitic and other hateful and false narratives in all media. Independent media identify and effectively push back against antisemitic narratives (e.g., conspiracy theories, scapegoating, hateful and negative stereotypes, etc.). Governments do not use antisemitic tropes and spread antisemitic narratives through the media; they actively and effectively counter antisemitism without infringing on freedom of expression.

- LOE 3.1: Reinforce and elevate local voices to speak out against antisemitism.
- LOE 3.2: Work internally with the Global Engagement Center, NORTHCOM, SOUTHCOM, the Russia Influence Group, and others to develop strategies to counter Russian disinformation tactics that weaponize claims of antisemitism and Holocaust denial to discredit U.S. allies and partners. Identify Russia's attempts to sow societal discord in Western Hemisphere countries, including their support for parties and groups of various political identities and ideologies that espouse antisemitism and other forms of xenophobia. Work locally with civil and religious organizations on engagement in communities targeted by Russian disinformation.
- LOE 3.3: Build relationships with local representatives of independent media, including social media platforms, and local organizations working to counter hate speech online. Encourage voluntary collaboration to address the spread of antisemitic content, while fully respecting freedom of expression.
- LOE 3.4: When Western Hemisphere government officials, political leaders, and other prominent public figures voice, enable, or willfully allow antisemitic narratives, or when antisemites receive government recognition or advancement, WHA takes steps to challenge such narratives, directly or in partnership with other U.S. or international officials in both public statements and private engagements.

8. (U) IV. Encourage governments to address Holocaust issues responsibly and accurately

Objective/Desired End State: Governments address Holocaust issues responsibly, develop comprehensive Holocaust education programs, and actively counter efforts to deny or distort the Holocaust.

- LOE 4.1: Encourage countries to honor their commitments under the 2009 Terezin Declaration on Holocaust-Era Assets and Related Issues by utilizing the JUST Act Report (Ref D). Western Hemisphere signatories of the Terezin Declaration include Argentina, Brazil, Canada, and Uruguay. The Netherlands is also a signatory.
- LOE 4.2: Promote Holocaust education efforts, including through public awareness campaigns and engagement with youth and non-Jewish religious minority communities, as well as teacher training sessions. Draw from OSCE guidelines, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust, and materials from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), as appropriate. Partner with the USHMM to share best practices with government and civil society officials responsible for Holocaust

memory and restitution efforts, expand on educational efforts, and support the museum's traveling exhibitions.

- LOE 4.3: Through diplomatic engagement with likeminded partners, counter government and other actors' attempts to use laws, museums, or other initiatives to distort the historical record of the Holocaust.

9. (U) V. Combat antisemitism regionally and internationally

Objective/Desired End State: Western Hemisphere countries actively and effectively combat antisemitism domestically and regionally, including in multilateral fora.

- LOE 5.1: Encourage countries to embrace and apply in practice the nonbinding IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, inclusive of the examples. (Endorsing country list: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/member-countries>)
- LOE 5.2: Encourage Western Hemisphere countries to join IHRA as members or observers. WHA member countries include Argentina and Canada. WHA observer countries include Brazil, El Salvador, and Uruguay.
- LOE 5.3: Encourage countries to respond effectively to attempts by other countries to deny, exploit, distort, or politicize the Holocaust or Holocaust remembrance in multilateral fora.
- LOE 5.4: Work with multilateral and regional institutions to combat antisemitism. Work on joint statements with member countries in these fora. Work with these organizations' specialists and envoys to support and amplify their work.
- LOE 5.5: Work with likeminded governments to combat antisemitism beyond the Western Hemisphere, including removing antisemitic content in textbooks in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as encourage steps toward IHRA observer status or membership for Middle Eastern and North African governments.

ACTION REQUEST

10. (U) By November 1, 2022, we request posts to report by cable up to three specific LOEs from the suggestions above with the goal of delivering results by November 1, 2023. Posts should also report on the estimated size of the Jewish community and the prevalence of antisemitic activities in the host country. Additionally, posts may voluntarily report on significant activities and best practices related to combatting antisemitism, linking them to the LOEs listed above. We encourage posts to highlight specific efforts Public Affairs offices implement in their Section Activity reporting in PD Tools. Posts may wish to consider collaboration with other posts in their region or with other international or NGO communities at their own post and may find inspiration by reviewing the work undertaken in Mission Canada (Refs E-H) and Mission Trinidad and Tobago (reported in post's Section Activities in PD tools), as well as ideas in the EUR Action Plan (attached). Post's cable should include any requests for technical or financial assistance or visits from technical experts to share best practices associated with those efforts. WHA/PPC will review posts' responses and coordinate assistance within the Department for posts based on their needs, including expert consultations, seminars, training, technical assistance, and other support with the intent of making these services easier to access.

POINT OF CONTACT

11. (S**~~DU~~**) Please direct questions to (b)(6) state.gov.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature:

Blinken

Drafted By:

WHA_PPC (b)(6)

Cleared By:

WHA/BSC (b)(6) a

WHA/BSC: (b)(6)

WHA/BSC: (b)(6)

D-MR (b)(6)

WHA/CAR (b)(6)

WHA/CEN (b)(6)

WHA/HA (b)(6)

INL/WHP (b)(6)

WHA/EPSC (b)(6)

WHA/PD (b)(6)

J/SEAS: (b)(6)

J/IRF (b)(6)

DRL/WHA (b)(6)

EUR/SEH (b)(6)

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R (b)(6)

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E (b)(6)

R/PPR (b)(6)

GPA/RA/RE: (b)(6)

R/GEO (b)(6)

ECA/P/P (b)(6)

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WHA/PPC: (b)(6)

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WHA_PPC (b)(6)

Approved By:

Released By:

(b)(6)

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Info:

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Action Post:

NONE

Dissemination Rule:

DIS_PPR_PD_PAO, DIS_RESEARCH, DIS_DEP_COOR,
DIS_VIOLENT_EXTREMIST_GROUP, DIS_GSEC_SCA,
DIS_DIV_CHIEF, DIS_PLCY_OFF, DIS_SA_TAGS, DIS_R_FO,
WHA_POSTS, POL_INFO, DIS_RPO, DIS_SEN_ADV_1



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