

GRASS Disinfo Brief: Putin's War of Choice

11 July – 17 July

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Ukraine War Disinfo Narratives in Georgia

11-17 July

Main Findings

- The most prevalent disinformation again accuses the West (the EU and the US) and/or the Georgian opposition parties of trying to drag Georgia into the war.
- In terms of the number of disinformation pieces and interactions, messages that justify Russia's invasion and argue that Russian victory and Ukrainian defeat are imminent have also been widespread.
- The message that the sanctions hurt the West more than Russia is the most popular on the issue of economic sanctions. However, a new narrative has also emerged, claiming that the sanctions have caused Russian aggression.
- Interestingly, Kremlin proxies complained about Russia's weakness on the information front, claiming that this is the only field where Moscow is overshadowed by the West.
- Disinformation regarding Western military aid to Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees is still circulating but it is not abundant in terms of numbers or articles.

Alarming Development in Tbilisi as GD and Pro-Kremlin Proxy Synchronized Attack Against US and EU Partners of Georgia Causes Doubts and Fears of a Change in Foreign Policy Orientation

The previous week was also notable for a massive campaign targeted at discrediting the US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan. Initially, the process started by the open letter of MP Mikheil Kavelashvili who recently and publicly left the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party in order to “speak the truth more publicly” but, it appears, his parting from the GD seems more formal than factual. Mr Kavelashvili wrote that US-supported institutions, such as the office of the public defender and CSOs, were supporting Georgia’s involvement in the war with Russia. The US ambassador refuted the accusations, stating that the letter consisted of lies and conspiracy theories, adding that she could not read the letter in its entirety. The GD chairman and other MPs came to the defence of Mr Kavelashvili, [calling](#) the ambassador’s comments “regrettable” and “offensive to the Parliament and the state.” Thereafter, Judge Lasha Chkhikvadze, who made a controversial decision to jail the director of the largest opposition-affiliated channel Mtavari TV, Nika Gvaramia, a few weeks before the EU Commission decision concerning Georgia’s EU membership bid, claimed that a diplomat from the US embassy had questioned him and requested explanations on his decision vis-à-vis Mr Gvaramia, implying that the US embassy pressured him. Judge Chkhikvadze also accused MEP Michael Gahler for pressuring Georgian judges with his [statement](#) in the European Parliament: “We do hope that the Appeal Court will use the opportunity to acquit Gvaramia on Tuesday of next week in order to correct earlier mistakes and to restore the strong voice of free media.”

These cases made attacking the US ambassador in Georgia one of the mainstream topics last week. MPs from the ruling party overtly demanded an explanation from the ambassador. Indeed, the propaganda media exploited these fertile grounds:

- Pro-governmental commentator Nuka Arveladze [blamed](#) Kelly Degnan for evoking anti-Western attitudes in Georgian society and for disseminating narratives of the United National Movement (the largest opposition party) which itself is the part of Russian propaganda, according to her. The anti-Western *Saerto Gazeti* (*Common Newspaper*) published an open [letter](#) to Ambassador Kelly Degnan written by the President of the National Academy of Writers, Koba Arabuli, where he voiced the same narrative. Additionally, he claimed that the West was blackmailing Georgia to drag the country into the bloody war whose stoppage, for some reason, is not in the interests of Europe. According to Mr Arabuli, Volodymyr Zelensky decided to be the West's marionette and this vampire (referring to Zelensky) is asking for Georgian blood as well.
- Nuka Arveladze also accused Ambassador Degnan of interfering in Georgia's internal affairs. Another pro-governmental expert, Tamta Megrelishvili, also [stated](#) that Kelly Degnan and MEP Michael Gahler are openly interfering in Georgia's justice system.
- Editor-in-Chief of the pro-Russian outlet Saqinform.ge, Arno Khidirbegishvili, [stated](#) that Kelly Degnan and some congressmen support the radical opposition in Georgia and aim for the start of a war between Georgia and Russia.

Russia's Proxies in Georgia in Action in Moscow to Pursue Alternative Foreign Policy "Options" for Georgia

Kremlin propaganda in Georgia continues repeatedly offering the public alternative foreign policy ideas that are directed at changing the country's pro-Western orientation to one which is pro-Russian. The leader of Alt-Info and the general secretary of the Conservative Movement

has indeed openly stated that the West is unacceptable for them and for Georgia in order to preserve national identity. The political movement desires to align with the Kremlin as the country, together with the entire region, would fall under Russia's sphere of influence in any case. In order to materialize their efforts of making Georgia a client state of Russia, documented in detail in the previous [issue](#) of GRASS's Disinfo Brief, Martinenko, alongside the chairman of the Conservative Movement, headed to Russia and toured the Kremlin for lobbying and negotiations and gave interviews to the Russian propaganda media.

Propaganda sought to incite anti-Western sentiments by disseminating the message that the West has never supported and will never support Georgia:

- Pro-Russian anchor Soso Manjavidze, in a pro-Russian Eri Media broadcast (established by the infamous Georgian businessman and public figure, Levan Vasadze, a pro-Russian politician), [stated](#) that only few people benefit materially from Europe.
- Arno Khidirbegishvili [assured](#) that the 30-year diplomatic relations between Georgia and the US show that the only goal of the US toward Georgia is to make it suffer. Mr Khidirbegishvili also spread disinformation indicating that Georgians rejected the pro-Western foreign policy and NATO as well as the EU whilst ambassadors of Western countries were the same "hateful actors" for Georgians.
- The pro-governmental 2012 Supporters page [stated](#) that Europe and the USA would turn their back on Georgia by saying that "considering the geographical location of Georgia and the ongoing political processes in world politics, we are forced to surrender Georgians to Russia."

After circulating propaganda against the US and the EU, Russian propaganda continued by offering negotiations with Russia (on Moscow's terms) as an alternative:

- Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Director of the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Centre, who also recently toured Moscow for negotiations, [promoted](#) the narrative that negotiation with Russia is the only correct way for Georgia's foreign policy. He underlined the importance of so-called public diplomacy which, according to him, is supported by the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Centre and claimed that this centre would ensure the implementation of projects promoting the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity and the development of an effective regional neighbourhood policy. Mr Lortkipanidze talked about the promises from the Russian side which included establishing visa-free movement, restoring intensive flights between Russia and Georgia, de-blocking transport corridors and supporting the integration of the conflict regions' society. Dimitri Lortkipanidze also [argued](#) that the 3+3 Format, envisaging Russia, Turkey, Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (Georgia has repeatedly declined participation), is a promising platform for fulfilling these objectives. He also argued that the article in Georgia's constitution about Euro-Atlantic integration is an obstructive factor to the extent that Georgia cannot look for other ways for sustainable economic development, implying that it should be scrapped.
- One of the members of the Conservative Movement [claimed](#) that Russia continues its creeping occupation because Georgia is on the wrong path; namely, it is a vassal of the West. He suggested friendly relations with Russia which would translate into economic reconstruction and the disappearance of the will to join the EU (something that, for now, keeps Georgians in a state of hunger).
- The pro-Russian Saqinform.ge outlet [claimed](#) that Washington is blocking the negotiations between Tbilisi and Moscow, Sokhumi and Tskhinvali and between Kyiv and Moscow.

- The სექტას (Sect) Facebook page [revived](#) the narrative that Georgia should balance its relationship with Russia and Europe. It expressed support for settling relations with Russia but excluded negotiations with NATO.

Russian Propaganda Anticipates a Victory in a "Fair and Justified War" - Military Situation on the Ground through Kremlin Lenses

In the previous week, Moscow's proxies were enthusiastic to discuss the events of Russia's unprovoked war on Ukraine - on the one hand, justifying the invasion and portraying it as a benevolent mission and, on the other hand, persuading the audience that Russia will have a free-ride victory in the war:

- On air on the pro-Russian [Alt-Info](#), the TV presenter tried to justify Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and accused the liberal media and the world's population of distorting the term "intervention" and for trying to make Russia appear as a conqueror. Even more, the anchor supported Russia's actions by saying that the Russian establishment perceives Moscow's actions as an attempt to create a Novorossia from the historical territories that Russia possessed until the 1920s. Giorgi Kiknadze, one of the members of the Conservative Movement, reinforced the presenter's opinion and declared that Russia was fighting fairly from a political perspective. Mr Kiknadze noted that the Ukrainian side had lost 80% of its personnel in order to strengthen the narrative that Ukraine is losing the war and that the liberal media has concealed this information. He also argued that the videos published on the Alt-Info Telegram channels display how Ukraine tried to recruit citizens for the army directly from the streets and how these people tried to avoid the military, indicating that morale and a

fighting spirit is plummeting in Ukraine, hence rendering the attempts to replenish the manpower losses almost impossible.

- Another respondent, a Georgian celebrity, Lali Moroshkina, infamous for spreading lies and conspiracies regarding COVID-19 and Russia's war in Ukraine, stated that Russia possessed top-notch military equipment with brand-new technology. She also stated that the claim that Russia has outdated military equipment is a myth. Rather, she argued that Russia needs to get rid of the written-off weaponry that was accumulated after the Second World War.
- A member of the Conservative Movement, Merab Gigani, [stated on Alt-Info's talk show](#) that Ukraine de facto no longer exists which would legally be confirmed in the fall when Ukraine would cease to exist as a state. He also echoed the Kremlin's message that Russia could not let NATO forces deploy on Russia's borders and Ukraine was refusing to reject NATO aspirations and declare neutrality which caused the war in Ukraine.
- Another respondent of the same programme, Editor-in-Chief of the pro-Russian outlet Isari.ge, Hamlet Chipashvili, declared that Russia would fight until Ukraine's full denazification and demilitarisation. He stated that Ukraine was incapable of fighting on the eastern frontline and that the Ukrainian government was not doing anything. He claimed that there were some small or larger cities left in Donetsk that the Russian army and Donetsk militia would soon liberate. Mr Chipashvili asserted that Russia would reach the borders of Poland and, even more, it would cross the boundary if Poland would not behave properly. He also echoed the message that Russia had not yet started the actual war, implying that Moscow had not yet used modern weapons or mobilised the reserves. He blamed the Ukrainian media outlets for circulating fake

news with Western finances in order to hide the fact that Ukraine was already losing hopelessly and that Ukraine as a state no longer exists.

- Leaders of the Conservative Movement, Zurab Makharadze and Irakli Martinenko, once again [asserted](#) that Ukraine is losing the war. Mr Makharadze justified Russia's invasion and agreed with Jordan Peterson that the war in Ukraine is a civil war of Western civilization; that is, a fight between Russia, a part of the West that believes in national interests and the rest of the West that opposes such concepts and values. Mr Martinenko claimed that Russia would not lose this battle and that it would be the winner even in the case of defeat because it would use nuclear weapons. Messrs Makharadze and Martinenko reiterated the claim that Russia had military superiority as it did not have a shortage of missiles and also possessed production capacity - a manufacturing line with its raw materials and professionals. Both men ironically claimed that Ukraine relies on the assumption that Russia would run out of missiles sooner than the Ukrainians would run out of people being shelled by the Russians. To strengthen their argument, they recalled that Ukraine's military leaders declared that Russia was firing ten times more artillery rounds than Ukraine.
- On his own platform, Editor-in-Chief of the pro-Russian outlet Isari.ge, Hamlet Chipashvili, [continued](#) the narrative that the Ukrainians are Nazis and fascists. He justified the Russian invasion of Ukraine by claiming that Ukraine would otherwise attack Russia and Russia's "special operation" had a preventive character. Mr Chipashvili stated that President Putin had no choice because he knew that the US, the UK, the EU and other countries were standing behind the Nazi Ukrainians. He took his narrative further and reasoned that everything - building underground and above-ground military facilities, multi-kilometre trenches, concrete hideouts, armaments (that, in reality, were designed for defence in the case of Russian invasion which

eventually materialised) and "feeding" Ukrainian soldiers by Nazi literature - was proof of Ukraine preparing for the attack on Russia. Mr Chipashvili also recalled history and stated that Ukraine was the first republic of the USSR to embrace fascist Germany. He claimed that during the fascist occupation, Ukraine worked so closely with the German Nazis that the conquered Poles, part of the Ukrainians, the Jews and the Russians preferred to surrender to the German fascists in World War Two rather than to the Ukrainian Bandera. He also stated that the Ukrainians were more brutal than were the German fascists. According to Mr Chipashvili, Russia was pushed to launch the "special military operation" in Ukraine because of witnessing how the collective West promoted Ukrainian fascism, Banderism and Russophobia. In conclusion, he asserted that the US, NATO and the EU had not visibly crossed the Ukrainian border but trespassed into Ukraine by organising colourful revolutions and bribing politicians.

- A Facebook page [posted](#) a video in which soldiers who seemed to be Ukrainians were captured by the Russian military. The Ukrainian soldiers were hurt and demoralised. The footage showed how the Russian soldiers forced them to say "Glory to Russia" and "Glory to Putin" and insult President Zelensky as well as the flag of the US. Based on these shots, the Facebook page hailed the strength of the Russian army and Russia in general and mocked the power of the West, ironically asking - "Where are your Europe and America? You were going to defeat Russia?" This Facebook page again emphasised that Russia's victory is inevitable and that the West cannot stop it.
- An "expert," Davit Kartvelishvili, [claimed that](#) not only the EU but the US also had fatigue vis-à-vis the war in Ukraine. He proclaimed that 35% of the respondents in a survey conducted in the UK and some EU states supported the immediate end of the war in Ukraine, even at the expense of the country giving up its territories. He continued saying that after the recent developments; that is, a more aggravated

situation in Europe in terms of economic hardship, it is reasonable to assume that such a scenario would be supported by even more people if the survey were conducted today. Mr Kartvelishvili asserted that the Ukrainian politicians were already openly attacked on the streets of Kyiv and Arestovich, the advisor to the Head of the President's Office, directly accused his boss, Andrey Yermak, of having connections with the Russian special services, something that is, according to him, also being examined in Washington.

- According to the [Iverion propaganda page](#), the mythologising and the romanticising of Bandera, which is often used to unite the Ukrainian people by not only Ukrainian nationalists but the liberal government of the country as well, faces clear opposition from the West and primarily from the Jews (paradoxically, Kremlin sympathisers equate a Nazi government with a liberal government).
- A pro-Kremlin account [posted](#) that Zelensky's government falsely claims that everything is under control despite losing several strategic populated areas. The post ironically stated that Arestovich said that the Ukrainian forces retreated from Severodonetsk and other Russian-captured territories on purpose in order to locate the fortified Russian positions and begin an assault. The author concluded that the relationship between the command of the regular army of Ukraine, which are fighting valiantly, and the government is deteriorating day by day because of the incompetence of the Ukrainian political leadership.
- Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Director of the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Centre, [claimed](#) on Alt-Info that the West had worked to turn Ukraine into a robust platform for eight years that would wage a geopolitical war against Russia until the last Ukrainian was left standing.

- Leader of a pro-Russian political party, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, [asserted](#) on TV Obieqtivi that the lost territories would never be returned to Ukraine. According to him, Western countries; namely, Poland, Romania and Hungary, have claims on the territory of Western Ukraine. Thus, Mr Tarkhan-Mouravi concluded that Ukraine would cease its existence in the future. He claimed that Zelensky, a Jew of Polish origin, betrayed Ukraine. Mr Tarkhan-Mouravi developed a conspiracy theory that Boris Johnson, the Prime Ministers of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, the US Secretary of Defence and the Head of the US Armed Forces, constitute the "party of war" and that Donald Trump was the only person who opposed the war against Russia and the warmongers rigged the elections against him.
- One of the leaders of Alt-Info, Irakli Martinenko, [stated](#) that Russia had achieved complete victory as Moscow controls almost the entire Ukrainian coastline, wheat-growing agricultural lands and natural gas reserves. Mr Martinenko claimed that unlike the West, which conducts its information warfare remarkably successfully, Moscow is catastrophically weak in information warfare, implying that this obscures the real picture on the frontline. Furthermore, Martinenko believes that the war would drag on because the West is effectively inciting sentiments of Russia's defeat.
- The სექტა (Sect) Facebook page [argued](#) that Russia's extraordinary parliamentary session on 15 July probably meant that Russia would start a real war and asserted that a clown appointed by neo-liberals, referring to Volodymyr Zelensky, had doomed the Ukrainian people.
- After reports that Iran might provide Russia with drones and that Russian President Vladimir Putin would hold talks with the leaders of Iran and Turkey in Tehran on 19 July, Sputnik-Georgia [wrote](#) with great optimism and joy that Iran could offer Russia several drones of its design, including Shahed and Mohajer tactical drones, various

versions of Karrar and other reconnaissance-strike drones. According to Sputnik, the new "drone army" would accelerate the "special operation" in Ukraine if the delivery of Iranian drones to Russia becomes a reality in the medium term. "Eastern Lend-Lease," as Sputnik coined the term, may be an essential tool for the fall-winter phase of the Russian "special operation" in Ukraine.

- Sputnik-Georgia also [stated](#) that the Ukrainian troops suffered catastrophic manpower and military equipment losses during the Russian "special operation" - losing the core of their trained professionals whose absence cannot be compensated by waves of mass mobilisation. According to Sputnik, many untrained reservists will never supplement the lack of professional soldiers, thereby indicating that everything is already lost for Ukraine.
- Sputnik-Georgia [tried](#) to justify Putin's war of choice based on the disinformation message regarding bio laboratories. According to Sputnik, Hunter Biden's correspondence on bio laboratories in Ukraine is shocking and the whole planet – with the exception of the United States – is interested in knowing what kind of deadly diseases were being tested on Ukrainians and what infections were planned to be leaked from the lab.

Pro-Kremlin Proxies Continue to Call on Georgian Authorities to Cease Support for Ukrainian Refugees

Calls to cut aid to Ukrainian refugees have continued with an additional argument that they are prioritised over local Georgians:

- The სექტა (Sect) Facebook page harshly [criticised](#) the Tbilisi city government for providing financial assistance to the Ukrainian refugees. According to their logic, there are at least two reasons why they should not follow this policy: the Ukrainian government being critical of Georgia and scolding Georgia and the socio-economic hardships of Georgians.

Time Goes On, the Russian Economy Deteriorates but Kremlin Propaganda Says Sanctions Only Hurt the West

Russian propaganda continues to fuel the messages that the economic sanctions do not hurt Russia but they destroy the economy of the ones (in this case - Europe) who impose them in order to argue that Georgia should not join the sanctions against Russia:

- In a broadcast of pro-Russian Alt-Info, anchor Giorgi Kharazishvili [insisted](#) that the economic crisis on the "old Continent" is caused by Europe itself, adding that he is surprised by its political short-sightedness. Continuing the same narrative, Director of the Yevgeny Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Centre, Dimitri Lortkipanidze, stated that Europe is unable to cope with the economic challenges following Russia's Gazprom's cutting natural gas supplies.
- Pro-Russian and anti-Western Split Space News [replicated](#) the claim of a Georgian celebrity, Lali Moroshkina, infamous for spreading disinformation and conspiracies regarding COVID-19 and Putin's war in Ukraine. According to Moroshkina, while Europe's economy is suffering, Russia has actually strengthened its own. Moroshkina has further promised to show how people in Europe are struggling to acquire their everyday necessities as well as alleged demonstrations and strikes that are taking place in different European cities.

- In a broadcast of pro-Russian Alt-Info, Giorgi Kiknadze, the head of one of the regional branches of the Conservative Movement party, [claimed](#) that the Western-initiated sanctions have caused a counter-effect resulting in the destruction of both the European and the American economies. In contrast, Moscow has been gaining strength and Russia is now a world superpower. Mr Kiknadze further insisted that every single country would become extremely vulnerable to Russia as soon as winter comes, leading to a disintegration of the European Union. According to his projections, the EU would have to lift the sanctions by autumn in order to save its economy from total collapse. Moreover, he claimed that the economic situation and the inflation figures are so unbearable that European leaders, such as the UK's Boris Johnson, are resigning.
- Leader of the Alliance of Patriots (AoP) pro-Russian political party, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, [discussed](#) the impact of sanctions on the Russian economy on the AoP's party-affiliated TV Obieqtivi. He claimed that the economic sanctions are equally painful for both Russia and European countries, surprisingly admitting that the Russian economy is suffering at least some damage. According to him, the economic crisis in Europe is so severe that France wants to leave the EU in order to lift the burden of subsidising other states.
- Lawyer Gia Toidze, talking on air on Alt-Info TV, has [claimed](#) that Europe is being a hypocrite with Brussels, on the one hand, using Georgia as a transit country to receive Russian products whose import is prohibited under its own sanctions list and, on the other hand, officially requiring that Tbilisi not allow the transit of Russian goods.
- In a broadcast of Kartuli TV (Georgian TV), which has a track record of spreading disinformation about COVID-19, “expert” Emzar Khvichia [stated that Ukraine could have avoided the war if European leaders had previously](#) guaranteed Russia that they would not follow the US sanctions policy against Moscow.

- Following Lithuania's decision to allow sanctioned Russian goods to be transported to Kaliningrad, the სექტა (Sect) propaganda Facebook page [claimed](#) that Lithuania's action was the result of rising fears of Russia.
- Another anti-Western and pro-Russian Facebook page [posted](#) a video showing Ukraine in 2021 and 2022 demonstrating the inflicted damage to the country's infrastructure. Amidst the background of destroyed Ukrainian infrastructure, the Facebook page claimed that the US bought Russian oil on the Indian black market, thus concluding that the US is supporting Russia's war and devastation in Ukraine.
- Commenting on the visit of Chairman Giorgi Kardava and General Secretary Shota Martinenko of the Conservative Movement to Moscow, the founder of Alt-Info, Konstantine Morgoshia, claimed that the Georgian Dream government is much more likeable in Russia due to not joining the economic sanctions and trying not to be under the influence of Europe.

Fearmongering Narrative of the War Expanding Beyond Ukraine into Georgia

Threatening the Georgian population with war against Russia has become routine for disinformation actors and the Georgian Dream (GD) government is eagerly fuelling this narrative. GD-affiliated pages, in unison with openly pro-Russian and anti-Western media and political groups, are attacking the West and blaming it for attempting to drag Georgia into the war against the Russian Federation.

- The government-affiliated Leader 41 Facebook page (41 is the electoral number of the ruling GD party) [posted](#) a hypothetical picture of war-destroyed Tbilisi, citing "How Tbilisi would look if Georgia started a war against Russia." The post's author claimed

that the United National Movement (the biggest opposition party) would be happy with such a scenario and Georgia would also be granted EU membership candidacy status. The post then claimed that Prime Minister Gharibashvili saved Georgia from such a catastrophe.

- Another pro-governmental page called 2012 Supporters (the year the GD came into power) [stated](#) that Georgia was a frontrunner of the associated trio before the war against Ukraine and had the highest level of interoperability with NATO. After the war erupted, however, the EU suddenly changed its position and granted membership candidacy status to Ukraine and Moldova. According to the page, this is the punishment for Georgia for not starting a war against Russia.
- One of the leaders of the anti-Western and pro-Russian Alt-Info group, Shota Martinenko, [stated](#) that the West is very hesitant to take any measures that could provoke the war but they demand Georgia take such steps that would instigate a war against the Russian Federation. Martinenko also claimed that the USA and the collective West are trying to sacrifice Ukraine and Georgia for their political gains.
- Alt-Info has also targeted US diplomats in Georgia. In the [report](#) prepared by Alt-Info TV, they claimed that Ambassador Degnan decided to take political revenge on the Conservative Movement (a political party established by the Alt-Info group) after the US failed to force Georgia to open a second front against Russia and demands punishment of the party's leaders.
- *Saerto Gazeti* has also published an [interview](#) with a government-affiliated expert, Edisher Gvenetadze, who has stated that the "World rulers" wish to drag Georgia into the war with Russia. He also blamed the EU for injustice noting that Georgia is far ahead of Ukraine and Moldova by any relative parameters but the EU would only grant

candidacy status to Georgia "if the population is dying and the country is being destroyed."

- Hamlet Chipashvili, Editor of the pro-Russian Isari.ge outlet, [published](#) another "masterpiece" claiming that Georgia would be commanded by Brussels to open a second front against Russia if it were a member of the EU.
- Editor-in-Chief of the anti-Western Saqinform.ge media outlet, Arno Khidirbegishvili, published an editorial [article](#) full of Russia-supporting and anti-Western propaganda. He claimed that the West was orchestrating anti-Russian developments in all post-Soviet states. According to Mr Khidirbegishvili, Washington thinks that Ukraine is not enough and they need one more conflict hot spot in South Caucasus. According to the article, the US has so far failed to drag Georgia into the war against Russia and now it is trying to increase pressure on Armenia and Tajikistan. In another [piece](#) published by Mr Khidirbegishvili, he blamed the USA for its efforts towards the "Ukrainization" of Georgia, meaning that the USA would use Georgia as a polygon against Russia.
- Speaking to its affiliated TV Obieqtivi, Leader of the pro-Russian Alliance of Patriots political party, Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, [stated](#) that Europe is facing a severe crisis as the "war party" is seeking to trigger an armed conflict in Europe. According to Mr Tarkhan-Mouravi, NATO would not help the Eastern European countries in the case of the war expanding to other countries and hence, NATO would dismantle and get back to its older borders.

Propaganda Narratives Regarding Military Aid to Ukraine

Pro-Russian propaganda in Georgia continues to discredit providing military aid to Ukraine by disseminating various messages such as the military aid is weakening the countries that provide it, the military aid is not helping Ukraine in the fight as it is doomed to lose the war and the Western military aid is being stolen and sold on the black market:

- Demur Giorkhelidze, an “expert” notorious for his anti-Western claims, [stated](#) on air on Alt-Info that NATO member states have run out of weapons that could be supplied to Ukraine. Mr Giorkhelidze argued that the US now has nothing in its strategic armaments to confront Russia. In addition, he claimed that France provided 25% of its arsenal to Kyiv and could not donate more or it would be left without weaponry as it would already take the country 18 months to replenish its missile arsenal. Mr Giorkhelidze concluded that Ukraine is doomed because Russia's military technology is far superior to Ukraine's military technologies. Consequently, he added that Ukraine is being destroyed regardless of what military assistance the West would provide whilst part of this aid is even being seized by Russia. He also labelled Zelensky as a provocateur and asserted that he took weaponry from the whole of Europe and thus the continent was left without the means to defend itself. Mr Giorkhelidze further argued that this war showed the weakness and incapability of NATO in conducting a war.
- The სექტა (Sect) Facebook page [claimed](#) that the vast part of the military aid allocated for Ukraine is disappearing from the border and that it might end up on the black market.

Attention, Moscow is Speaking: Russian Disinformation on Facebook and Instagram

Recently, Russia's state propaganda mouthpiece, Channel One News (Новости Первого канала), targeted Georgia on a number of occasions. First, a long-existing recurring narrative that the Lugar Laboratory, located near the country's capital Tbilisi, is being used by the Americans for their military purposes was once again aired on TV. This time though, the false claim was supported by native Georgian "experts" who even organised a conference on the topic – **FactCheck** Georgia looked into the [story](#) and investigated the background information on those "experts" mentioned by Russia's Channel One News. Another story aired during the news programme featured a statement made by Russia's Ministry of Defence (Minoborony) saying that 50 Georgian mercenaries were killed during the previous three weeks of fighting in Ukraine – disinformation debunked by **FactCheck** Georgia in this [article](#). Further, another horrendous attack on civilian infrastructure, this time in the Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia which [resulted](#) in the death of at least 23 Ukrainian citizens, was followed by a disinformation campaign involving different actors, including Margarita Simonyan, Editor-in-Chief of the Russian state-controlled media organisations RT and Rossiya Segodnya, who [falsely claimed](#) that the Russian army attacked a military facility in Vinnytsia. Additionally, desperate to show the domestic audience that Russia is not alone in the battle, propaganda sources circulated disinformation about a famous American actor, Mickey Rourke, allegedly declaring his support for Putin when in reality Rourke said precisely the opposite during the 12 July [interview](#) on Piers Morgan Uncensored – according to the actor, he does not understand what Putin wants and the fact that the civilians are being killed is wrong.



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