



Monitoring of Xenophobia and Extremism in Ukraine December 2016

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Introduction

The Donbas conflict remains an unresolved problem to the whole Ukraine. Tactical successes are not enough to ensure the positive dynamics. Despite the fact that hostilities in eastern Ukraine have been scaled down, they continue to claim lives. The strategy of Crimea and Donbas return has not been revealed to the public and expert community. European vector of Ukraine's foreign policy received a positive evaluation only for the work in the PACE, but even there, Ukraine's triumph may soon be replaced by disappointment because of the willingness of many European politicians to return to business with Russia.

Ukraine's relations with the EU in 2016 have lost their drive and confidence. European integration remains a popular theme for Ukraine's politicians, but a visa liberalization delay and Dutch whims have revealed that our country is too big for a smooth rapprochement with the EU without taking into account European interests and protecting those of Ukraine. Brexit has seriously worsened the climate within the European Union, and this fact can not be discounted. The report of the European Court of Auditors showed that Ukraine was recognized as the most corrupt country in Europe. In this situation, Ukraine should learn from the European experience and ensure further transformation within the country, being aware that the European integration will be a long process with plenty of problems on the way.

The post-Soviet space has not become a springboard for Ukraine's breakthrough. A positive thing is Kyiv's warm relations with the Baltic States, but the trend in Belarus, Georgia, and Moldova are worrying. By the way, new Ukrainian ambassadors have not been appointed to Minsk and Tbilisi for over a year. It would be naive to believe that all the former Soviet republics are ready to take up arms against Russia, so it is necessary to use other arguments and facts in Ukraine's communication with them.

Savchenko returned to Ukraine as a hero, and six months later, many refuse to shake hands with her. The deputy was expelled from the delegation to the PACE. There is an urgent issue - to remove her from the Defense Committee of the Verkhovna Rada. And all because of the pro-Russian statements and her meetings with the leaders of the Self-proclaimed Republics.

Statements of officials

Ukraine says missile tests will avoid Crimea, mollifying Russia, 01.12.2016

Ukraine's military said its two-day missile drill starting on Thursday would avoid the airspace over Crimea, sidestepping a possible confrontation with Russia which annexed the peninsula in 2014. News of the tests had angered the Kremlin, prompting it to put its air defense forces on high alert and maneuver warships in the Black Sea. The disagreement marked a fresh escalation in tensions between the neighbors and one-time allies, whose relations collapsed after Russia seized Crimea and backed pro-Russian separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine. Volodymyr Kryzhanovsky, a Ukrainian military official, said the exercises, which are taking place in Ukraine's southern Kherson region bordering Crimea, were being carried out in accordance with international law.

The exercises were taking place at least 30 km (18 miles) from Crimea's air space, "therefore it would be wrong to reproach Ukraine," he told.

<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/ukraine-says-missile-tests-will-avoid-crimea-mollifying-russia>

EU Leader Says Russia Sanctions Likely To Be Extended, 02.12.2016

The head of the European Union's executive body has said he expects EU sanctions against Russia to be extended next year, but that it will be harder to do that in the future. Donald Tusk, who is president of the European Council and a former Polish prime minister, made the comments in an interview. He said France, Germany, and the United States had supported him in maintaining a cohesive response to Russia's military actions in recent years. He said he expected another extension of the sanctions to be approved in January, for the usual six-month period. But he also said the election of Donald Trump as U.S. president will also make it harder to preserve Western unity toward Russia. "I believe that after the [U.S.] elections and Donald Trump's victory it will be harder to build such unequivocal, uniform policy of the Western world toward Russia," Tusk said.

<http://www.rferl.org/a/eu-tusk-russia-sanctions/28151605.html>

Putin on revision of Sentsov verdict: "Appropriate conditions should ripen", 02.12.2016

During the meeting of the Council for Culture and Arts and of the Council on the Russian language of the Russian Federation in St. Petersburg, Russian film director Alexander Sokurov appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin to reconsider the verdict of Ukrainian citizen Oleh Sentsov. Putin refused, citing the fact that "in a Russian way and in a Christian way" this would be impossible without a court ruling, Rosbalt reports. "He has been convicted not for his art work, but for the fact that he had undertaken a whole other set of functions, as the investigation and court claim. Namely, he actually devoted his life to terrorism," said the Russian president. "In a Russian way and in a Christian way, we cannot (act) without a court ruling. I will say it again: no one convicted him for his views and position," said Putin. According to Putin, "the court ruling has been handed down," and "there are certain rules and regulations that we can use, but "the appropriate conditions" need to "ripen" to this end.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/putin-revision-sentsov-verdict-appropriate-conditions-ripen/>

Lavrov "doesn't understand" why Kyiv continues ATO, 03.12.2016

"I'll be honest, I don't understand why the so-called anti-terrorist operation is still going on in Ukraine and the leaders of the self-proclaimed republics are called terrorists and separatists," Lavrov said, according to Russian media agencies. His statement arrived as Kyiv says militants continue to attack the positions of the Ukrainian troops. Kyiv has stated numerous times that it will only accept reintegration of the Donbas region through local election, which means that the so-called republics must cease to exist and Russia must stop controlling them through military, financial and political means. "The Donetsk and Luhansk leaders signed the Minsk agreements. They did it because Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko insisted, and now they are told they are not legitimate, can't take part in election and must go".

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/lavrov-doesnt-understand-kyiv-continues-ato/>

Intel Officials Believe Russia Spreads Fake News, 03.12.2016

US intelligence officials believe Russia helped disseminate fake and propagandized news as part of a broader effort to influence and undermine the presidential election, two US intelligence sources told. "They're doing this continuously, that's a known fact," one US intelligence official said, requesting anonymity to discuss the sensitive national security issue. "This is beyond propaganda, that's my understanding," the second US intelligence official said. The official said they believed those efforts likely included the dissemination of completely fake news stories. Neither official provided details of how they believed Russia was spreading fake news. While they said the intelligence community was confident that Russia had engaged in spreading false or misleading information, both said the FBI had not opened a specific investigation into it. "No one has looked into it specifically," one intelligence official said. "In the context, did Russia attempt to influence the US elections; the aperture is as wide as it can possibly be."

https://www.buzzfeed.com/alimwatkins/intel-officials-believe-russia-spreads-fake-news?utm_term=.jgN9qxVl0#.hvlA2znXm

Putin says Trump clever, will understand new responsibilities, 04.12.2016

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump is a clever man and will quickly understand his new responsibilities, Russian President Vladimir Putin said. Putin has spoken previously of his hope that Trump will help restore U.S.-Russia relations, and analysts said he was unlikely to want to dial up anti-Western rhetoric before Trump's inauguration in January.

"Trump was an entrepreneur and a businessman. He is already a statesman; he is the head of the United States of America, one of the world's leading countries. Because he achieved success in business, it suggests that he is a clever man. And if (he is) a clever man, then he will fully and quite quickly understand another level of responsibility. We assume that he will be acting from these positions," Putin said. Putin's comments appeared to address criticism from Trump's opponents who say his unconventional actions since the election - including railing at the cast of a Broadway show and early-morning invective on Twitter - show Trump is out of his depth.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-putin-idUSKBN13T0B7>

German Foreign Minister Steinmeier hopes for hostage swap in Donbas before Christmas, 05.12.2016

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who currently chairs the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), expressed confidence that the exchange of prisoners between the parties to the Donbas conflict will have taken place by Christmas. "That would be more than a glimpse," Steinmeier said. At the same time, Steinmeier pointed at a stagnation in the implementation of the Minsk agreements. "Parties to the conflict are literally digging deeper into their trenches," Steinmeier said, referring to the positions of the parties in the negotiations. The ceasefire is being further violated, and Normandy Four has also failed to achieve substantial progress in addressing major policy issues, according to him.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/German-Foreign-Minister-steinmeier-hopes-for-hostage-swap-in-donbas-before-christmas/>

U.S. reshaping budget to account for Russian military threat, 05.12.2016

"Russia is the No. 1 threat to the United States. We have a number of threats that we're dealing with, but Russia could be, because of the nuclear aspect, an existential threat to the United States," Air Force Secretary Deborah James told Reuters. James, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson and Pentagon chief arms buyer Frank Kendall, all voiced growing concern about Russia's increasingly aggressive behavior. Their comments come as the Pentagon finalizes a classified security assessment for President-elect Donald Trump, who has promised to both pump up U.S. defense spending and build closer ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin. European diplomats fear Moscow could use the time before Trump's inauguration to launch more offensives in Ukraine and Syria, betting that President Barack Obama will be loathe to respond forcefully so soon before he hands off power on Jan. 20.

<http://news.trust.org/item/20161204235208-6ppts/?source=hpbreaking>

Kerry: Allies to affirm support for Ukraine's sovereignty at NATO-Ukraine Commission, 06.12.2016

"Tomorrow, in the NATO-Ukraine Commission, we will support and affirm our steadfast support for the sovereignty and integrity of a democratic Ukraine," U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said. "And we will restate, as we have consistently, that we do not support or recognize Russia's purported annexation of Crimea or accept its continued aggression in the eastern part of the country," he said. He called on Russia "once again to work with all of us to fully implement the Minsk agreement."

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1664817-kerry-allies-to-affirm-support-for-ukraines-sovereignty-at-nato-ukraine-commission.html>
<http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/12/264923.htm>

NATO Chief Laments 'serious' Security Problems in Ukraine, 07.12.2016

Opening talks between NATO and Ukraine foreign ministers Wednesday, Stoltenberg said the security situation "remains serious" and "hinders progress toward a political settlement." Stoltenberg says the cease-fire in Ukraine is being violated daily. He said heavy weapons have not been withdrawn from the conflict zone as required by the Minsk peace agreement. A meeting last week of foreign ministers from Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany intended to shore up the shaky peace process ended without result.

<http://www.newsmax.com/World/Europe/EU-NATO-Ukraine-Russia/2016/12/07/id/762589/>
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_131901.htm

Donald Trump announces James 'Mad Dog' Mattis as secretary of defense, 07.12.2016

Donald Trump has selected the retired marine general James Mattis to serve as his first Pentagon chief, the first of his national-security appointments that will reassure the establishment defense circles Trump scorned on the campaign trail. Trump made the announcement at an Ohio rally on the first day for his "thank you tour". "I don't want to tell you to this, I refuse to tell you, don't let it outside of this room. I will not tell you that one of our great great generals, don't let it outside, we are going to appoint Mad Dog Mattis as our secretary of defense and we're not announcing it until Monday so don't tell it to anybody."

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/01/james-mattis-secretary-of-defense-donald-trump>

Uncertainty over U.S. position delays action on Ukraine peace deal: Germany, 07.12.2016

Uncertainty in Moscow and Kiev about what policies U.S. President-elect Donald Trump will adopt means there is little prospect of making much progress in implementing the Minsk ceasefire accord on Ukraine, Germany's foreign minister said. Speaking in Brussels, Frank-Walter Steinmeier also said that it was still unclear what the future relationship between Russia and the United States would be. "In contrast to some views I have seen, I personally think it is completely open as to (what kind of) relationship develops between the United States and Russia," he told reporters, adding pressing the 'reset button' had not got any easier in the last eight years given the range of new conflicts.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-germany-idUSKBN13W15J>

EU puts credibility at risk over Ukraine visa wrangle – Tusk, 08.12.2016

The European Union is putting its credibility and reputation at risk by letting internal political wrangling stall a promised easing of visa requirements for Ukraine and Georgia, the head of the European Council said. In a letter sent to European Parliament President Martin Schulz on Tuesday and seen by Reuters, Donald Tusk urged the legislature to compromise with national governments to unblock visa liberalisation. Both former Soviet states feel aggrieved that Brussels is not making good on its promises. "At stake here are the legitimate hopes and aspirations of the nations who are our neighbours, as well as the reputation of the European Union, which has categorically and repeatedly committed itself to the issue," the former Polish premier wrote.

"Even though all the parties in this debate have their own good arguments and undoubtedly good will, it seems we are getting close to squandering our joint efforts," he added, saying failure to deliver would be "an unforgivable mistake".

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-ukraine-crisis-eu-idUKKBN13W0JK>

Germany demands cooperation from Russia as "question of war and peace" is on table, 08.12.2016

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier demanded that Russia cooperate constructively, as foreign ministers of the OSCE prepared to meet in Hamburg. During a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Steinmeier told him that Moscow needed to help defuse growing tensions in Europe, Steinmeier's office said, describing the talks as "serious." Steinmeier also called on Russia to implement an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" in Syria and urged Lavrov to push for a political solution to the conflict.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/germany-demands-cooperation-from-russia-as-question-of-war-and-peace-is-on-table-821388.html>

Mogherini: Russia undermines European security through its actions in Crimea, Donbas, 08.12.2016

"Today, these long-standing key principles of European security have not been respected. The crisis in and around Ukraine has yet to be resolved and the region continues to be burdened by protracted conflicts," Mogherini said at the 23rd OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Hamburg. "Failure comes when we let our differences prevail, instead of focusing on our shared interests and on the international frameworks we need to achieve them," she said. She noted the EU continues to see the OSCE as a crucial pillar of European security. "We believe the OSCE can provide a tool and a framework towards peace and security in our continent," Mogherini said.

<https://www.kvypost.com/ukraine-politics/mogherini-russia-undermines-european-security-principles-actions-crimea-donbas.html>

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/16745/opening-remarks-high-representative-vice-president-federica-mogherini-23rd-osce-ministerial_en

Lavrov demands direct talks between Kyiv and Donbas, 08.12.2016

Sergey Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister, believes that Kyiv needs to switch to direct talks with 'authorities' of the occupied cities of Luhansk and Donetsk to effectively solve Donbas conflict. Lavrov made the statement during a meeting of 23rd OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg. "There is no alternative to the direct talks between Kyiv and Donbas, mediated by Trilateral contact group and Normandy format," Lavrov stated. Russia's top diplomat also rebuked western states for the accusations against Russia as to Ukraine and Syria. "If you want to invite a partner for a dialogue, you should not start the dialogue with accusations," he said.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/lavrov-demands-direct-talks-between-kyiv-and-donbas-821578.html>

U.S. Congress boosts security assistance to Ukraine to US\$350 mln, 09.12.2016

"According to the bill, from amounts authorized to be provided for security assistance to Ukraine, including lethal assistance, up to \$350 million shall be available for fiscal year 2017, a \$50 million increase from \$300 million authorized in NDAA, 2016," it said. Ukraine security assistance and intelligence support has been expanded to include equipment and technical assistance to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine for the purpose of developing a comprehensive border surveillance network for Ukraine, as well as training for staff officers and senior leadership of the military. "The document is now headed for signing by the U.S. President," the posting said. "We appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress for Ukraine in our fight against the ongoing Russian aggression," the Ukrainian Embassy said.

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1669552-us-congress-boosts-security-assistance-to-ukraine-to-us350-mln.html>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2943/all-info?r=7>

Yanukovich's lawyer says when his client may return to Ukraine, 10.12.2016

As soon as the danger to Viktor Yanukovich's life disappears, he will take part in all court hearings," Serdiuk said. Summonses for interrogation were posted on the PGO's official website. Yanukovich was invited to appear at 10:00 local time on December 5 and December 9 for an interview by the chief of the investigative department of the Main Military Prosecutor's Office under the PGO. Instead, his lawyers arrived in the PGO.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/yanukovichs-lawyer-client-return-ukraine/>

Trump Will Face 'Wall of Resistance' in Congress if He Gives Putin a Pass on Ukraine, 10.12.2016

"I think the idea that Donald Trump the great deal-maker could cut some deal with Putin that in any way involved Ukraine, and Ukraine's territorial integrity, [or] the Baltic states and their status, would run into a wall of opposition in the Congress," Coons said. As a candidate, Trump repeatedly spoke of his admiration for Putin as a "strong leader" and indicated he would be open to discussing an arrangement with Moscow that would enlist Russia's assistance in the fight against the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, in Syria. "When you think about it, wouldn't it be nice if we got along with Russia?" Trump said on the campaign trail in July. "Wouldn't it be nice if we got together with Russia and knocked the hell out of ISIS?" He has also repeatedly denied findings by U.S. intelligence officials that Russia was behind the hacks that meddled with the presidential election.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/09/trump-will-face-wall-of-resistance-in-congress-if-he-gives-putin-a-pass-on-ukraine/>
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-idUSKBN1400QX?il=0>

Deputy head of UN OCHA: "Only two or three are entitled to two or three international organizations have a right to work in Luhansk and Donetsk, that is far not enough", 12.12.2016

Deputy Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Nadir Minbashiyevev said what the humanitarian missions are engaged along the demarcation line and in the occupied territories of Ukraine, elaborating on coordination with the local authorities, and explained why the demarcation line is turning into an actual border. On the ground, there are coordination mechanisms of humanitarian organizations. Coordination is divided into clusters (groups). For example, there are groups that discuss health issues, there are groups that discuss issues of housing - its restoration, repair and so on ... All humanitarian organizations that are engaged in specific programs get together and discuss the needs, resources, categories of people whom they can help (the disabled, pensioners, families with children). And these meetings usually involve the local authorities, too. Some of these groups are even co-chaired by the local authorities to make them aware of what the humanitarian missions are doing. Often such meetings take place in the cities. The place is determined where different organizations coordinate, and they are joined by representatives of the local authorities. Unfortunately, this mechanism is not set up well everywhere, and good. And it does not work well everywhere. For example, that's because the organizations, based, for example, in Mariupol, cover too wide a range of settlements.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1668062-deputy-head-of-un-ocha-only-two-or-three-are-entitled-to-two-or-three-international-organizations-have-a-right-to-work-in-luhansk-and-donetsk-that-is-far-not-enough.html>

John McCain doesn't know what to make of Trump's Russia hacking response, 12.12.2016

Responding to intelligence officials' report that Russia tried to influence the U.S. presidential election in favor of President-elect Donald Trump, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Arizona) on Sunday said he doesn't know what to make of Mr. Trump's dismissal of the issue. "I don't know what to make of it because it's clear the Russians interfered," he told CBS' "Face the Nation." "Whether they intended to interfere to the degree that they were trying to elect a certain candidate, I think that's a subject of investigation. But facts are stubborn things. They did hack into this campaign." In an interview with "Fox News Sunday," Mr. Trump said Sunday that new revelations about Russia's influence on his behalf are "ridiculous." "It's just another excuse. I don't believe it," Trump said. "... Every week it's another excuse. We had a massive landslide victory, as you know, in the Electoral College." McCain called for a select committee to further investigate the extent of Russia's influence and intentions.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/john-mccain-donald-trump-russia-hacking-response/>

Kremlin confirms handover of Ukrainians convicted in Russia 'under discussion', 12.12.2016

"This issue has been repeatedly discussed during the contacts of working groups, it was mentioned by the Ukrainian side at the Berlin meeting of the Normandy Four group," Peskov said. "Certain names are included in the agenda," he said, adding: "Not all of them may be classed in any category, in any case all of them are people who are convicted and serve their sentence upon a decision of a Russian court." "No doubt, there are judicial procedures in case if any decisions are taken," Peskov said.

<http://tass.com/politics/918654>

Savchenko refused to comment on the meeting with the leaders of the "LDNR", 12.12.2016

The MP refused to speak with reporters. The people's Deputy Hope Savchenko refuses to comment on the meeting with the leaders of the terrorist "LNR" and "DNR". She declared to "the Ukrainian truth". "I'm sorry, I don't have time to talk right now" she said to journalists. Later they called her sister Vera, but the phone was picked up Hope and said that "to say there's no time for anybody". In response to an SMS message with a request to provide a comment when it is convenient, she wrote: "When I have something to say, you will hear".

<http://ukrhotnews.com/2016/12/12/savchenko-refused-to-comment-on-the-meeting-with-the-leaders-of-the-ldnr/>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1674656-source-shares-details-of-savchenkos-secret-meeting-with-donbas-terrorists-in-minsk-media.html>

<https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/savchenko-meeting-zakharchenko-plotnitsky-held-russian-participation.html>

<https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/unian-savchenkos-sister-says-nadiya-left-batkivshchyna-october.html>

"It was productive" – Savchenko on meeting with militants, 13.12.2016

Nadiya Savchenko, a Ukrainian MP, a delegate to the PACE and a military aviator, has confirmed she travelled to the Belarusian capital last week to meet the leaders of the Russian-backed separatist forces. Addressing media late on December 12 from Sofiyivska square in central Kyiv, Savchenko explained that the talks were needed "to reinforce Minsk format" and to accelerate the process of prisoner exchange. "We need to end this war and take our people back," she told journalists. Apart from her and the leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk militant republics, the meeting was attended by "Russia's representatives."

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/it-was-productive-savchenko-on-meeting-with-militants-845783.html>

Merkel, Hollande back extending sanctions on Russia over Ukraine, 13.12.2016

The leaders of France and Germany, speaking two days before an EU summit which will discuss the conflict in eastern Ukraine, said they want to extend sanctions against Russia due to a lack of progress in implementing a ceasefire deal. The conflict between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists has claimed nearly 10,000 lives since it erupted in 2014. Germany and France have tried to convince both sides to implement a peace deal agreed in Minsk last year but with little success so far. EU leaders will on Thursday discuss extending sanctions, which include restricting access to international financing and curbs on defence and energy cooperation with Russia. Merkel, speaking with Hollande who was visiting a Franco-German conference on the digital economy in Berlin, said implementation of the ceasefire deal was "very sluggish". "It will be necessary to extend the sanctions against Russia again - although we would have wished for better progress in the implementation of this process," she said. Hollande agreed. "We must continue to apply the terms of the Minsk agreement and when they are not carried out, we must continue with sanctions," he said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-france-ukraine-idUSKBN14211H?il=0>

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1677881-putin-complains-to-merkel-of-ukraines-reluctance-to-agree-on-gas-purchases.html>

No deal yet on Ukraine treaty, Dutch foreign minister says, 13.12.2016

The cabinet has not yet reached agreement with other EU states on a separate declaration to take away Dutch objections to the EU treaty with Ukraine, foreign minister Bert Koenders told parliament on Tuesday. The Netherlands rejected the treaty with the former Soviet state in a referendum in April.

<http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/12/no-deal-yet-on-ukraine-treaty-dutch-foreign-minister-says/>

Ukraine's ex-president Kravchuk: Russia not to resort to all-out invasion, 13.12.2016

"Even if we imagine that Russia will go for wide-ranging steps in Ukraine and the question will arise of Ukraine's occupation, it will be the last day for Russia," Kravchuk said. "That's because I believe it is impossible to get Ukraine into obedience, keep it in obedience – economically, politically, and spiritually," he said. "I am convinced that Russian politicians are not so primitive to fail to see it." He added that the Kremlin prefers point pressure points that they want to exploit through Donbas. "That point pressure us applied in different variations," he said. "But I don't see the option for them to go for an all-out war against Ukraine," Kravchuk said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1677151-ukraines-ex-president-kravchuk-russia-not-to-resort-to-all-out-invasion.html>

<http://us11.campaign-archive2.com/?u=cd23226ada1699a77000eb60b&id=e8ff4a887e>

U.S. Officials: Putin Personally Involved in U.S. Election Hack, 15.12.2016

Two senior officials with direct access to the information say new intelligence shows that Putin personally directed how hacked material from Democrats was leaked and otherwise used. The intelligence came from diplomatic sources and spies working for U.S. allies, the officials said. Putin's objectives were multifaceted, a high-level intelligence source told NBC News. What began as a "vendetta" against Hillary Clinton morphed into an effort to show corruption in American politics and to "split off key American allies by creating the image that [other countries] couldn't depend on the U.S. to be a credible global leader anymore," the official said.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-officials-putin-personally-involved-u-s-election-hack-n696146>

Federica Mogherini, Top EU Diplomat, Says Bloc Is Prepared for Trump, 14.12.2016

The EU is prepared for a more deal-oriented relationship with the U.S. once President-elect Donald Trump takes office. "We are ready for a transactional way of working...one more based on an analysis of where our interests coincide," Federica Mogherini said "I believe that going through the list of global conflicts and regional issues, we would come out with a very long list of things where we have an interest in either a division of labor or a common approach."

<https://www.kyivpost.com/world/wall-street-journal-mogherini-top-eu-diplomat-says-bloc-prepared-trump.html>

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/federica-mogherini-top-eu-diplomat-says-bloc-is-prepared-for-trump-1481740445>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/743798/european-union-not-sidelined-donald-trump-us-putin-russia-top-diplomat>

Crime against Ukrainians: U.S. Ambassador on money siphoning by Yanukovych regime, 15.12.2016

The diplomat agreed with the idea that asset recovery cases are "complicated" because there is the "need for justice and getting the assets back for the Ukrainian people". She also stressed the extreme importance of due process. "I think all of us encourage the Ukrainian government, the prosecutors, the justice system to really double on their efforts to recover these assets," the Ambassador said. She also made clear in her comments that "this is not just an abstract kind - some money is siphoned off from some government account, it's actually stealing from the Ukrainian people." Ms Yovanovitch explained that this concerns all groups, "whether it is a pensioner who is not able to get a larger pension because that money was stolen, whether it is a child who's not getting a better education because that money was stolen, whether it is a sick people who are not getting the kind of healthcare they need, because that money was stolen." "This is a crime against the Ukrainian people and justice must be served number one, and the assets must be recovered number two," she said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1681611-crime-against-ukrainians-us-ambassador-on-money-siphoning-by-yanukovych-regime.html>

Obama vows action against Russia over election hacks, 16.12.2016

"We need to take action and we will," he told US public radio network NPR.

Russia stands accused by the US of hacking the emails of the Democratic Party and a key Hillary Clinton aide, which the Kremlin strongly denies. The accusations, without evidence, are "unseemly", Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman said. Republican president-elect Donald Trump has also dismissed the claim as "ridiculous" and politically motivated. The intelligence agencies say they have overwhelming evidence that Russian hackers linked to the Kremlin were behind the hacks.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-38337109>

Biden welcomes Ukraine's decision to release 15 Donbas militants, 16.12.2016

"The Vice President voiced strong support for the Ukrainian Government's decision today to unilaterally release 15 individuals taken prisoner during the conflict, expressing hope that Russia and Russian-backed separatists would respond in kind to this goodwill gesture and give momentum to the prisoner exchange process stipulated in the Minsk agreements," says a White House readout of Biden's calls with President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman. The leaders also reiterated their unwavering support for full implementation of the Minsk agreements and underscored the need to reinstitute a full cease-fire and ensure full access for OSCE monitors to enable further disengagement of forces along the line of contact, the readout said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1682427-biden-welcomes-ukraines-decision-to-release-15-donbas-militants.html>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/15/readout-vice-president-bidens-calls-president-ukraine-petro-poroshenko>

Italy Says It Blocked EU From Widening, Lengthening Sanctions On Russia, 16.12.2016

"We had a discussion that luckily ended without considering the option -- which would have been wrong, I think -- to react to the situation in Syria and Aleppo with EU sanctions against Russia," Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said after an EU summit in Brussels. He said "a majority of countries" agreed with Italy that more sanctions on Russia, on top of those already imposed for Russia's aggression in Ukraine, would have been "a mistake."

<http://www.rferl.org/a/italy-says-blocked-european-union-widening-prolonging-sanctions-russia/28179495.html>

FBI: Ukraine politicians unwilling to share details about Yanukovych's schemes, 16.12.2016

"We're working, we count on your cooperation, we need documents, we need witnesses. Let me say that the biggest problem in the Yanukovych case is witnesses -- nobody is ready to testify and say that 'Yes, I was present when this scheme was being elaborated,'" the FBI's Supervisory Special Agent Karen Greenaway said. Greenaway says that her team, which has been working for past 18 months to investigate corruption schemes and recover stolen assets, has collected and transferred a number of evidence to the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine. In her words, FBI agents were unable to establish communication with Ukrainian law enforcers for a long period of time, but finally they succeeded in finding common ground.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1682542-fbi-ukraine-politicians-unwilling-to-share-details-about-yanukovychs-schemes.html>

<http://assetconf.antac.org.ua/en/>

NATO, Russia Discuss Air Safety Talks but Differ on Ukraine, 19.12.2016

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the 28-nation military alliance and Russia "have profound disagreements on the crisis" in Ukraine. He said NATO allies "reiterated their strong support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity" and insisted that they would never "recognize Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea." In a statement later, Russia's NATO ambassador, Alexander Grushko, said he raised Ukrainian cease-fire violations with the allies, notably through the use of heavy weapons. NATO members accused Russia of similar violations. He also called on the alliance to urge Ukraine to respect its commitments.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/nato-russia-diplomats-rare-talks-ease-tensions-44278250>

UN General Assembly resolution on Crimea internationally consolidates Russia's responsibility for human rights violations on peninsula, 20.12.2016

"I am sincerely grateful to all partners for support and participation in the elaboration of that important document. From now on, the given Resolution assigns status of invader and full responsibility for the brutal violation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine - the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol - to Russia at the highest international level," President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko said. The president said that the given decision of the UN General Assembly "is the most important sign of international unity and solidarity in times when the worst practices of the Soviet Union are used in Crimea, including methods of "punitive psychiatry", show trials, abductions, tortures and even intentional murder of people who openly protest against Russian occupation of Ukrainian territories."

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/391718.html>

<https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/110688.aspx>

U.S. Ambassador: Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine ongoing for 25 years, 21.12.2016

Ambassador of the United States to Ukraine Marie L. Yovanovitch has said that the so-called "hybrid war" of the RF against Ukraine began even before this term emerged. At a Kyiv presentation of the Foreign Policy Audit study, Yovanovitch said that over the 25 years since Ukraine had gained independence, the country remained in a state of a hybrid war with Russia.

<https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/unian-us-ambassador-says-russias-hybrid-war-ukraine-ongoing-25-years.html>

OSCE envoy says when "all-for-all" POW swap in Donbas possible, 22.12.2016

Ambassador Martin Sajdik, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group on the implementation of the peace plan in the east of Ukraine, says that before prisoners of war in Donbas are swapped on the "all-for-all" formula, both sides should verify their POW lists. The "all-for-all" exchange remains on the agenda of the Minsk peace talks, he said at a briefing after a Trilateral Contact Group meeting in Minsk on Wednesday. "The problem is, I would say that in the end, the parties must agree on their final, verified lists of those persons who should be released," he said.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/osce-envoy-says-when-all-for-all-pow-swap-in-donbas-possible-851853.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1691576-ukraine-at-minsk-talks-insists-on-disengagement-in-occupied-debaltseve.html>

Putin`s aide preparing "DPR-LPR" `s accession to Russia, 23.12.2016

"DPR" representatives held a meeting with Vladislav Surkov, where he asked the self-proclaimed "authorities" to communicate more with the locals and disseminate information about "Russia`s significant contribution to the development of the "republic." "According to his promise, within a year and a half, the "DPR" and "LPR" will be integrated into the Russian Federation as the full-fledged administrative units," head of Information Resistance Group, military analyst and MP Dmytro Tymchuk said.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/putins-aide-preparing-dpr-lprs-accession-to-russia/>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/putin-explains-why-he-does-not-agree-to-prisoner-exchange-with-ukraine/>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/we-not-feel-guilty-putin-comments-on-crimea-annexation-donbas-war/>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/u-s-state-department-appeals-to-russia-about-accords-on-ceasefire-in-eastern-ukraine/>

Kolomoisky comments on PrivatBank nationalization, 23.12.2016

"I want to thank the Cabinet of Ministers and personally Volodymyr Groysman. As you know, as a result of the latest wave of customer panic provoked, first of all, by the NBU's (National Bank of Ukraine) actions, we were forced to turn to the Cabinet of Ministers with a proposal to hand over the PrivatBank to the state. I think that the premier and his team have shown real courage by taking this difficult decision. If they had not dared to take this step, it would have endangered the entire financial system of Ukraine," Kolomoisky said in written comments. He also said that the PrivatBank has become the victim of the NBU's arbitrariness. "The loan portfolio was provided and balanced in the PrivatBank, which is confirmed by the international audit.

However, the NBU was constantly changing its own regulations, inventing ever new ways of artificially reduced capitalization of the bank. Then they began talking about the mythical hole of \$150 billion, 97% of tied loans, and that all the money was stolen or moved offshore. But all these figures are the result of an arbitrary change in the accounting policy. Normal central banks usually help banks in difficult times, such as economic crises, occupation or war. But our regulator used all possible tricks to put pressure on the PrivatBank, the former beneficiary said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/392640.html>

Putin: sooner or later we will normalize relations with Ukraine, 23.12.2016

"I am sure that sooner or later there will be normalization of relations with Ukraine", - Putin said at a press conference. This will benefit the development of humanitarian and commercial ties between the two countries. Kerch bridge will serve the development of not only tourism, but also the economy of the Crimea, and will be useful after the normalization of relations with Ukraine.

"This project demanded. Not only for the flow of tourists, "- he said. Recently, Putin reiterated that he still believes the collapse of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century".

<http://newsme.com.ua/en/world/3639872/>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1696552-russian-invaders.html>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/putin-early-presidential-elections-2017/>

U.S. State Department appeals to Russia about accords on "ceasefire" in Donbas, 23.12.2016

"The United States welcomes the trilateral contact group's announcement of an agreement for a holiday ceasefire in eastern Ukraine – excuse me – set to begin on Christmas Eve at midnight," U.S. State Department spokesperson John Kirby said. "We hope that the ceasefire will mark the beginning of sustained quiet at the line of contact to allow Ukrainians on both sides of the line to live in peace and security," he stressed. "And as we've said before, we're deeply concerned by the recent spike in violence in eastern Ukraine in which combined Russian-separatist forces have launched daily attacks on Ukrainian positions using heavy weaponry prohibited by the Minsk agreements." "Once again, we urge Russia to use its influence with the separatists to turn down the violence, as it has done successfully numerous times in the past, and allow access for OSCE monitors. This will relieve the humanitarian suffering in eastern Ukraine, and it will create space for further progress on the implementation of the Minsk agreements," Kirby said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1694036-us-state-department-appeals-to-russia-about-accords-on-ceasefire-in-donbas.html>
<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/12/265937.htm>

Obama adviser: China is more of a threat than Russia, 25.12.2016

Asked about the Afghanistan war, Rhodes doesn't believe it was a mistake for the US to scale back their presence there and give it a timeframe. "We had to scale back. And frankly, the American public had an expectation that we were going to scale back. And you know, sustainability has always been a concern of the presence on our counterterrorism and war efforts ... He [Obama] didn't want to leave his successor, for instance, with what he found - which was 180,000 troops in this massive resource allocation," Rhodes says. We ask Rhodes whether Obama didn't want to commit the same level of resources, and had considerations about sustainability and what his successor would inherit in the back of his mind, when it came to the Syrian civil war.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2016/12/obama-advisor-china-threat-russia-161222113428695.html>

Crimean Tatar leader: Four former Soviet states mull recognizing Crimea as Russia, 26.12.2016

"It is painful to me that four states of the former Soviet Union - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan - judging by their actions, are almost ready to admit that Crimea is not the territory of Ukraine. I had a conversation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. I believe we have to take some very specific steps, at least, regarding the ambassadors of these countries. And we must indicate our position that such behavior is unacceptable more clearly and firmly," Chubarov told. At the same time, Chubarov said that Crimea is not a "grey," but a "black" area compared to Donbas.

"The OSCE is working there, there are some contacts [in Donbas], but they are not allowed [by occupational authorities] in Crimea. We work in Kyiv in an emergency response mode with those Mejlis members, who are in mainland Ukraine," he said.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/crimean-tatar-leader-four-former-soviet-states-mull-recognizing-crimea-as-russia-853918.html>

Justice ministry: Talks between Savchenko and self-proclaimed republics out of law, 26.12.2016

"In my opinion it is inadmissible. All talks should be within the determined circle of persons appointed by the president," she told. "There cannot be any legal relations with the so-called self-proclaimed republics in Luhansk and Donetsk regions, and we don't plan any. We do not recognize the fact of this occupation, we understand this is temporary occupation [in the areas] where the ATO [Anti-Terrorist Operation] is under way," she said. As was earlier reported, Savchenko secretly met with militant leaders of the "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR") and "Luhansk People's Republic" ("LPR") in Minsk to conduct talks on the release of prisoners of war.

<http://ukraine.timesofnews.com/justice-ministry-talks-between-savchenko-and-self-proclaimed-republics-out-of-law.html>

Trump to be offered compromise with Putin on Crimea, 27.12.2016

Kissinger should become a mediator between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, according to Bild's article as the publication refers to the information of the EU intelligence. "Russia guarantees security in Eastern Europe and it will gradually decrease its activities in the region. At the same time, the West will not interfere with the Crimea issue," Bild wrote. Trump is also offered to accept Moscow's supremacy in the southwestern part of the former Soviet Union and to achieve the lifting of the anti-Russian economic sanctions.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/trump-to-be-offered-compromise-with-putin-on-crimea/>

Gerashchenko: so far, a team of trump, in Moscow, the aggravation is all ways trying to discredit Ukraine, 28.12.2016

This was stated the representative of Ukraine in the humanitarian sub-group of the tripartite contact group to resolve the conflict in the Donbass Irina Gerashchenko.

"Now, on the eve of the formation of the new administration trump in Moscow aggravation..., it is necessary by all means to discredit Ukraine and its leadership", – said Gerashchenko.

According to her, the Kremlin and fully dependent on him, the militants are trying to impose "your cynical scenario the debate about the hostages," manipulate numbers to block the process of liberation, blackmailing Ukraine of its citizens. While the terrorists themselves do not decide anything. "The scenario written in the Kremlin, say give – give, say block, that will be what happens last year when we managed to release only 17 people from the list. Whom Moscow will tell – that and will give. When Moscow will say – and then unlocks", – she said. "ORDA did not provide information on those holds. For example, now in the list of the SBU with whom we work in the Minsk group, more than 100 people, the fall of the militants was confirmed only 20 of this list, since September is already 48, although we know the whereabouts of 58! But they are hiding, lying that there are none, and others refuse to look," says Gerashchenko. Fighters need to give them those who have committed serious crimes not in the area of ATO, that is, provide incorrect information and demand the impossible. Moreover, they demand Amnesty, said Gerashchenko.

<http://24-my.info/gerashchenko-so-far-a-team-of-trump-in-moscow-the-aggravation-is-all-ways-trying-to-discredit-ukraine/>

Presidential Administration says visa lib postponed due to position of individual member states, 29.12.2016

"The delay was due to the position of individual Member States, for whom it is very difficult to cross the psychological barrier in terms of visa liberalization with one of the largest countries in Europe. Now I would speak only of France. Despite the fact this is a delicate issue for the French side, it must be admitted. I hope France will not delay the technical procedures until the date of their presidential election in April 2017," Yeliseyev said. It is safe to say that 2017 will be the year of visa liberalization between Ukraine and the EU. "But I've always said, I am saying now, and will keep saying that we should shy away from specific time frames in order not to mislead the optimists and not to "feed" pessimists," said the deputy head of the PA.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1703051-presidential-administration-says-visa-lib-postponed-due-to-position-of-individual-member-states.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1705052-us-has-not-said-its-last-word-on-donbas-ukraines-presidential-administration.html>

The ugly things Moscow might do if Ukraine is consigned to a Russian sphere of influence, 29.12.2016

Mikhail Khazin, an economist, a former official in the Russian Presidential Administration, and a member of an experts commission of the Moscow Patriarchate, outlines what he believes Moscow would want if the West acknowledged that Ukraine is in Russia's sphere of influence. Once Ukraine is acknowledged as part of Russia's sphere of influence, Khazin says, "everything will depend on what we want. If we want to keep Ukraine whole but loyal to Russia, then it will be necessary to return the Donbas with a change of leadership in Kyiv ... Further, counter-propaganda will begin. The population there won't be delighted in fact." "There, crudely speaking, will be several million people whom it will be impossible to correct. Well, it will be necessary to liquidate part of them and drive out the rest," the Moscow commentator says.

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/12/29/the-ugly-things-moscow-might-do-if-ukraine-is-consigned-to-a-russian-sphere-of-influence/#arvlbdata>

Ukrainian General assesses likelihood of Russian airstrikes against Ukraine, 29.12.2016

The use of Russian combat aircraft in the war in Donbas cannot be ruled out: jets can engage if the conflict "extends," according to a Ukrainian Lieutenant-General (Retd) Dmytro Umanets. Answering the question on whether the Russian air forces will be involved in the Donbas war, he said: "This is a very difficult question, and it requires a lot of attention. While we have more or less strengthened our defenses, everything regarding the use of warplanes is a very difficult question. If the aggression moves further, if the conflict extends... I will not be talking about this situation, but, as a military, I understand that if some means have exhausted themselves and haven't allowed to defeat the enemy, the leaders start using other means and forces to suppress the enemy. It's natural." On the border with Russia, there should be created "a field, which not even a drone could fly through" and "a powerful group of anti-aircraft missile troops, aimed to suppress any attempts of the enemy to attack our cities, our country, and our people."

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/dEijDtAcWABZp9og8zToU6>

New sanctions, expulsion of diplomats "not the sum total" of response to Russia's actions – Barack Obama, 30.12.2016

"These actions are not the sum total of our response to Russia's aggressive activities. We will continue to take a variety of actions at a time and place of our choosing, some of which will not be publicized," Obama said in a statement. Obama went on to say that all Americans "should be alarmed by Russia's actions." He said that Russia "took actions intended to interfere with the U.S. election process," stressing that this cyberattack "could only have been directed by the highest levels of the Russian government." He added that the U.S. diplomats "have experienced an unacceptable level of harassment in Moscow by Russian security services and police over the last years." "Such activities have consequences," Obama said.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/new-sanctions-expulsion-of-diplomats-not-the-sum-total-of-response-to-russias-action-obama/>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/12/29/statement-president-actions-response-russian-malicious-cyber-activity>

<http://tass.com/politics/923449>

<http://tass.com/politics/923478>

Trump card Moscow keeps up its sleeve: Gerashchenko says Russia blackmails Ukraine with prisoners, 31.12.2016

"The issue of hostages has become one of the most emotional and difficult ones. This is that one issue, the trump card that Moscow holds up its sleeve, trying to blackmail Ukraine and the whole world with it, demanding amnesty [for militants detained in Ukraine]," said Gerashchenko. "The decision on whom to release, when to release, and how to release, is not taken by 'Igor' and 'Sasha' [the reference to the manner Nadiia Savchenko called Donbas militant leaders Igor Plotnitsky and Alexander Zakharchenko, with whom she held unsanctioned talks in Minsk] but by Moscow. That is why it is very important to talk specifically with Moscow: to find a way how to demand from Moscow the release of our prisoners," she said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1706686-trump-card-moscow-keeps-up-its-sleeve-gerashchenko-says-russia-blackmails-ukraine-with-prisoners.html>

Soros brands Trump "would-be dictator", 31.12.2016

"Even the US, the world's leading democracy, elected a con artist and would-be dictator as its president," George Soros wrote in his column published by Project Syndicate. "Although Trump has toned down his rhetoric since he was elected, he has changed neither his behavior nor his advisers. His cabinet comprises incompetent extremists and retired generals," reads the article. However, Soros expressed confidence that democracy would prove resilient in the U.S.: "Its Constitution and institutions, including the fourth estate, are strong enough to resist the excesses of the executive branch, thus preventing a would-be dictator from becoming an actual one." At the same time, the acclaimed businessman suggests that "the US will be preoccupied with internal struggles in the near future, and targeted minorities will suffer." "The US will be unable to protect and promote democracy in the rest of the world. On the contrary, Trump will have greater affinity with dictators. That will allow some of them to reach an accommodation with the US, and others to carry on without interference," said Soros.

<http://www.unian.info/world/1706826-soros-brands-trump-would-be-dictator.html>

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/open-society-needs-defending-by-george-soros-2016-12?barrier=accessyef>

Senator John McCain brands Russia's US election 'hack' 'an act of war', 31.12.2016

The Republican said today Russia must be made to pay the price for cyber attacks on the United States and that it was possible to impose many sanctions, including on financial institutions. McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, has scheduled a hearing for Thursday on foreign cyber threats. "When you attack a country, it's an act of war," McCain said in an interview. "And so we have to make sure that there is a price to pay, so that we can perhaps persuade the Russians to stop these kind of attacks on our very fundamentals of democracy." And that came on the same day the FBI formally accused Russian agents of hacking during the US election campaign in an extraordinary report.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/senator-john-mccain-brands-suspected-9538566>

Pinchuk proposes Crimea trade for Donbas peace, drawing harsh criticism, 31.12.2016

Billionaire oligarch Victor Pinchuk has supported Ukraine's integration with Europe through his Yalta European Strategy Conference, but he's now promoting a different line, writing in a Wall Street Journal op-ed that Ukraine should give up Crimea and medium-term hopes of European Union and NATO membership in exchange for peace in Donbas. Pinchuk's article –under the headline "Ukraine must make painful compromises for peace with Russia" – argues that Ukraine should remove EU membership and its claim to Crimea from its national policy priorities as part of a broad deal to end Russia's war against the eastern Donbas. "We should also make clear that we are ready to accept an incremental rollback of sanctions on Russia as we move toward a solution for a free, united, peaceful and secure Ukraine," Pinchuk wrote in the column. "The Ukrainian lives that will be saved are worth the painful compromises I have proposed."

<http://ukrainianlaw.blogspot.com/2016/12/pinchuk-proposes-crimea-trade-for.html>

Russia using "organized chaos" to subvert Ukrainian government – analyst, 31.12.2016

Russia's hybrid aggression unleashed against Ukraine has transitioned to a phase where Moscow seeks non-military means of 'resolving' the conflict on its own terms. This is in line with the Russian General Staff concept of hybrid warfare. In early 2013, Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, presented a report called "New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations" at the Russian Academy of Military Science conference. Exactly a year later, the world saw Russia's annexation of Crimea followed by the war in the Donbas. After Russia's occupation of Crimea and some of the Donbas areas, few people could still view Gerasimov's chart as a sheer scientific coincidence. Having seen reduced military activity in the Donbas, Russian military and academic circles are discussing scenarios to move the aggression in eastern Ukraine into the 'resolving the conflict' phase.

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2016/12/30/russia-using-organized-chaos-to-subvert-ukrainian-government-gerasimov-hybrid-war/>

Actions of Ukrainian Authorities

Ukraine publishes Russia's letter against missile tests near Crimea, 01.12.2016

The letter addressing the military attaché under Ukraine's Embassy in Russia was published by the Ukrayinska Pravda news outlet. "The Defense Ministry of the Russian Federation warns that if launched missiles are spotted in the said area, they will be destroyed by the air defense forces of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation," the letter reads. "If the launched missiles pose a threat to Russian facilities located in this area of the Russian Federation's territory (the ground, the sea and airspace), a response strike will be carried out to destroy the launchers," the Russian Defense Ministry warned.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1654292-ukraine-publishes-russias-letter-against-missile-tests-near-crimea.html>

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/ukraine-warns-russia-of-missile-tests-near-crimea/>

<http://uaposition.com/business-insider/russian-forces-on-high-alert-as-ukraine-tests-missiles-near-crimea/>

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/2131257-ukraine-starts-missile-tests-near-occupied-crimea.html>

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/russia-deploys-anti-aircraft-system-in-crimea-ahead-of-ukraine-s-missile-tests-video-816263.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1655597-russia-preparing-paratroopers-rotation-in-crimeas-north-border-guards.html>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/ukraine-kicks-missile-tests-occupied-crimea/>

Readout of Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work's Meeting with Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze, 07.12.2016

Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work hosted Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze for a meeting at the Pentagon today. The leaders discussed their mutual commitment to the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Work expressed that Ukraine needs to maintain momentum on defense reforms to help Ukraine better provide for its own security and make its defense enterprise more effective and efficient. The deputy prime minister noted how she believes that success in defense reform could have a positive domino effect in other areas of reform throughout Ukraine. The two leaders also reviewed U.S. security assistance efforts designed to help build the capacity of Ukraine's forces. The United States has committed more than \$600 million since 2014, including training programs, equipment, and a robust advisory effort to advance the implementation of key defense reforms. Work noted the fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act offers a promising signal that security cooperation efforts can continue in the new year if Ukraine demonstrates progress in implementing defense institutional reforms.

<http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/1021548/readout-of-deputy-secretary-of-defense-bob-works-meeting-with-ukrainian-deputy>

Ukraine's Klimkin, OSCE's Zannier discuss strengthening of SMM security component in Donbas, 09.12.2016

"The parties discussed possibilities of strengthening security component of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in order to ensure effective monitoring and verification of implementation of the Minsk agreements," the statement of the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine reads. Klimkin stressed the need for continuous SMM monitoring on the line of separation and presence of the monitors on to the uncontrolled area of the Ukrainian-Russian border in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/2136283-klimkin-zannier-discuss-strengthening-osce-smm-security-component-in-ukraine.html>

SBU exposes Ukrainian colonel collaborating with Russia special services, 13.12.2016

"It took us much time to gather evidence, without hastily drawing conclusions on this case. And the materials we've got on this case let us state openly, directly and firmly that Bezyazykov worked for and fulfilled tasks of the Russian special services," head of the SBU chief's staff Oleksandr Tkachuk said. Witnesses confirm that the traitor had got a Russian military uniform, service weapons, an ID card, he received a salary and used an administrative vehicle with a driver, Tkachuk said. According to Tkachuk, Bezyazykov repeatedly traveled to the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don for briefings by members of the Russian special services. "While in captivity, he would freely travel to the Russian Federation. He was seen to show off a Stechkin [automatic pistol]," the SBU officer said. "The traitor colonel collaborated with the intelligence structures of the [Donbas] militants controlled by the Russian special services," the SBU tweeted on Tuesday. Donbas terrorists knew Bezyazykov under such noms de guerre as "Louise," "Uncle Vanya," "Colonel," "Ivan Nikolayevich." When asked when the colonel began to work for the Russian intelligence services, Tkachuk said the information was being verified. "We do not rule out any versions as for the period when Bezyazykov was working for the Russian special services," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1676211-sbu-exposes-ukrainian-colonel-collaborating-with-russia-special-services.html>

Ukrainian Colonel suspected of collaboration with DPR militants hospitalized, court hearing postponed, 13.12.2016

The court hearing to decide on the measure of restraint against Bezyazykov has been postponed indefinitely. During a Tuesday hearing, the suspect "felt unwell" and the court ordered to take the suspect to a hospital in an ambulance. July 5, Colonel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Bezyazykov, who has illegally been held by militants in Donbas since August, 2014, was released. According to the colonel's wife, the evidence against her husband was given by his subordinates, who were also in captivity with him. Indeed, he tried to persuade the soldiers to side with "DPR", but the conversations were staged, she said. "It was a play. He could not

refuse because there was a threat to his life, when these people, the militants, killed a man in front of my husband. He could not risk his life like that. But he made it clear that it is was all staged," the woman said.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1677422-ukrainian-colonel-suspected-of-collaboration-with-dpr-militants-hospitalized-court-hearing-postponed.html>

Ukraine security chief calls for better cyber defence against Russia, 14.12.2016

Over the past week, Ukraine's Finance and Defence ministries and State Treasury said their websites had been temporarily downed by attacks aimed at disrupting their operations. "These attacks were planned in advance and coordinated from a center based in the Russian Federation," the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, Oleksander Turchynov, said. At the end of 2015, the council blamed Russia for a cyber attack on its power grid that left part of western Ukraine temporarily without electricity. Cyber security experts consider Russia one of the world's most advanced cyber powers, along with the United States, China, Israel, France and Britain. Bratislava-based computer security company ESET said it believed the recent attacks on the ministries were attempted "cybersabotage" and likely carried out by the same group that targeted Ukraine's power grid last year.

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN1431MZ-OCATP>

Ukraine moves to nationalize its largest bank, 19.12.2016

"At a meeting on Sunday, the Cabinet of Ministers considered issues to ensure stability of the country's financial system. Taking into account the results of a meeting of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, the government has supported the proposal put forward by the National Bank and the Council for Financial Stability on the transfer of PJSC PrivatBank to 100% state ownership," the Cabinet said in a statement posted on its official website. The bank, partly owned by Ukraine's billionaire and former Dnipropetrovsk governor Ihor Kolomoyskiy, will be taken over by the country's Finance Ministry.

<http://uatoday.tv/business/ukraine-moves-to-nationalize-its-largest-bank-849488.html>

http://en.lb.ua/news/2016/12/19/2643_privatbank_quarantees_safetv.html

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1685627-nbu-chief-on-privatbank-nationalization-services-for-legal-entities-suspended-for-24-hours-no-other-payment-restrictions-to-come.html>

http://en.lb.ua/news/2016/12/19/2644_poroshenko_urges_privatbank_clients.html

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/finance-ministry-introduces-new-head-privatbank-forms-supervisory-board/>

NBU chief voices terms of PrivatBank stabilization, 21.12.2016

Head of the National Bank of Ukraine Valeria Gontareva has said that the stabilization process of the nationalized PrivatBank can take between one and three years, DT.ua reported.

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1690062-nbu-chief-voices-terms-of-privatbank-stabilization.html>

Yanukovych era official commits suicide to avoid arrest, 21.12.2016

Former deputy head of Naftogaz of Ukraine energy holding, who had been in office at the time of Viktor Yanukovich presidency, Hennady Yuriev, has committed suicide in his home in Vinnytsia region, reports citing the press secretary of Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko. It is noted that today, December 21, military prosecutors have come to his house to detain the former official. "After the group of investigators entered one of the searched premises, they found a body of the former deputy head of Naftogaz of Ukraine, who seems to have made a shot from a firearm at the time of the entry," press secretary Larysa Sarhan wrote.

<http://uatoday.tv/crime/yanukovych-era-ex-official-commits-suicide-to-avoid-arrest-851578.html>

Ukraine's parliament votes to dismiss Savchenko from PACE delegation, 22.12.2016

Verkhovna Rada, the parliament of Ukraine, has voted to exclude Nadiya Savchenko from Ukrainian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). The move was supported by 237 lawmakers present in the session hall.

Savchenko explained she met with the separatist leaders to discuss possible ways to release Ukrainians held captive in the occupied territories of Donbas.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/ukraine-s-parliament-votes-to-dismiss-savchenko-from-pace-delegation-851958.html>

Groysman: Cabinet plans to introduce Mobile ID in Ukraine, 24.12.2016

"We need to open up opportunities for the development of this trend, to ensure its maximum support. We will form the package of necessary legislative initiatives," he said, adding that the government will be able to prepare the necessary package of initiatives in a few weeks. Groysman said that the government will also support those bills on Mobile ID, already submitted to Parliament. According to him, this will enable operators to "start implementing mobile identification issues." According to the head of the government, Mobile ID services are very promising, since they will facilitate the introduction of online public services and the buildup of a digital society in Ukraine. Groysman said that with the help of this technology, the citizens will be able to get any public services online, without any direct interaction with government agencies. "Everything has to be done remotely. The practice, when a person physically goes somewhere to be issued some documents should be a thing of the past," the prime minister said.

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1697456-groysman-cabinet-plans-to-introduce-mobile-id-in-ukraine.html>

http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=248985030&cat_id=244314975

Ukrainian Prime Minister postpones visit to Israel following tensions after UNSC Resolution vote, 25.12.2016

Volodymyr Groysman has postponed his visit to Israel. A new date of the visit will be determined later," Stoliarchuk informed. As was reported earlier, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday, December 24, announced that he had canceled the official visit of his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Groysman to Israel. The cancellation of the visit is believed to be connected with the voting on the UN Security Council resolution reiterating its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory. Some 14 (out of 15) members of the UN Security Council, including Ukraine, voted for the resolution, with one abstention (the United States, which did not use its veto power). The resolution notes that Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank and continuing construction in East Jerusalem is a violation of international law and is an obstacle to an Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/ukrainian-prime-minister-postpones-visit-to-israel-following-tensions-after-unsc-resolution-vote/>

<https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ukrnews/2146208-ukraine-supports-un-resolution-on-israel.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1698956-subtle-diplomacy-why-ukraine-could-not-avoid-voting-for-un-resolution-on-israel.html>

SBU exposes terrorists' communication channel in Donbas, 26.12.2016

The law enforcers found out that three residents of the town of Pokrovsk had organized the channel using special telecom equipment. The attackers routed telephone traffic over the Internet via IP-telephony technology, bypassing international switching centers. "During searches at their premises, the officers seized GSM-gateways, through which an uncontrolled communication channel had been organized, computer equipment, as well as 3,000 Sim cards," the report says. According to the detainees, it was the representatives of the "DPR" and "LPR" illegal armed groups who ordered the "services" on creating an unauthorized comm channel," the SBU said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1697962-sbu-exposes-terrorists-communication-channel-in-donbas-photo-video.html>

SBU chief comments on cons and pros of possible martial law in Donbas, 28.12.2016

"On the one hand, we are seeing that there is an ongoing war in the east of Ukraine, that is de jure called ATO [Anti-Terrorist Operation]. But it's still war, because even now, in violation of Minsk agreements, heavy artillery is active, and people are dying. Meanwhile, de facto, the Ukrainian society, Ukrainian political elite, political leadership allow for mass rallies to be held," he said. Hrytsak also believes that it would have been easier for the country to deal with the problems in the east, had the state of emergency or martial law been introduced. "But in this case, we would have gone more than a dozen steps back in our Euro-Atlantic aspirations, as this would have automatically assumed introduction of censorship, the ban on assembly, re-election and much more. Therefore, this is the biggest challenge," said the head of the SBU.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1701731-sbu-chief-comments-on-cons-and-pros-of-possible-martial-law-in-donbas.html>

President signed the Law on Amendments to the Tax Code on the Improvement of the Investment Climate in Ukraine, 30.12.2016

In the course of the meeting with Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee for Tax and Customs Policy Nina Yuzhanina and Minister of Finance of Ukraine Oleksandr Danyliuk, President Petro Poroshenko signed the Law on Amendments to the Tax Code on the Improvement of the Investment Climate in Ukraine. "I would like to congratulate you on the completion of an extremely important process, which started with large-scale consultations with the public, huge work that involved business circles and civil activists," Petro Poroshenko said. According to him, the draft law has been considered by the Government. The National Council of Reforms has made serious efforts to finally produce a draft law on the amendments to the Tax Code aimed to improve the investment climate.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-pidpisav-zakon-pro-vnesennya-zmin-do-podatkovogo-k-39338>

Terrorism / Separatism

Hot spot in Mariupol sector in last day, militants use banned artillery, 01.12.2016

"In the Mariupol sector, the militants used 122mm artillery systems, 120mm and 82mm mortars to shell the towns of Krasnohorivka and Maryinka, and the villages of Shyrokyne, Slavne, Hnutove, Talakivka, Pavlopil, and Novohryhorivka. Tank shells were also used on Shyrokyne," the report says. In the Luhansk sector, the occupiers fired grenade launchers near the village of Stanytsia Luhanska. In the Donetsk sector, Russia`s hybrid military force opened fire from grenade launchers of various systems, heavy machine guns and other small arms near the town of Avdiyivka and the village of Luhanske. The Minsk peace agreements on Donbas ban the use of weapons whose diameter is larger than 100mm.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/hot-spot-mariupol-sector-last-day-militants-use-banned-artillery/>

ATO HQ: Ukrainian soldier joins Donbas militants to shun punishment for crime, 02.12.2016

"Yesterday, a serviceman of one of our units committed a serious crime. Hoping to avoid the punishment, he defected to the enemy," the report of the ATO HQ says. However, the ATO HQ did not elaborate on details of the crime committed by the defector.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1657256-ato-hq-ukrainian-soldier-joins-donbas-militants-to-shun-punishment-for-crime.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1658352-ukraine-defense-ministry-elaborates-on-murder-of-platoon-commander-in-ato-zone.html>

Tuka comments on possibility of pro-Ukrainian uprising in Donbas, 02.12.2016

"If we speak about militants who have Ukrainian citizenship, their mood is bad. Many of them are willing to lay down their arms," he said in an interview. Tuka also noted that after the end of the conflict in Donbas, Ukraine will have to handle demilitarization and prosecution of militants involved in killings of members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and civilians. In addition, according to Tuka, a mere 30% of the militants of the self-proclaimed republics in Donbas are local citizens, while the rest are Russian mercenaries. "And this is a serious problem because I had information that even today, it is theoretically possible to stir up a rebellion from within there. But the likelihood is that the uprising will be drowned in bloodshed by that scum who arrived from the outside. And there are serious doubts that we will be able to support this uprising from our side," the official said. He also said he had met with representatives of two such areas that would like to raise a rebellion, and directed them to respective structures.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1658141-tuka-comments-on-possibility-of-pro-ukrainian-uprising-in-donbas.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1659262-ukraine-official-names-another-threat-to-donbas-conflict-settlement.html>

ATO HQ: Russia's hybrid military force attacks Ukraine 26 times in past day, 04.12.2016

The number of attacks by the combined Russian-separatist occupation forces on Ukrainian positions in Donbas, eastern Ukraine, decreased to 26 on December 3, 2016, from 44 in the previous day, according to the ATO HQ press service.

<http://www.onlinegetnews.com/newsflash/ato-hq-russias-hybrid-military-force-attacks-ukraine-26-times-in-past-day/4055626.html>

Five Ukraine police killed in friendly fire mix-up, 04.12.2016

An armed policeman stands guard in the town of Knyazychy, about 30 kilometres east of Kiev. Five Ukrainian police were killed by friendly fire in a tragic accident in which officers mistook colleagues for burglars, officials said. Three burglars initially escaped the crime scene amid a gunfight between different security forces, although they were later detained. "Last night a devastating tragedy took place that killed five police officers," Anton Gerashchenko, a lawmaker and advisor to the interior ministry, wrote. The regional police force confirmed the incident.

<http://uaposition.com/the-borneo-post/five-ukraine-police-killed-in-friendly-fire-mix-up-2/>

<http://www.unian.info/society/1660356-police-detain-gang-staked-out-by-officers-killed-in-kniazhychi-photos-video.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3998990/Five-Ukrainian-policemen-killed-COLLEAGUES-friendly-fire.html>

ATO HQ comments blast in occupied Donetsk, numerous victims among militants, 05.12.2016

"There was a lot of information that an ammunition depot, a chemical plant exploded in Donetsk. In fact, we only know that one of the militant units was located on this plant, and we know exactly what the unit was. They arrived there until October, as well as machinery and heavy equipment, a lot of ammunition and the corresponding weapons. We know for sure that after 21:00 Kyiv time, fire trucks appeared at the scene. Something has definitely happened, but it is clearly impossible to say for sure that there were many casualties among the militants," he said. According to sources, an arsenal of pro-Russian mercenaries blew up, which was located at a chemical factory. There is no verified information at the moment if any civilians were affected. However, according to some estimates, around 100 militants were killed in the blast.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1660652-ato-hq-comments-blast-in-occupied-donetsk-numerous-victims-among-militants.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1660657-donbas-militants-use-mortars-near-shyrokyne-anti-aircraft-guns-in-luhansk-sector.html>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 05.12.2016

In Donetsk region the SMM recorded more ceasefire violations between the night of 2 December and the evening of 3 December compared with the previous reporting period, and fewer on 4 December. In Luhansk region the Mission recorded fewer ceasefire violations on both 3 and 4 December compared with the previous reporting period. It continued to face restrictions of its movement in the disengagement areas in Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske, as well as in other areas.* The SMM followed up on reports of a civilian casualty in Horlivka and damage to civilian infrastructure in Luhanske and Horlivka. The Mission continued to note long queues at entry-exit checkpoints on both sides of the contact line. It facilitated and monitored repair works near the Donetsk water filtration station. It monitored two border areas not controlled by the Government. In Kherson the SMM noted a calm situation at the administrative boundary line between mainland Ukraine and Crimea.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/286206>

Militants give "amnesty" to prisoners who accept "DPR", 06.12.2016

Seven employees of the penitentiary system of "Donetsk People's Republic" were arrested earlier this year, another 15 are wanted", according to the Head of Ukraine's National Police in Donetsk region Vyacheslav Abroskin. "The jailers who sided with the terrorists are criminals. They will not escape responsibility for crimes they committed. Since the beginning of 2016 to the present time seven employees of the penitentiary system of "DPR" were arrested, another 15 are wanted," he wrote. Abroskin also gave some examples from the life of colonies located in the "DPR". In Zhdanivska colony, according to him, a "legal drug trafficking" operates: narcotics are delivered here and "just like in a supermarket, the prisoners buy them." The colony also serves as a sewing department tailoring military uniforms for militants. Makiyivka colony is used by militants "DPR" as a place where they put Ukraine's Armed Forces soldiers and "guilty" militants.

<http://112.international/conflict-in-eastern-ukraine/militants-give-amnesty-to-prisoners-who-accept-dpr-11769.html>

Ukraine reports 45 militant attacks in last day, Maryinka checkpoint comes under fire, 07.12.2016

In the Mariupol sector, the enemy fired 120mm and 82mm mortars, grenade launchers and automatic grenade launchers, infantry fighting vehicles and small arms. In the Donetsk sector, the militants fired mortars, grenade launchers, and heavy machine guns. Additionally, a sniper was active. "In the Luhansk sector, Russia's hybrid military force repeatedly fired 120mm and 82mm mortars, grenade launchers and anti-aircraft guns on the villages of Krymske, Novozvanivka, Novo-Oleksandrivka and Stanytsia Luhanska, as well as small arms on the village of Katerynivka," the report says.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1665066-ukraine-reports-45-militant-attacks-in-last-day-maryinka-checkpoint-comes-under-fire.html>

Militants attack Ukraine 20 times in last day, use heavy artillery in Vodiane, 08.12.2016

In the Mariupol sector, Russia's hybrid military force fired 120mm mortars on the villages of Chermalyk and Shyrokyne, and 82mm mortars on the town of Krasnohorivka. A sniper was active in the village of Novotroytske. The enemy also used grenade launchers and small arms near the villages of Lebedynske, Slavne and Pavlopil. "In the Donetsk sector, the occupiers fired 152mm and 122mm artillery systems on the village of Vodiane, as well as 120mm and 82mm mortars on the village of Verkhniotoretske. Additionally, the enemy opened fire from infantry fighting vehicles, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms on the town of Avdiyivka and the village of Luhanske," the report says.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1667302-militants-attack-ukraine-20-times-in-last-day-use-heavy-artillery-in-vodiane.html>

ATO HQ: Russian proxies attack Ukraine 70 times in last day, 11.12.2016

Most of the attacks occurred in the Mariupol sector where Russia's hybrid military force fired 152mm and 122mm artillery. Additionally, militants used mortars of various calibres, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and small arms. The village of Shyrokyne also came under tank attack. In the Luhansk sector, the enemy used 122mm artillery, mortars, grenade launchers and small arms. In the Donetsk sector, the occupiers fired 82mm mortars, grenade launchers of various systems, heavy machine guns and small arms, according to the report.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1672682-ato-hq-russian-proxies-attack-ukraine-70-times-in-last-day.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1673331-ato-hq-russian-proxies-attack-ukraine-over-50-times-in-last-day.html>

Ukrainian army reports 42 attacks in Donbas in last day, 13.12.2016

In the Mariupol sector, the hostiles fired 120mm and 82mm mortars, grenade launchers, and sniper activity was observed, the staff said. In the Luhansk sector, mortars, grenade launchers and small arms were used. Novozvanivka came under artillery attack. In the Donetsk sector, the separatists fired mortars, grenade launchers, small arms and heavy machineguns.

<https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/ukrainian-army-reports-42-attacks-donbas-last-day.html>

One killed and one wounded as Russian-separatist forces fire on queue at Mayorsk checkpoint, 14.12.2016

Combined Russian-separatist forces on Dec. 14 attacked the Mayorsk entry and exit checkpoint in Donetsk region, as a result of which one person has been killed and another one has been wounded, according to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

<https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/one-killed-one-wounded-russian-separatist-forces-fire-queue-mayorsk-checkpoint.html>

Red Cross sends 560 tonnes of humanitarian aid to occupied Donbas, 14.12.2016

The Ukrainian Border Service on Saturday handled 560 tonnes of humanitarian aid from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and allowed it to enter temporarily occupied territory in Donbas, eastern Ukraine, according to the State Border Service's press service. Thirty-one trucks with the international aid entered the uncontrolled territory across the refurbished Novotroytske checkpoint in Volnovakha district, Donetsk region.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/red-cross-sends-560-tonnes-of-humanitarian-aid-to-occupied-donbas-520282.html>

Donetsk Airport, Avdiyivka, Yasynuvata triangle of most ceasefire violations – OSCE, 15.12.2016

"The OSCE is aware that the situation at the contact line remains very unstable, and we continue to note an unacceptably high number of ceasefire violations along the contact line in the known hotspots," Hug said. He noted that approximately 50% of all those violations are reported in the triangle formed by Donetsk Airport, Avdiyivka and Yasynuvata. The rest of the violations are registered in the area between Svitlodarsk and Debaltseve, east and northeast of Ukrainian-controlled Mariupol, as well as west and north of Horlivka, and sporadically also in the western part of Luhansk region. The mentioned hotspots are located near or in civilian areas "where civilians live and work," Hug said. He said that the OSCE SMM patrol had visited the site of shelling at the Mayorsk checkpoint where a man was killed and two more were injured on Wednesday morning. "The patrol of the SMM had been present shortly afterwards on the scene of the incident. It had observed there a dead body of a male civilian in the vicinity of the 'zero' checkpoint of the Ukraine Armed Forces in the Mayorsk crossing area. The body observed by our patrol had a gunshot wound to his head," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1679626-donetsk-airport-avdiyivka-yasynuvata-triangle-of-most-ceasefire-violations-osce.html>

Civilian areas in Donbas come under Russian militant fire twice in last day, 16.12.2016

Militants attacked civilian areas twice. The village of Maiorsk was shelled with the use of small arms, while mortars, anti-aircraft guns and heavy machine guns were used to attack the village of Krymske," it wrote on Facebook on Thursday. In total, combined Russian-separatist forces attacked Ukrainian army positions in eastern Ukraine 18 times in the past 24 hours, using banned weapons in all directions.

<http://uaposition.com/maps/civilian-areas-in-donbas-come-under-russian-militant-fire-twice-in-last-day/>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1682096-donbas-sees-escalation-as-number-of-militant-attacks-grows-to-39-in-last-day.html>

Self-proclaimed Luhansk People`s Republic draws up lists of Ukrainian-minded citizens, 16.12.2016

The so-called Ministry of State Security of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People`s Republic ("LPR") terrorist organization draws up lists of Ukrainian-minded citizens, according to the Information Resistance activist group. "LPR" members use such notions for degrees of "pro-Ukrainian mood" as "unreliable" and "Ukraine sympathizers." "The lists must include information about movable and immovable property owned by these individuals," the Information Resistance group said.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/self-proclaimed-luhansk-people-republic-draws-up-lists-of-ukrainian-minded-citizens/>

In two-hour battle against Russian troops on Sunday 5 Ukrainian soldiers killed, 26 wounded, 18.12.2016

5 Ukrainian soldiers were killed in action (KIA) and 26 were wounded in action (WIA) during an attack on Sunday, December 18, by combined Russian-separatist forces on Ukrainian positions along the so-called Svitlodarska Duha, a stretch between the militant-controlled town of Horlivka and the town of Svitlodarsk in Donetsk region, according to the ATO HQ press center.

"Our positions near the village of Novo-Oleksandrivka, which is in the Luhansk sector, came under fire from rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns. Since 05:50 [local time on Sunday], mercenaries of the Russian occupation force had been trying to oust our vanguard troops from their positions in the area of Svitlodarska Duha after long preparation fire from heavy artillery and mortars," the ATO HQ reported on Sunday.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/in-two-hour-battle-on-sunday-5-ukrainian0soldiers-6-wounded/>

<http://uaposition.com/maps/ukraine-reports-40-russian-attacks-on-its-positions-in-donbas-in-past-day/>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/russian-attack-at-svitlodarsk-duha-Donbas-enemy-retreat-many-dead-and-wounded/>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 19.12.2016

The SMM recorded more ceasefire violations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions on both 17 and 18 December compared with 16 December. The SMM observed heavy fighting in the areas around Svitlodarsk and Debaltseve. The SMM followed up on reports of shelling and observed impacts on both sides of the contact line in Popasna and Kalynove. The SMM continued

monitoring the three disengagement areas in Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske, and its access was again restricted; it recorded ceasefire violations in or around Petrivske.* The Mission continued to monitor the withdrawal of weapons and observed weapons in violation of the withdrawal lines. The Mission monitored one border crossing point currently not under government control.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/290026>

ATO HQ: Militants attack Ukrainian positions in all sectors in last day, 20.12.2016

Most attacks were recorded in the Mariupol sector. The militants fired 122mm artillery systems, 120mm and 82mm mortars, infantry fighting vehicles and tanks. In the Luhansk sector, Russia's hybrid military forces fired 120mm and 82mm mortars and rocket-propelled grenades. An enemy sniper was active in Stanytsia Luhanska.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1687352-ato-hq-militants-attack-ukrainian-positions-in-all-sectors-in-last-day.html>

Russian proxies pledge truce in Donbas for Christmas, 21.12.2016

"We, Trilateral Contact Group members, and representatives of separate areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, stressing the need for peace and truce due to the upcoming holidays, confirm our commitments to a comprehensive, sustainable and indefinite ceasefire, starting from 00:00 Kyiv time on December 24 this year," he said at a briefing after a TCG meeting in Minsk.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1691476-russian-proxies-pledge-truce-in-donbas-for-christmas.html>

Turchynov on battles near Svitlodarsk: Our troops take new positions after counter-attack, 22.12.2016

The new positions "have become an additional advantage over the enemy in that defense sector," Turchynov said while visiting the front line where the 54th brigade has managed to repel enemy attacks. "For the fourth day in a row, our positions have continuously been shelled with the use of artillery systems and large-caliber mortars that are banned by the Minsk agreements. They have set a kind of a new 'record' in terms of the number of bombs and shells lobbed onto our positions near the so-called Svitlodardka Duha bulge - over 800 per day," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1691712-turchynov-on-battles-near-svitlodarsk-our-troops-take-new-positions-after-counter-attack.html>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/russia-plans-to-boost-military-presence-at-ukraine-borders-russia-ministry-defense/>

Russian hackers tracked Ukrainian artillery units using Android implant: report, 22.12.2016

A hacking group linked to the Russian government and high-profile cyber attacks against Democrats during the U.S. presidential election likely used a malware implant on Android devices to track and target Ukrainian artillery units from late 2014 through 2016, according to a new report. The malware was able to retrieve communications and some locational data from infected devices, intelligence that would have likely been used to strike against the artillery in support of pro-Russian separatists fighting in eastern Ukraine, the report from cyber security firm CrowdStrike found. The findings are the latest to support a growing view among Western security officials and cyber security researchers that Russian President Vladimir Putin has increasingly relied on hacking to exert influence and attack geopolitical foes. The hacking group, known commonly as Fancy Bear or APT 28, is believed by U.S. intelligence officials to work primarily on behalf of the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyber-ukraine-idUSKBN14B0CU>

Ukraine, use of banned weapons increase in Donbas, 23.12.2016

Last week the use of banned weapons in Donbas increased about 300%. OSCE SMM Principal Deputy Chief Monitor to Ukraine Alexander Hug reported. The use of this kind of weapons was banned by the Minsk peace agreements on Donbas. "Last week the use of Minsk-proscribed weapons increased by approximately 300%," reported Hug. He also talked about an higher number of ceasefire violations during the last week. "Osce monitors recorded a 75% increase in the number of ceasefire violations compared to the previous week," he said. Hug talked about the types of weapons used in Donbas: last week the Smm recorded about 985 mortar, tank, artillery and multiple launch rocket system explosions, he said. (ANSA).

<http://www.cei.int/node/1767/36440>

Three Ukrainian soldiers captured, brutally tortured, then killed by Donbas militants – activist, 23.12.2016

"A tragic situation at Svitlodarsk Arc. Three of our guys are gone. Two of them were out in the field, and they were taken away either by local militants or Russian mercenaries – it's not yet clear. The soldiers were wounded. They were videotaped and [the video was] handed over to our side, as confirmation that they were being held by the enemy..." the activist wrote. He added that the exchange had failed as the enemy did not want it and the Ukrainian side found no one to negotiate with. They [militants] all consider themselves commanders, and it was impossible to find someone to take up responsibility for ceasing fire. Then they were transferred to Debaltseve, abused and tortured and eventually killed them. Brutal images showing torture and dead bodies was immediately sent to us a confirmation that they were KIA," wrote Kabakaev. He noted that another Ukrainian soldier, who had reportedly been missing, was also killed.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1694072-three-ukrainian-soldiers-captured-brutally-tortured-then-killed-by-donbas-militants-activist.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1697201-handover-of-bodies-of-killed-ukraine-troops-at-svitlodarsk-arc-details.html>

Ukrainian govt forces report ceasefire violations in Donbas, 24.12.2016

Ukrainian government forces' positions in Donbas have been fired upon four times since a comprehensive ceasefire agreement that took effect at 0:00 a.m. December 24, Leonid Maiukhin, a member of the headquarters of the Ukrainian government forces in Donbas, told. "Two acts of provocation took place in Maryinka and one each in Shyrokyne and Zhovte in Luhansk region," Matiukhin said, adding that the militants used machineguns and firearms. The Ukrainian delegation to the Joint Control and Coordination Center (JCCC) in Donbas had said earlier that the ceasefire had been observed. "As of the morning of December 24, the Ukrainian part of the JCCC confirms the introduction of a comprehensive, durable, and open-ended ceasefire starting 0:00 a.m. December 24, 2016. Silence has been in effect along the entire line of contact," the statement said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/392921.html>

No ceasefire in Donbas: militants attack Ukraine 33 times in last day – Poltorak, 26.12.2016

"Unfortunately, the ceasefire is not observed by the terrorist groups. Unfortunately, there were 33 attacks with the use of mortars and artillery systems yesterday," Poltorak said at a briefing in Kharkiv on Monday. He noted that the relevant actions were supported by the Russian Federation. "It is a testament to the aggressive policy, which is supported by the Russian Federation, and the aggressive behavior of the terrorist groups in Donetsk and Luhansk," the Minister said. At the same time, Poltorak assured that the Armed Forces of Ukraine fully control the situation at the front and, in the case of aggravation, are ready to give a fitting rebuff. "The situation in the zone of the Anti-Terrorist Operation is under full control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The number of personnel, equipment, weapons, which are now in the ATO zone, fully ensure the inviolability of the borders and provide the fulfillment of the tasks assigned to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. We are monitoring the situation and are ready to react if it worsens," Poltorak said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1698177-no-ceasefire-in-donbas-militants-attack-ukraine-33-times-in-last-day-poltorak.html>

"D/LPR" set to hand two captured Ukrainians over to Savchenko, 26.12.2016

The leaders of the "DNR" and "LNR" Aleksandr Zakharchenko and Ihor Plotnitskiy say they will transfer two Ukrainian women in their captivity to Nadiya Savchenko, a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada. "As a gesture of goodwill on the eve of Christmas and New Year we are without any conditions are giving two women - Anzhelika Presnyakova and Olha Svorak over to a representative of the people of Ukraine Nadiya Savchenko," the two warlord leaders said in a statement published on militant website on 26 December.

Savchenko on December 7 clandestinely met in Minsk with the leaders of terrorist organizations "DPR" and "LPR".

http://en.lb.ua/news/2016/12/26/2705_dlpr_set_hand_two_captured.html

http://en.censor.net.ua/photo_news/421160/russianbacked_militants_release_two_ukrainian_female_hostages_photo

Two Ukrainian soldiers missing in ATO area, 27.12.2016

"Two soldiers of one of militants units that perform tasks in Luhansk region in Zolote checkpoint area at about 16:00; they were returning from the hospital by car, strayed from the route and drove to the territory controlled by militants", the press-center of ATO headquarters announced this on Monday evening. There is no connection yet with the missing soldiers. The headquarters investigates the circumstances of the incident.

Earlier it was reported that militants shelled ATO forces 37 times during past day and night. In order to preserve lives of the personnel, Ukrainian officers fire in response in Shyrokyne area.

<http://112.international/conflict-in-eastern-ukraine/two-ukrainian-soldiers-missing-in-ato-area-12492.html>

Deputy Minister comments on "blockade" of "LPR-DPR" by non-government actors, 27.12.2016

George Tuka said that he had no trust in the organizers of the so-called "blockade" of the "LPR-DPR" self-proclaimed republics. This move had not been coordinated with any government agency, Tuka wrote: "So, setting up checkpoints, carrying out any searches, issuing any 'licenses' is illegal and must be assessed accordingly by the law enforcers," he wrote. At the same time, the intention to "make [militants] starve" given 400 km of uncontrolled border with Russia is a really crazy idea. "I don't believe in a success of such 'pressure on separatists' other than providing yet another newsmaker for the occupiers (which we are already witnessing)," said the deputy minister.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1699287-deputy-minister-comments-on-blockade-of-lpr-dpr-by-non-government-actors.html>

Russian troops shell Ukraine positions in Donbas 44 times in past 24 hours, massing Grads near Svitlodarska Duha, 28.12.2016

It is noted that the occupying forces continue shelling the Ukrainian positions in all directions. In particular, in the Mariupol direction, the village of Shyrokyne was shelled from 122mm artillery. Vodiane and Shyrokyne as well were shelled from 120mm and 82mm mortars. The militants used grenade launchers and small arms firing at Talakivka, Vodiane, Maryinka, Pavlopil, and also Shyrokyne, where the active sniper was spotted aiming. The situation at the so-called Svitlodarska Duha bulge in the Donbas conflict zone, where the militants tried to seize the frontline of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from December 18 to December 22, is not yet stabilized. It is confirmed that the occupiers are massing Grad multiple rocket missile systems in this area, according to Colonel Andriy Lysenko, Defense Ministry spokesman for the ATO.

<http://uaposition.com/maps/russian-troops-shell-ukraine-positions-in-donbas-44-times-in-past-24-hours-massing-rads-near-svitlodarska-duha/>

Russian 'convoy' took away 40 bodies of Russian soldiers - Ukrainian intelligence, 28.12.2016

According to the report from Defence Intelligence of Ukraine, Russia military command uses the so-called 'humanitarian convoys' to secretly take away the killed soldiers. The aim of this operation is to disguise the presence of Russian army in Donbas. Moreover, the intelligence reports that the tensions between Russia-backed separatist forces and their commanders - Russian officers - continue to escalate. On December 26, there was a gunfight in Bryanka between drunk soldiers that were at an operational site and Russian officers that came for a spot check. As a result, one person was killed and several more were wounded. Because of this, soldiers were forbidden to leave the headquarters and were stripped of compensation for injuries that happened when they were drunk. That caused even more disagreement.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/russian-convoy-took-away-40-bodies-of-russian-soldiers-ukrainian-intelligence-855268.html>

ATO HQ: Russian proxies attack Ukraine in all sectors, 28.12.2016

"In the Mariupol sector, Russia's hybrid military force fired 82mm mortars on the town of Krasnohorivka, as well as heavy machine guns and small arms on the town of Maryinka, and the villages of Starohnativka, Shyrokyne and Novotroyitske," the ATO HQ said in an evening update. In the Luhansk sector, the militants opened fire from infantry fighting vehicles on the village of Balka Kosharna, as well as from small arms on the villages of Krymske and Malynove.

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/ePzc7MwMk2T1mHDZY3rLiu>

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/f4N4sdN5cDOcSnZuZKm9au>

Ukraine reports battle with Russian militant forces near Kruta Balka in Donbas, 29.12.2016

In Mariupol direction, the invaders shelled from 82mm and 120mm mortars, large-caliber machine guns and small arms. In the Donetsk direction, Russian occupation forces fired on the positions of the AFU from 120mm mortars, heavy machine guns, grenade launchers and small arms. In the area of Kruta Balka, a direct clash with the militants was reported.

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/ukraine-reports-battle-russian-militant-forces-near-kruta-balka-in-donbas/>

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/gYruSM9bBPI8BlppZBkuey>

<http://www.osce.org/om/291371>

Mortar shelling, clash near Popasna: ATO HQ report, 31.12.2016

The invaders opened fire from 120mm and 82mm mortars, grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms. It is reported that a clash with the pro-Russian militants took place near Popasna. The militant attack was repulsed, the enemy suffered losses and retreated.

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/dgmTmBb5OOVQQi9YMWEBk6>

National Minorities

Vandals put pig head, fake blood on Hasidic rabbi's grave, 21.12.2016

Ukrainian prosecutors opened a probe Wednesday into an attack on an important Jewish pilgrimage site in a central Ukrainian town, the second attack in as many years.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims visit the grave of revered Hasidic Rabbi Reb Nachman of Bratslav in the town of Uman, south of Kiev, every year. Rabbi Yisrael Elhadad of the Uman synagogue said on Ukraine 112 television channel that a group of ultra-nationalists stormed into the synagogue before dawn on Wednesday, tear gassed the pilgrims who were praying there, splashed fake blood on the walls and dumped a pig's head on the floor. The office of Prosecutor General Yuri Lutsenko said he has personally taken control of the case and instructed local prosecutors to make it a priority. Ukraine's acting police chief Vadym Troyan said the criminals would face eight years of prison if caught and convicted.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-4055018/Vandals-pig-head-fake-blood-Ukraine-rabbis-grave.html>

<http://www.unian.info/society/1690581-ukraine-police-on-hunt-for-criminals-who-vandalized-synagogue-in-uman.html>

Mass Media

1+1 Media CEO comments on situation with license: State interested in TV channel's assets, 29.12.2016

"It came as a surprise to us to learn that the chairman of the National Council [on Television and Radio Broadcasting] links the situation with the extension of 1+1 TV Channel's license with the nationalization of Privatbank. In our country, there is a mechanism for nationalization of banks but, thank God, there are no mechanisms to nationalize TV channels," he said, adding that the comment of Yuriy Artyomenko proves that the state is interested in the assets of 1+1 TV Channel. Tkachenko said that the channel was not an asset of PrivatBank. "The studio has no loans from and neither does it have debt obligations to the bank [PrivatBank]. In private conversations, I have repeatedly received information that on the part of the Presidential Administration, pressure has been imposed on the National Council. I attribute this to the fact that ahead of the elections, the Presidential Administration is not happy with having a media resource beyond its control," says the statement.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1703722-11-mediad-ceo-comments-on-situation-with-license-state-interested-in-tv-channels-assets.html>

<https://www.kyivpost.com/ukraine-politics/unian-11-media-ceo-says-license-cannot-subject-blackmail-illegal.html>

Ukraine Worldwide

FSB on "ghost hunt in occupied Crimea: Russian media tell of trial of "Ukrainian saboteurs", 06.12.2016

Lefortovo District Court of Moscow extended the arrest of citizens of Ukraine Yevgeny Panov and Andriy Zakhtey, charged with plotting terrorist attacks in the occupied Crimea. A court hearing was held on December 5 behind closed doors. As it became known, the prosecution has indicted only two Ukrainian citizens - Panov and Zakhtey. They are accused of "attempted sabotage and participation in an illegal armed formation." At the same time, the defense of the accused said that Panov and Zakhtey had no relation to plotting sabotage. According to the lawyer of Mr Panov, the man came to Crimea to make some money taxying. Subsequently, on August 7, he was detained at a border checkpoint as he was returning to mainland Ukraine.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1662947-fsb-on-ghost-hunt-in-occupied-crimea-russian-media-tell-of-trial-of-ukrainian-saboteurs.html>
<http://www.unian.info/society/1662692-ukrainian-saboteur-panov-tortured-in-crimea-into-confessing-lawyer.html>

Trumped up case of "Ukrainian saboteurs" in Crimea, 06.12.2016

December 9 marks exactly one month since the arrest in Crimea of the so-called "Ukrainian saboteurs" in the occupied Crimea. This is the second batch of nearly a dozen people detained in the case into the alleged plot to carry out terrorist attacks on the peninsula. One of these people is the former contributing author Dmytro Shtyblikov (he quit writing for the agency back in the days of the Maidan). One of my colleagues has branded Putin's regime "Stalin-lite". And the offspring, its noticeable product have become criminal cases. Cases against journalists, cases against the Crimean Tatars, and now the case against "Ukrainian saboteurs." The Crimean Human Rights Group says that in the latter case, all human rights are violated. The right to protection: a lawyer is not appointed or they are assigned by a state, and then they are forced to sign a nondisclosure deal; or the penitentiary authorities simply hide suspects from the lawyers hired by their families. We know nothing of the fate of the Putin's Crimean hostages.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1663937-trumped-up-case-of-ukrainian-saboteurs-in-crimea.html>

EU assistance to Ukraine: results so far are "fragile", 07.12.2016

EU assistance to Ukraine had limited impact and, despite the impetus for reform since then, the results achieved so far remain fragile, according to a new report from the European Court of Auditors. Over most of the period audited, the unstable political, legislative and administrative context limited the effectiveness of EU assistance, say the auditors. The auditors assessed whether European Commission and European External Action Service assistance was proving effective in supporting the reforms in Ukraine. They examined the areas of public finance management and the fight against corruption, as well as the gas sector, between 2007 and 2015. EU-Ukraine cooperation advanced in the wake of the 2014 Maidan events, say the auditors, but the challenges faced by Ukraine still heavily affect the reform process and the risks posed by the former and new oligarchs remain high. The EU responded promptly to the 2014 crisis with a package of €11.2 billion over seven years. But this was an emergency solution. The EU allocated and disbursed large amounts of money rapidly and without first agreeing its strategy.

<http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages/NewsItem.aspx?nid=7942>

German Defense Ministry sending military advisors to Ukraine, 09.12.2016

Ukrainian and German Defense Ministries have agreed to send military advisors to Ukraine. A corresponding agreement on the assigning of the German military advisors to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine was signed in Kyiv on Thursday by Deputy Defense Minister of Ukraine on European Integration Ihor Dolhov and Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Defense of Germany Ralf Brauksiepe. Under the agreement, the German consultant will come to the National Army Academy named after Hetman Petro Sahaidachny in Lviv to provide consultations in the sphere of defense. According to Brauksiepe, it is another evidence of the close cooperation between the two countries.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/389635.html>

Secret CIA assessment says Russia was trying to help Trump win White House, 10.12.2016

The CIA has concluded in a secret assessment that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help Donald Trump win the presidency, rather than just to undermine confidence in the U.S. electoral system, according to officials briefed on the matter.

Intelligence agencies have identified individuals with connections to the Russian government who provided WikiLeaks with thousands of hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee and others, including Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, according to U.S. officials. Those officials described the individuals as actors known to the intelligence community and part of a wider Russian operation to boost Trump and hurt Clinton's chances. "It is the assessment of the intelligence community that Russia's goal here was to favor one candidate over the other, to help Trump get elected," said a senior U.S. official briefed on an intelligence presentation made to U.S. senators. "That's the consensus view."

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-orders-review-of-russian-hacking-during-presidential-campaign/2016/12/09/31d6b300-be2a-11e6-94ac-3d324840106c_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_russiahack-1215p%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.a6005b433a9b

FSB has arrested and beaten Ukrainian activist Igor Movenko in Crimea, 16.12.2016

This morning in occupied Sevastopol FSB officers came to place of work of Ukrainian Igor Movenko and detained him. They also seized his desktop computer. His wife, Valentina Movenko, informed the Crimean Human Rights Group about the detainment.

"A few hours later, at about 12:00 am officers brought handcuffed Igor to our home. I was at home, but they opened the door with the key that they took from Igor. By this time I already knew that Igor was taken by FSB, since his coworkers told me about this on phone call. They read us a court order to conduct the search, but they refused to give me a copy of the order", - said Valentina Movenko. She informed the CHRG, that she was forbidden to talk with her husband, but Igor managed to tell her that he was beaten and threatened to be detained if he did not confess extremism.

https://humanrights.org.ua/en/material/v_krymu_fsb_zaderzhala_i_izbila_ukrainca_igorja_movenko
<http://www.unian.info/society/1684196-crimea-occupation-authorities-put-human-rights-activist-in-psychiatric-ward.html>

Russia may introduce strict immigration control of Ukrainians who visit occupied Crimea, 16.12.2016

FAN official Andrey Komissarov noted that migration regime in the occupied Crimea should be built, given the peninsula's "strategically important location and conflict with a neighboring Ukraine," TASS wrote. "Just recently, the FSB chief made a statement about the growing threat of terrorist attacks by Ukrainian subversive groups in Crimea. In this regard, there is an obvious need to develop measures for the ultimate registration of individuals arriving in Crimea from Ukraine, and monitoring of their stay on the peninsula," he said. "Just recently, December 13, the FSB chief made a statement about the growing threat of terrorist attacks by Ukrainian subversive groups in Crimea. In this regard, there is an obvious need to develop measures for the ultimate registration of individuals arriving in Crimea from Ukraine, and monitoring of their stay on the peninsula," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1683606-russia-may-introduce-strict-immigration-control-of-ukrainians-who-visit-occupied-crimea.html>

Russia: EU prolongs economic sanctions by six months, 19.12.2016

On 19 December 2016, the Council prolonged the economic sanctions targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy until 31 July 2017. These measures were introduced on 31 July 2014 initially for one year in response to Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine. They were reinforced several times. The Council formalised this decision on 19 December 2016 by written procedure and as it is the rule for all decisions on prolongation of restrictive measures, unanimously.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/12/19-sanctions-russia/>

Russia/Ukraine-related Designations and Identifications; Publication of Russia/Ukraine-related General License, 20.12.2016

Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) updated the Specially Designated Nationals List and the Sectoral Sanctions Identifications List to target sanctions evasion and other activities related to the conflict in Ukraine. Concurrent with today's action, OFAC also published Russia/Ukraine-related General License 11, "Authorizing Certain Transactions With FAU Glavgosekspertiza Rossii." This general license authorizes certain transactions that are ordinarily incident and necessary to requesting, contracting for, paying for, receiving, or utilizing a project design review or permit from FAU Glavgosekspertiza Rossii's office(s) in the Russian Federation.

<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/20161220.aspx>

Russia plans to boost military presence at Ukraine borders, 22.12.2016

"In 2017, the Ministry of Defense will have to deal with a number of priorities. First of all, to continue strengthening combat capabilities of the armed forces, to take measures to strengthen the military grouping in the West, South-West, and Arctic strategic directions," Shoigu said at a meeting of the expanded board of the Ministry of Defense. "Due to the state defense order, the growth in the supply of new weapons and military equipment amounted to 5%. As a result, equipping the units of permanent readiness of the armed forces with modern samples [of weaponry] amounts to 58.3%," Shoigu said, adding that the level of serviceability of military equipment in 2016 has also increased, reaching 94%. Four anti-aircraft missile regiments of the Russian aerospace forces will be equipped with the S-400 systems in 2017, he said.

<http://en.uzmi.com/news/post/hquUetee2XHkdqWolGOR1c>

Source: Tu-154 plane of Russia's Defense Ministry falls in Black Sea, 25.12.2016

"According to preliminary data, it fell in the Black Sea," the source said. The source also said that debris and chassis of the Tu-154 plane of Russia's Defense Ministry have been found some 6 kilometers from the Black Sea coast. "The parts of the plane and undercarriage, and also an oily spot have been found some six kilometers from the coast," the source said. The Defense Ministry said the plane disappeared from radars at 05.40 a.m. Moscow time (02.40 a.m. GMT) shortly after taking off from Sochi. There are 91 people onboard the plane, including 83 passengers. Among them are Russian servicemen who flew to congratulate with the New Year the air group of Russia's Aerospace Forces at the Hmeymim airbase in Syria, musicians of the famed army choir, the Alexandrov Ensemble, and nine representatives of Russian mass media.

<http://tass.com/world/922233>

<http://uaposition.com/latest-news/russian-defense-ministrys-tu-154-aircraft-crash-named/>

Obama administration is close to announcing measures to punish Russia for election interference, 28.12.2016

The Obama administration is close to announcing a series of measures to punish Russia for its interference in the 2016 presidential election, including economic sanctions and diplomatic censure, according to U.S. officials. The administration is finalizing the details, which also are expected to include covert action that will probably involve cyber-operations, the officials said. An announcement on the public elements of the response could come as early as this week. The sanctions portion of the package culminates weeks of debate in the White House on how to revise a 2015 executive order that was meant to give the president authority to respond to cyberattacks from overseas but that did not cover efforts to influence the electoral system.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/the-white-house-is-scrambling-for-a-way-to-punish-russian-hackers-via-sanctions/2016/12/27/0eee2fdc-c58f-11e6-85b5-76616a33048d_story.html?utm_term=.6a71f14aac0a

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-graham-sanctions-idUSKBN14H11Q?il=0>