



iSANS

*The International Strategic Action
Network for Security*

**MILITARY PROPAGANDA OF THE LUKASHENKA REGIME
AGAINST POLAND AND NATO:
DANGEROUS INCITEMENT OF HATRED**

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Military propaganda of the Lukashenka regime against Poland and NATO: Dangerous incitement of hatred

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SUMMARY

iSANS systematically monitors various spheres of Belarusian politics, including propaganda, military activity, militarization of the education system, etc.

The analysis of informational influence campaigns ahead of the Russian aggression against Ukraine (2021-2022) revealed a pattern: propaganda serves as a marker of preparation for escalation, forming the rationale for the regime's actions both domestically and in the international arena.

After significant strengthening of the alliance between Minsk and Moscow, the information agenda of A. Lukashenka's regime became akin to the Russian one, adopting many of its features. In particular, it also began to demonize neighboring states, justify repression, authoritarianism, and militarization, and build the image of a "besieged fortress."

This report presents the main elements of the regime's propaganda, its language, and the mythology it creates. It focuses on anti-Polish and anti-NATO rhetoric, and manipulation through the migration crisis and history.

1. General features of the regime's propaganda

For A. Lukashenka's regime, information policy is one of the key elements of strategic management. The goals of propaganda are to distribute the roles of external and internal enemies to mobilize the population, strengthen the authoritarian system and justify its policy.

Key messages of propaganda:

1. Demonization of Poland and NATO

- The image of Poland as an aggressive militaristic state threatening Belarus and the Union State with Russia is being actively and methodically promoted. The Lukashenka regime uses Poland as a bugbear to justify its own militarization and consolidation of authoritarianism.
- An image of an "abnormal" state is created of Poland. Its social, economic, and military problems are exaggerated. The army is presented as incapable of fulfilling its functions, being only an instrument of the U.S. interests.
- NATO is portrayed as an aggressive bloc fueling conflicts in Europe, increasing tensions, and hindering stability.

2. Projecting their own problems on their opponents

- Propaganda actively uses the method of projection, transferring internal problems to neighboring states. For example, criticism of low allowances, corruption and drunkenness in the Polish army in general demonstrates the well-known problems of the Belarusian Armed Forces. Allegations about the puppetry of the Polish leadership express the lack of democratic legitimacy of A. Lukashenka himself and his dependence on Russia.

3. Manipulation through the migration crisis

- The rhetoric and tone of international human rights agencies are increasingly used to cover the migration crisis. Poland is accused of violating human rights

and international law, the actions of the Polish military are regarded as inhumane. This way the propaganda prepares the ground for the external audience in order to emphasize the “humane” image of the Lukashenka regime in case of escalation.

4. Reliance on historical parallels

- To deepen anti-Polish and anti-Western sentiments, discrimination of Belarusians in interwar Poland (1919-1939), various aspects of World War II, and contemporary conflicts are regularly mentioned. The idea of Poland as a “historical” enemy is formed.

5. Victimization of the Lukashenka regime, strengthening its association with Belarus

- Propaganda presents Belarus as a victim of Western aggression, creating the image of a peaceful, but forced to defend a besieged fortress. This narrative justifies the isolationism of the Lukashenka regime, repression, and rapprochement with Russia.

In fact, the propaganda agenda of the Lukashenka regime demonstrates motives similar to Russia's propaganda against Ukraine in the period of 2014-2022. In both cases, they sought to portray opponents as “abnormal” states and a threat to security. In the case of the Belarusian regime, it also relies on a unique aspect, its long-standing tendency to delegitimize democracy as an idea, asserting the superiority of the so-called “dictatorship of order, where one can be sure of the future.”

At the same time, the effectiveness of the regime's military propaganda currently can be assessed as ambiguous, but with the risk of increasing its influence in the future.

Today, it is aimed at the Belarusian audience, in front of which the justification of militarization and repression is created by cultivating fear of NATO. For instance, budget expenditures on defense in 2025 increased by 70% to \$1.4 billion compared to 2023.

However, the impact on its own audience is still limited, as Belarusians to a certain extent demonstrate resistance and skepticism towards official sources.

For reference.

Data from the iSANS survey (spring 2024):

- *29% of Belarusians see NATO as a threat.*
- *24% feel hostility from the U.S., 20% – from Poland.*
- *Only 11% and 13% express a negative attitude towards Poles and Americans, respectively.*

At the same time, the impact of the Belarusian regime's propaganda on the international audience remains limited, but there are preconditions for its growth. Such conclusions are supported by forming an ecosystem of Polish-language media, experts, and Telegram channels under the regime's auspices, where the central link is the Prawda Polska Foundation of the defector judge, T. Szmydt.

In addition, countries with a neutral or pro-Russian position, such as the Middle East and Africa, may be receptive to the messages of the Lukashenka regime's propaganda.

Thus, the Belarusian regime's propaganda is an increasing tool of political manipulation. The problem is a comprehensive challenge: it refers to preserving the authoritarian

system in Belarus, the erosion of regional security, relations between different audiences, and the future of Western interests in this region.

2. Peculiarities of the propaganda language

The propaganda of the Lukashenka regime relies on the established vocabulary, emotionally charged clichés, and radicalization of perception.

The propaganda language of the Belarusian regime is characterized by opposing black and white, defaming the enemies, and glorifying the regime.

- Poland is called a “puppet regime of the U.S.,” a “beggar,” a “battering ram,” the Polish military is called “tin soldiers,” “Hilfspolizei.”
- NATO – “aggressors,” “militarists,” the “destroyer of independent states.”
- A. Lukashenka acts as a “defender of the people,” a pillar of stability, peace, and traditional values.

A special emphasis is put on historical images and references, which is intended to give depth to the propaganda and to present the policy of the Belarusian regime as a “guardian of historical justice.” For example, Polish soldiers serving on the border are called “Hilfspolizei,” causing negative associations with the collaborationists of World War II.

The language of international organizations is imitated and the vocabulary of opponents is adopted (the mockingbird tactics). The actions of the Polish military are called “violations of human rights” and the military themselves are called “murderers of women and children,” which echoes the rhetoric of the UN or Amnesty International.

In general, the lexicon of propaganda is aimed at creating a feeling of hopelessness among Belarusians, where they are surrounded by enemies, and the regime acts as their only protector.

3. Propaganda mythology

The Lukashenka regime's propaganda builds its own mythology based on the feeling of permanent external threat, the need for heroic defense of the political regime in Belarus, and the allegedly voluntary desire to be in an alliance with Russia.

The target audience of the myth is the citizens of Belarus, primarily supporters of the regime, the power bloc, and the fluctuating part of society.

The key **components of the mythology:**

- Poland is an enemy, a militaristic state, a puppet of the U.S., preparing an attack on Belarus.
- NATO is an aggressive bloc, building up its forces near Belarus' borders, which justifies strengthening the army and rapprochement with Russia.
- The Lukashenka regime is the defender of the people, peace and stability. Opposition to him is regarded as treason and work for the West.

The **values** of the myth are based on such concepts as defense of national sovereignty, defense of peace and a forced necessity to respond to aggression, rejection of Western militarism, Russophobia, and the decay of traditional values.

Propaganda is mainly distributed through the regime's traditional media, Telegram channels, and statements by officials and “experts.”

At the same time, the propaganda mythology creates an informational and analytical framework for the state apparatus as well. Today, propaganda rather than analysis and objective reality serves as a source of formation of state policy in Belarus, which emphasizes its functional role.

In general, since 2021, the Lukashenka regime has been successfully and purposefully pursuing a course to undermine Belarusian-Polish relations. Its policy has not only reduced its influence on Minsk, but also complicated the activities and stay of Belarusians in the EU countries. All this makes it possible to raise the issue of the Belarusian regime's influence on the political course of European states more broadly.

The propaganda mythology can be **deconstructed**.

Fact check: NATO is a defensive bloc, not an offensive one; NATO is strengthening its eastern flank because of the threat from Russia, not Belarus. Poland's military reinforcement is driven by the need to respond to potential threats from its eastern borders, not by preparations for aggression against Belarus.

Alternative messages: the history of Polish-Belarusian relations is mainly characterized by stories of cooperation, the source of conflict is only the Lukashenka regime, which is warring with its own society and neighbors.

Demonstration of double standards: propaganda accuses Poland of militarization, but the Belarusian regime strengthens its armed forces. The regime blames Poland for the low material security of its army, while the allowances of the Belarusian military remain very low even despite the budget increase, in contrast to the luxury of Lukashenka and his large family.

Distribution of responsibility: the Lukashenka regime identifies itself with the Belarusian people, calling itself a "guarantor of peace." At the same time, it is responsible for involvement in Russia's war against Ukraine. By supporting the Kremlin's aggressive plans, the regime exposes Belarus and its people to the threat of a retaliatory military strike.

Thus, it is advisable to use the monitoring data to strengthen the positive image of NATO and Poland through public diplomacy, emphasizing the defense policy and socio-economic successes. The media and experts should develop debunking counter-narratives, and use examples from the history of successful cooperation between the peoples of Poland and Belarus to undermine the myth of enmity. Develop a link between analyzing propaganda and reacting to new informational occasions. Strengthen independent Belarusian media and civic activism to reinforce anti-propaganda measures.

MONITORING of Belarus' military propaganda against Poland and NATO

Poland

Discreditation of the Army and the Ministry of Defense

One of the main topics covered by the Belarusian military propaganda in the period under review is the situation in the armed forces of Poland. The narrative about their low level of combat capability was especially actively promoted. For instance, very often the informational occasions about various incidents and accidents related to the army and servicemen were exploited. And it could be not only about what happened during the performance of official duties (for example, during [drills](#)), but also during [personal](#)² time. In particular, one of the cases of a Polish soldier killed in a traffic accident was [commented](#)³ on as follows: "If Polish servicemen cannot handle a car on a flat stretch of road, what can we say about military equipment and weapons? They only know how to rattle and break them." It was also [said](#)⁴ about the prevalence of suicides among soldiers and officers, which are silenced and eventually passed off as health problems. Based on this, the Polish Army was [called](#)⁵ "the first army in Europe, not only in terms of expenditures, but also in terms of the number of accidents and deaths."

The propagandists tried to create the impression that the number of incidents was only [increasing](#)⁶ over time and that the command was carefully [hiding](#)⁷ it. For example, it was even [reported](#)⁸ that the number of accidents in the army was so high that the hotlines of the Polish Ministry of Defense were literally bursting with calls from worried relatives of servicemen, and the officials themselves had decided simply not to answer them. The blame for all the incidents has been placed entirely on the military and the Polish authorities, ignoring any objective factors. For example, here is one of the revealing [thoughts](#)⁹ of the propagandists on this topic: "The incompetence and devastation in the Polish army cannot be compensated neither by purchases of armaments, nor by increasing the number of tin soldiers [*a disparaging expression often used by the military propaganda with regard to Polish soldiers – ed*]. And until the Polish leadership starts to look for a threat inside the country, the soldiers of the Polish Army will continue to die in peacetime."

According to the propagandists, the main [reasons](#)¹⁰ for what is happening are systemic problems in the army, including the low level of discipline and professional training of soldiers, as well as their poor psychological state. The latter was allegedly caused by "murderous drunkenness, drug addiction and moral decay" and constant pressure of commanders on their subordinates. They also [spoke](#)¹¹ about "terrible interpersonal relations, lack of equipment, nepotism, allowing alcohol at training grounds and unfair punishment." Along with those mentioned above, there was a [message](#)¹² that young Poles should think about whether it is worth it to join the military service, from which they may never return home.

Among other things, systemic problems at the level of the army command and officials from the Ministry of National Defense were also emphasized. For example, the dismissal of a number of Polish generals after Tusk's government came to power in December 2023 was [characterized](#)¹³ as a "serious purge" in the state apparatus, and that in this way "the new Polish government began to remove representatives of the Duda-Morawiecki regime from their posts". The Minister of Defense W. Kosiniak-Kamysz personally was also heavily criticized, after whose arrival, as it was [claimed](#),¹⁴ "the number of tragic events in the Polish army is off the scale." The current problems were also blamed on the previous ministers, who allegedly appointed people loyal to themselves to leading positions in the army, regardless of their insufficient professional qualities. Another

problem was [seen](#)¹⁵ in the lack of cooperation between the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces due to personal animosity of their representatives towards each other.

Attention was regularly [drawn](#)¹⁶ to cases of Polish military offenses. One of the most actively covered informational occasions was the [case](#)¹⁷ of looting by a serviceman in the flood-affected areas in the Lower Silesia Voivodship, by whose actions the propagandists tried to judge the state of the entire army. At the same time, in the process of disaster relief, the idea was [conveyed](#)¹⁸ that the real scale of looting among the military was actually concealed. At the same time, the prevalence of drug trafficking as a source of income for many soldiers was [reported](#),¹⁹ and the increase in the size of the army was [criticized](#)²⁰ through the prism of the crimes committed by soldiers: "These are the true 'feats' of the Polish Army, which have no boundaries. Feeling their impunity, the Polish military continues to commit atrocities, from which ordinary people suffer. This is what happens when the top brass believes that the main thing is not quality, but quantity."

Another message that the military propagandists tried to convey was the allegedly negative attitude of Poles towards the army and the Ministry of Defense. The idea of distrust of the military and their commanders, as well as the utter pointlessness of the state spending money on defense was [presented](#)²¹: "It is not surprising that Poles constantly criticize their army, which does nothing but cause problems and eat up the people's budget." As evidence, quotes from dissatisfied Polish residents from social networks were regularly [mentioned](#),²² where the military were accused of incompetence. However, it should be noted that the authenticity of these comments is questionable, as their sources have never been cited.

At the same time, the Belarusian Front propaganda Telegram channel has repeatedly [claimed](#)²³ to have a network of sources in Poland. Many Polish servicemen and civilians allegedly write to them in a chatbot with exclusive information and [complaints](#)²⁴ about the situation in the troops, especially about disorganization, harsh conditions of service and unprofessionalism of the command. On this basis, the texts of some of the channel's posts were even [duplicated](#)²⁵ in Polish (including calls to report to the editors about what was happening in the army with a guarantee of anonymity). There is no confirmation that these sources actually exist. At the same time, it was also [claimed](#)²⁶ that after a number of publications of the above-mentioned Telegram channel, Polish military counterintelligence officers strengthened control over the personnel of the armed forces by instructing military personnel not to use cell phones on duty and limiting their communication on dating websites.

The plans of the Ministry of Defense to draft 200,000 people from the reserve for military training sessions this year were also criticized. The narrative that such a conscription would be implemented only under duress was promoted, because according to the law, in case of non-appearance, violators would face a huge fine or imprisonment. Against this background, the democratic foundations of the state were [questioned](#)²⁷: "This is the true face of democracy and freedom in Poland: if you don't want to, we will force you, if you can't, we will pressure you."

One of the areas of disinformation was also the state of armament and logistics of the Polish army in general. The country's air defense system, which was [called](#)²⁸ "the most leaky in the universe," was particularly criticized. The coverage of the case of [violation](#)²⁹ of Polish airspace by a Russian drone in August this year in the Belarusian military-oriented media was indicative in this respect. The drone flew from the territory of Ukraine and was initially detected by the Polish military, but disappeared from the radars and was never found.

On the one hand, they [spoke](#)³⁰ about dissatisfaction with the above-mentioned situation among Poles, who allegedly consider the costs of modernizing the army to be

ineffective. On the other hand, propagandists [questioned](#)³¹ Poland's ability to provide broader military assistance to Ukrainians: "And it was Duda who the other day was going to help shoot down Russian missiles over Ukraine with his air defense system, even though he is unable to ensure the security of his own country." The Air Force was [criticized](#)³² in a similar vein: "The Polish Air Force and Air Defense Forces are famous for their ability to lose everything, screw up and fly in the wrong place. Aviators lose missiles on the fly. They are zero in navigation, which is why they have repeatedly violated the airspace of a neighboring country [Belarus – ed]."

While continuing to promote the narrative of Poland's low combat capability, propagandists [referred](#)³³ to modern armored vehicles and aircraft in service with the Polish army as "military junk." Their attention was also regularly [drawn](#)³⁴ to the use of steel helmets from the times of the Polish People's Republic by soldiers, which allegedly do not meet the standards of the modern army (although, for example, the majority of the military in Belarus have Soviet-made steel helmets).

Information about the conditions of service of soldiers performing tasks on the eastern border was also presented negatively. It was [reported](#)³⁵ that the soldiers had problems with communication and provision of equipment and accommodation, the reason for which was cited, among other things, the provision of military aid to Ukrainians: "The Polish authorities gave Ukraine over \$9 billion in aid, while their own soldiers are forced to live in sheds made of garbage." At the same time, it was concluded that despite its membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, "the Polish army has two sides: the ostentatious and the real one."

At the same time, there was a constant [message](#)³⁶ about the serious shortage of ammunition in the Polish Army, including due to problems with its purchase abroad and the lack of its own production in the country. It was emphasized, "The empty arsenals and ammunition depots of the Polish Army imply difficulties in providing the almost two hundred thousand troops with the organization of OCT [*operational and combat training – ed.*] activities, not to mention the conduct of combat operations". The purpose of all these arguments was again to create an impression of Poland's [unpreparedness](#)³⁷ for a potential conflict in the region: "Considering the whole situation with the combat readiness of the Polish Armed Forces, it is comical to hear slogans bordering on panic from the mouths of Polish officials about the country's readiness to be next in line after Ukraine in a war with Russia. What to fight with?"

Armed Forces Day in Poland

Polish Armed Forces Day and the related military parade in Warsaw on August 15 was an illustrative example of propaganda's active exploitation of a certain informational occasion. Amid the holding of the parade, it was [claimed](#)³⁸ that the "NATO occupation troops" had needlessly wasted the state treasury and caused enormous damage to the city's infrastructure (especially roads)." Special attention was [paid](#)³⁹ to the dissatisfaction with the military parade on the part of ordinary Poles, who allegedly "consider their army mediocre and berate the country's military leadership for the inflated budgets for its maintenance," because all these expenses fall on them as taxpayers. The fact that the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade [a unit of the three countries intended for participation in international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations – ed.] took part in the parade was [mentioned](#)⁴⁰ as another reason for negativity among the population, and the main resentment of people was allegedly caused by the image of the coats of arms of Poland and Ukraine on one banner.

In addition to the previous messages discrediting the Polish Armed Forces, following the parade in Warsaw, it was [written](#)⁴¹ that instead of a serious military event, the event resembled "an informal carnival with elements of a circus performance." The most

odious publication on this topic was a “congratulation” on Polish Armed Forces Day (including a version in Polish) by the authors of the Nevolfovich Telegram channel, who [wrote](#)⁴²: “The achievements of the [Polish] soldiers in the sphere of suicides, accidents, alcoholism and drug addiction, as well as in the violation of human rights and the treatment of migrants are really ‘impressive’... The Polish army commits arbitrariness under the cover of political and patriotic narratives.” At the same time, the BelVPO Telegram channel [claimed](#)⁴³ that “behind the demonstration of the immutable power of the Polish Army, there is chaos, disorderliness, lies, and endless scandals,” and “official Warsaw is satisfied with everything and this in no way prevents it from stealing from ordinary Poles, who will be in debt for their security for years to come.”

Accusations of militarization and preparations for aggression

Accusations against Poland of escalation of the situation and preparations for an attack on Belarus and Russia were also actively spread. They were most often heard in news articles about the purchase of various types of weapons, drills or development of military infrastructure (for example, construction or opening of new military bases). It was [claimed](#)⁴⁴ about the “extreme militarism of the Polish authorities” and their preparations for participation in a full-scale armed conflict with Belarus and Russia. At the same time, they [emphasized](#)⁴⁵ the exceptional role of the U.S. in this process, which allegedly “turns Poland into a ‘battering ram’ on the eastern flank of NATO, directed against the Union State of Belarus and Russia, playing on the militaristic ambitions of Warsaw.” It was also [said](#)⁴⁶ that “in a militaristic frenzy, Duda and his servants escalate and destabilize the situation in the European region, continuing to intimidate Poles with a non-existent threat from the East.”

At the same time, they repeatedly [spoke](#)⁴⁷ about the need to respond to the existing challenges and threats from the Polish side and to apply retaliatory measures against them: “Poland is escalating the situation more and more every day, but it forgets that it will have to answer for every action.” Referring to Lukashenka’s statements, the propagandists also [threatened](#)⁴⁸ the Poles with the use of nuclear weapons: “We recall that in case of an attack on Belarus, the aggressor will receive an immediate response from Minsk and Moscow with all kinds of weapons.”

Periodic accusations of Warsaw’s aspiration to restore the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the 1939 borders were also noticed. It was [noted](#)⁴⁹ that Poles need the strongest army of NATO’s eastern flank not to defend themselves against Russia, but to implement their territorial claims against Belarus and Ukraine and to regain their former territories by force. Lukashenka’s [words](#)⁵⁰ on this topic were also actively quoted: “If only Poles get into Ukraine and try to seize the West, we will support Ukrainians. Because we realize that we will be the next ones.”

The most significant information occasion of the above-mentioned narrative was the “holiday” of September 17 (the anniversary of the seizure of the western parts of Belarus and Ukraine by Soviet troops in 1939, which has been celebrated in Belarus as National Unity Day at the state level since 2021). It was [emphasized](#)⁵¹ that “National Unity Day of Belarusians is an occasion for ‘grief’ in Poland” and that Poland “does not give up its attempts to return the ‘eastern Kresy’ [Western Belarus and Ukraine, as well as part of Lithuania – ed.], at least to its sphere of influence, at most – to change its borders at the expense of the Kresy”. That is why, [according](#)⁵² to the propagandists, modern Poland is so actively arming itself and “welcomes with open arms only those who work for the split of Belarus.”

At the same time, attention was drawn to the construction of the “Eastern Shield” defense system on the border of Poland with Belarus and Russia. Here again the message was [conveyed](#)⁵³ about the aggressive intentions of Poles and that these

fortifications are being built against the background of planning an attack and gathering troops in the border area. As it was [noted](#),⁵⁴ by such actions the military leadership of the country continues to escalate tensions in the region, although there is no real threat from the east. Also, by building the “Eastern Shield,” Poland allegedly wants to show “an illusion of importance” in front of its allies, and for the Polish authorities it is also “an additional opportunity to split the money.”

In the process of positioning modern Poland as the main enemy of Belarus, historical parallels with Nazi Germany were actively used. For example, it was [emphasized](#)⁵⁵ that Poles were also rapidly increasing “the production and purchase of weapons, propaganda of Russophobia, destruction of the historical heritage of the country, and the formation of Nazi ideology.”

At the same time, one of the main tasks of military propaganda was to impose the view on the audience about the allegedly widespread process of militarization of Polish society. Particular attention was [drawn](#)⁵⁶ to the examples of the implementation of educational programs and the holding of certain events to popularize service in the army among children and young people. That is, despite the fact that the Lukashenka regime is actively involving thousands of children across Belarus in “military-patriotic clubs,” the propagandists present patriotic education in Poland as militarization. It was [said](#)⁵⁷ that the country’s leadership seeks to recruit “as much ‘cannon fodder’ as possible to participate in its dirty political games.”

The practice of military picnics organized by the Polish army was [criticized](#)⁵⁸ in a similar vein, which were considered a tool for the formation of radical views in children, as they allegedly “honor the Nazi regime, teaching the ideology of fascism from childhood.” The following [reasoning](#)⁵⁹ was also illustrative: “Children, as the most vulnerable strata of society, become the object of manipulation by the Polish authorities. From a very early age, for example, instead of fairy tales, they are told horror stories about bad neighbors who want to attack them and their families. Society is gripped with hysteria, which allows the authorities to unreasonably increase military expenditures.” At the same time, militarization was called the main course of Polish policy, because the country’s leadership needs to increase the number of the army up to 300 thousand people, and for this purpose it is necessary to prepare young people psychologically for a possible conflict.

Throughout the period under review, the [idea](#)⁶¹ was disseminated that too much money is spent on military needs to the detriment of the economy and the living standards of Poles: “Poland is already experiencing serious economic, social and demographic difficulties. At the same time, the regime continues to spend enormous sums on weapons. The cost of this policy will be borne by the poorer population, whose pockets will be turned out by the introduction of new taxes, fines, cuts in subsidies and benefits.” It was [noted](#)⁶² that the increase in defense spending is driving the country into debt, making it impossible to implement high-quality social projects and build infrastructure for the population. Analogies with Hitler’s Germany were also [used](#)⁶³: “Warsaw is preparing for war, not defense. The country needs an efficient economy and well-fed people, not rusty barbed wire. The Nazis also kept people behind barbed wire, but they were not safe.”

The increased military expenditures were also [seen](#)⁶⁴ as a reason for the state budget deficit in 2024: “What is the Polish leadership thinking about? That the Polish people, from whose pockets the regime is already shaking out the last money for armaments and American military bases, will pay their debts.” At the same time, attention was drawn to the vested interest of the U.S. in this. In the [opinion](#)⁶⁵ of the propagandists, the leadership of the country “under the guise of fighting for Western values, at the expense of Polish taxpayers, enriches the American military-industrial lobby.” It was also [said](#)⁶⁶ that the process has a significant corruption component: “The rulers of the Polish-

Lithuanian Commonwealth have for many years been looking with envy at how eagerly the Banderovtsy [a pejorative term for Ukrainians-ed.] are grabbing Western aid... And how are we worse, the Przeki [a pejorative term for Poles – ed.] wonder. This is how “defense” megaprojects are born, the main task of which is to enrich the fierce Russophobes who have gained power in Poland.”

Together with the claims about the aggressive militaristic intentions of the country's leadership, the narrative about the reluctance of ordinary citizens to participate in a possible war with Russia and Belarus was promoted in every possible way. It was noted that the lion's share of the Polish population [considered](#)⁶⁷ the probability of such a conflict to be high, but at the same time did not want to take part in it and [did not believe](#)⁶⁸ in the army's ability to withstand the threat from the east. For example, the Belarusian Front Telegram channel [cited](#)⁶⁹ the words of a Pole who allegedly wrote to them in a chatbot: “I will not join the army, even if I am mobilized, because I don't want to be sent to Ukraine or Belarus as cannon fodder.” Among other things, the pro-government media also [claimed](#)⁷⁰ that after the outbreak of war, a significant part of the population, especially young people, would go abroad, and Poland itself “could repeat the fate of Ukraine, where today people are forced to go to slaughter on the orders of the West.”

Reaction to the operations “Safe Podlasie” and “Eastern Dawn”

Two operations of the Polish army that started on August 1 this year were presented as a source of potential threat to Belarus and Russia: 1) [Safe Podlasie](#)⁷¹ aimed at ensuring the protection of the border with Belarus. Within the framework of this operation, the number of soldiers in the border area increased to 17 thousand; 2) [Eastern Dawn](#)⁷² with the participation of contingents of the U.S., UK and Italy. Its purpose was to strengthen Poland's air defense system in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which increased the risk of violations of Polish airspace.

As [noted](#)⁷³ with the launch of the Safe Podlasie operation, the risk of escalation in the border area increased, which could lead to an armed conflict, and the Polish military leadership “again voiced militaristic slogans and intentions to rattle weapons near the eastern borders.” At the same time, it was [emphasized](#)⁷⁴ that the situation “would lead to even more casualties and deaths among refugees at the border,” and “an open military provocation is [unfolding](#)⁷⁵ against Minsk.” At the same time, the following is an [example](#)⁷⁶ of the propaganda narrative about the Eastern Dawn operation: “In fact, Warsaw is moving to the last phase of its initiative to shoot down Russian missiles in the skies of Ukraine. Officially, this is done to prevent missiles from accidentally flying into Poland, but in fact, a no-fly zone is being created in western Ukraine.” Against this background, there was a [bewilderment](#)⁷⁷ as to why there was such an escalation of the situation, since the Belarusian party allegedly pursues an exclusively friendly policy towards the neighboring state.

Migration crisis

A huge array of publications was devoted to the migration crisis and the current situation on the Polish-Belarusian border. The *GRANITSA FM | Facts and Opinions* Telegram channel [became](#) the central mouthpiece of military propaganda here. The main message that they sought to convey was the existence of systematic use of violence by Polish soldiers, border guards and police officers against migrants crossing the state border. It was [stated](#)⁷⁹ that the rigid migration policy of the Poles led to the fact that since 2021, dozens of refugees were killed on the border with Belarus, and thousands were maimed, beaten, and raped. On the other hand, propagandists [claimed](#)⁸⁰ that no

one knows exactly how many migrants were buried in Polish forests, but their number “is clearly on a world record.”

Among other things, they [mentioned](#)⁸¹ the testimony of Polish soldier E. Czczeko, who escaped to Belarus in 2021 and claimed that on June 8-19, 2021, he personally participated in and witnessed the mass execution of 241 migrants without trial. It was [noted](#)⁸² that by surrounding itself with fences and barbed wire and refusing to help those in need, Poland is losing its understanding of the value of human life. It was also [written](#),⁸³ “Sooner or later, Belarus will publicize all the crimes of the ‘Western democracies.’ No one will escape responsibility.”

At the same time, the [reaction](#)⁸⁴ to the proposal of the German Interior Ministry to deploy officers of the European Border and Coast Guard (Frontex) on the Polish-Belarusian border was very revealing: “It is obvious that Polish *slaboviki* [*a pejorative name for law enforcement officers – ed.*] are tired of dirtying their hands in the blood of migrants alone.” There were also some threatening comments: “The EU *Hilfspolizei* [*members of the collaborationist police forces during World War II – ed.*], who are trying to develop a theater of war near our borders, should remember that we have something to answer with in case of a real threat.” At the same time, through publications and statements of propagandists, a clear thesis was [conveyed](#)⁸⁵ that it was Poland that was to blame for the migration crisis, and Belarus had nothing to do with it.

The adoption of a law by the Polish Sejm in July this year facilitating the use of firearms by law enforcement agencies in the border area in cases of threat to the security of the individual or the country was criticized in several cases. This law has been [called](#)⁸⁶ “egregious Nazism” and “authorization to kill innocent people,” after which the “legal shooting of refugees” by the hands of Polish border guards and military will [begin](#).⁸⁷

The [introduction](#)⁸⁸ of the so-called buffer zone on the Polish-Belarusian border, where a temporary prohibition to stay was established, was also considered a negative phenomenon. The restriction was established to prevent illegal migration and smuggling in June 2024 for a period of 90 days and then extended for another 90 days. Concerning the buffer zone, propagandists actively [used](#)⁸⁹ the phrase “death zone.” Among other things, it was also [claimed](#)⁹⁰ that “together with the adopted law on the killing of refugees [mentioned above- ed.], the buffer zone is nothing but a big shooting range with live targets.”

In the context of the migration crisis, the most illustrative example of a disinformation campaign was the reaction of propaganda media to the death of Polish soldier M. Sitek, who was mortally wounded on the border with Belarus at the end of May. Initially, it was [claimed](#)⁹¹ that this tragedy did not really happen and that it was a purposeful informational-psychological operation. Then the propagandists came to the following [conclusion](#)⁹²: “The Warsaw regime wants to use this situation, firstly, to justify its military, who unauthorizedly used weapons, [...] and secondly, to untie the hands of the military, where they can shoot refugees on sight.”

At the same time, various versions of what happened were [spread](#).⁹³ For example, the serviceman committed suicide amid the general low morale among Polish security forces or died at the hands of his fellow servicemen as a result of the conflict. In addition, stories published on social media about other alleged deaths of Polish soldiers were [mentioned](#).⁹⁴ The army command was once again accused of carefully concealing information about such incidents.

Later, there were [claims](#)⁹⁵ against the Polish party for allegedly using the situation with the death of the soldier for its own selfish purposes. It was said that Poland would now start implementing its “militaristic plans” with regard to the Union State of Belarus and Russia, as well as stop complying with the EU laws on migration policy. It was also [predicted](#)⁹⁶ that the situation on the border would escalate even further and as a result,

violence against migrants would continue. However, in response to the Poles' demand for the extradition of the murderer, it was [declared](#)⁹⁷ that the Belarusian border guards were ready to conduct a unilateral or bilateral investigation of the incident. Thus, it emphasized the desire of Belarus to cooperate, while the Poles allegedly only escalated the situation and provoked the conflict.

After the information appeared that the refugee suspected in the murder of soldier M. Sitek had been spotted on the territory of the EU (in France and Belgium), propagandists [questioned](#)⁹⁸ the reliability of the border fortifications built by Poles: "Another rhetorical question arises – how could a migrant escape from Belarus if the border is sealed?" At the same time, they added victim-blaming and accusations of the unprofessionalism of the Polish military and border guards: "The military are sitting on the border, processing government food into waste and cannot even protect themselves from migrants."

The authors of propaganda media regularly drew attention to the concerns of Polish human rights defenders about the situation on the eastern border. It was reported that the latter [called](#)⁹⁹ on the international community to put pressure on the Polish authorities due to regular misconduct by Polish soldiers and border guards, and the following were [listed](#)¹⁰⁰ among their abuses: 100 illegal return of migrants to the border, ignoring asylum requests and other human rights violations.

The dissatisfaction with what is happening on the border on the part of ordinary citizens, who allegedly strongly disagree with the policy and actions of the country's leadership and the military, was also [emphasized](#)¹⁰¹: "Polish society is ready to throw such 'defenders' who kill women and children to the pitchforks." At the same time, the propagandists were not enthusiastic about the opening of a number of criminal cases by the Polish prosecutor's office on the abuse of power by representatives of law enforcement agencies at the border. It was reported that there are much more such offenses in the reports of the border guards of Belarus, and with these investigations "the Warsaw regime once again throws a bone to local citizens in the form of human rights activists and concerned citizens that they are allegedly on the side of refugees." They also [recalled](#)¹⁰³ the existence of so-called "civil patrols" (groups of people patrolling the streets allegedly to protect Poles from the crimes of foreigners), calling them "chaotic associations of athletic young people who literally beat up any migrant at night."

The strengthening of security measures on the border, especially the erection of fences and fortifications, has been periodically criticized because of the negative impact on local flora and fauna. For example, there have been [allegations](#)¹⁰⁴ of deforestation of protected forests in Belavezhskaya Pushcha and disruption of wildlife migration routes. Attention was also [drawn](#)¹⁰⁵ to the call by UNESCO to refrain from further construction of barrier infrastructure in the border area, but it was doubted that anyone in Poland cared about environmental issues and that the Polish government, "obsessed with militant rhetoric," would heed the recommendations.

Another serious accusation against the Polish party was its involvement in the smuggling of migrants to Germany and other EU countries. On the one hand, it was [claimed](#)¹⁰⁶ that representatives of Polish law enforcement agencies were involved: "In the migrants' profile Telegram chats, they say that the commercial offer of the Polish Army representatives is many times less than that of the border guards." On the other hand, it was [emphasized](#)¹⁰⁷ that Polish politicians, who have a stake in this business and "cover" the delivery of migrants to the West, are deeply involved in the process. It was also [claimed](#)¹⁰⁸ that "the authorities are profiting from refugees and receiving bonuses for multi-billion dollar contracts that will go into the pockets of arms lords."

At the same time, many publications related to the migration crisis harshly [criticized](#)¹⁰⁹ representatives of Belarusian independent mass media, who allegedly have to keep silent about the real situation on the border with Belarus: "Zmahars [*a pejorative term for*

Belarusian opponents of the Lukashenka regime – ed.] keep silent because the party [a pejorative term for Poles –ed.] don't like to be contradicted.”

The [words](#)¹¹⁰ of Polish Prime Minister D. Tusk about the probable termination of granting asylum to migrants became an important informational occasion for military propaganda on the topic in question. Subsequently, government representatives [stated](#)¹¹¹ that the border service would not be obliged to accept asylum applications if any refugee illegally crossed the border with the help of special services from Belarus. Against the background of these statements, the [accusations](#)¹¹² of Poles in the desire to demonize the Belarusian party were heard again. In fact, it was claimed that Poland was looking for another way to circumvent the obligation to accept migrants on its territory.

Attention was also drawn to the situation on the Polish-German border. It was [noted](#)¹¹³ that after the Germans introduced temporary border controls at all land borders on September 16 in order to limit illegal migration, Poland would lose its leverage against the EU, and “Polish border guards (and any local enterprising citizens) would have fewer opportunities to throw unwanted refugees to Germany.” They [claimed](#)¹¹⁴ about such actions on the German part as well: “It is no secret that the Polish-German border is an interesting place: refugees walk there as they please, German police, without informing Poles, throw people into Poland.”

Flooding in the south of Poland

Another illustrative example of the spread of disinformation was the coverage of the events surrounding the flooding in the south of Poland in September. Ukraine was named as one of the culprits for the problems encountered in overcoming the consequences of the disaster. It was [claimed](#)¹¹⁵ that army units sent to the affected areas complained of a shortage of equipment that had previously been transferred to Ukraine, forcing Poland to turn to other countries for support. Ukraine was also allegedly to [blame](#)¹¹⁶ for the fact that money intended for protective hydraulic structures were regularly spent on military aid, and in total, Polish taxpayers had invested between 15 and 24 billion euros in the neighboring country over the past ten years.

Amid overcoming the consequences of the flooding, claims against President A. Duda and Prime Minister D. Tusk were actively made. The first one allegedly [stepped away](#)¹¹⁷ from participation in solving the problem and stayed in Warsaw to “[have fun](#)”¹¹⁸ at the harvest festival, while the head of the government and his team were [accused](#)¹¹⁹ of a complete lack of coordination and of “building their careers on empty promises and loud words, but failing to provide real protection for citizens in critical moments.” In parallel, it was [reported](#)¹²⁰ that Poland could face uncontrolled spread of deadly viruses due to the flooding of burial sites of those who died of dangerous diseases (cholera, plague, smallpox and anthrax). The reason for the inability to ensure the safety of citizens was stated to be “infighting in the ruling circles and unrestrained spending on ‘war toys’ by politicians.”

Criticism of the authorities and the situation in the country

There was regular criticism of the country's leadership on a number of other issues of domestic policy and the situation in the country in general. It was [noted](#)¹²¹ that after the election of the new government headed by D. Tusk, people felt only negative changes: “Corruption is growing, ethical standards are falling – and this is the history of modern Poland. Corruption scandals in the government drag on from year to year, and the result does not change because of the change of figures, only the speed of theft has changed.” At the same time, President A. Duda was [accused](#)¹²² of embezzlement and even of links with the criminal world.

The democratic foundations of the country were often questioned. For example, the revocation of the passport of former Polish judge T. Szhmydt, who fled to Belarus, was [called](#)¹²³ “a desperate attempt to silence criticism of the authorities.” At the same time, it was also emphasized that this decision clearly demonstrates how the Polish leadership tries to “deal with dissidents and those who oppose illegal actions and hypocrisy in the government.”

At the same time, the following were emphasized among Poland’s internal problems: 1) the [stagnation](#)¹²⁴ of the institution of state power; 2) cultural [activities](#),¹²⁵ as well as the entire Polish society, are under the tight control of the liberal-fascist ideology of the European Union; 3) half of Poland's population lives below the poverty line; 4) the deep demographic crisis is exacerbated by the dominance of the European LGBT agenda and the difficult economic situation; 5) all undesirable media outlets have been shut down, and Polish patriots are forced to flee the country under threat of imprisonment and reprisals.

Amidst the upcoming election of the Polish president in 2025, they spoke about the [growing](#)¹²⁶ confrontation between the current government of D. Tusk and the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [*Law and Justice –ed.*] opposition party to the detriment of the situation of ordinary citizens and the normal development of the country. However, as [noted](#),¹²⁷ this will not change anything in Poland's attitude towards Belarus and Russia, whatever the outcome of the internal political struggle.

Criticism of the police

The state of the Polish police was discussed separately. The existence of a [shortage](#)¹²⁸ of personnel in the police force was criticized, as was the decision taken in this connection to lower the requirements for candidates for service. At the same time, it was [emphasized](#)¹²⁹ that “if the situation does not change, the authorities led by D. Tusk will have to recruit migrants or fight off unruly Poles themselves in the foreseeable future in order to secure their interests.” Among other things, unprofessionalism of commanders, as well as regular abuse of authority and harassment of the population were [named](#)¹³⁰ as the biggest problems of the police.

Poland's Independence Day

The celebration of Poland's Independence Day on November 11 was the object of serious criticism. The most negative criticism was directed at the Independence March, held annually in Warsaw. It was [noted](#)¹³¹ that the march was organized by neo-Nazis and was “accompanied by the burning of flares and nationalist speeches, while ‘Sieg Heil-ing’ [*performing a Nazi salute – ed.*] was welcomed,” because Polish society was “imbued with the ideas of Hitler and Bandera.” The following were [mentioned](#)¹³² as constant companions of the march: “beatings, drunkenness, outbursts of aggression and other actions that violate public order.”

Against the background of the event, a narrative about the dissatisfaction of Polish society with the current situation was also [promoted](#)¹³³: “On Poland's Independence Day, one can hear slogans about freedom, unity and national pride! But can the Polish people be proud of what is happening in the country now...?” Another informational occasion was the congratulation of the Polish people by A. Lukashenka on the holiday, which conveyed the [message](#)¹³⁴ about the necessity of de-escalation. However, at the same time, the propagandists continued to put forward claims concerning the build-up of the Polish military group near the Belarusian borders and the largest defense expenditures over the years.

At the same time, on the eve of the holiday, false information about Warsaw Mayor R. Trzaskowski was [published](#).¹³⁵ It was claimed that at first he banned the march on Polish Independence Day on November 11, but then changed his mind and started actively inviting people to take part in it. The politician allegedly did this because he wanted to get more votes in the upcoming presidential election. However, in reality, the initial rejection of the organizers' application was due to their desire to hold marches for sixteen days instead of one.

Contradictions between Poland and Ukraine

Throughout the whole period under review, the coverage of the relations between Poland and Ukraine continued. The reference to historical contradictions was actively used, especially to the Volyn Massacre of 1943 and the still unresolved issue of exhumation of Poles who died at the hands of Ukrainians at that time. For example, it was [emphasized](#)¹³⁶ that contemporary Poland needs to be careful about trusting and assisting Ukraine because the Ukrainians had already once repaid with the Volyn Massacre for support from the Poles in the war against the Bolsheviks in 1920, therefore they may do the same in the foreseeable future: "It seems that Duda, in the pursuit of profit, has forgotten that history is cyclical and Taras [image of a Ukrainian – ed.] is already sharpening his pitchfork against Marek [image of a Pole – ed.]".

Dissatisfaction with close bilateral relations on the part of ordinary Poles was emphasized. As propagandists [noted](#),¹³⁷ the glorification of historical figures of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, whose descendants are responsible for the Volyn Massacre, continues now in Ukraine, so the Polish population is dissatisfied with the fact that "for the sake of political benefits, Duda and Tusk embrace the ideological followers of the Bandera executioners."

At the same time, it was [stated](#)¹³⁸ that Ukraine would not be able to join the European Union and NATO "until it condemns its nationalist past and distances itself from the 'glorification' of war criminals." It was [emphasized](#)¹³⁹ that Poles would prevent Ukrainians from integrating into these structures, and even their "outrageous level of Russophobia" could not help the situation. The aforementioned desire to regain the "Eastern Kresy," which included Western Ukraine, was also [attributed](#)¹⁴⁰ to the Polish authorities.

In general, relations between the two countries were [described](#)¹⁴¹ as extremely pragmatic: "The Pany does nothing for no reason concerning Ukraine, and the Ukrainians want only one thing – to take a bigger profit from their neighbor." At the same time, it was [stated](#)¹⁴² that in the current geopolitical situation, Poles see Ukrainians as competitors for resources from Western partners, and since the funds for supporting the two countries are allegedly starting to run out, Poland's attitude towards Ukraine has started to cool down. Commenting on the existing contradictions, they also [wrote](#)¹⁴³: "Oh, they used to hug and kiss so much. One step from love to hate. Apparently, they are already running out of money, so they are looking for an excuse. A beaver is not a friend to a pig [*images of Poland and Ukraine – ed.*]."

The contradictions between the states included the reduction of arms deliveries to Ukraine, including Poland's refusal to send a new batch of MiG-29 fighters. In this regard, it was [emphasized](#)¹⁴⁴ that "Polish assistance is not a manifestation of solidarity, but a profitable calculation," because Poland receives loans from NATO countries to buy new weapons in exchange for old equipment sent to Ukraine.

The [issue](#)¹⁴⁵ of the legitimacy of the Ukrainian authorities amid their refusal to hold elections during the war, as well as Poland's [concern](#)¹⁴⁶ over fatigue from the war and the difficult situation at the front, was cited as another problem in bilateral relations. It was because of the latter that the "victory plan" of Ukraine's President Zelenskyy was allegedly not properly supported. At the same time, it was [suggested](#)¹⁴⁷ that Poland

would not benefit from Ukraine's victory in the conflict with Russia because the economic benefits of Ukrainian refugees willing to work for low wages were too great.

Participation in the war in Ukraine

The very fact of providing military assistance to Ukrainians kept the propagandists on their toes, and the potential broader involvement of Poland in the conflict was especially frightening. For example, the statement by Polish Foreign Minister R. Sikorski that Poland has the right to shoot down missiles in Ukrainian airspace if they threaten nuclear power plants was [commented](#)¹⁴⁸ on as follows: "This is already crossing all lines, no matter how far they are drawn. Sikorski actually announced Poland's participation in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict." At the same time, it was [emphasized](#)¹⁴⁹ that the Polish authorities have not yet received U.S. permission for direct participation in the conflict, so they will continue to support the combat operations with the hands of Ukrainians. However, the following was [stated](#)¹⁵⁰ in parallel: "A new bridgehead is being created from Poland to be dragged into the Ukrainian conflict. Military bases and training grounds, endless drills of NATO troops. The country is being stuffed with American weapons like a Christmas piglet."

Creation of the Ukrainian Legion

The issue of creating a volunteer Ukrainian Legion on the territory of Poland from among Ukrainians living in the European Union, which was first announced in July, was also reflected. The propaganda media [considered](#)¹⁵¹ this initiative to be "another American move to drag Poles into the war," because "the priority task of the U.S. is to get the Slavs to kill each other as much as possible."

The problematic aspects of the protracted process of creating the unit were constantly highlighted, especially the [insufficient](#)¹⁵² number of those willing to join the unit. At the same time, it was [questioned](#)¹⁵³ whether the Ukrainian Legion would include citizens of Ukraine. As it was noted, "mercenaries from all over the world will be trained in Poland under the guise of Ukrainians."

Polish war volunteers in Ukraine

The participation of Polish war volunteers in the war as part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) was discussed separately. In particular, they raised the issue of the continuing uncertain legal status of Polish citizens fighting in the war: according to the law, after returning home, they face criminal liability. The propagandists [saw](#)¹⁵⁴ the reason for this in the following: "Once the conflict is over, Moscow will raise the issue before the governments of the countries from which the thugs infiltrated Ukraine, as well as Interpol, of extraditing to Russia those accused of crimes against humanity. In this situation, it is politically advantageous for Warsaw to dissociate itself from those of its citizens who sided with the Kyiv regime."

At the same time, accusations of war crimes committed on the territory of Kursk region of Russia were made against Polish war volunteers in the Ukrainian Armed Forces. It was [claimed](#)¹⁵⁵ that Poles "shot and slaughtered" local residents and that they "surpassed even Ukrainian nationalists in brutality." Historical parallels were also used. For example, against the backdrop of the Russian National Unity Day (the anniversary of the liberation of Moscow from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1612, which is celebrated in Russia on November 4), with a hint at the participation of Polish volunteers in the operation of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Kursk region of Russia, they [claimed](#)¹⁵⁶ that "today Polish mercenaries, with the connivance of Polish politicians, have come to the Russian land again" and "this time the brazen enemy will get what he deserves."

Amid a prediction that Poland's population will decline in the next few decades, Polish Defense Minister W. Kosyniak-Kamysz and his department were [named](#)¹⁵⁷ among those responsible for the “extinction of the Polish nation.” It was claimed that at their suggestion, “allegedly retired Polish military and mercenaries from private military companies” are dying in Ukraine. That is, here we see an actual accusation of the hidden participation of the Polish army in the conflict in the neighboring country. It was also [reported](#)¹⁵⁸ that there are “more than a dozen or even a hundred” injured Polish participants in the Russian-Ukrainian war throughout Poland, while the number of disabled people already exceeds a thousand, and the number of former participants with post-traumatic stress disorder is even higher. At the same time, it was reported that Polish society “amid the crisis of power and interethnic discord” has a negative attitude towards persons who took part in hostilities on the side of Ukraine.

The Situation of Ukrainians in Poland

Periodically, attention was paid to the situation of Ukrainians living in Poland. Two contradictory propaganda narratives can be distinguished on this topic. On the one hand, it was [noted](#)¹⁵⁹ that the end of the Ukrainian conflict would be the end of Poland's “freebies” and that “Ukrainian refugees are carrying the country's economy” and “the loss of cheap labor will lead the country to even greater economic decline.” On the other hand, they tried to [explain](#)¹⁶⁰ the cases of discrimination of Ukrainian refugees by Poles as follows: “One should think about it – what if Poland and the Kyiv regime could come to an agreement with each other? Perhaps Warsaw is deliberately creating unbearable conditions for refugees in this way, pushing them to return to Ukraine, where forced mobilization and inglorious death at the front awaits them.” The following narrative was also [heard](#)¹⁶¹: the situation is moving towards the point where all Ukrainian refugees will soon be sent to the front.

The situation of Belarusians in Poland

Among other things, they tried to show the complexity of the situation of Belarusians living in Poland. For example, after the statement of President A. Duda that the new migration strategy of the government could make it impossible for representatives of the Belarusian opposition to find asylum in Poland, they [wrote](#)¹⁶² the following: “Duda is afraid of being deprived of villeins. Then who will clean the pany's toilets and do other work unworthy of the pany? The begliye [a pejorative term used by propaganda with regard to Belarusians abroad who fled from the Lukashenka regime – ed.] will become a powerless crowd, who will be afraid to even look at the pan, so as not to be thrown out of the country.”

The existence of discrimination against Belarusians in their everyday life in Poland was emphasized in every possible way. In particular, it was [said](#)¹⁶³ that the Polish police did not even try to do their work in cases when they were approached by any citizen of Belarus. At the same time, the propaganda media also came to the [conclusion](#)¹⁶⁴ about the predisposition of Belarusians living in Poland to commit crimes, because allegedly “it is mostly people with a criminal past and the corresponding way of thinking, prone to hooliganism, violence and, finally, to betrayal, who emigrated from Belarus in 2020.”

Preparation of armed detachments of Belarusians

The [accusations](#)¹⁶⁵ that Polish special services help to prepare armed detachments of Belarusians for invasion of Belarus and are actually engaged in “assistance to terrorism” were actively made. It was [noted](#)¹⁶⁶ that their training was carried out with the use of military weapons and as secretly as possible because it categorically contradicts the

international legislation. At the same time, it was [claimed](#)¹⁶⁷ that the special services of the Lukashenka regime allegedly had reliable information about the preparation of “terrorist cells” in Poland with the support of the GROM special unit [a military unit of the Polish special forces – ed.]. At the same time, it was also reported about Poland’s plans “to attack four territories in the southwest of the Republic of Belarus with the involvement of its own army units, as well as the forces of Lithuania and Ukraine.”

Poland’s lack of subjectivity

The actual lack of independence of Poland and the impossibility of making decisions important for the country on its own were emphasized. The U.S. and other Western countries were attributed to the Poles as “masters.” Among the phrases most frequently used by military propaganda with regard to Poland in this context are the following: 1) “Poland is under US [leadership](#),”; 2) “pro-Western [puppet](#)¹⁶⁹ regime;” 3) is “under U.S. [hand](#)¹⁷⁰ control;” 4) “Poland has long been under the U.S. external [control](#),”¹⁷¹ 5) “the U.S. is the [owner](#)¹⁷² of Poland;” 6) “[mouthpiece](#)¹⁷³ of the State Department” [U.S. State Department – ed.]; 7) “Western [masters](#)¹⁷⁴ of Poles; 8) “[vassal](#)¹⁷⁵ of the U.S.” [about Polish Foreign Minister R. Sikorski – ed.]; 9) “Poland is [used](#)¹⁷⁶ to living as a beggar for money from the U.S. and the European Union.”

At the same time, it was [stated](#)¹⁷⁷ that the Americans considered Poland as a bridgehead for launching military operations with Russia and Belarus, which is why they are actively deploying their troops to the country. Also, as the propagandists [claimed](#),¹⁷⁸ “Warsaw’s unusually quick acceptance of the role of a dependent partner raises alarming questions about the leadership’s instinct for self-preservation,” and “blindly following American orders could provoke tragic consequences for Poland.” They also tried to make Poles doubt their independence because of the country’s large number of loans taken from Western countries for the purchase of armaments.

They repeatedly spoke about too “bossy” behavior of the military of the U.S. contingent stationed in Poland. It was [reported](#)¹⁷⁹ that Poles began to increasingly express dissatisfaction with the behavior of American soldiers who “occupied Poland.” U.S. soldiers allegedly “demonstrate a dismissive attitude towards them, behave arrogantly, and often become involved in drunken fights.”

Contradictions between Poland and Germany

Among other things, the topic of contradictions in relations between Poland and Germany was raised. One of the [reasons](#)¹⁸⁰ for this was the unfolding rivalry between the two countries in the arms race as “key European NATO members and historical competitors (often enemies).” Once again, the propaganda technique of using historical parallels was actively used. For example, hinting at the revanchist aspirations of modern Germany to seize Polish lands and the possible involvement of Russia in this process, it was also [noted](#)¹⁸¹ that German “Bürgers may recall the 39th year and have to divide Poland again [this refers to the occupation of Poland by Germany and the USSR in 1939 – ed.]”

Another problematic [issue](#)¹⁸² was the possible start of readmission procedures, as a result of which Germany could return tens of thousands of migrants to Poland who originally arrived in the EU through Polish territory. As it was [claimed](#),¹⁸³ “having quarreled with its western neighbor against the background of the return of border controls by Germany, the ‘hyena of Europe’ [a pejorative expression for Poland – ed.] is now seriously concerned,” and “a minimum level of diplomatic relations” between the two countries is coming. At the same time, other Polish-German disagreements included the [unwillingness](#)¹⁸⁴ of the German leadership to allow Poland to discuss the “victory plan” of

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy, as well as the [issue](#)¹⁸⁵ of investigation of the explosion of the Nord Stream gas pipeline in 2022.

NATO

Preparations for war with Belarus and Russia

The leading narrative of the Belarusian military propaganda about the NATO bloc was the growing threat of invasion of Belarus and Russia by the member states of the organization. For example, NATO was regularly accused of increased activity near the borders of Belarus and Russia. This activity consisted in conducting military [drills](#)¹⁸⁶ and increasing the number of [armaments](#)¹⁸⁷ and army [contingents](#).¹⁸⁸ It was [claimed](#)¹⁸⁹ that “no matter how the West justifies itself, the actions of the neighboring countries of Belarus indicate that NATO wants to organize another military conflict on the eastern flank.” At the same time, it was actually [emphasized](#)¹⁹⁰ that war is inevitable, and the North Atlantic Alliance “rejects any negotiations on peace and is guided by invasive plans.”

The peaceful nature of the military-political bloc was regularly questioned, and any defensive training maneuvers were [called](#)¹⁹¹ a “demonstration of force” and [presented](#)¹⁹² as offensive: “The aggressive orientation of ‘exclusively defensive’ drills becomes more and more obvious every day.” It was [stated](#)¹⁹³ that NATO member states provoke war not only in our time but have always done so: “Since World War II, more than 250 military conflicts have occurred in 153 countries. 80% of them are the work of the United States and its Alliance partners. Not a single year has passed since NATO came into existence that the bloc’s military has not taken part in an armed conflict. To save a village, it must be destroyed – that is the real motto of NATO.” Once again immersing their audience in historical discourse, the authors of propaganda media also [recalled](#)¹⁹⁴ how after the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Ukraine and Belarus, following the collapse of the USSR, NATO representatives assured that they would not expand to the East, but they did not keep their promise.

There were threats to use mirror measures in response to the allegedly aggressive actions of the bloc's countries. It was [noted](#)¹⁹⁵ that such an escalation would not lead to stability in the region and could prompt the political leadership of the Union State to take tough retaliatory measures that would “lead to serious consequences for all parties to the conflict.” The [reaction](#)¹⁹⁶ of one of the pro-government Telegram channels to the military drills being held in Lithuania was most illustrative: “NATO is increasing the presence of troops and equipment near our borders. Impudently seizes reserves, scares the inhabitants, rattles caterpillars, threatens with barbed wire, moats, hedgehogs, dragon's teeth, and other monsters. The Western beast is becoming more and more brazen.”

The attention of the audience was also [drawn](#)¹⁹⁷ to the problems in the everyday life of citizens provoked by regular drills, as well as to the periodic deaths of servicemen, who “have to pay for NATO's militaristic ambitions with their lives.” At the same time, it was [emphasized](#)¹⁹⁸ that the alliance member states have not changed their aggressive rhetoric towards Russia and Belarus for several years, thus preparing their population for war with them.

The increase in military expenditures of NATO countries was constantly criticized. It was especially emphasized that the EU countries [spend](#)¹⁹⁹ huge sums on armaments and military equipment precisely against the background of huge internal [problems](#),²⁰⁰ which can lead to catastrophic [consequences](#)²⁰¹ for them. As it was [noted](#),²⁰² active armament not only increases tension in the region and risks of military conflicts but also puts the world on the threshold of World War III. Moreover, it is the U.S. that is allegedly

[forcing](#)²⁰³ its European allies to increase defense spending and conduct large-scale drills because it is [afraid](#)²⁰⁴ of losing its influence.

At the same time, amid the French army's drills, it was [claimed](#)²⁰⁵ that NATO had begun preparing France for war with Russia. There were also [accusations](#)²⁰⁶ of escalation in the Arctic and North Atlantic, where NATO is allegedly strengthening its capabilities: "The redeployment of RA [reconnaissance aviation – ed.] to Scotland will significantly strengthen NATO's capabilities in the region. This fact, in the context of growing geopolitical tensions, only emphasizes that the U.S. and its allies are preparing to turn the Northern region into the epicenter of the confrontation between East and West."

Baltic and Romanian "bridgeheads"

It was regularly [claimed](#)²⁰⁷ that there were signs that the North Atlantic Alliance was creating an offensive bridgehead against Russia and Belarus in three Baltic countries: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. It was stated that this bridgehead was being prepared in order to [prevent](#)²⁰⁸ the defeat of Ukraine, as well as because "NATO [considers](#)²⁰⁹ the Baltic as its internal sea and Russia is unnecessary there, to put it mildly." At the same time, it was [emphasized](#)²¹⁰: "It is hard not to understand that NATO fighters, flying right over our heads, are exploring the skies over the potential theater of military operations into which the puppet authorities have turned the entire Baltics."

Similar statements about military activity in Romania were [made](#)²¹¹: "For NATO, Romanians are the same as the Balts, and they are not worth sparing either. Therefore, along with the Baltic bridgehead, NATO is preparing the southern segment of its 'eastern flank.' At the same time, Romanian troops are considered as a fresh portion of 'cannon fodder' fit for the Ukrainian 'cauldron.' Or Moldovan...?.."

NATO and the war in Ukraine

One of the common topics during the period under review was the role of NATO in the Russian-Ukrainian war. It was particularly [emphasized](#)²¹² that the current situation in Ukraine was a direct result of the North Atlantic Alliance's long-standing aggressive policy. It was this organization that allegedly [provoked](#)²¹³ Russia to retaliate, as "the U.S. regularly causes conflicts for its own selfish interests." At the same time, the failures of the Russian army at the front were [justified](#)²¹⁴ by the following: "The objective reasons for the turning of the SMO [*special military operation; a term used by pro-Russian propaganda for the war in Ukraine – ed.*] into a protracted war is that by summer 2022, the NATO bloc, led by the U.S., had already joined the war, taking over the function of rear, combat management, combat support and intelligence. Ukraine was only required to fill the front with people... A proxy world war has begun."

For NATO's commitment to continue supporting Ukrainians, the organization was [accused](#)²¹⁵ of opposing peace in Ukraine, as well as continuing to escalate the conflict and "provoke bloodshed among Slavs." In parallel, the topic of possible negotiations between the warring countries was raised. It was [claimed](#)²¹⁶ that "NATO has declared the Kremlin a threat to world democracy and is going to fight to the last Ukrainian," but negotiations are still necessary for the West, for populist purposes, as "society is showing fatigue with comprehensive aid to Ukraine."

At the same time, the [message](#)²¹⁷ was conveyed that representatives of the North Atlantic Alliance do not believe in the realistic scenario of the return of the territories occupied by Russia and the victory of Ukraine in the war, but none of them is willing to confirm this officially. It was [stated](#)²¹⁸ that this was a recognition of the inevitable, and Russia, despite Western pressure, would "come out of this conflict with strengthened forces and clear strategic intentions."

Amid the emergence of the “victory plan” of Ukraine’s President Zelenskyy, one of the points of which is the country’s membership in NATO, the narrative about the impossibility of such a development was actively [promoted](#).²¹⁹ It was [emphasized](#)²²⁰ that a number of countries are against Ukraine joining NATO: the U.S., Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Belgium, Slovenia and Spain. As noted, these countries understand that admitting Ukraine to NATO in its current state automatically makes all members of the bloc parties to an armed conflict with Russia.

At the same time, the seriousness of the consequences of the Western countries’ authorization for Ukraine to use long-range missiles to strike deep into Russian territory was emphasized. A similar message was regularly repeated that the Kremlin would [view](#)²²¹ such a decision as the entry of NATO member states into direct armed conflict with Russia and that the Russian [response](#)²²² to such actions would be “imminent and devastating for the West.” It was [noted](#)²²³ that those officials from NATO countries who do not believe in the seriousness of the consequences and believe it is necessary to authorize Kyiv to use such missiles are “egregious scoundrels and war criminals.” However, a positive solution to this issue for Ukraine was [questioned](#)²²⁴: “NATO is trying to play ‘tough guys,’ but they delicately step aside in front of a strong rival.”

A. Lukashenka’s warning about the potential participation of the bloc’s member states in the Russian-Ukrainian war was also [quoted](#)²²⁵: “If NATO troops enter Ukraine, it will be World War III. Because then both tactical and strategic nuclear weapons will be used, and the response will be immediate and terrible. They understand this too, and we understand this too. That is why we need to sit down at the negotiating table.”

NATO’s lack of prospects

The authors of propaganda media tried to show the weakness and lack of prospects of NATO as a military-political bloc. In particular, they [predicted](#)²²⁶ the imminent disintegration of the organization, as only political and diplomatic miscalculations of geopolitical competitors and the lack of a real alternative kept the members of the bloc from internal conflicts.

The imminent “withdrawal of the U.S. from Europe” was also [cited](#)²²⁷ as one of the reasons for this development of events, after which the most important security guarantee for European countries would be lost. It was reported that this process could be launched if D. Trump [comes](#)²²⁸ to power, after which the Americans would seriously [reduce](#)²²⁹ their aid and eliminate themselves from solving European problems. As noted, such an approach is of concern to European allies, as the absence of the U.S. could weaken NATO and lead to a split in the EU. NATO’s low level of combat readiness was also mentioned. This message was [conveyed](#)²³⁰ through news about various incidents and accidents with servicemen of the bloc’s member states.

Appointment of M. Rutte as Secretary General

A number of publications were devoted to the election of M. Rutte as Secretary General of the organization. He was [called](#)²³¹ “a true citizen of the new Europe and a ‘mirror’ of the entire West, i.e. a representative of LGBT, a Russophobe and a liberal.” It was [claimed](#)²³² that after this event, “NATO’s militarism will continue in favor of war policy,” and “the alliance’s further ‘non-interference’ in the Russia-Ukraine conflict remains highly questionable.” Amid the change in NATO leadership, propagandists were particularly [concerned](#)²³³ about possible shifts in the issue of authorizing Ukraine to launch long-range missile strikes on Russian territory.

A propaganda narrative about the negative consequences of joining NATO is also interesting. For example, they [wrote](#)²³⁴ the following about Lithuania: "One of the poorest countries in the EU actually puts military spending above the social needs of its citizens. Flirtation with NATO and obligations to the alliance has turned into a burden on every resident of the country, who will pay for it through the growth of the debt burden and a possible decline in living standards."

Amid a military parade on Latvia's Independence Day, the following was [claimed](#)²³⁵: "During this whole vanity fair, politicians and presenters were convincing Latvians that NATO is with them, NATO is what is needed... to destroy the independence of the state."

The justification of Sweden's decision to join NATO was also questioned. For example, referring to the fact that information on how to prepare for nuclear, cyber and biological attacks had been distributed among the population of the country, it was [said](#)²³⁶: "How quickly everything in Sweden has changed since joining NATO! Just a few years ago it was a marvelous, blooming country, absolutely fine, completely safe. And now two years have passed – and the citizens are scared of nuclear war. We joined NATO! We've succeeded! Well done!"

It is necessary to separately mention a message about the fatal consequences of interaction with the North Atlantic Alliance for Ukraine. Back in 1997, the country's leadership signed an agreement on cooperation with NATO. Propagandists held NATO and Western countries in general [responsible](#)²³⁷ for all the problems of Ukrainians: "Western promises about the possibility of Ukraine joining the alliance turned out to be only manipulations, which eventually led to two 'Maidans' that changed the political course of the Ukrainian state to Russophobia and nationalism, and then to outright Nazism; the formation of the Ukrainian army as a bridgehead for a rush to Russia; and the crisis in the east of Ukraine." It was separately emphasized that the above-mentioned treaty eventually turned Ukraine into "a training ground for practicing new ways of warfare," which led to "the collapse of the country, the economy, and migration of the population to more prosperous countries."

Thus, the monitoring showed that the military propaganda of the Lukashenka regime actively and regularly uses various media resources to promote messages about the militarization of Poland, NATO's aggressive intentions, and the allegedly humane and peaceful policy of the Belarusian regime. The information campaign is mainly aimed at discrediting Polish statehood, accusing NATO of provoking conflicts, and forming the image of Belarus as a victim of aggression among the audience. The propaganda also constantly exaggerates Poland's internal problems arising from its military policy and distributes inaccurate information about humanitarian, border, and political aspects.

The main sources of distribution of information remain the traditional state media, the regime-controlled network of Telegram channels, and experts. There was a noticeable increase in the number of publications about Poland and NATO in October-November, which is connected with another round of regional tension around the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, as well as the beginning of the campaign for the presidential "election" in Belarus.

The quality of military propaganda can still be assessed as average, which is emphasized by frequent contradictions between texts and illustrations, and by the apparent underestimation of the intellectual abilities of its own military and bureaucratic audience. Many materials reveal such obvious inconsistencies that their refutation does not require special fact-checking.

The influence of such campaigns is still limited both in relation to the Belarusian and foreign (Polish) audiences. At the same time, the current international tension

creates an informational and political basis for the growing significance and level of impact of the Belarusian regime's military propaganda on the international audience.

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