

**Statement of Mustafa Nayyem and Svitlana Zalishchuk
Members of the Parliament of Ukraine
before the**

**Subcommittee on Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Programs
of the Senate Committee on Appropriations**

March 29, 2017

Honorable members of the United States Senate,

on behalf of Svitlana Zalishchuk and Mustafa Nayyem, members of the Parliament of Ukraine, we would like to provide you with evidence of Russia actively financing artificial ‘civil society’ initiatives and spreading fake stories not only in Ukraine but also in other democratic countries in order to create a negative image of Ukraine and interfere with the political process. We present a few examples which show how Russia is using bogus ‘civic’ organisations, news agencies and mainstream Russian media, trolls and misinformation as part of its hybrid war against Ukraine:

1. Alexander Usovsky, a Belarusian living in Poland, received more than 100,000 US dollars from Russia in order to finance anti-Ukrainian nationalist groups in Poland and to set Poles against Ukrainians. Usovsky’s correspondence with the Russian MP and director of the Institute of CIS countries, Konstantin Zatulin, who provided this funding, was revealed by the Ukrainian groups CyberHunta and Cyber Alliance. Usovsky coordinated his anti-Ukrainian actions with Mateusz Piskorski, who founded the openly pro-Russian party "Change" in 2015 and a year later was detained by the Polish authorities, accused of espionage in favor of Russia against Poland.

“Za kasę z Rosji w Polsce przeciw Ukrainie”: <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,21472245,za-kase-kremla-w-polsce-przeciw-ukrainie.html?disableRedirects=true>,

“Pro-Russian Activism of Mateusz Piskorski, Detained in Poland”:
<http://www.interpretermag.com/pro-russian-activism-of-mateusz-piskorski-detained-in-poland/>

2. Harry van Bommel, a left-wing member of the Dutch Parliament, used a “Ukrainian team” that actually included Russians in an effort to influence the Dutch referendum in 2016 on ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement. Presenting themselves as Ukrainians, the members of the “Ukrainian team” attended public meetings, appeared on television and used social media to denounce Ukraine’s pro-Western government as a bloodthirsty kleptocracy, unworthy of Dutch support, and also to promote implausible alternative theories for the downing of the Boeing jet carrying Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

“Fake News, Fake Ukrainians: How a Group of Russians Tilted a Dutch Vote”:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/16/world/europe/russia-ukraine-fake-news-dutch-vote.html>

3. Russian state TV Channel One showed a scene where a small boy was crucified “just like Jesus” by the Ukrainian army in eastern Ukraine in Sloviansk while his mother was tied to a tank, and dragged three times around the city’s central square. Some days later Russian opposition leaders Alexei Navalny and Boris Nemtsov in Sloviansk said that there was no evidence that such a public execution had taken place and called for

the management of Channel One, Russia's most popular channel, to be put on trial for broadcasting it.

"There's No Evidence the Ukrainian Army Crucified a Child in Slovyansk":
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/07/15/there-s-no-evidence-the-ukrainian-army-crucified-a-child-in-slovyansk.html>

4. Russian newspaper Moskovskiy Komsomolets falsely accused Ukraine of presenting a staged video game as evidence at a hearing before the UN International Court of Justice in The Hague. "As proof, Ukraine demonstrated a video game seemingly showing Russia transporting heavy artillery for the militia" in eastern Ukraine, the newspaper writes. This spurious claim is not supported by any evidence, link or explanation. Other media who disseminated similar stories claiming that Ukraine presented a video game as evidence include Rambler News, Nesam.net.ua, Zagolovki, Live News and others. The full session of the ICJ hearing is available on the court's web site where the documentary visualization is also available. (1:48:00-1:54:00).

"Украина предъявила игровое видео на суде против России в Гааге":
<http://www.mk.ru/politics/2017/03/06/ukraina-predyavila-igrovoe-video-na-sude-protiv-rossii-v-gaage.html>

The ICJ hearing:
http://www.icj-cij.org/presscom/view_vod.php?event=20170306_ur&filename=5349310122001

5. The pro-Russian Novorossia news agency published a story accusing Ukrainian armed forces of robbing and looting local Ukrainians in the conflict zone and illustrated this fake story with a photograph of a soldier carrying two geese. This photograph actually shows a Russian soldier and was taken in Chechnya in 1995. This photograph was posted on the Russian social media site LiveJournal by a user named *Frallik* in 2013. Frallik writes that the photo was taken in 1995 in Meskenduk, during the second Chechen war.

"Fake: Russian Soldier Looting in Chechnya Presented as Ukrainian":
<http://www.stopfake.org/en/fake-russian-soldier-looting-in-chechnya-presented-as-ukrainian/>

6. Fake reports alleged that the Ukrainian air force had targeted Russian President Vladimir Putin's plane, which flew over the same region as MH17 one hour earlier. Just three hours before MH 17 was downed, The Associated Press reported the passage of a Buk M-1 missile system - a machine the size of a tank bearing four ground-to-air missiles - through the rebel-held town of Snizhne near the crash site. A highly placed rebel officer told the AP in an interview after the disaster that the plane was shot down by a mixed team of rebels and Russian military personnel who believed they were targeting a Ukrainian military plane.

"Russian pictures of MH17 being shot by Ukrainian jet 'fake'":
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11233420/Russian-pictures-of-MH17-being-shot-by-Ukrainian-jet-fake.html>

"Russia's Fictions on Malaysia Flight 17":
<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/15/opinion/russias-fictions-on-malaysia-flight-17.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FMalaysia%20Airlines%20Flight%2017>

7. At the end of February 2017 several Russian publications claimed that European countries were accusing Ukraine of releasing a radioactive isotope into the continent's atmosphere. An increase in iodine-131 was first noticed in Norway in mid-January, eventually traces were also picked up in Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, France and Spain. No European publication has reported that the leak originated in Ukraine. Only Russian media, such as RIA Novosti Ukraina, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Anna News, Forum.msk.ru, Operativnaya Linia, Otkrytaya elektronnyaya gazeta claimed that the source of the leak was Ukraine, but did not provide any evidence to support the claim. Citing the Independent and the Barents Observer as its sources, the RIA story points the finger of blame directly at Ukraine, however, Ukraine does not figure in their stories at all. According to the Independent, the unusual activity could be coming from a secret Russian nuclear missile launch, or from a hidden pharmaceutical business, but nobody is entirely sure.

“В Европе - загадочная вспышка радиации”:

<http://rian.com.ua/analytics/20170224/1021704749.html>

“В повышении радиоактивного фона Европа обвиняет Украину”:

<http://kp.ua/incidents/567761-v-povyshenyy-radyoaktyvnoho-fona-evropa-obvyniaet-ukraynu>

“Mysterious radiation spreading across Europe after authorities keep it secret”:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/radiation-europe-russian-missile-strike-radioactive-material-france-norway-iodine-131-irsn-a7591886.html>

“Radioactive Iodine over Europe first measured in Finnmark”:

<https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/ecology/2017/02/radioactive-iodine-over-europe-first-measured-finnmark>

8. Russian media site Polit Online recently published a story claiming that the United Nations (responding to a request by former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich from 2014 calling for Russian troops to enter Ukraine) gave Russia permission to invade Ukraine. The source for this story is a Facebook post by Ukraine's Attorney General, Yuriy Lutsenko, in which he states that the UN's office in Ukraine has received official copies of Viktor Yanukovich's 2014 letter asking for Russian troops to enter Ukraine and related official documents from the Russian Federation presented to the UN in support of Yanukovich's request. Lutsenko's post includes copies of the documents in question. According to UN protocol, each UN member has the right to distribute documents to the General Assembly and the UN Security Council. The UN Secretariat distributes such documents after they've been assigned registration numbers for archiving and records. The dissemination of such documents is the normal order of business within the UN, in no way is it a United Nations stamp of approval or permission for one country to seize or capture another, as Polit Online claims.

Yuriy Lutsenko's post:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=625853430947169&set=a.139021569630360.1073741834.100005675529100&type=3&theater>

9. Russian state news agency TASS declared that the US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, had named the terms under which Crimea would be recognized as part of Russia and Lenta.ru quickly followed suit claiming that he “clarified” those conditions. Both agencies ignored the fact that Mr. Tillerson clearly stated that Russia's annexation of Crimea was illegal and violated Ukraine's sovereignty. Tillerson did not outline any

conditions for such recognition. On the contrary, he said that Russia had no right to take Crimea and the weak response for this action from the US emboldened Moscow. Responding to Senator Rob Portman's question that United States would never recognize the annexation of Crimea similar to the way it had never recognized the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States, Mr. Tillerson responded: "The only way that could ever happen is if there were some broader agreement that would be satisfactory to the Ukrainian people, so absent that, we would never recognize the annexation". RIA Novosti, Russian Defense Ministry television channel Zvezda, the newspaper Vzglyad, TASS, Vedomosti, Lenta.ru, Interfax and many other Russian media organizations also disseminated this fake story.

"Тиллерсон: США признают воссоединение Крыма с РФ, если свои возражения снимет Украина":

<http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/3933750>

"Кандидат в госсекретари США уточнил условие признания Крыма российским":

<https://lenta.ru/news/2017/01/11/tillerson/>

10. Director of the organization "Fair Help", Elizaveta Glinka, better known as Dr. Lisa, brought children from Donbas to Russia without the consent of the Ukrainian authorities. In numerous interviews, she has asserted that there are no Russian troops in Ukraine, claiming that people are dying from shelling by the Ukrainian army. Her work in recent years had a propagandistic purpose as she directly helped to give the Putin regime a "human face", and for that she was presented with an award by the Russian president.

"Доктор Луза. Шурма для режима или ангел, который служил злу":
http://ru.espreso.tv/article/2016/12/26/doktor_lyza_shurma_dlya_rezhyma_yly_angel_kotoryy_sluzhyl_zlu

11. A fake video showing the Dutch flag being burned and terror threats made against the Netherlands was manipulatively presented as an official statement of the Ukrainian battalion "Azov". As the investigation of the analytical group Bellingcat shows, this video was initially spread and likely created by the same network of accounts and news sites that are operated by Russia's infamous "St. Petersburg Troll Factories" which form part of their Internet Research Agency and its sister organization, the Federal News Agency.

"Behind the Dutch Terror Threat Video: The St. Petersburg "Troll Factory" Connection":

<https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2016/04/03/azov-video/>