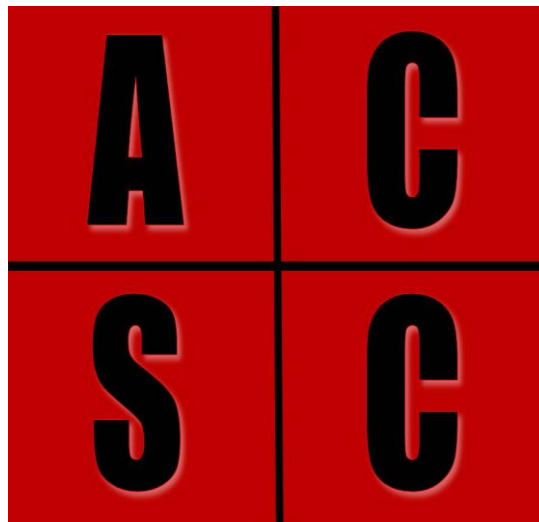# ACADEMIC CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

SIGNAL INFORMATION

VOL III

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

*C*ONSPIRACIES AND DISINFORMATION HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON NATIONS

*S*OCIETIES ARE VULNERABLE TO FAKES, AT LEAST THEY ARE WELL EDUCATED

*C*OMMON EFFORTS ARE THE WAY TO BUILD COMMON RESILIENCE

*A*CSC THINK-TANK SIGNALS DISINFORMATION

ACADEMIC CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

The Signal Information is a project to highlight the vast scope of disinformation directed against the Polish Armed Forces and the Polish military environment.

In this special time we dedicate our work to solidarity with Ukraine.

"The Russian invasion of Ukraine ends once and for all an era of illusions about the west's relations with Moscow. What has been clear to Poland for years must now surely be clear to all western countries. Russian aggression against independent Ukraine has shown President Vladimir Putin's true face"[1].

Mateusz Morawiecki, the Prime Minister of Poland

promote awareness & debunk disinformation – communicate

ACSC Team

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[1] Full article by the PM: https://www.ft.com/content/315a342d-d646-4061-ab4a-d2455b6a7221

RUSSIAN HOSTILE ACTIONS

At the beginning of the year there was a cyberattack under the False Flag aimed at Polish-Ukrainian relations

13/14 JAN there was a "deface" cyberattack directed at many governmental services in Ukraine. The content of services was replaced by the picture. It was noticed that all Internet services with replaced content were working under the control of October CMS[2].

Українець! Всі ваші особисті дані були завантажені в загальну мережу. Всі дані на комп'ютері знищуються, відновити їх неможливо. Вся інформація про вас стала публічною, бійтеся і чекайте гіршого. Це Вам за ваше минуле, сьогодення і майбутнє. За Волинь, за ОУН УПА, за Галичину, за Полісся і за історичні землі.

Украинец! Все ваши личные данные были загружены в общую сеть. Все данные на компьютере уничтожаются, восстановить их невозможно. Вся информация о вас стала публичной, бойтесь и ждите худшего. Это Вам за ваше прошлое, настоящее и будущее. За Волынь, за ОУН УПА, за Галицию, за Полесье и за исторические земли.

Ukrainiec! Wszystkie Twoje dane osobowe zostały przesłane do wspólnej sieci. Wszystkie dane na komputerze są niszczone, nie można ich odzyskać. Wszystkie informacje o Tobie stały się publiczne, bój się i czekaj na najgorsze. To dla Ciebie za twoją przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość. Za Wołyń, za OUN UPA, Galicję, Polesie i za tereny historyczne.

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2 https://niebezpiecznik.pl/post/ktos-chcial-nas-wplatac-w-cyberkonflikt-z-ukraina/
3 https://archive.fo/VIDeS/1a0ed22a3974116cc731f91f04046f648988fb78.jpg

Translation:

"*Ukrainian! All your personal data has been sent to the common Net. All data on the computer are being deleted, and these will be impossible to recover. All information about you are public, be afraid and wait for the worst. This is for you, for your past, present and future. For Volyn, for the OUN UIA [Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists Ukrainian Insurgent Army], Galicia, Polesie and for historical lands*".

TECHNICAL SIDE

Malicious malware was discovered on multiple computer systems, an attack reached more than 70 government websites. A hacking group linked to Belarus used multiple techniques to break into government computer systems, including hacking into Ukrainian IT company to launch a "supply chain" attack against its government customers. The defacement attacks exploited unpatched versions of the open-source content management system "October CMS", which was supported by Ukrainian software company Kitsoft and other IT companies. The Ukrainian Security Service confirmed, "hackers exploited a specific vulnerability" in a content management system used by the government. "The attackers hacked the infrastructure of a commercial company that had access to the rights to administer the web resources affected by the attack.", highlighted services[4].

RUSSIA ONCE AGAIN

The attack comes at a time of geopolitical tension between Russia and the West. Ms. Olha Stefanishyna, Ukrainian deputy Prime Minister, stated to BBC World News she believed there was a Russian influence behind the cyberattacks impacting the country, "The cyberattacks are happening on a daily basis on websites of the Ukraine of a regional and central nature."[5], she said. Jen Psaki, Press Secretary to the Whitehouse stated,

> "The United States and our allies and partners are concerned about the cyberattack, and the President has been briefed. We are also in touch with the Ukrainians and have offered our support as Ukraine investigates the impact and nature and recovers from the incidents. I know the Ukrainians also announced and conveyed that they got their systems up and running pretty quickly and that personal data was not accessed. We will continue to, of course, work with them and assess any additional impacts. We're continuing to consult with allies and partners, including Ukraine, on this. You might have also seen NATO's statement as well, which says that they're also exchanging information with Ukraine. So that's where the status stands right now. I think it's important to note the Ukrainians' statements on this, which convey very, very clearly that they were able to get their systems up and running."[6].

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[4] https://niebezpiecznik.pl/post/ktos-chcial-nas-wplatac-w-cyberkonflikt-z-ukraina/
[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VG5LpRoI3d0
[6] Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, January 14, 2022,
https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/01/14/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-jen-psaki-and-fema-administrator-deanne-criswell-january-14-2022/

MAKE IT HYBRID

The Centre for Strategic Communication[7], the Ukrainian government body that aims to counter disinformation from Russia and elsewhere, claimed in a blogpost that the attack forms part of a campaign that has been continuing since 2014, "Russia's cyber troops are often working against the United States and Ukraine, trying to use technology to shake up the political situation," it said. "The latest cyberattack against Ukraine is one of the manifestations of the hybrid war against our state (…). Its goal is to destabilize the situation in Ukraine by stopping the work of the public sector and undermining the confidence of the government on the part of Ukrainians.", it underlined[8].

MAIN LINES OF THE ATTACK

- A signal was sent to the Ukrainian public about the growing threat, the possibility of intercepting personal data.
- To Western countries, the attack was intended to show that Russia is starting a next stage in the escalation of the conflict and to make the possibility of armed aggression more likely.
- It can be seen as an element of pressure on Western states to refrain from introducing harsh sanctions on Russia, as they may respond in the form of cyberattacks. Russia is carrying out continuous actions aimed at reinforcing the conviction in Russian society that Western countries are aggressive, also in the context of the escalation of tension around the Ukrainian borders.
- IT security experts warn that cyberattacks, online espionage and information operations will increase in range and power[9].

IMPACT ON MEDIA

Information about the cyberattack was published the day after the incident:

- CNN:

A laptop screen displays a warning message in Ukrainian, Russian and Polish that appeared on the official website of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry.
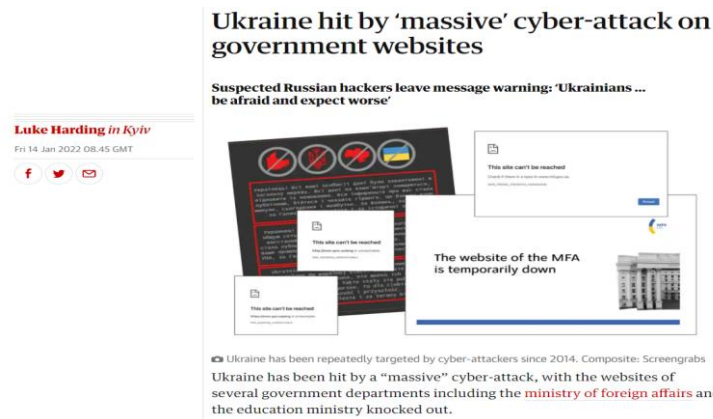
10

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[7] https://stratcomua.org/en

[8] https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252512087/Russian-backed-hackers-defaced-Ukrainian-websites-as-cover-for-dangerous-malware-attack

[9] Ibid.

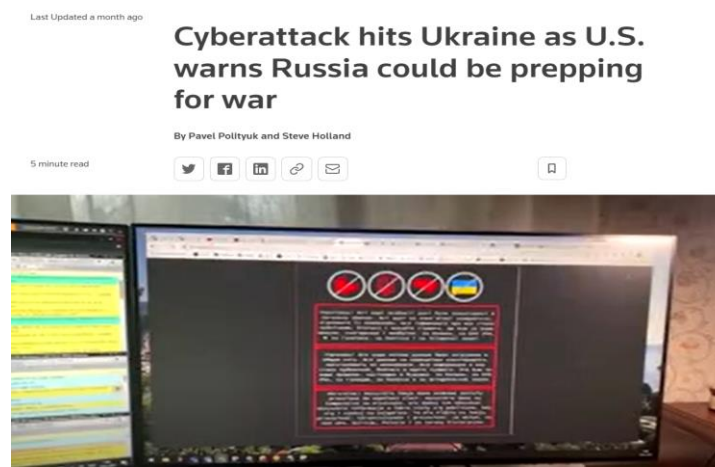[10] https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/14/europe/ukraine-cyber-attack-government-intl/index.html

- THE GURADIAN:

Ukraine hit by 'massive' cyber-attack on government websites

Suspected Russian hackers leave message warning: 'Ukrainians ... be afraid and expect worse'

Luke Harding *in Kyiv*
Fri 14 Jan 2022 08.45 GMT

The website of the MFA is temporarily down

Ukraine has been repeatedly targeted by cyber-attackers since 2014. Composite: Screengrabs

Ukraine has been hit by a "massive" cyber-attack, with the websites of several government departments including the ministry of foreign affairs and the education ministry knocked out.

- REUTERS:

Last Updated a month ago

Cyberattack hits Ukraine as U.S. warns Russia could be prepping for war

By Pavel Polityuk and Steve Holland

5 minute read

"FALSE FLAG" FOOTPRINTS

The hackers defaced government websites with messages written in three languages. They referred to incidents in Ukrainian history, including the genocide in Volyn that led to the deportation of thousands of Poles to Siberian labor camps. Analysis of the Polish version of the hacker's message revealed that it was not written by a native Polish speaker. The false message appeared as an attempt to point the blame at Poland for this hacking operation and to weaken Polish-Ukrainian relations.

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[11] https://awww.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/14/ukraine-massive-cyber-attack-government-websites-suspected-russian-hackers

[12] https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/expect-worst-ukraine-hit-by-cyberattack-russia-moves-more-troops-2022-01-14/

There were three main fundaments that were supposed to indicate Poland as an attacker – all debunked:

1. It was based on tragic history events and a very difficult issue in our mutual relations.
2. Messages appeared on these websites in three language versions: Ukrainian, Russian and Polish, while the content written in Polish contained errors indicating computer translation of the message.
3. Metadata of the picture indicated that the source of the attack was located in Warsaw, near the General Staff of the Polish Army (the Warsaw School of Economics). The geographical data was added manually[13].

RESULT

- In this case of the False Flag operation Poland was supposed to be accused of standing behind the attack.
- The aim of the cyberattack was to cause reputation damage to state institutions and international partner, as well as to undermine trust in them.
- It was primarily a psychological and informational operation.
- Despite the disinformative nature of the message, the media did not accuse Poland.

ESET research
@ESETresearch

Breaking. #ESETResearch discovered a new data wiper malware used in Ukraine today. ESET telemetry shows that it was installed on hundreds of machines in the country. This follows the DDoS attacks against several Ukrainian websites earlier today 1/n

9:25 PM · 23 lut 2022 · Twitter Web App

[14]

IF ENEMY DISCOVERS OUR VULNERABILITY
- HE WILL CERTAINLY USE IT

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[13] https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252512087/Russian-backed-hackers-defaced-Ukrainian-websites-as-cover-for-dangerous-malware-attack

[14] https://twitter.com/ESETresearch/status/1496581903205511181?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1496581903205511181%7Ctwgr%5E%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fsecurityaffairs.co%2Fwordpress%2F128349%2Fmalware%2Fwiper-malware-hermeticwipe-ukrain.html,
https://securityaffairs.co/wordpress/128349/malware/wiper-malware-hermeticwipe-ukrain.html

We are experienced enough to have a strong disbelief in Russian actions and to predict Kremlin's hostility

There was a reminder posted by many TT users. It is the speech given by Lech Kaczyński the President of Poland (2005–2010). President Lech Kaczyński came to Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, on August 12, 2008, during the Russian-Georgian war. In this way he opposed the Russian aggression, and his speech turned out to be prophetic for the later fate of the eastern part of Europe.
Among others the President stated, "*We perfectly know that today Georgia, tomorrow Ukraine, the day after tomorrow the Baltic states, and then maybe it's time for my country, for Poland.*"[15].

← Tweet

Marcin Czapliński ✔
@czaplinskiii

Posłuchajcie raz jeszcze, tych słów Prezydenta Lecha Kaczyńskiego wypowiedzianych w 2008 roku w Gruzji. #StandWithUkraine
Translate Tweet

From Marcin Czapliński ✔

6:57 AM · Feb 24, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

16

For many years Russia stays aggressive towards many countries using an array of assets to uphold tensions

Russian aggression is multidimensional, uses different methods. But one is for sure – it has a long tradition. Here is just small part from the Kremlin's aggressive actions.

← Tweet

Disinfo Digest
@Disinfo_Digest

.@StZaryn: Rosyjska agresja ma różne wymiary, korzysta z różnorodnych metod. Ale jedno jest jasne – ma bardzo długą historię.

Tu jedynie mały wycinek ostatnich przejawów państwowej agresji Kremla:
Translate Tweet

6:10 PM · Feb 25, 2022 · Twitter Web App

17

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[15] https://awww.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/2906851,Prezydent-Lech-Kaczynski-w-2008-roku-sprzeciwil-sie-rosyjskiej-agresji-na-Gruzje

[16] https://twitter.com/czaplinskiii/status/1496725972451840002?s=11

[17] https://twitter.com/disinfo_digest/status/1497257780218060817?s=11

2008: Attack on Georgia: The Kremlin, together with military activities, used propaganda to accuse Georgian soldiers of crimes, including genocide.

2014: Russia attacked Ukraine and began the occupation of Crimea and Donbas. Military actions were enhanced by intensive informative and hybrid campaigns against Ukraine.

Since 2014: Russia constantly provides informative operations in order to dehumanize Ukrainian nation and to promote lies about allegedly collapse of the Kiev Government. It accuses Ukrainian authorities of neo-Nazizm and reinforces its actions against NATO. It presents the Alliance as the enemy and the threat for the Kremlin. Russia attacks the presence of the Allied troops on the Eastern flank of NATO.

2016: Russia destabilized election campaigns in the USA.

2017: Russia run operation of destabilizing the campaign before the referendum in Spain.

FEB 2022: Russia started consecutive phase of the invasion of Ukraine. The Kremlin launched a vast military campaign and attacked Ukraine. It also continues informative aggression.

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[18] https://twitter.com/Disinfo_Digest/status/1497257780218060817/photo/1

We recognize false narratives directed against Poland

01. We can rely on Allies only in the peace time but in case of emergency they will leave as soon as they came.
02. The fact we are in or out of NATO, may be meaningless.
03. The head goal for American and British troops stationing in our region is to evacuate own citizens.
04. Americans end English retreat troops from Ukraine as they fear of Russian invasion. This is a lesson for Poland.
05. The presence of US troops in Poland does not affect our security, it is rather the opposite.
06. Americans may pack to planes and evacuate like from Afghanistan.

We debunk Russian disinformation on our daily basis

Russia stays very active in the infosphere sharing #fakenews. We should be #fejkoodporni (fakeresillient), we should not allow to be manipulated, we should not share #fakenews. If you find it, shall you signal it.

- @WeryfikacjaNASK service was established. It alerts about disinformation in the Net.

- There is the Operational Group in the Government Information Center.

- We monitor the content put in the Polish social media and we react to signs of disinformation.

[20]

[20] https://twitter.com/acks_aszwoj/status/1497543086473416707?s=11

WE FIGTH RUSSIA AS THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION

Together with our Allies we discuss solutions to deliver support to Ukraine, block the aggression protect the world from Russia in the future

21

Tweet

PLinNATO ✓
@PLinNATO

President @AndrzejDuda at #Bucharest9 Summit in Warsaw: the West must do everything in its power to make Russia 🇷🇺 suffer a costly defeat in Ukraine 🇺🇦

#StandWithUkraine

👤 Kancelaria Prezydenta and 4 others

5:10 PM · Feb 25, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

22

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21 https://twitter.com/GitanasNauseda/status/1497286952898465792/photo/1
22 https://twitter.com/plinnato/status/1497242732036718594?s=11

23

24

President's Chancellery: In this important moment we have to communicate the unity of Middle-European community, which today is so much focused on Ukrainian matters.

Andrzej Duda, the President of Poland welcomed in the Presidential Palace the president of the European Commission and presidents of Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Estonia.

25

26

23 https://twitter.com/prezydentpl/status/1497235732322263046?s=11
24 https://twitter.com/prezydentpl/status/1497196751475908629?s=11
25 https://twitter.com/plinnato/status/1497239411481841670?s=11
26 https://twitter.com/polandmfa/status/1497497014766030848?s=11

It was another meeting of the President of Poland @AndrzejDuda with representatives of the Government, army and services.

In the meeting dedicated to the situation on Ukraine attends also the Minister of National Defence @mblaszczak.

27

28

"Together with Mr. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, we participated in an online meeting with the President Joe Biden and the Presidents of NATO countries. We highlighted that the North Atlantic Alliance – the whole community – must maintain united and we absolutely must stand together with Ukraine", stated the President of Poland.

He also underlined that Poland and Ukraine are brotherly nations, the closest neighbours and friends. It can be seen in the way Poles help and support Ukrainians[29].

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[27] https://twitter.com/MON_GOV_PL/status/1499080828202147844?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Etweet

[28] https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/prezydent-po-spotkaniu-z-szefem-nato-realizujemy-nasze-zobowiazania-sojusznicze

[29] https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/briefing-prezydenta-oraz-sekretarza-generalnego-nato,49643

... however when some of our Allies loses their way, we have to react quickly

Poland in the EU
@PLPermRepEU

Prime Minister @MorawieckiM in #Berlin 🇩🇪:

Today there is no time for the selfishness that we see also here in #Germany.

This is why I came to @OlafScholz to shake Germany's conscience so that they decide on firm and crushing sanctions that would influence Putin's decisions.

Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland and 9 others
1:38 PM · Feb 26, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

30

Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland
@PremierRP_en

🇵🇱🇱🇹🇩🇪 PM @MorawieckiM in #Berlin: We must cut off Russian financial institutions and Russian companies from financing on capital markets. Cross them out of the MSCI index, cut Russia off from SWIFT. All sanctions should be on the table now.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 4 others
2:22 PM · Feb 26, 2022 · Twitter for Android

31

Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland
@PremierRP_en

🇵🇱🇱🇹🇩🇪 PM @MorawieckiM in #Berlin calls on Germany to introduce tougher sanctions against Russia.

27.7K views   0:67 / 1:07

3:39 PM · Feb 26, 2022 · Twitter Web App

32

30 https://twitter.com/plpermrepeu/status/1497551601585823749?s=11
31 https://twitter.com/premierrp_en/status/1497562682572029955?s=11
32 https://twitter.com/premierrp_en/status/1497582158071975939?s=11

WE SUPPORT UKRAINE

In this hard time, we provide brotherly help to Ukrainians

The relation of Matt Gutman – the Chief National Correspondent ABC News from the train station in Przemyśl, where Ukrainian refugees received help and assistance form Poles.

[33]

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[33] https://twitter.com/abc/status/1496952465916416007?s=11

Partial script:

"This is the train station in Przemyśl. It's basically the first town in Poland after you cross from Ukraine. What you're seeing behind me are people who have come tonight on a train that was delayed for five hours and 45 minutes, but it finally made it from the city of Lviv in Ukraine. All these people behind just pulled in, they went through customs, now they're trying to buy tickets for other towns in Poland or the rest of Europe. You can see there's help from Police over there, there are information booths and I'll take you over there real quick. The Poles have been incredibly hospitable, offering coffee, some cookies, to the people who have just arrived. There are paramedics here as well in case anybody has any sort of medical issue. The biggest question for lot of these people once they arrive, where do they go ? What do they do ? There's the other question – What are they ? You know, these people have left their home because of a conflict, because Russia invaded Ukraine..."

34

35

The reception point for Ukrainian refugees was installed in a sport hall. There is food and basic medical support.

34 https://twitter.com/mswia_gov_pl/status/1497526421538979840?s=11
35 https://twitter.com/visegrad24/status/1497493586929147908?s=11

140 mothers with children came from Ukraine to the East Railway Station in Warsaw. They came by the special medical train.

[36] https://twitter.com/mswia_gov_pl/status/1497497622935785472?s=11

[37] https://warszawa.wyborcza.pl/warszawa/7,54420,28162153,specjalny-pociag-z-ukrainy-jest-juz-na-dworcu-wschodnim.html

38

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[38] https://twitter.com/poland_mod/status/1497273487404240896?s=11

[39] https://media.terytorialsi.wp.mil.pl/informacje/zalacznik/2134164

https://prk24.pl/ - Polskie Radio Koszalin

https://media.terytorialsi.wp.mil.pl/informacje/zalacznik/2134178

https://podkarpacka.policja.gov.pl/rze/komendy-policji/kpp-jaroslaw/wydarzenia/108720,Kazdego-dnia-z-pomoca-uchodzcom.html

[40] https://media.terytorialsi.wp.mil.pl/informacje/zalacznik/2134182

https://www.portel.pl/prasowka/uchodzcy-z-ukrainy-wyladuja-pod-malborkiem/86381

https://media.terytorialsi.wp.mil.pl/informacje/zalacznik/2134170

DISCLOSING PUTIN'S MADNESS RECALLS OLD DEMONS

[41] https://twitter.com/Disinfo_Digest/status/1497170086314053637/photo/1

[42] https://twitter.com/skarlos77/status/1497170828743491585/photo/1

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[43] https://twitter.com/hwag_ucmc/status/1497314935235354625/photo/1

[44] https://www.indiatoday.in/world/russia-ukraine-war/story/russians-vladimir-putin-invasion-ukraine-war-crisis-1917667-2022-02-25

STRONGER TOGETHER

Brussels, 24 FEB 2022: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg addresses a press conference after the meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) following Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

NATO to beef up Eastern flank defence, hold summit after Russian attack on Ukraine

By Alexandra Brzozowski | EURACTIV.com   24 lut 2022 (updated: 25 lut 2022)

45

46

47

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45 https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/nato-to-beef-up-eastern-flank-defence-hold-summit-after-russian-attack-on-ukraine/
46 https://twitter.com/NATO_AIRCOM/status/1497195641071673349
47 https://twitter.com/nato_aircom/status/1497515808246874113?s=11

48

WE SUPPORT INDEPENDENT UKRAINE

"Właśnie rozmawiałem z prawdziwym przyjacielem Ukrainy - prezydentem Polski Andrzejem Dudą" - napisał w mediach społecznościowych prezydent Ukrainy Wołodymyr Zełenski.

Prezydent Zełenski o prezydencie Polski: to prawdziwy przyjaciel Ukrainy   Foto: PAP

49

"I have just talked to real friend of Ukraine – the President of Poland, Andrzej Duda",
wrote Wołodymyr Zełenski, the Ukrainian President.

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48 https://twitter.com/landcmd/status/1497146602158362628?s=11
49 https://www.polskieradio24.pl/5/1223/Artykul/2909304,Zelenski-rozmawial-z-prezydentem-Duda-Prawdziwy-przyjaciel-Ukrainy-jestem-wdzieczny-Polakom

"The war that Putin has unleashed on Ukraine is also a battle for the soul of the west. This is the moment for us in the west to show that we will not submit to tyranny. It is time for us to show that values such as freedom and the right of the self-determination of peoples are not merely things we talk about, but also things we are willing to fight for"[50].

Mateusz Morawiecki, the Prime Minister of Poland

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[50] https://www.ft.com/content/315a342d-d646-4061-ab4a-d2455b6a7221