ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA
ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA 2019
This report “Anti-Western Propaganda” by Media Development Foundation (MDF) is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) within “Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness Program in Georgia” [PITA], implemented by the UN Association of Georgia. The contents are the responsibility of MDF and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government and UNAG.
The fifth annual report on anti-western propaganda reflects the results of media monitoring and fake news debunking in 2019. The monitoring report, which traditionally focuses on detecting anti-western messages, observing the process of their framing as well as shifting narratives over time, also identifies sources of these messages and verifies them when they contain fake information.

Monitoring is conducted on media outlets as well as other sources – political class, clerics, public organizations and separate public figures. Apart from monitoring traditional media, fake news is tracked down on the social network Facebook.

The report spans the period from 1 January through 31 December 2019. The introductory part of the report presents main findings of the study, monitoring methodology, total quantitative data and their sources. The third part provides an overview of how narratives are framed and contains a separate chapter on health and biosecurity which sums up the data of the past five years and reviews harmful information operations consistently conducted by Russian authorities against the Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research. Final chapter describes the fake and manipulative content instances that were revealed and debunked under the Myth Detector project.

Similar studies were carried out by the Media Development Foundation (MDF) in 2014-2018 too. They were conducted in partnership with the UN Association of Georgia (UNAG) within the framework of USAID’s Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Awareness Program.
METHODOLOGY

The monitoring applied a mixed study methodology:

- **Content Analysis.** Narratives and their sources are identified through content analysis of traditional Georgian language media (TV, print and online outlets), allowing to understand the context and observe trends, and process quantitative and qualitative data. A quantitative part provides the amount of anti-western messages broken down by topics, while the qualitative part focuses on the typology of messages.

- **Identification and Verification of Fake News.** CrowdTangle analytics tool is applied to identify fake news stories posted by Facebook pages and groups, to verify them and look into their sources. Additionally, fake stories supplied by readers are also verified but these stories and their sources identified by random selection through systematic monitoring.

**Selecting Subjects of Content Analysis.** As an earlier study\(^1\) of the MDF has shown, Russian media is more used as a source of information in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities. Georgian-speaking media consumers receive identical disinformation from Georgian sources. It is for this very reason that Georgian media outlets have been selected as subjects of monitoring in this study.

Media outlets to be monitored were selected from mainstream as well as tabloid media. In total, 15 outlets were monitored. Several monitored TV programs that were taken off the air because of changes in TV programming, were replaced with the programs of similar format. The monitoring was conducted on the following subjects:

- **Daily prime-time news and weekly analytical programs on four TV channels:** Georgian Public Broadcaster (Moambe; Akhali Kvira); Rustavi 2 (Kurieri; P.S.);\(^2\) Imedi (Qronika; Imedis Kvira); Obieqtivi TV (Akhali Ambebi).


\(^2\) After the European Court of Human Rights ruled against a claim of Rustavi 2 in July 2019, a new TV company “Mtavari Arkhi” established by former Rustavi 2 employees became the subject of monitoring; namely, the news program “Mtavari” and a weekly analytical program “Post Factum.”
Talk-shows of five TV channels: Georgian Public Broadcaster (Kviris Interviu); Rustavi 2 (Archevani) thereafter Mtavari (Archevani); Imedi (Pirispir); Obieqtivi (Ghamis Studia; Dghis Bolos); Kavkasia (Barieri; Spektri).

Six online media outlets: Sakinformi, Netgazeti, Interpressnews, Georgia & World, PIA, Marshalpress.

Four newspapers: Rezonansi, Kviris Palitra, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia.

Identification and verification of fake news. Antiliberal, pro-Kremlin Facebook pages and groups with close links to the government are monitored through CrowdTangle analytics tool. Pages in the database are periodically updated. Identified fake or manipulative content is verified based on the methodology of MDF’s fact-checking portal, Myth Detector, which includes four stages:

1. Selection
2. Verification of facts
3. Assessment
4. Search of information about a source

Verification is carried out based on open sources and relevant tools (OSINET), which are detailed on the Myth Detector webpage.  

3 After the change in ownership of Rustavi 2, the program “Archevani” moved to a newly established TV channel Mtavari Arkhi; consequently, the monitoring subject changed since October 2019.

4 After the closedown of the program “Pirispir” on the Imedi TV in November 2019, a talk show “Arena” became a subject of monitoring.

5 The talk-show “Dghis Bolos” became a monitoring subject in September 2019, after the closure of Valeri Kvaratskhelia’s program “Okros Kveta.”

CONTENT

KEY FINDINGS

1. TOTAL DATA 12

2. SOURCES OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES 20
   - Media 21
   - Political parties / politicians 22
   - Civil organizations 23
   - Representatives of Society 24
   - Clergy 24

3. FRAMING OF ANTI-WESTERN NARRATIVES 25
   I. SOWING FEARS 26
      1.1. Fear of irritating Russia 26
      1.2. Fear of war 27
      1.3. Fear of losing the territorial integrity 30
      1.4. Fear of biological subversion 30
      1.5. Threat of losing identity 35
   II. DESPAIR 37
      2.1. The West cannot protect us 37
      2.2. Democracy, sovereignty is a fiction 38
      2.3. Two Wests: liberalism is experiencing defeat 40
   III. OFFERING SOLUTIONS 40
      3.1. Neutrality 40
      3.2. Direct dialogue with Russia 41
      3.3. Economic dependence on Russia = stability 41
      3.4. Co-religious Russia for overcoming moral occupation 42

4. FAKE AND MANIPULATIVE CONTENT 43
   - Russian sources 51

ANNEX 1 52
   - Biosecurity: Lugar Lab – target of Russian government 52
FIGURE 1. Topics of anti-Western messages in 2016-2019 12
FIGURE 2. Topics of anti-Western messages in 2019 13
FIGURE 3. Messages concerning the USA 15
FIGURE 4. Messages concerning identity 15
FIGURE 5. Messages concerning NATO 16
FIGURE 6. Messages concerning the West 17
FIGURE 7. Messages concerning Russia, the Soviet system 18
FIGURE 8. Messages concerning the EU 18
FIGURE 9. Messages concerning NGOs, Soros 19
FIGURE 10. Anti-Western messages by sources 20
FIGURE 11. Sources of anti-Western messages by media outlets and their respondents 21
FIGURE 12. Typology of anti-Western messages by media outlets 22
FIGURE 13. Sources of anti-Western messages by politicians 22
FIGURE 14. Typology of anti-Western messages by politicians 23
FIGURE 15. Structure of anti-Western narratives 25
FIGURE 16. Narrators of interests of the Russian government against Lugar Lab 32
FIGURE 17. Russian government representatives against Lugar Lab 33
FIGURE 18. Attitudes to the Lugar Laboratory (age groups), NDI, 2019 34
FIGURE 19. Attitudes to the Lugar Laboratory (ethnicity), NDI, 2019 35
FIGURE 20. Topics of fake news 44
FIGURE 21. Russian sources 51
The analysis of media monitoring results revealed the following trends in 2019:

- Similar to previous years, the 2019 media monitoring showed an upward trend in anti-Western messages with the indicator of increase having doubled in the past four years (2019: 2769; 2016: 1258).
- Compared to 2016, a notable increase was seen in anti-American and anti-NATO messages related to unconditional support of Georgia in security issues from the main strategic partner of the country, including a sustained support of the country’s integration into NATO. The increase in anti-NATO messages can be attributed to an aggressive campaign on Georgia’s neutrality, conducted by a pro-Russian political party, Alliance of Patriots.
- Two new messages were dominant in regard to the USA: 1) An opinion that the Anaklia deep sea port construction project is not of economic nature, but has a defense-military purpose for the USA; 2) Statements on unsuitability of deploying a US military base in Georgia following to a comment of the President of Georgia who equated such a possibility to provoking Russia, therewith providing a fertile ground for statement of pro-Russian actors.
- Statements in support of Russia increased, conveying messages about the need to settle conflicts through revising the foreign policy course and dealing one-on-one with the Kremlin.
- The indicator of anti-EU/Europe messages remained almost the same as in previous years, showing a decrease since 2017 when a visa-free travel with the EU was introduced. The decrease in anti-EU messages may also be explained by the fact that stages of further EU integration have not been actively discussed.

**Sources**

The main source of anti-Western messages was media, followed by political parties and politicians. Comments by politicians have almost doubled compared to 2018, which was mainly because of campaign against the USA and NATO, conducted by the Alliance of Patriots.

- **Media.** Five media outlets were again identified as main sources of anti-Western messages; they are: online media outlets Georgia & World, and Sakinformi, both with close links to the Kremlin; TV Obieqtivi associat-
ed with a pro-Russian political party, the Alliance of Patriots; and newspapers of ethno-nationalist stance, but often repeating the narrative of pro-Kremlin media (Asaval-Dasavali and Alia).

**PARTIES / POLITICIANS.** In 2019, the leader by anti-Western messages, alike the previous year, was the Alliance of Patriots followed by the Russian government, the United Democratic Movement, the Neutral Socialist Georgia and the Georgian Idea. It should be noted that a number of statements of the ruling party Georgian Dream are not included in the quantitative data of anti-Western messages because of their indirect nature. However, they are cited to better understand the context as such indirect statements often enhance the anti-Western discourse.

**FRAMING OF ANTI-WESTERN NARRATIVES**

As in previous years, the structure of anti-Western narratives is again three-tiered, consisting of the following stages: I. sowing fears; II. Instilling despair; and III. offering solutions.

I. SOWING FEARS

- **FEAR OF IRRITATING RUSSIA.** In parallel to the declared aim of integration into NATO and the EU, the 2012 election manifesto of the Georgian Dream explicitly stated that Georgia would no longer be an item on the list of disagreements between the West and Russia. The same view was promoted in 2019 by actors having close links to Russia – representatives of the Eurasian Institute and the Alliance of Patriots. Along with the NATO integration and deployment of US servicemen in Georgia, the construction of Anaklia deep-sea port was considered inconsistent with Russia’s interest and in early 2020, the government terminated the agreement with the Anaklia consortium.

- **FEAR OF WAR** rested again on messages that the war was encouraged by the USA, that the USA and other Western partners are not interested in settling the conflict between Georgia and Russia and that the deployment of NATO or US bases in Georgia will turn the country into a foothold, leading it to “Syriaza-
tion.”

- **FEAR OF LOSING THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY** was associated, like in previous years, with a suggestion of extending Article 5 of NATO Treaty, concerning the collective security, to the occupied territories after the restoration of country’s territorial integrity and an initiative to expedite Georgia’s NATO membership, as well as with threats of deploying Turkish bases in Georgia in case of integration into NATO.

- **FEAR OF BIO-SUBVERSION** was fueled mainly in relation to Richard Lugar Biosecurity Laboratory established with the assistance from the US government, which has been targeted by the Russian government for years with the aim to sow fear of biological subversions among Georgian society. That the Russian government deems the Lugar Lab important is also proved by the fact that it is a regular topic on the agenda of President Putin himself and other top political officials whose comments are often heard in preplanned information influence operations.

- **THREAT OF LOSING IDENTITY** is based on the concept of the “Russian World” which determines an expansionist and messianic Russian foreign policy and provides it with a “moral” framework. The 2019 media analysis showed that the emphases were placed, on the one hand, on the incompatibility of Western values with the Ortho-
dox Christianity and, on the other hand, on a theory about the West causing a moral degradation of Georgia which will have significantly more devastating consequences than a physical occupation.

II. Despair

- **The West Cannot Protect Us.** Much like in previous years, skepticism was instilled that the West/NATO and Georgia’s partners cannot protect Georgia, that they will not engage in confrontation with Russia because of Georgia and that the US, which failed to protect Kurds, is an unreliable partner.
- **Democracy, Sovereignty Is a Fiction.** Similar to the previous years, an opinion was promoted that the West applies double standards and acts in accordance with political conjuncture, that in reality, Georgia is not a sovereign state and the US and other countries interfere in its domestic affairs much like the Soviet Union did. The anti-occupation rally on 20 June was also portrayed as the rally organized by the USA. Even more, this process was linked, both by the Russian government and local actors, to the former Assistant Defense Secretary Michael Carpenter.
- The narrative on US interference in Georgia’s internal affairs was augmented by a rally staged by the pro-Russian party, the Alliance of Patriots, in front of the building of US Embassy as well as a campaign organized by the same political party against NDI and IRI surveys after the reliability of these institutions was criticized by the leader of the ruling party, Bidzina Ivanishvili.
- **Two Wests: Liberalism Is Experiencing Defeat.** Narrators of both Georgian government and Russian interests were engaged in portraying the West as divided into two Wests. On the one hand, media evaluated the criticism voiced against the Georgian government at the McCain Institute conference as the opposition to Trump and an action taken against Trump by the Georgian political opposition; on the other hand, various actors separated the conservative West from the liberal West, placing the emphasis on the failure of liberalism.

III. Offering Solutions

- **Neutrality.** In parallel to fanning fears and instilling despair, anti-Western messages were focused on revising the foreign policy and supporting the idea of neutrality, accompanied with a campaign conducted by Alliance of Patriots to mobilize society.
- **Direct Dialogue with Russia.** Settling the problem of Abkhazia and Samachablo through direct dialogue with Russia has been advocated by the Alliance of Patriots for years, which means rejecting the international Geneva format and remaining one-on-one with Russia, thereby turning a blind eye to its responsibility as the party to the conflict. All this will turn Russia from the occupier into a mediator between the Georgian and Abkhazian-Ossetian parties.
- **Economic Dependence on Russia = Stability.** An opinion was promoted that the economic stability achieved with Russia in recent years was endangered by the 20 June anti-occupation protest and that Georgia depended on Russia both historically and economically.
- **Co-Religious Russia for Overcoming Moral Occupation.** Messianic idea of Orthodox Christian Russia was again promoted by separate clerics and Georgia & World.
FAKE AND MANIPULATIVE CONTENT

- The Media Development Foundation (MDF) within the Myth Detector project checked 199 information in 2019. From the media outlets, the highest number of fake news was spread by Georgia & World (31), Sputnik Georgia (17) and Saqinform (16); From the social media – Facebook pages Stalin (10) and “Alt-Info” (9); from political parties – Alliance of Patriots (24).
- The majority of cases of statistics fabrication/manipulation of numbers concerned the issues of economy and migrants; the majority of manipulated interviews was spread in the context of NATO integration; the majority of conspiracy theories were spread about healthcare and biosecurity, while falsification of history mainly concerned the Soviet past.
- Several disinformation was spread in 2019, about the separatist statements of Georgian muslims and Georgian citizens of Armenian origin aiming to incite hatred based on religion and ethnicity. The both materials included the “photo evidence” depicting totally different events.
- Portrayal of fragments from the movie as real events was aimed at promoting a narrative about Islamization of Europe and fanning anti-migrant sentiments.
- Alongside fake video depicting a clone of President George W. Bush talking about American Imperialism, a pro-Governmental blogger, whose photo was generated through artificial intelligence was revealed, quoted by pro-Governmental online media outlets against the founder of Anaklia Development Consortium, Mamuka Khazaradze, also against political opposition and critical media outlets as a real source.
- Compared with the last year, the number of satirical articles, spread as real information, has increased.
The 2019 media monitoring report has revealed an increase in anti-western messages. The total of 2,769 such comments were analyzed, which is a doubled indicator in the past four years (in 2016: 1258). Similar to the previous two years, a leading theme was a negative discourse in relation to the USA, identity and NATO. Compared to 2016, a notable increase was seen in anti-American (2019: 617; 2016: 170) and anti-NATO (2019: 566; 2016: 253) messages related to unconditional support of Georgia in security issues from the main strategic partner of the country, including a sustained support of the country’s integration into NATO. The increase in anti-NATO messages can be attributed to an aggressive campaign on Georgia’s neutrality, conducted by a pro-Russian political party, Alliance of Patriots. At the same time, an increasing dynamic was observed in negative assessments about the West\(^7\) (2019: 467; 2016: 251). There was a simultaneous rise in pro-Russian statements conveying a message about the need to reconsider the country’s foreign course and settle the conflicts by means of direct dialogue with the Kremlin (2019: 269; 2017: 142). The indicator of anti-EU messages remained almost the same as in previous years, showing a decrease since 2017 when a visa-free travel with the EU was introduced. The decrease in anti-EU messages may also be explained by the fact that stages of further EU integration have not been actively discussed. Identity-related discourse continued to be intensive (587) though if this topic dominated over all other topics in 2016, in 2019 it was outnumbered by anti-American messages.

\(^7\) This category includes messages that simultaneously concerned the USA, Europe and international institutions; also messages in which the West is viewed as an entire geopolitical space with shared values.
As shown on Figure 2, the shares of anti-US (22.3%), identity-related (21.2%) and anti-NATO (20.4%) messages were nearly similar. The topic of Russia as being the only alternative and idealization of authoritative governance accounted for 9.7%. The shares of comments made against the EU (5.4%) and George Soros/non-governmental organizations (NGO) (4.1%) were lower.

**THE USA.** In 2019, two new messages were dominant in regard to the USA:

- **ANAKLIA DEEP SEAS PORT.** A new message in relation to the USA in 2019 concerned the Anaklia deep sea port construction which for its economic benefit and regional importance has become a target of the Russian government. An opinion that the Anaklia project is not of economic nature, but has a defense-military pur-

---

*Myth Detector, 11 September 2019. Why is Russia Afraid of the Anaklia Port?*  
pose for the USA was observed on 33 occasions and sourced by Russian officials as well as the pro-Kremlin political party, the Alliance of Patriots, and Georgian-language media proxies.

- **US MILITARY BASE IN GEORGIA.** Statements on unsuitability of deploying a US military base in Georgia were relatively fewer and concerned a comment of the President of Georgia who, in her interview to the Voice of America, equated such a possibility to provoking Russia,\(^9\) therewith providing a fertile ground for statement of pro-Russian actors.

Opinions from old messages that continued to dominate were:

- **THE USA INFRAIGES ON GEORGIA’S SOVEREIGNTY,** interferes in a decision-making process and actually runs the country (166). It should be noted that the US government was not always portrayed as a single entity and sometimes President Donald Trump was separated from these processes. Even more, actions of Democrats and the Georgian opposition, NGOs and other actors were interpreted as the actions against Donald Trump.

- **THE USA PROVOKES CONFLICTS, VIOLENCE, COUPS (105);** several attempts were observed of seeking a US trace in the events that unfolded after the dispersal of anti-occupation rally on 20 June.

- **THE USA USES GEORGIA AS A FOOTHOLD AGAINST RUSSIA (58),** promoting the opinion that the cause of conflict is not the Russian aggressions but the US-Russia antagonism in which Georgia is a victim in the opposition between these two super states.

- **THE USA IS AN UNRELIABLE PARTNER (56).**

- **IT CANNOT PROTECT GEORGIA (44).**

- **THE US INFLUENCE ON AND INTEREST TOWARDS THE REGION IS DWINDLING (34).**

- **THE USA IS NOT INTERESTED IN SETTLING THE CONFLICTS (30).**

- **THE WAR WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE USA (27),** furthermore, the start of war was tied to the aims of the presidential campaign of the late Senator John McCane.

- **THE USA DOES NOT SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY (21).**

- **ENCOURAGES BIOLOGICAL SUBVERSION (19).**

- **APPLIES DOUBLE STANDARDS (10).**

As Figure 3 shows, anti-US comments were mainly made by media.

---

Figure 3. Messages concerning the USA

- Interferes in domestic affairs
- Encourages coups / violence
- Uses Georgia as a foothold against Russia
- Is an unreliable partner / not treats us as equal
- Cannot defend us / Javelins are useless
- US influence on / interest towards the region dwindling
- Anaklia is not an economic project
- Not interested in settling the conflicts / normalizing relations with Russia
- War was encouraged by the USA
- Does not support economic development
- Encourages biological subversion
- Applies double standards
- US military bases are unacceptable
- Miscellaneous

Identity / Values. A leading theme in the discourse concerning the loss of identity was a threat about homosexuality and perversion been forced on Georgians (275); this was followed by messages about the fight conducted against religion, namely the Orthodox Christianity, meddling in the affairs of the Church (123), and unacceptable values that have been imposed (97). Yet another promoted idea was that the West fights against traditional family, national identity (92).

Most frequently, the source of themes related to the threat of losing identity was the media.

Figure 4. Messages concerning identity

- Imposes homosexuality / pedophilia / immorality
- Fights against Orthodox Christianity / meddles in the affairs of the Church
- Imposes unacceptable values
- Fights against traditions / family / national identity

NATO. As regards NATO, the following themes were exploited:

- Neutrality. The increase in messages was linked to a campaign conducted by a pro-Russian political party, Alliance of Patriots, in which they demanded Georgia’s neutrality under the guise of non-alignment initiative (104).
- **NATO = Financial Expenses.** The same political party focused on the unsuitability of spending amounts from Georgia’s budget for collective security and assessed the contribution as unjustified financial costs (25).

- **NATO = Loss of Territories.** Equating Georgia’s integration in NATO to a threat of losing Abkhazia and Samachablo, the Georgian territories occupied by Russia, (76) was again linked to Article 5 of NATO Treaty, which concerns collective security. An initiative put forward by a researcher from Heritage Foundation Luke Coffey in 2018 to expedite Georgia’s NATO membership without extending Article 5 protection to the occupied territories until the country’s territorial integrity has been recovered was reiterated by Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen during the McCain Institute and EPRC conference held in Tbilisi in 2019. This statement was followed by a wave of manipulative messages about the threat of losing the territories.

- **Skepticism.** Skepticism towards NATO, sowing nihilism that Georgia’s integration into NATO is unreal and the unity of NATO is fragile (143) was dominant again.

- **NATO = Provoking Russia** (100) was also a frequent message.

- **Miscellaneous.** Attempts continued to instill ideas that NATO is not the Georgian people’s choice (34), NATO cannot protect us (31), NATO is an aggressor and a threat itself (27). Portrayal of the integration into NATO as an intervention by Turkey was, alike previous years, linked to Turkey’s membership of NATO and its politics of expansion in the region (13). Participation of Georgian servicemen in international peacekeeping missions under the NATO leadership was portrayed not as a contribution into collective security but a sacrifice made for the benefit of other countries (9). Messages about NATO using Georgia as a foothold were relatively fewer (4).

Most frequently anti-NATO statements were made by political parties and most active among them was the Alliance of Patriots.

**Figure 5. Messages Concerning NATO**

**The West.** A new message that was spread about western countries was that liberalism, globalization is failing in the USA and other western countries and that Western values are being reconsidered (28).
From among older messages dominant were the opinions that the West infringes on Georgia’s sovereignty by meddling in the domestic affairs and actually runs the country (144); the West cannot protect us (54); the West is not interested in Georgia settling the conflicts and improving relations with Russia (45) and uses Georgia and Ukraine against Russia (45). Along with sowing skepticism (37) towards the West, the West was portrayed as inspirator of violence (36) and opinions were promoted that the West does not support the development of the country (24), applies double standards (18), does not consider us equal (14) and obligates us to receive migrants (11).

Russia has no alternative / Idealization of Authoritative Governance. Messages on Georgia’s economic dependence on Russia grew more intensive in 2019 (50) as compared to the previous period and were associated with a protest sparked by a speech of a Russian MP from communist party in the Georgian Parliament. The Kremlin reacted to this protest by suspending flights between Georgia and Russia. Speculations that the suspension would harm the high tourist season in Georgia and the country could not survive without dependence on Russia’s economy were exploited in the contexts of that very 20 June protest.

In contrast to previous years, a message “if Russia is an occupier then Turkey is an occupier too” was included in the quantitative data of the reporting period (16) because apart from Turkophobic context, which is traditionally discussed in the reports on Hate Speech, it shows an attempt to shift focus from Georgia’s current security challenges (occupation by Russia) onto a historic occupation (occupation by Ottoman Empire). That message was applied when certain sources questioned the Russian occupation of Georgia (11).

---

Compared to previous years, a notable increase has been seen in messages conveying a thought that there is no alternative to negotiations with the Northern neighbor and that direct dialogue with it is necessary (82); this was followed by messages idealizing the Soviet Union and authoritative regimes (44). An extraordinary mission of Russia as an Orthodox Christian country was again emphasized (20) as well as military superiority of Russia (14). Several sources dismissed a threat of Russian propaganda and claimed that propaganda was used by the West to promote its own political agenda (14). Portrayal of Russia’s strength as a counterweight to the West (13) was complemented by some sources with an opinion that the majority of Georgians want to cooperate with Russia (5).

**Figure 7. Messages concerning Russia, the Soviet system**

- Negotiations with Russia as the only alternative
- Georgia’s economic dependence on Russia
- Idealization of Soviet Union / authoritarian regimes
- Messianic mission of Orthodox Russia
- If Russia is an Occupier than Turkey is too
- Russian propaganda – fiction, Western propaganda – real
- Superiority of Russian military force
- Questioning Russian occupation
- Powerful Russia as counterbalance to the West
- Majority of Georgians want to cooperate with Russia

**EUROPE / EU.** Messages about the EU and Europe have not changed in content, nor have they increased in number. Euroscepticism (54) was in the lead, followed by messages that visa liberalization and the Association Agreement are useless (19), and that migration crisis is the result of Europe’s policy and Europe is a hostage of its own tolerance (17). Older messages also circulated that Europe/EU runs Georgia (14), cannot protect us (12), applies double standards (11) and does not support the country’s development (8). Although in a limited number but one could still hear that the EU obligates us to accept migrants (5) and uses us in opposing Russia (3).

**Figure 8. Messages concerning the EU**

- Euroscepticism
- Visa liberalization is useless
- Migration policy is the result of Europe’s policy
- Runs us
- Cannot protect us
- Applies double standards
- Does not support economic development
- Imposes migrants
- Uses in its opposition to Russia
- Miscellaneous
There were no changes observed either in attitudes to or messages about NGOs and US philanthropist and Open Society Foundation founder George Soros. Dominating messages were that Soros meddles in Georgia’s internal affairs (27) and fights against a traditional identity (20) much like NGOs do (17). Calls were made for banning the Soros Foundation (11) as well as restricting and controlling foreign-funded NGOs (5).

**Figure 9. Messages concerning NGOs, Soros**

- NGOs fulfill orders of foreign countries
- Soros meddles in internal affairs
- Soros fights against traditional identity
- NGOs fight against traditional identity
- Call for banning Soros
- Foreign-funded NGOs must be restricted and controlled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>MEDIA</th>
<th>POLITICAL PARTIES</th>
<th>PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>SOCIETY</th>
<th>CLERICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NGOs fulfill</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orders of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreign countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soros meddles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in internal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affairs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soros fights</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs fight</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>against</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for banning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soros</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-funded</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs must be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>restricted and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>controlled</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. SOURCE OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES

Similar to the previous year, the main source of anti-Western messages was media (1,271), followed by political parties and politicians (756). Comments by politicians have almost doubled compared to 2018 (2018: 430), which was mainly because of campaign against the USA and NATO, conducted by the Alliance of Patriots. Anti-Western messages made by separate representatives of society (407) and public organizations (206) were almost identical to the previous year whereas those made by clerics were relatively lower (75).

![Figure 10. Anti-Western Messages by Sources](image-url)
Main sources of anti-Western messages were five media outlets again; online outlets Georgia and World, and Sakinfromi, TV Obieqtivi, and Asaval-Dasavali and Alia newspapers. Georgia and World (geworld.ge) was in the lead by the number of negative editorial assessments (690); moreover, 279 respondent comments were also identified in this outlet. The leader by anti-Western comments of respondents was TV Obieqtivi (627) where 217 such comments were made by the journalists. As regards other outlets, the situation is the following: Sakinfromi – 273 editorial and 68 respondent comments; Asaval-Dasavali – 75 editorial and 101 respondent comments; and Alia – 15 editorial and 65 respondent comments. On Imedi TV one anti-Western comment was made by a journalist and 32 by respondents.

The category “Other” includes those media outlets that reported respondents’ anti-Western comments. The highest number of them was reported by news agencies IPN (94), and Marshalpress (74), Rezonansi newspaper (32), news agency PIA (32) and Kavkasia TV (29).
Comments about the loss of identity were dominant in Georgia and World (196), newspapers Asaval-Dasavali (19) and Alia (8). Online outlet Sakinformi (90) and TV Obieqtivi (68) were distinguished for most frequent comments against the USA. Comments against NATO were most frequently seen in Georgia and World (62) and Sakinformi (58), while against NGOs and Soros were seen in Georgia and World (20) and Asaval-Dasavali (20).

**FIGURE 12. TYPOLOGY OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY MEDIA OUTLETS**

In 2019, the leader by anti-Western messages, alike the previous year, was the Alliance of Patriots (446), moreover, the number of such comments increased by four times. The Alliance of Patriots is followed by the Russian government (126), the United Democratic Movement (39), the Neutral Socialist Georgia (32) and the Georgian Idea (23). The leader of the Neutral Socialist Georgia, Valeri Kvaratskhelia, is a presenter of TV Obieqtivi too and consequently, is also mentioned in the category of media.

**FIGURE 13. SOURCES OF ANTI-WESTERN MESSAGES BY POLITICIANS**
As Figure 14 shows, the Alliance of Patriots prevailed in every topic though anti-NATO messages were way higher in number (232) than all comments on other topics. Russian government comments were directed against NATO (46), the USA (37) and the West (35).

Comments of the United Democratic Movement were most frequently directed against NATO (25). The Russian government (34) and the United Democratic Movement (25) most frequently made comments against the USA. Comments on the threat to lose identity were made most frequently by the Alliance of Patriots (61); this message was dominant in the comments by an anti-liberal political party, the Georgian Idea (13) too.

The media monitoring identified 23 civil organizations spreading antiwestern messages as last year. The new one was “Development Laboratory of Georgia” (23), which was represented by its director Irakli Gogava and has been appearing mostly on “TV Obieqtivi”. Among the other organizations, the most active were Primakov Georgian-Russian Civil Center (45) and Eurasian Institute (45), which were often publishing their position on the website “Georgia and the World”, as well as the organization “Stalin”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS</th>
<th>ANTIWESTERN MESSAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Primakov Georgian-Russian Civil Center</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eurasian Institute</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Association of Defenders of Rights</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Development Laboratory of Georgia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Global Research Center</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Stalin</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Georgian March</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gogava was the MP in 1999-2004 from Citizens of Union and affiliated with Governor of Kvemo Kartli Levan Mamaladze. http://old.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=640
Representatives of Society

Among anti-Western comments (407) by representatives of society, the most active persons were: retired General Guram Nikolaishvili (58); businessman Levan Vasadze, that accumulated his capital in Russia and affiliated with the World Congress of Families (WCF); Political analyst Tamar Kiknadze (31) who actively participates in events organized by the Primakov Center and in Georgian-Russian forums and was a frequent respondent of Obieqtivi TV; The audience of Obieqtivi TV (24), making anti-Western comments mainly during phone-ins and others. Among them was also Veterans Today’s journalist Jeffrey Silverman (10) who mainly was active against Lugar Laboratory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representatives of Society</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guram Nikolaishvili</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levan Vasadze</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamar Kiknadze</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The audience of TV Obieqtivi</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamuka Areshidze</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clergy

As in 2018, among clergy, the most active with anti-Western messages was arch-priest of Ketevan Tsamebuli Church in Avchala, Giorgi Razmadze.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clergy</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giorgi Razmadze</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davit Kvlividze</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various religious servants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davit Isakadze</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiridon Abuladze</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioane Gamrekeli</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basil Mkalavishvili</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giorgi Pavlov</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davit Nozadze</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iakob Iakobashvili</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melkisedek Diakonidze</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristepore Tsamaladze</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davit Lasurashvili</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iremia Lomadze</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Vaskresensky</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Framing of Anti-Western Narratives

As in previous years, the structure of anti-Western narratives is again three-tiered, consisting of the following stages: I. sowing fears; II. Instilling despair; and III. offering solutions.

**Figure 15. Structure of Anti-Western Narratives**

**I. FEARS**
1. Of irritating Russia
2. War
3. Territorial integrity
4. Bio-subversion
5. Loss of identity

**II. DESPAIR**
1. West cannot protect us
2. Democracy, sovereignty is a fiction
3. Two Wests: liberalism is experiencing defeat

**III. SOLUTION**
1. Neutrality
2. Direct talks with Russia
3. Economic dependence on Russia = stability
4. Co-religious Russia to overcome moral occupation
I. Sowing Fears

1.1. Fear of Irritating Russia

In contrast to the government of the United National Movement (2004–2012), distinguished for its radical rhetoric and actions (expulsion of Russian spies) in the relationship with Russia, the ruling Georgian Dream party, that came to power in 2012, adopted a qualitatively different attitude to the Kremlin. In parallel to declared aim of integration into NATO and the EU, the 2012 election manifesto of the Georgian Dream explicitly stated that Georgia would no longer be an item on the list of disagreements between the West and Russia. The same view was promoted in 2019 by actors having close links to Russia – representatives of the Eurasian Institute and the Alliance of Patriots:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 ELECTION MANIFESTO OF GEORGIAN DREAM</th>
<th>EURASIAN INSTITUTE, 28 JANUARY, 2019</th>
<th>ALLIANCE OF PATRIOTS, 22 JULY, 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Georgia should no longer be a factor in disagreement between the West and Russia”</td>
<td>Gulbaat Rtskhiladze: “Our goal: to prevent the Caucasus and especially, Georgia from forming into an arena of confrontation between Russia and the USA, the West.”</td>
<td>Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi: “Georgia has already become a factor of confrontation and it shall not be.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the premise of avoiding irritating Russia, the ruling political party did not always react to information operations of the Kremlin (for example, a deliberate campaign against the Lugar Lab) while narrators of the Kremlin’s interests constantly referred to those topics with a potential to irritate Russia. Along with the NATO integration and deployment of US servicemen in Georgia, the construction of Anaklia deep-sea port was considered inconsistent with Russia’s interest and in early 2020, the government terminated the agreement with the Anaklia consortium.15

**ANAKLIA SEAPORT IS NOT AN ECONOMIC PROJECT.** A pro-Russian political party, the Alliance of Patriots, and TV Obieqtivi, closely associated with the political party, questioned the economic purpose of the seaport, discussing it in the context of US military interests.

Bondo Mdzinarishvili, presenter of TV Obieqtivi: “...when General [Hodges] makes such statement, does the subtext not imply that the Anaklia seaport is crucial for totally different aims than economic development?”

Gigi Maglakelidze, Alliance of Patriots: “A serious question arises about the economic efficiency of this seaport.”16

---

14 Obieqtivi, Dghis Bolos, 22 July https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3825956
16 Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studis, 26 October. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3867060
Davit Tarkhan-Mourvai, Alliance of Patriots: “In case of non-alignment, we will have a deep seaport in Anaklia... Non-alignment means that no foreign submarines will be stationed there while this, in turn, means that Russia will feel no danger.”

The editor-in-chief of Sakinfromi stressed that in contrast to the previous government, the incumbent government did not blindly implement Americans’ orders and hence, it suspended the construction of the Anaklia seaport.

Arno Khidirbegishvili, editor-in-chief of Sakinfromi: “In contrast to Saakashvili, Ivanishvili will not blindly execute their will and has already suspended the construction of Anaklia seaports – the first ever US naval base on the Black Sea.”

A deputy Russian foreign minister attributed a statement of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that the seaport will enhance Georgia’s relationship with free economies and prevent it from falling prey to Chinese and Russian economic interests, to anxiety caused in the West by the normalization of ties between Russia and Georgia:

Grigory Karasin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia: “The anxiety in the West is caused by the fact that the relationship between Georgia and Russia is normalizing... It is up to Georgia to decide how to act concerning the Anaklia seaport, but what Pompeo said about Russia and China, is not the tone that is appealing to us.”

1.2. FEAR OF WAR

Fear of the resumption of hostilities has been fueled for years by actors pursuing Kremlin’s interests in Georgia. To this end, they continued to promote the following messages:

The war was encouraged by the USA. This message pursued the aim of ignoring Russia’s responsibility and blaming Georgia and its strategic partner in starting the conflict:

Jeffrey Silverman, Veterans Today: “The 2008 August war was also part of the US test-plan.”

Levan Chachua, Georgian Idea: “As regards to Bryzas and Kramers who tell us that Russia understands only the language of force, it was with such wicked encouragement that they brought Saakashvili to a condition that he bombed sleeping Tskhinvali.”

21 Asaval-Dasavali, 13-19 May.
Nino Burjanadze, United Democratic Movement: “The problem was that McCain and his team encouraged Saakashvili, because McCain very much needed an anti-Russian hysteria in the run up to the US presidential elections.”

Vladimir Putin, President of Russia: “Americans were in the zone of hostilities [in 2008]. The Georgian army was equipped by Americans; it is also a fact that Americans trained them.”

US/West is not interested in settling the conflict and normalizing the relationship with Russia:

Giorgi Lomaia, Alliance of Patriots: “No one is interested in establishing peace in your country…. in order to always have someone to point finger at and say that it is an aggressor, occupier, etc…. Foreigners need us as experimental guinea pigs to use us as a bargaining chip with Russians.”

Maria Zakharova, spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “Our Western colleagues, especially the United States, continue to make unfounded accusations against Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Instead of helping to ensure peace and security in the South Caucasus, they are actually doing the opposite and destabilizing the region. We can see how Georgia is being flooded with arms and drawn into military blocs.”

US / West uses Georgia as a foothold against Russia:

Beso Barbakadze, a journalist of Georgia & World: “The best foothold for fighting Russia is our territory. Americans know perfectly well that they cannot nudge, cannot “fool” other neighbors [into confrontation with Russia].”

Nino Ratishvilis, TV Obieqtivi presenter: “The key factor still is that the US needs the Georgian territory for waging war with Iran.” “I fear seeing ‘Syria-zation’ of Georgia, turning it into a foothold.”

US / NATO bases will provoke Russia. Comments on unsuitability of deploying US military bases in Georgia were related to an initiative put forward by the director of Foreign Policy Studies at the Heritage Foundation, Luke Coffey, to deploy US servicemen, after they withdraw from Syria, in Georgia, namely in Samtskhe-Javakheti; also, represented the reaction of pro-Russian actors to a statement of President of Georgia that the deployment of US bases in Georgia would provoke Russia:

23 Asaval-Dasavali, 12-18 August.
24 Rustavi 2, P.S., 5 May, library record. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3786254
26 Imedi, Qronika, 13 September. https://www.imedi.ge/ge/video/41859/pasukhi-moskovs#!/?type=2&page=2
29 Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 23 October. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3865556
Bakur Svanidze, journalist: “This idea [the deployment of US servicemen in Georgia after their withdrawal from Syria] is indeed an ‘excellent chance’ for Georgia to take after (God forbid!) Syria and become a testing ground for two (or three) large states to test each other’s force.”

Gigi Maglakelidze, Alliance of Patriots: “If a military base is established in Georgia and, God forbid, even one bomb is dropped, a nuclear weapon is already so powerful... I think that from the standpoint of the country’s security, Georgia must not rely on muscle flexing, javelins and demonstrating some force.”

Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center: “I want to comment on Georgian President’s statement regarding the deployment of foreign bases in Georgia; I think the statement is wise and very pragmatic and I support it.”

Melkisedek Diakonidze, Archbishop: “[President Salome Zourabichvili] said no to the installment of an US base and I humbly extend my thanks to her for that.”

A message that the integration into NATO will provoke Russia was again actively promoted:

Anzor Danelia, author at Georgia & World: “Russia which now has the power to threaten, repeatedly warned us that it would not allow any NATO or whatnot near its borders!... You will force Russia, much like that subversive Saakashvili did and as a result Samachablo and Abkhazia were lost, to make mincemeat out of everything here.”

Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “If even one NATO base is deployed here, we will be left without the state. Russia will make mincemeat out of us next to that very base.”

Russian government made sharp statements about Georgia’s NATO integration, calling the Georgian government to be consistent and instead of playing a double game, make a choice:

Grigory Karasin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia: “Tbilisi has to decide; either to choose the atmosphere of regional favor in the South Caucasus, or the Euro-Atlantic agenda... We remember full well what caused Ukraine’s problem... History shows that an attempt to play simultaneously on two boards leads to confusion which may have negative consequences.”
1.3. FEAR OF LOSING THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

Fear of losing territorial integrity was associated, like in previous years, with a suggestion of extending Article 5 of NATO Treaty, concerning the collective security, to the occupied territories after the restoration of country’s territorial integrity and an initiative to expedite Georgia’s NATO membership, voiced by Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in 2019. This initiative, apart from Kremlin actors, was negatively assessed by separate representatives of the Georgian Dream too:

Gia Volski, Georgian Dream: “Neither we nor any other political force can or will concede these territories because doing so would mean going against the history and the state.”

Free Georgia: “Discussions about Georgia’s integration into NATO should and must indeed start but not in view whether it is acceptable to integrate into NATO without Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia but whether it generally makes sense to continue cooperation with NATO if this leads to disintegration of Georgia’s territorial integrity instead of recovery thereof.”

A conspiracy theory that Georgia’s integration into NATO equals the entry of Turkish army and loss of territories was mainly spread by notoriously Turkophobic party, the Alliance of Patriots, and the publisher of the pro-Kremlin media outlet, Georgia & World:

Alexandre Chachia, publisher of Georgia & World: “Only idiots may not believe that if Georgia becomes a member of NATO and the latter deploys its armies to Georgia at the Psou river, that army will inevitably be the Turkish army.”

Davit Tarkhan-Mourvai, Alliance of Patriots: “Unless there is a military non-alignment, mark my words, Turkey will swallow up Ajara and this will be facilitated by NATO member states.”

1.4. FEAR OF BIOLOGICAL SUBVERSION

The Lugar Lab, named after US Senator Richard Lugar, at the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) has been targeted by the Russian Federation for years now. The program within which the Lugar Lab was built in Georgia aims at reducing biological threat in the former Soviet countries through focusing on research and equipping local labs with modern technologies.

Sakинфоми, 2 October. https://bit.ly/3dfDy1s
Obieqtivi, Dgis Bolos, 23 July. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3826729
This chapter sums up the key trends that were observed in the past few years in the Russian government’s deliberate attacks against the Lugar Lab.

That the Russian government deems the Lugar Lab important is also proved by the fact that it is a regular topic on the agenda of President Putin himself and other top political officials whose comments are often heard in preplanned information influence operations. The Russian government’s interests in relation to the Lugar Lab, which aim to sow fears in Georgian society about biological subversion, are promoted by the following actors:

1. **Former security minister of Georgia, living in Russia.** The former security minister of Georgia, Igor Giorgadze, who was on the wanted list for a terrorist attack on President Shevardnadze, drew the attention of media in September 2018, when he called a special news briefing in Moscow to allege that people died from experiments conducted in the Lugar Lab, were linked to the trial of US medication Sovaldi against Hepatitis C.\(^{45}\)

2. **Foreign named journalists with links to the Kremlin:**
   - **Dilyana Gaytandzhieva**, a Bulgarian journalist with ties to Hezbollah and the Kremlin, whose investigation into the Lugar Lab was aired on Al-Mayadeen, a TV company linked to Hezbollah, and published by websites News Front, registered in Crimea, and South Front, connected to Russia, as well as by Zero Hedge, a website notorious for publishing conspiracy theories. The Russian Defense Ministry’s TV Zvezda presented Gaytandzhieva as the author of investigation into the Lugar Lab, supporting the claims about “dangerous trials” made by Igor Giorgadze from Moscow. Gaytandzhieva has access to classified correspondence between the US Embassy in Georgia and the Ministry of Health of Georgia as well as to official correspondence of employees of the Ministry, which indicates about the leak of information from separate government entities.\(^{49}\) From Georgian media, Gaytandzhieva’s investigations were published by Georgia & World and tvalsazrisi.ge.
   - **Jeffrey Silverman**, the head of Georgian bureau of Veterans Today. He is also an author of US-sanctioned website USA Really, founded by Alexander Malkevich. Silverman is one of the main sources of anti-Lugar Lab information for Russian pro-government media.\(^{51}\) Furthermore, in 2018-2019, Silverman was a volunteer teacher in the “Teach and Learn with Georgia” program implemented by the Teacher Professional Development Center, getting funding from the state budget. Silverman’s accusations of the Lugar Lab for testing biological weapons are often reported not only on Russian TV channels (Russia’s...
First Channel, Rossiya 24), but also in Georgian media (Asaval-Dasavali, Georgia & World, Obieqtivi, Sakinformi).

3. **Patrioti TV founded by the Eurasian Institute**
   - Patrioti TV, founded by the Pro-Russian organization Eurasia Institute, aired a documentary portraying the Lab as a facility dangerous to life in the spring of 2018. It featured the same respondents who appeared in Gaytandzhieva’s investigative film, and also in addition the founder and 100% shareholder of the Patrioti TV, Giorgi Iremadze.

4. **Representatives of de facto authorities of Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia** made repeated statements that diseases were spread from the Lugar Lab to their territories.

---

**FIGURE 16. NARRATORS OF INTERESTS OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST LUGAR LAB**

- **Igor Giorgadze**
  - former security minister of Georgia

- **Jeffrey Silverman**
  - author of US-sanctioned website, USA Really, Head of Georgia bureau of Veterans Today

- **Dilyana Gaytandzhieva**
  - a Bulgarian journalist with links to Hezbollah and Kremlin

- **Patrioti TV**
  - founded by the Eurasian Institute

**Russian media outlets:**
- 1 Channel, Rossiya-24, PEH TB, TB Zvezda, Tass.ru, Sputnik, News-Front, South Front, Tsargrad.tv

**Miscellaneous:**
- Al-Mayadeen, Zero Hedge

**Georgian media outlets:**
- TV Obieqtivi, Georgia&World, Sakinformi, Asaval-Dasavali, INews, tvalsazrisi.ge

**Representatives of de facto authorities of Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia**

---

Viewpoints of narrators of Russian interests and their engagement in information influence operations provide a fertile ground for the Russian government to allege about threats emanating from labs developed by the US support in Georgia and other post-Soviet countries and declare that it will not allow the testing of biological weapons at its borders.\textsuperscript{53}

**Figure 17. Russian government representatives against Lugar Lab**

Allegations made by Igor Giorgadze in September 2018 about testing the medication Sovaldi (which is licensed in Russia as a vitally important medication) in the Lugar Lab, was followed by statements of Vladimir Putin\textsuperscript{54} and others about the threats which, as they claimed, were created in the Lugar Lab with the involvement of Americans. It was this very allegation that was supported by the investigative film of the Bulgarian journalist\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Vladimir Ermakov, the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry Department of Nonproliferation and Arms Control: Russia will not allow biological experiments by US at its borders. Obieqtivi, Sakinformi, 25 September. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3678525

\textsuperscript{54} Vladimir Putin, President of Russia: “I would not judge whether this [about Lugar Lab] is true or not. I saw this statement by the former Georgian minister of state security. This is definitely cause for concern. These developments – if they are actually taking place – are very dangerous and are related to the latest achievements in genetics. From what I have seen, I can only repeat what is there: it is about finding agents that can selectively affect people depending on their ethnic group, and over two or three generations, allegedly, they have used animals to conduct such experiments... So if someone is developing this technology, they have to understand that others will be doing so as well. So it is better to sit at the negotiating table beforehand and develop unified rules of conduct in this very sensitive area.” http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/putin-calls-dangerous-georgians-medication-which-among-vital-medications-russia-2016

and accompanied with comments by Silevrman. All this, however, came at the time when Great Britain accused Russia in the case on Skripals poisoning with a nerve agent Novichok and aimed at distracting the attention from Russia’s responsibility towards “American threats.”

The attached table (Annex 1) sums up all main messages spread about the Lugar Lab in the past few years and identifies sources of those messages.

**Influencing Public Opinion.** A survey conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in 2019 showed a rather high number of those respondents who did not know whether the Lugar Lab contributes to the spread of epidemics in Georgia (18-34 – 45%, 35-54 – 36%, 55+ – 40%). These figures taken together with those who believed the Lugar Lab was a hotbed of epidemics (18-34 – 17%, 35-54 – 24%, 55+ – 40%) add up to more than 50% of respondents who either lacked information and had wrong information on this topic.

![Figure 18. Attitudes to the Lugar Laboratory (Age Groups), NDI, 2019](image)

In the regions populated with ethnic minorities, the share of those who lacked information on this issue was significantly higher (61%) while the share of those who believed the statement was true, stood at 12%.

---

The study into anecdotal evidence, conducted by the MDF in 2019, in which 139 people were surveyed through face-to-face interviews in four regions, also showed that respondents were most susceptible to conspiracy theories about viruses and epidemics. Some 45.8% of respondents believed that viruses were spread artificially and biological weapons and other medications were tested on us. A segment of the respondents who so thought, believed that the aim was to annihilate the population to misappropriate territories while another segment believed that testing medications on Georgians served the interests of pharmaceutical companies as well as the interests of neighboring Turkey.

Both the NDI survey and the interviews conducted by the MDF revealed a correlation between the Kremlin’s messages and public perceptions as well as the situation before the coronavirus pandemic. One should also note that varying narratives of the Kremlin during the COVID-19 pandemic and an extraordinary role played by the Lugar Lab in diagnosing the cases of the disease may show a different picture in future surveys.

1.5. Threat of losing identity

A threat of losing the identity has been exploited by the Kremlin propaganda for years now. It is based on the concept of the “Russian World” which determines an expansionist and messianic Russian foreign policy and provides it with a moral framework.

The 2019 media analysis showed that the emphases were placed, on the one hand, on the incompatibility of Western values with the Orthodox Christianity and, on the other hand, on a theory about the West causing a moral degradation of Georgia which will have a significantly more devastating consequences than a physical occupation.

---


60 Ibid., pg. 8.

61 Nicolai N. Petro, March 23, 2015, Russia’s Orthodox Soft Power https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/articles_papers_reports/727
The Western values that rest on Catholicism-Protestantism are incompatible with Orthodox Christianity

Alexandre Chachia, publisher of Georgia & World: “The history of confrontations between Catholicism-Protestantism and Orthodox Christianity counts a millennium... Values of our Church are incompatible with the Western mode of life which they vigorously try to establish here.” 62 “The foundation of Protestant worldview and Anglo-American-German mentality is rationalism, clear-cut individualism and analytical thinking, life and fight in solitude, reliance on oneself... All these properties are totally unacceptable for Orthodox Christian consciousness... A notion that ‘shared religion’ is a factor that we have in common with the West is unfounded.” 63

Orthodox Christianity is the key challenge to Western civilization

Giorgi Razmadze, cleric: “Foreign Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt... used to openly say that the Orthodox Christianity was the key challenge to Western civilization because it regulated family relationships and did not recognize the rights of sexual minorities.” 64

Instead of occupying with tanks, the West occupies us morally which is way more dangerous

Nino Ratishvili, presenter of TV Obieqtivi: “Whose interests are being served by, for example, financing and promoting LGBT and other similarly painful for us issues in order to create a problem and confrontation in society?... They decided not to waste tanks, bombs, guns, bullets on Georgia and it does not matter now what you apply to occupy me, suspend the economy and development, reproduction.” 65 “Russia is the occupier, of course... but for me, no less fearful and even more evil and dangerous occupier is libertarianism – a wanton immorality which was slyly dubbed as freedom by liberast occupiers.” 66

The West imposes homosexuality, unacceptable values, thereby creating anti-Western attitudes

Giorgi Gigauri, Asaval-Dasavali journalist: “The question is posed in the following way: it is not whether you choose ‘Russia or America?!’ but whether you ‘support pederasty or not?!’... Do not even dare trying to sell pederasty for democracy to the Georgian government and Georgian people!” 67

Sopo Kikacheishvili, Georgian Dream, representative of the Mayor in the Melitauri village community: “Everything is good, food, clothes, but is Europe better? Europe?! The country of pederasts and as they are called – gays and lesbians?! I am fond of Russia, their traditions.” 68

66 Marshalpress, 9 May 2019.
68 Rustavi 2, Kurieri, 2 July. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3816581
Giorgi Razmadze, protopriest: “Primarily, I address ambassadors and have such a question to them: Is the Georgian democracy - I ask you forgiveness but have to use this word – measured by human buttocks?”

Levan Chachua, Georgian dream: “I want to openly tell those representatives of embassies and foreign missions who encourage the Georgian state to confront the Georgian society, that their coercion of Georgian nation generates anti-Western attitudes in society.”

Kakha Kukava, Free Georgia: “Each such debate in Georgia will more or less increase the number of people with anti-Western attitudes... When you tell to a Georgian person that England demands the conduct of a gay pride whereas Putin is against it, you get this [increased] percentage.”

II. DESPAIR

2.1. The West cannot protect us

Much like in previous years, skepticism was instilled that the West/NATO and Georgia’s partners cannot protect Georgia, that they will not engage in confrontation with Russia because of Georgia and that the US, which failed to protect Kurds, is an unreliable partner.

- THE WEST FAILED TO PROTECT US DURING THE 2008 WAR

Bondo Mdzinarishvili, Obieqtiivi presenter: “Wasn’t it the USA that failed to protect its interests here in 2008?!”

Rezo Amashukeli, poet: “I do not think they will send anything but diapers, especially considering that Trump said that he cannot spend time on us, he has to take care of his Americans.”

- THE USA / NATO WILL NOT LOCK HORNs WITH RUSSIA OVER GEORGIA

Gulbaat Rtskhiladze, Eurasia Institute: “Anyone is mistaken who expects that America will lock horns with Russia over Georgia and weaken Russian and then we will live well, this will not happen.”

Davit Kvlividze, protopriest: “And you think that NATO will draw Russia out of Abkhazia and tell them anything? No one will tell anything to anyone... They need Georgia as a foothold.”

---

9 Asaval-Dasavali, 18-24 November.
12 Obieqtiivi, Ghamis Studia, 15 August. https://www.myvideo.ge/3836663
13 Obieqtiivi, Ghamis Studia, 16 May. https://www.myvideo.ge/3791653
15 Marshalpress, 24 October. https://marshalpress.ge/archives/261920
The USA abandoned Kurds

Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “Everyone sees that Americans failed to protect Kurds who were their strategic allies and partners in the fight against the ISIS.”76

2.2. Democracy, sovereignty is a fiction

Similar to the previous years, an opinion was promoted that the West applies double standards and acts in accordance with political conjuncture, that in reality, Georgia is not a sovereign state and the US and other countries interfere in its domestic affairs much like the Soviet Union did. To voice protest against the interference, the Alliance of Patriots staged a protest rally outside the building of US Embassy in Tbilisi in September 2019, demanding that the former assistant to US State secretary, David Kramer, be declared persona non grata;77 Patriots staged another rally in early 2020 to voice protest against NDI and IRI surveys, which was preceded by the statements of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the leader of Georgian Dream about unreliability of these institutions.

US / West interferes in sovereign affairs of Georgia

Valeri Kvaratskhelia, Obieqtivi presenter: “Unfortunately, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Georgia has not had a leader who was not managed by America.”78

Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “In short, we freed ourselves from Moscow’s yoke but put on the yoke of Washington. Russia was, at least, the Orthodox Christian country and we had shared values.”79

Giorgi Razmadze, cleric: “Our society – minors or adults, must go to the embassies, primarily to the US embassy, and demand from them that either they withdraw from this country or stop meddling in our domestic affairs once and for all.”80

Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “We are neither a US colony nor Russia’s province... We declare that Georgia must itself determine its external or internal policy steps.”81

Ada Marshania, Alliance of Patriots: “We, Georgia, are a very serious and deep colonial country. Now our territory is an American colony, under the protectorate of America.”82

---

76 Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 25 October. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3866579
77 On 10 September, the appearance of the leader of Alliance of Patriots, Irma Inashvili, at a joint conference of the McCaine Institute and the EPRC without registration ensued a row between her and David Kramer. RFE/RL, 11 September 2019. “Irma Inashvili puts forward an initiative on introducing a ‘Kramer list’.” https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/30159225.html
78 Obieqtivi, Okros Kveta, 6 July. https://www.myvideo.ge/?video_id=3820378
81 Marshalpress, 11 September. https://marshalpress.ge/archives/256447
82 Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 26 June. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3813587
NDI / IRI interfere in the election process. At the end of 2019, the leader of Georgian Dream, Bidzina Ivanishvili criticized the US institutions (NDI and IRI) for the results of their surveys, saying that it was the devaluation of the institutions of the strategic partner and damaging to the US interests. At the end of the year, the pro-Kremlin Alliance of Patriots launched an anti-NDI campaign, staging a rally outside the US embassy in early 2020 and conducting an alternative survey through public gatherings:

Bidzina Ivanisvili, Georgian Dream: “But it is a general feeling that an obvious bias is persistent in these surveys and institutions of our partners experience devaluation in our country… The most distressing for me is that such partner institutions are devaluing which may lead to a common distrust [towards them] and this may be further aggravated by an opinion that if this is bad it means that your strategic partner may be doing something improperly.”

Gigi Maglakelidze, Alliance of Patriots: “This is a direct interference against Georgia’s state interests… When such fuss is kicked in the US over Russia’s interference in the US elections… which almost led to impeachment… such fake surveys (NDI / IRI) are direct meddling in the political life of Georgia and pressure on society and political manipulation of society.”

Anti-occupation rally is led by America. The anti-occupation rally on 20 June, triggered by Russian communist MP Sergey Gavrilov taking a seat of the speaker in the Parliament of Georgia, was portrayed as the rally organized by the USA. Even more, this process was linked, both by the Russian government and local actors, to the former Assistant Defense Secretary Michael Carpenter.

Davit Isakadze, protopriest: “These processes are led from the USA, the US Embassy.”

Dimitri Lortkipanidze, Primakov Georgian-Russian Public Center: “Much like, back then, reactionary forces in the center of Kyiv were waiting for cookies distributed by Victoria Nuland, some people here are also waiting for a serious interference from abroad…” this is proved by direct participation of security employees of the embassy in the storming on 20–21 June… All this was then followed by the Tbilisi pride which was supposed to provoke destabilization in the country.”

Sergey Gavrilov, Russian MP from the communist party: “Interparliamentary assembly of Orthodox Christianity with the participation of Russian MPs was merely a premise for a coup. That was not a spontaneous protest. All activists had been prepared in advance and led by coordinators speaking US English.”

Netgazeti, 28 November. What did Ivanishvili point out to the USA? https://netgazeti.ge/news/410102/
Obieqtivi, Ghamis Studia, 23 November. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3877191
Valentina Matvienko, Russian politician: “Mass unrest in Georgia began just days after the visit of Michael Carpenter, the former Assistant Secretary of Defense and current Managing Director of the Biden Center at the University of Pennsylvania. He tweeted on his Twitter: ‘Just spent 3 days in Georgia. I’m not sure the government [of Georgia] fully understands the implications of its open-door policy with Russia’ and he continues in the same vein... This looks like a deliberately planned provocation against Russia as well as Georgia.”

Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of the State Duma: “This provocation began overseas.”

2.3. TWO WÊSTS: LIBERALISM IS EXPERIENCING DEFEAT

Narrators of both Georgian government and Russian interests were engaged in portraying the West as divided into two Wests. On the one hand, media evaluated the criticism voiced against the Georgian government at the McCain Institute conference as the opposition to Trump and an action taken against Trump by the Georgian political opposition; on the other hand, various actors separated the conservative West from the liberal West, placing the emphasis on the failure of liberalism.

Giorgi Gigaouri, journalist: “Trump, if elected for the second term, will be hundred times more conservative and ruthless towards Sorosism, liberastia and LGBT ideology!”

Vladimir Putin, President of Russia: “The ‘liberal idea’ had ‘outlived its purpose’ as the public turned against immigration, open borders and multiculturalism.”

Irma Inashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “... and today Trump, the President of the United States, is also taking this path and the situation in Europe has also radically changed — though, unfortunately, this is not discussed in Georgia — not in favor of that pseudo-liberalism. That wave is gradually abating and forces with conservative values are coming, among others, to the European Parliament.”

III. OFFERING SOLUTIONS

3.1. NEUTRALITY

In parallel to fanning fears and instilling despair, anti-Western messages were focused on revising the foreign policy and supporting the idea of neutrality, accompanied with a campaign conducted by Alliance of Patriots to mobilize society.

90 Interpressnews, 10 July. https://bit.ly/3d5wS3U
90 Rustavi 2, P.S., 21 July. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3825631
91 Imedi, Imedis Kvira, 15 September, journalist: “How rightful is it to decide, under the instruction of the opposition to Trump, not only as to which political figure should attend the conference, but also who should be a US ambassador to Georgia?” https://www.imedi.ge/ge/video/41916/antitrampistebis-politika#!/?type=2&page=1
92 Asaval-Dasavali, 13-19 May.
93 Sakinformi, 1 July. https://bit.ly/3fs64N1
94 Obieqtivi, Dgis Bolos, 30 May. https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3798326
FOREIGN POLICY VECTOR MUST BE CHANGED

Levan Vasadze, businessman: “It is impossible to reintegrate Abkhazia and Samachablo without Russia’s will, but it must be noted here that it is possible to do that without the will of the West; therefore, given the reality, we, perhaps, should reject the integration into NATO.”

NON-ALIGNMENT IS THE GUARANTEE OF SECURITY FOR RUSSIA

Giorgi Lomaia, Alliance of Patriots: “Block-free status means that Russia will not face a constant threat of some danger that will come from our territory and naturally, we will not face a threat which we constantly expect from Russia.”

Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, Alliance of Patriots: “Two enormous actors, two empires – Russia and China have been constantly speaking of late about a new security concept which is, perhaps, one of the best for them, they speak precisely about military non-alignment and collective guarantees of non-aggression.”

3.2. DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH RUSSIA

Settling the problem of Abkhazia and Samachablo through direct dialogue with Russia has been advocated by the Alliance of Patriots for years, which means rejecting the international Geneva format and remaining one-on-one with Russia, thereby turning a blind eye to its responsibility as the party to the conflict. All this will turn Russia from the occupier into a mediator between the Georgian and Abkhazian-Össetian parties.

Dito Chubinidze, journalist: “Like a woman and man cannot conceive a child by Bluetooth, this problem cannot be solved without talking to Putin!”

Gigi Maglakelidze, Alliance of Patriots: “This key lies in Moscow, this key lies in Sokhumi, this key lies in Tskhinvali.”

Vazha Otarashvili, Alliance of Patriots: “We must establish a direct link with Moscow, Sokhumi and Tskhinvali and it should be declared that the first step must be a military non-alliance.”

3.3. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON RUSSIA = STABILITY

An opinion was promoted that the economic stability achieved with Russia in recent years was endangered by the 20 June anti-occupation protest and that Georgia depended on Russia both historically and economically.
Jaba Khubua, journalist: “As a result of improved economic and cultural ties with Russia the tourism, the main segment of Georgian economy, hugely benefited from the multiplicity of Russian tourists. And all this, this stability achieved in the past seven years, was ruined in one fell swoop by the United National Movement and Bokeria’s European Georgia by means of anti-statehood disturbance staged on the Rustaveli Avenue.”

Alexey Pushkov, Russian Senator: “They can now send their wine and water to their NATO allies free of charge – I do not think they will pay for it.”

Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Affairs Minister of Russia: “There are different states in the Black Sea area which at the same time are closely linked and interconnected historically and economically.”

Ramzan Kadyrov, leader of republic of Chechnya: “It’s high time for the Georgian government to understand that there is no closer neighbor than Russia, any other state that will lend a helping hand faster.”

3.4. CO-RELIGIOUS RUSSIA FOR OVERCOMING MORAL OCCUPATION

Messianic idea of Orthodox Christian Russia was again promoted by separate clerics and Georgia & World.

Davit Mkheidze, author: “In the eternal battle between evil and good that is underway in the world, the Orthodox Christian Russia is on the one side of the divide while the entire West under the leadership of the USA is on the other side. Because of this, this battle is also called the confrontation between the Orthodox Christianity and the Satanists... The integration into Russia 236 years ago saved Georgians from the physical annihilation and the mental degradation from Islamization: Within the USSR, the Georgian Soviet Republic experienced unprecedented prosperity and revival.”

Davit Kvlividze, protopriest: “Look at Russia: homosexuality is prohibited, Jehovah’s Witnesses are taken to task, preaching is not allowed for everyone who so desires, that’s why people long for not Russians, but the situation that is in that country.”

Nika Korinteli, journalist: “In order to succeed in liberalizing the Church, they need to primarily destroy the influence of Moscow Patriarchate within it and then, transform local churches one by one.”
4. FAKE AND MANIPULATIVE CONTENT

The Media Development Foundation (MDF) within the Myth Detector project checked 199 information in 2019. In addition to traditional media outlets, fake news and manipulative information was revealed using the Crowd-tangle analytical tool in social media. Also, the media reporting cases, provided by readers were included in the revealed data. In 2019, Myth Detector revealed the following disinformation:

| Fake News | 109 |
| Fabrication of Statistics | 23 |
| Fabrication of interview / comments | 19 |
| Photo / video manipulation | 18 |
| Conspiration | 15 |
| Fabrication of History | 9 |
| Presenting satirical work as a real fact | 6 |

The largest proportion of fake news or manipulative information concerned politics (30.9%) and the threat of losing identity (17.4%), followed by NATO integration (7.7%), migrants (6.8%), defense/security (6.8%) and European integration issues (6.3%). Almost the same share of fake news was concerning history (4.8%) and economy (4.3%). The share of fake news concerning justice (2.4%), NGOs (1.9%), education (1.3%) and conflicts (0.5%) was small.
From the media outlets, the highest number of fake news was spread by “Georgia and the World” (31), “Sputnik Georgia” (17) and “Saqinform” (16); From the social media – Facebook pages “Stalin” (10) and “Alt-Info” (9); From political parties – “Alliance of Patriots” (24).

**Fabrication and manipulation of statistics**

The majority of cases of statistics fabrication/manipulation of numbers concerned the issues of economy and migrants.

- **Migrants**. Manipulative statistics were spread concerning the migrants owning property, as well as the number of migrants of Asian and Middle East origin in European countries.

---

108 Myth Detector, June 19, 2019, “Disinformation as if Turkish Citizens own the majority of Real Estate in the Center of Batumi”. https://bit.ly/37CIEq


110 Myth Detector, October 1, 2019, “Disinformation by Alliance of Patriots as if Georgia will Accept 200 000 Syrian Refugees”. https://bit.ly/3Yw61E

111 Myth Detector, April 22, 2019, “Disinformation, as if the number of migrants is increasing in Sweden”. https://bit.ly/3dnrCcd

112 Myth Detector, July 24, 2019, “Four Lies of “Georgia and World” about Number of Muslims in Europe”. https://bit.ly/3esJWSz
- **Georgian Economy after 20 June Protests.** Manipulative statistics were spread about the economy in the context of 20 June anti-Occupation Protests and the accompanying sanctions imposed by Russian Government, when there were assessments about the destruction of Georgian economy, the inflation of Georgian Lari, petrol price\(^{110}\) and the tourism loss.\(^{110}\)

- **Association Agreement, DCFTA.** The importance of Association Agreement and DCFTA was neglected, insisting that the Free Trade Agreement does not benefit Georgia\(^{112}\).

- **Visa Liberalization and Deportation.** Fabricated statistics was spread about the massive deportation of Georgian citizens from the Schengen Zone\(^{113}\).

- **The Support of Euro-Atlantic Integration.** Manipulative reporting of public opinion research results was observed with the aim to show that the majority of Georgian population does not support Euro-Atlantic integration\(^{114}\).

- **NATO.** Fabricated statistics was spread about NATO-funded programs in Georgia\(^{115}\) and about the participation of Alliance members in the Afghanistan mission\(^{116}\).

**Fabrication of Interview / Comment**

Compared with 2018 data, in 2019 the number of interview / comment fabrication cases significantly increased: on the first hand, it was happening by spreading warped, manipulated context of the existing statement and on the other hand, interviews / comments were fabricated. The majority of manipulated interviews was spread in the context of NATO integration.

- **Skepticism towards NATO.** Facebook pages of anti-liberal groups and pro-Kremlin media outlets manipulatively reported the interview with NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, James Appathurai. Appathurai’s quotes that NATO and an aspirant country will make membership decisions independently, without the interference of any third party was reported in an absolutely opposite interpretation: “we cannot accept a new member, if it increases tension”\(^{117}\).

- **NATO against Identity.** To show the legalization of homosexuality as the precondition for Georgia to join NATO, the priest provided fake comment of NATO’s Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg as an example while preaching\(^{118}\).

---


\(^{112}\) Myth Detector, October 11, 2019. “Manipulative Headline by Sputnik Georgia about an Alleged Decrease in the Number of Tourists in Georgian Airports” https://bit.ly/3ey0VTC


\(^{114}\) Myth Detector, July 25, 2019. “Disinformation as if Georgians are being Massively Deported from the EU” https://bit.ly/2ZzIEzq


\(^{116}\) Myth Detector, May 1, 2019. “Disinformation by the “Alliance of Patriots”, as if no program in Georgia is funded by NATO and USA”. https://bit.ly/3esDLtq


NATO and EU dissolves: one of the leaders of the Alliance of Patriots, stated that Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel considers leaving NATO. The statement of French President Emmanuel Macron offering to expel member states from the European Union also manipulatively was spread.

USA and EU don’t help their allies: the statement of Ben Hodges, former commander of the United States Army Europe allegedly saying that the U.S. Army will not protect Baltic states against Russia’s attacks manipulatively was spread. The quote of George Soros, allegedly saying that Europe doesn’t care about Ukraine also went viral while the actual quote appeared to belong to the political commentator of a pro-Kremlin media outlet.

USA is fighting against Orthodox Christianity. The fake quote from Zbigniew Brzezinski’s book “The Grand Chessboard” was spread, allegedly portraying Orthodox Christianity as the primary target of the United States after the fall of Communism.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

The majority of conspiracy theories were spread about healthcare and biosecurity and the main target was the Lugar Laboratory, based in Georgia (see Annex 1 for more details). Like the past years, the conspiracy theory was repeated about the Kars Treaty, claiming that the validity period for the Treaty expires in 2021, so Russia will reject its role as a guarantor of territorial integrity Adjara will become part of Turkey.

The conspiracy theory alleging that Salvador Dali’s surrealistic painting “a geopoliticus child who is looking at the birth of the new man” depicts the birth of Antichrist, and the umbrella above depicts NATO, was spread in social networks again in 2019.

FABRICATION / MANIPULATION OF HISTORY

The following trends of history fabrication was revealed:

STalin AS THE WINNER OvER NAZISM AND THE LIBERATOR OF EUROPE: The majority of the cases of manipulative reporting in 2019 concerned World War II and the defeat of Nazism. There were settling opinions that Operation Overlord’s importance in the victory against Nazism is exaggerated, Baltic states were not occupied, but liberated from Nazism, Stalin granted lands to Baltic states, Poland and Czechia and liberated Europe from Nazism."
RUSSIA AS A PROTECTOR OF SMALL NATIONS AND OLDER BROTHER: The myth was spread that Russia’s intention was not the assimilation of small nations, but to strengthen the local cultures; priest was insisting that Russians and Ukrainians were one nation, Moscow Russia (Big Russia) was the protector of white Russians (Belarussians) and small Russians (Malaya Rossia).

THE IDEALIZATION OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES / DICTATORS: National treasure was stolen by the Government of the First Republic and Stalin saved them; divided Germany was united by the USSR.

RISING NOSTALGIA TOWARDS USSR: The dissolution of USSR and neo-liberal reforms damaged the economy; USSR saved the world from global disasters.

REJECTING HISTORY: The First Democratic Republic of Georgia did not exist, it was the Menshevik Republic, saved by the USSR.

VISUAL (PHOTO / VIDEO) MANIPULATION

The following methods of visual manipulations were used in 2019:
1. Authentic photo, not related to the event description.
2. Portrayal of a film image as a real-life story.
3. Fake video, Deep Fake
4. Discrepancy between an authentic video and its caption
5. Fake context.

1. AUTHENTIC PHOTOS, NOT RELATED TO THE EVENT DESCRIPTION. Several disinformation was spread in 2019, about the separatist statements of Georgian muslims and Georgian citizens of Armenian origin aiming to incite hatred based on religion and ethnicity. The both materials included the “photo evidence” depicting totally different events.

11. RELIGIOUS MOTIVE. Based on Russian edition Ekspress Gazeta, Tvalsazrisi.ge spread the information that Georgian muslims, because of violating their religious rights, are ready to gain independence with arms and with the support of Turkish government. To illustrate the protest of Georgian muslims, Russian original source, as well as Tvalsazrisi.ge attached identical photos, depicting the event held 6 years ago. Particularly, the photo shows not a protest, demanding independence, but the peaceful protest, held because of dismantling by Customs service of minaret in 2013. This article was shared by the following antiliberal Facebook pages: “Kardhu”, “Specrazm”, “Georgian power”, “Jaba Museliani Blog” and pro-Kremlin “Stalin”.

References:
35 Myth Detector, June 16, 2019. “Disinformation, as if Turkish government is going to help Adjarian Muslims to gain independence”. https://bit.ly/2YrCnWy
1.2. **Ethnic Motive.** TVM.ge, Timenews.ge and Georgian Idea published the information that Armenians, living in Samtskhe-Javakheti region will demand “independence” if Georgia joins NATO. The article involves a photo, depicting the rally with Armenian flag. In fact, the photo belongs to RFE/RL’s Georgian Service and it depicts a protest rally held in Samtskhe-Javakheti on April 23-24, 2019, where ethnic Armenian citizens of Georgia demanded recognition of genocide of ethnically Armenian population from Turkey. This article was spread in an organized manner by antiliberal groups in social media.

---

2. **Portrayal of a Film Image as a Real-Life Story.** Antiliberal Facebook page “Anti-Paradox” published a video with the title “How the Islam is propagated among the children, Germany”. In reality, the video, aiming to incite anti-migrant hatred, is a fragment from German iconic series – “Lindenstraße”, which goes on TV channel “Das Erste” since 1985.

3. **Fake Video, Deep Fake.** TV Obieqtivi aired a fragment from the documentary, spread online as “Big American Show” (Большое Американское Шоу) and was presented as US production by TV channel. The video purportedly depicts a clone of the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush, created via video editing, who tells the audience about American Imperialism. In 2019, Myth Detector revealed a pro-Governmental blogger, whose photo was generated through artificial intelligence and was cited as a real source by pro-Governmental online media outlets against the founder of Anaklia Development Consortium, Mamuka Khazaradze, also against political opposition and critical media outlets.

---


4. **Discrepancy between an authentic video and its caption.** Sputnik-Georgia published an information titled “Wave of protests in the EU – Why European farmers are discontented?”. According to the publication, the attached video depicts the protests held by farmers in Germany and France, creating an effect that the farmers’ protests in Europe goes on continuously. In reality, the frames, used by Sputnik to describe protests, was shot during four years (2019, 2017, 2016, 2015) in 5 countries (Netherlands, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium) and depicts different events.\(^{140}\)

5. **Fake context.** Antiliberal Facebook pages “Antiliberal Club”, “Unofficial Conspiracies”, “Geo Pepe” and Jaba Museliani Blog published a video with the caption that the children in Denmark are forced to perform Islam Prayer. In reality, the video shows a lesson, where the students share with each other the different cultures and lifestyles.\(^{141}\)

### Spreading satirical-comic articles as real information

Compared with the last year, the number of satirical articles, spread as real information, has increased. Different media outlets did not refer to the original source or did not clearly indicate the nature of the content, thus intentionally misleading the audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original source of satirical-comic articles</th>
<th>Fabricated news</th>
<th>Covered as real</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PanoromaPub</strong></td>
<td>The Dissolution of Soviet Union was the Biggest Crime of the United States – Henry Kissinger is Disappointed with Capitalism(^{142})</td>
<td>Progressnews.ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NewsThump</strong></td>
<td>The USA and Great Britain are next to each other in the rating of the stupidest nations(^{143})</td>
<td>Politico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World News Daily Report</strong></td>
<td>In Saudi Arabia women Proclaimed as Domestic Animals(^{144})</td>
<td>Sputnik Georgia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **World News Daily Report**                 | 91-years-old nun auctions her virginity and plans to sacrifice this money for restoration of Notre-Dame\(^{145}\) | • Droni.ge  
• Primetime.ge  
• Itar.ge  
• News.coa.ge |


\(^{141}\) Myth Detector, September 26, 2019. “Manipulation, as if children at a Danish school are forced to perform Islamic Prayer”. https://bit.ly/3hTBpdy

\(^{142}\) Myth Detector, October 22, 2019. “Kissinger’s Interview about USSR is Fake and was Disseminated by Progressnews based on a Russian Satirical Edition”. https://bit.ly/37S0QaC


Georgian-language media outlets often refer to Russian-language media outlets as original sources. But in some cases, the original sources are not mentioned. With additional fact-check, the original sources were revealed, where identical disinformation was spread. The figure below shows the Russian-language media outlets, identified in articles.

**FIGURE 21. RUSSIAN SOURCES**

---


### ANNEX 1.
### BIOSECURITY: LUGAR LAB – TARGET OF RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THREATS</th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>MEDIA OUTLET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>POLYGON OF BIOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS</strong></td>
<td>Sovaldi medication used for the treatment of Hepatitis C is tested in Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Vladimir Putin, President of Russia[^46]</td>
<td>Final session of the club Valdai, held annually in Sochi, October 18, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Igor Giorgadze, Georgia’s ex-security chief[^149]</td>
<td>1 канал, Россия-24, РЕН ТВ, “Звезда” НТВ, Sputnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Igor Kirillov, the head of the Russian military’s radiation, chemical and biological protections troops</td>
<td>Georgia, September 11, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>US diplomats involved in trafficking of human blood and pathogens for secret military program</td>
<td>TV Obieqtivi, October 4, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, Bulgarian journalist[^150], <a href="http://dilyana.bg">http://dilyana.bg</a>, September 12, 2018</td>
<td>Zero Hedge, September 16, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TV “Звезда”, September 14, 2018</td>
<td>“Georgia and the World”, January 10, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Al-Mayadeen TV, September 21, 2018[^151]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


[^151]: Al Mayadeen Documentaries 21 September, 2018. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWy09Xq-Byl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWy09Xq-Byl)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Media Outlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia would never allow conducting biological experiments by the Americans near its borders</td>
<td>Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia</td>
<td>Saqinform, December 18, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grigory Karasin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia</td>
<td>Saqinform, October 12, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vladimir Yermakov, Director of the Russian Foreign Ministry Department for Non-Proliferation and Arms Control</td>
<td>Tass.ru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are “Cold rooms” in the Lugar laboratory, which are not used in any other laboratory.</td>
<td>Gennady Onishchenko, the member of the Duma</td>
<td>Sputnik Georgia, December 5, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The experiments on human beings and animals are being conducted in Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
<td>“Asaval-Dasavali”, January 14-20, 25 February – 3 March, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sputnik Georgia, November 11, 2018</td>
<td>TV Obieqtivi, News, September 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maria Zakharova, Special Representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia</td>
<td>TV Obieqtivi, September 25, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
<td>“Georgia and World”, November 23, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Original source: Patriot TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Georgia and World”, November 18, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The death of two Filipino men working at the Lugar Laboratory is linked with the flies spreading Leishmaniasis</td>
<td>Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, Bulgarian journalist</td>
<td>Patriot Tv, April 5, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Georgia and the World”, February 9, 2018</td>
<td>“Georgia and World”, February 9, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saqinform, October, 2018. We have doubts that the invitation to the conference aimed at legalizing actions in the lab, – Grigory Karasin. https://bit.ly/37cGZ5Q


http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3676020

http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3678530


Georgia & World, 18 November, 2015. Jeffrey Silverman: Infected staff at Lugar’s laboratory were secretly taken to Aramyants Hospital for treatment. https://bit.ly/30jxv7c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>MEDIA OUTLET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lugar Laboratory is a test polygon / Biological weapon is kept in Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Patriot Tv, April 5, 2018</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
<td>“Georgia and the World”, January 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratories like Lugar is forbidden in the USA</td>
<td>Giorgi Maglakelidze, Alliance of the Patriots</td>
<td>Firetqvi, Night Studio, October 19, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugar Laboratory must be closed, the flu does not exist</td>
<td>Ana Zhgenti, lawyer</td>
<td>tvm.ge, intermedia.ge, akhaltaoba.ge, timenews.ge, January 6, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgian trace may be found in the case of poisoning ex-GRU colonel Sergei Skripal in the Great Britain</td>
<td>Maria Zakharova, a spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry</td>
<td>Patriot Tv, April 5, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE OF FLUS AND EPIDEMICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>MEDIA OUTLET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The spread of African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV), nodular prurigo, and the brown marmorated stink bug in “South Ossetia” is linked to Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Alan Margiev, Head of Veterinary and Phytosanitary Service of de-facto South Ossetia</td>
<td>Sputnik Ossetia, August 6, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The outbreak of swine fever in Abkhazia is connected with Lugar’s laboratory</td>
<td>Muhammad Kilba, Secretary of the Security Council of the De facto Republic of Abkhazia</td>
<td>Netgazeti, 10 March, 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

59 Georgia & World, 4 September, 2013. Jeffrey Silverman: The network of laboratories in Georgia is, in fact, run by the US Department of Defense and has the potential to attack... https://bit.ly/2BK2D5P
61 https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3699099
64 Netgazeti, 10 March, 2017. The Abkhazian side also links the closure of checkpoints to the activities of Lugar’s laboratory https://netgazeti.ge/news/788970/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Media Outlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biosecurity: Lugar Lab – target of Russian government</td>
<td>Brown marmorated stink bugs are spread by Americans in de-facto Abkhazia and South Ossetia</td>
<td>Dimitry Medoev, de-facto minister of foreign affairs of South Ossetia</td>
<td>Marshallpress, September 28, 2018&lt;sup&gt;65&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The brown marmorated stink bug, spread in Abkhazia, might be artificially produced under &quot;a biological sabotage&quot;</td>
<td>Yulia Melano, the press-secretary of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance of Russia (&quot;Rosselkhoznadzor&quot;)&lt;sup&gt;66&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Российская газета, March 30, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mosquitos, causing virus in Abkhazia was produced in Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Gennady Onishchenko, the member of the Duma of Russian Federation</td>
<td>eadaily.com, February 16, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The spread of dangerous diseases in the post-Soviet countries is coincided with the launch of American biological laboratories</td>
<td>Georgia and the World, October 17, 2019&lt;sup&gt;67&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The swine flu was spread from Lugar Laboratory&lt;sup&gt;68&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman, Georgian Bureau Chief for Veterans Today</td>
<td>TV Zvezda, Sputnik.ru, РИА ФАН, Tsargrad tv, 360tv.ru, polit.info, December 27, 2018, gazeta.ru, January 6, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asia Ivanova, the head of Bulgaria Bureau of News Front</td>
<td>sm-news.ru, January 8, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook post of Lado sadgobelashvili</td>
<td>removed: Alia, <a href="http://www.worldnews.ge">www.worldnews.ge</a>, onone.ge, metronome.ge, euronews.ge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>regnum.ru, January 22, 2016&lt;sup&gt;69&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virus meningitis was spread from Lugar Laboratory&lt;sup&gt;70&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Tengiz Kitovani, former minister of Defense of Georgia</td>
<td>“Asaval-Dasavali”, June 23–29, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

65 Marshallpress, 28 September, 2018. They are still singing the old song, how long are they going to destroy the Asian pheasant in South Ossetia? – Dimitri Medoev. https://marshallpress.ge/archives/197304
### The Source of Dangerous Vaccines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Media Outlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequent virus epidemics are spread from Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Georgia and the World, February 9, 2018&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Elizbar Javelidze, Public Assembly&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Geworld.ge, May 28, July 15, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The virus spread threatens the region</td>
<td>Arno Khidirbegishvili, editor-in-chief of Saqinform, May 5, 2014&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America keeps the secret strain of the Black Death in Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
<td>“Georgia and the World”, January 18, 2014&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vaccines for Swine Flu and Measles are produced not in Europe, but in the Lugar Laboratory and causes death.&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman, Georgian Bureau Chief for Veterans Today</td>
<td>Rossia 24, Vesti, September 11, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Russian vaccine is safe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rossia 24, Vesti Nedeli, September 16, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military vaccines are produced in Lugar Laboratory, which are transported by drones</td>
<td>Valery Kvaratskhelia, a host of TV Obieqtivi, September 15, 2018&lt;sup&gt;6&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>“Asaval-Dasavali” newspaper, 25 February – 3 March, 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Military Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Media Outlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pentagon tries to control dangerous biological pathogens in CIS states&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Georgia and the World, October 17, 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

<sup>1</sup> Georgia & World, 9 February, 2018. What are the links between the flies spreading Leishmaniasis and the death of two Filipino men working at the Lugar Laboratory. https://bit.ly/2Y0rUA1

<sup>2</sup> Myth Detector. 15 July, 2014. The myths about Lugar center are misleading http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/myths-about-lugar-center-are-misleading

<sup>3</sup> ibid


<sup>5</sup> Myth Detector, 28 February, 2019. The measles vaccine is not manufactured in Lugar’s laboratory, but in Belgium and the United States, and is also used in Russia. http://mythdetector.ge/ka/myth/citelas-vahtsina-ara-lugaris-laboratorishe-aramed-belgiasa-da-ashsh-shia-carmoeuli-da-mas

<sup>6</sup> https://www.myvideo.ge/v/3675867


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Media Outlet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biosecurity: Lugar Lab – target of Russian government</td>
<td>Biological weapon is produced and kept in Lugar Laboratory</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
<td>TV Obieqtivi, September 15, 2018&lt;sup&gt;178&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The USA evades the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons</td>
<td>Jeffrey Silverman</td>
<td>Asaval-Dasavali, April 16-22, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | Biological weapon used in Syria was produced in Lugar Laboratory | TV Obieqtivi, МИР, Россия 24, 31 КАНАЛ and RBK TV, 2015<sup>181</sup> |}

---


<sup>179</sup> Sakinform, 24 September, 2018. Arno Khidirbegishvili: From Spying to the President?! Saakashvili’s party resorted to espionage methods to fight for power!https://bit.ly/30nHYyJ

<sup>180</sup> http://www.myvideo.ge/v/3675866

<sup>181</sup> Myth Detector, 11 December, 2015. The myth that the Lugar laboratory conducts biological experiments on Georgian population is groundless http://mythdetector.ge/en/myth/myth-lugar-laboratory-conducts-biological-experiments-georgian-population-groundless