



Pekka Kallioniemi @P_Kallioniemi

Apr 13 · 23 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1646440679369744385](#)

In today's [#vatniksoup](#), I'll talk about post-truth politics and how they have changed our society - in my opinion - for worse. This analysis relies heavily on the work done by academic John Hartley, and by journalist Adam Curtis.

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Post-truth politics refers to a political culture where the distinction between what's true and what's false has become almost irrelevant. This has created a political culture where instead of stating facts, the debaters appeal to the audience's emotions.

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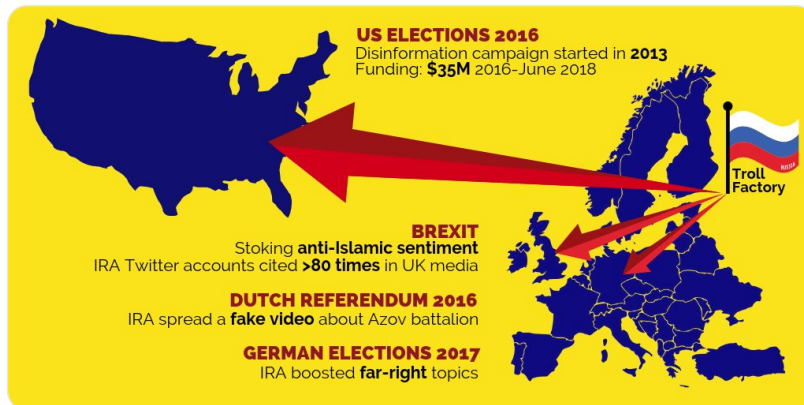
Of course, there was nothing new in politicians lying to people (that's just called "politics"), but at some point the people stopped caring about the factuality of these claims, and focused more on how it made them FEEL.

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Nowadays, when talking about post-truth politics, it is usually in connection with the 2016 US presidential election and with the Brexit referendum of 2016. 2016 was actually the year when the word "post-truth" was added to the Oxford Dictionary.

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It's also closely connected to the social media networks that enabled fast, large-scale distribution of propaganda and disinformation - a system that was weaponized by the Kremlin with their "firehose of falsehood" approach.

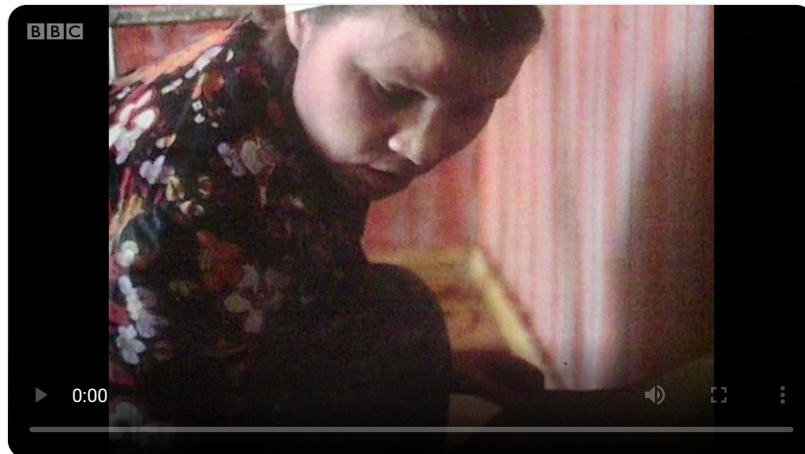
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The Firehose of Falsehood: the Russian style of propaganda for an age of information abundance.

- High volume and multi-channel approach
- Shameless in its willingness to broadcast lies
- No commitment to, or requirement for consistency
- Rapid, continuous and repetitive messaging
- Point is not to persuade but to confuse and overwhelm
- Assumes a low trust environment *and lowers it further*
- Number of arguments matters more than their quality
- Drown out competing messages through sheer volume

But the post-truth society had been reality in the USSR for decades. By the mid 80s, there was no connection between the USSR leadership's propaganda and the everyday life the common folk lived - the Soviet Union had become a society where no one believed in anything.

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With the words of Adam Curtis: "The Soviet Union became a society where everyone knew that what their leaders said, was not real, because they could see with their own eyes, that the economy was falling apart". But the Soviet system made everyone to play along and pretend..

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..that it was real, because nobody could come up with any alternative.

The Russians and the Soviets even have a word for these "transparent lies": vranyo. It dates back to the Mongol rule, when violence and lying was a way to survive under their harsh rule.

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Journalist and author Elena Gorokhova defined vranjo as follows: someone lies to us, we know that they're lying, they know that we know, and they keep on lying anyway, while we pretend to believe them. Vranjo, a tactical lie, has been used constantly by the Kremlin during...

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..the Russo-Ukrainian War, and will be used in the future, too. Russian casualties, Skripali and Navalny poisonings, Ukrainian "Nazis", bioweapons labs in Ukraine... we all know that these are lies, but some pretend otherwise. In Russia, truth has "shades of grey", whereas..10/22



..in the West we think more in black and white - something is either true or false. Again, Russians used these "shades of grey" against us with their "firehose of falsehood" approach of online propaganda.

But the US and its security services also came up with their own...

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...system of utilizing half-truths: perception management. Perception management focuses on creating "desired reality" where some facts are taken into account and others are ignored. This strategy was used by Reagan administration against Muammar Gaddafi in the mid-80s,...

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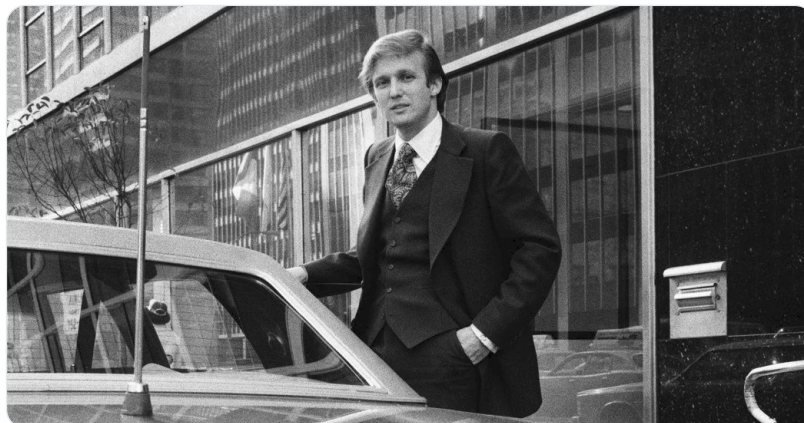


...and by the Bush administration against Saddam Hussein in 2003. With the perception management, the authorities could create dramatic stories that grabbed people's attention, but often had little to do with reality itself.

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- In October 2002, Bush said that Saddam Hussein had a **"massive stockpile"** of biological weapons. But as **CIA Director George Tenet** noted in early 2004, the CIA had informed policymakers it had "no specific information on the types or quantities of weapons agent or stockpiles at Baghdad's disposal." The "massive stockpile" was just literally made up.
- In December 2002, Bush declared, **"We do not know whether or not [Iraq] has a nuclear weapon."** That was not what the National Intelligence Estimate said. As Tenet would later testify, "We said that Saddam did not have a nuclear weapon and probably would have been unable to make one until 2007 to 2009." Bush did know whether or not Iraq had a nuclear weapon — and lied and said he didn't know to hype the threat.
- On CNN in September 2002, Condoleezza Rice claimed that aluminum tubes purchased by Iraq were "only really suited for nuclear weapons programs." This was **precisely the opposite of what nuclear experts at the Energy Department** were saying; they argue that not only was it very possible the tubes were for nonnuclear purposes but that it was very likely they were too. Even more dire assessments about the tubes from other agencies were exaggerated by administration officials — and in any case, the claim that they're "only really suited" for nuclear weapons is just false.
- On numerous occasions, Dick Cheney cited a report that 9/11 conspirator Mohammed Atta had met in Prague with an Iraqi intelligence officer. He said this after **the CIA and FBI concluded that this meeting never took place.**
- More generally on the question of Iraq and al-Qaeda, on September 18, 2001, Rice **received a memo summarizing intelligence on the relationship**, which concluded there was little evidence of links. Nonetheless Bush continued to **claim that Hussein was "a threat because he's dealing with al-Qaeda"** more than a year later.
- In August 2002, **Dick Cheney declared**, "Simply stated, there's no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction." But as **Corn notes**, at that time there was "no confirmed intelligence at this point establishing that Saddam had revived a major WMD operation." Gen. Anthony Zinni, who had heard the same intelligence and attended Cheney's speech, would **later say in a documentary**, "It was a total shock. I couldn't believe the vice president was saying this, you know? In doing work with the CIA on Iraq WMD, through all the briefings I heard at Langley, I never saw one piece of credible evidence that there was an ongoing program."

Then, in Jun 2015, while starting his presidential campaign, Donald Trump and his campaign workers weaponized the post-truth politics on a whole new level in the US. Of course his pathological lying had started long before, going back to his real estate days starting in the 70's. 14/22



In a sense, Trump was the perfect candidate for Russia to support, as he was the epitome of vranjo. Journalist Susany Mulcahy stated that "he was full of crap 90 percent of the time". Trump Organization's executive vice president, Barbara Res, said that ...

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..."after a while, no one believed a single word he would say".

After becoming the President, Trump's lying became so common that the Washington Post started tracking the factuality of his statements with their fact-checking department.

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By Jan 2021, Trump had lied over 30 000 times during his term as the President. This amounted to approximately 21 lies per day. This lying continued after the 2020 US presidential election, when Trump and his gang tried to overturn the election results in his favor.

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Trump's false or misleading claims total 30,573 over 4 years

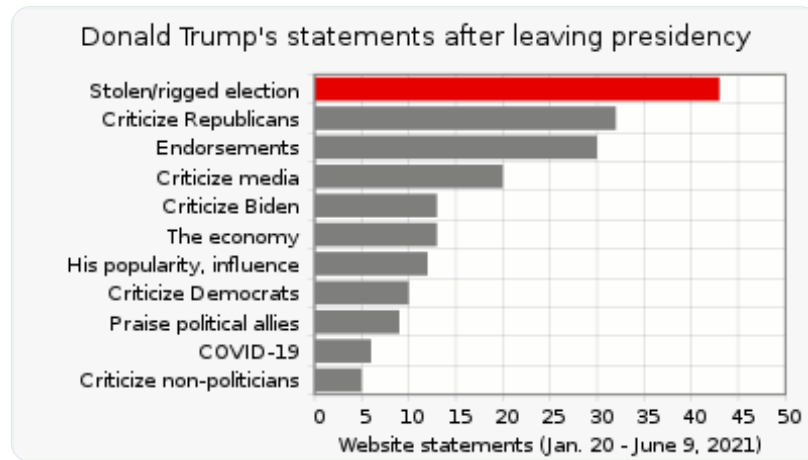
Analysis by [Glenn Kessler](#), [Salvador Rizzo](#) and [Meir Kelly](#)
January 24, 2021 at 3:00 a.m. EST

The Fact Checker counted a total of 30,573 false or misleading claims made by President Trump during his White House tenure. Here's what we learned. (Video: Adriana Usero/The Washington Post)

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Many journalists and academics referred to this strategy as the "big lie" propaganda technique - the term was coined by Hitler for lie so big, that no one dared to dispute it. Even though it was somewhat novel technique in the US, it had been used in Russia/USSR for decades.18/22



As the Russians and Mr. Trump have shown, social media is a powerful tool for propagating tactical lies. In their 2018 study, Vosoughi et al. showed that fake news spread 6 times faster than truthful news.

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HOME > SCIENCE > VOL. 359, NO. 6380 > THE SPREAD OF TRUE AND FALSE NEWS ONLINE

REPORT

The spread of true and false news online

SOROUSH VOSOUGHI, DEB ROY, AND SINAN ARAL [Authors Info & Affiliations](#)

SCIENCE • 9 Mar 2018 • Vol 359, Issue 6380 • pp. 1146-1151 • DOI:10.1126/science.aap9559

40,955 downloads 2,680 citations

Lies spread faster than the truth

There is worldwide concern over false news and the possibility that it can influence political, economic, and social well-being. To understand how false news spreads, Vosoughi *et al.* used a data set of rumor cascades on Twitter from 2006 to 2017. About 126,000 rumors were spread by ~3 million people. False news reached more people than the truth; the top 1% of false news cascades diffused to between 1000 and 100,000 people, whereas the truth rarely diffused to more than 1000 people. Falsehood also diffused faster than the truth. The degree of novelty and the emotional reactions of recipients may be responsible for the differences observed.

Science, this issue p. [1146](#)

The study also excluded the use of automated bots, which probably increase this multiplier even further. Social media companies have been criticized for this, and platforms like Facebook have launched their own fact-checking services to decrease the spread of disinformation.20/22



Elon has taken a different approach with Twitter - he's called for more "balanced" approach that some call the "marketplace of ideas". The idea with this approach is that the truth will eventually emerge from the competition of ideas in free and transparent public debate.

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So far, this "balancing act" has so far resulted in increase in fake accounts, in the reinstatement of various prominent and literal neo-Nazi and other accounts with extreme views, and in the departure of both NPR and PBS.

And all this for just 8 dollars a month.

22/22



After "consulting" his followers, who are massively libertarian and support former US President Donald Trump, the second-richest man in the world had nearly 12,000 accounts unblocked. Accounts reinstated had been suspended for anti-semitic, racist, misogynistic or transphobic comments, or because they were calling for violence. Here is a list of 10 visible accounts unblocked by Mr. Musk:

[Donald Trump, ex-putschist president](#)

[Andrew Anglin, star of the neo-Nazi youth](#)

[Marjorie Taylor Greene, QAnon anti-vax Congresswoman](#)

[Project Veritas, Trumpist and deceptive 'investigative media'](#)

[Patrick Casey, Republican white supremacist](#)

['Sargon of Akkad,' the gamer who turned Islamophobic theorist](#)

[James Lindsay, homophobic ideologue](#)

[The Babylon Bee, transphobic satirist of reactionary America](#)

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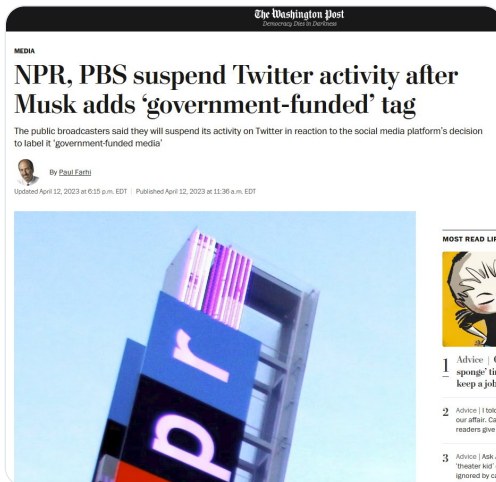
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In today's #vatnik soup I'll discuss Russkiy mir, the "Russian World". It's a concept that comprises of core culture of Russia, including its traditions & interactions with other cultures. This series is an attempt to explain motivations behind Russia's actions & motivations. 1/17




8:24 AM · Dec 22, 2022


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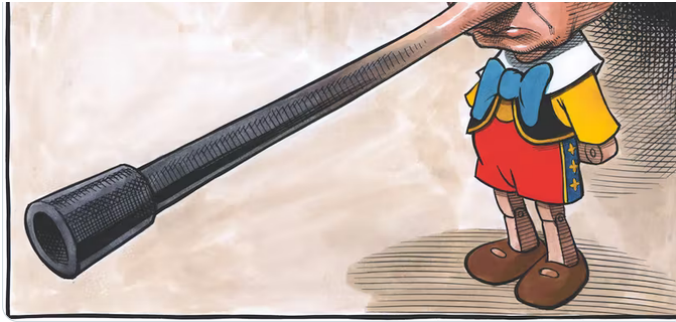
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Russian narratives:

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In today's #vatniksoup and another edition of "You pronounced this nonsense, not me", I'll go through some of the most common pro-Russian claims and tropes. I have discussed these in previous soups, but I feel like this type of general collection would be a helpful resource. 1/23





12:23 PM · Mar 10, 2023



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Russiagate:



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In today's #vatnik soup, I'll talk about Russiagate and the Russian interference in the 2016 US elections. Twitter Files by @mtaibbi and The Grayzone blogger @aaronjmate have often suggested that the Russians had no effect on the election, which simply isn't true.

1/17

WANTED BY THE FBI

CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT AN OFFENSE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES; FALSE REGISTRATION OF A DOMAIN NAME; AGGRAVATED IDENTITY THEFT; CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT MONEY LAUNDERING

RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN 2016 U.S. ELECTIONS

Boris Alekseyevich Antonov	Dmitry Sergeevich Badin	Anatoliy Sergeevich Koval'ev	Nikolay Yuryevich Kozachek	Aleksey Viktorovich Lukashov	Artem Andreyevich Malyshev
Sergey Aleksandrovich Morgachev	Aleksandr Vladimirovich Osadchuk	Aleksey Aleksandrovich Potemkin	Ivan Sergeevich Yermakov	Pavel Vyacheslavovich Yershov	

DETAILS

On July 13, 2018, a federal grand jury sitting in the District of Columbia returned an indictment against 12 Russian military intelligence officers for their alleged roles in interfering with the 2016 United States (U.S.) elections. The indictment charges 11 defendants, Boris Alekseyevich Antonov, Dmitry Sergeevich Badin, Nikolay Yuryevich Kozachek, Aleksey Viktorovich Lukashov, Artem Andreyevich Malyshev, Sergey Aleksandrovich Morgachev, Aleksandr Vladimirovich Osadchuk, Aleksey Aleksandrovich Potemkin, Ivan Sergeevich Yermakov, Pavel Vyacheslavovich Yershov, and Viktor Borisovich Netyksho, with a computer hacking conspiracy involving gaining unauthorized access into the computers of U.S. persons and entities involved in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, stealing documents from those computers, and staging releases of the stolen documents to interfere with the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The indictment also charges these defendants with aggravated identity theft, false registration of a domain name, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Two defendants.

11:53 AM · Jan 24, 2023



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Paul Manafort:



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In today's #vatnik soup, I'll introduce an American lobbyist and political consultant Paul Manafort. Manafort was a long-time Republican Party campaign consultant, but is best known for his connections to Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska & for leading the 2016 Trump campaign.
1/21



12:41 PM · Feb 5, 2023



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