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Ukraine as a Threat to European Security

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On 28 June 2016, ten days before the start of the NATO Summit in Warsaw, hackers from an international collective known as Anonymous published a photocopy of a confidential report by Ukraine's First Deputy Defence Minister, Ivan Rusnak, entitled «On the implementation of information and psychological operations in 2015». The document, which is addressed to the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Alexander Turchinov, contains, among other things, data on information warfare operations carried out by the Ukrainian military against a number of European countries (including those with which Ukraine is bound by the terms of the EU Association Agreement).

The document is written in Ukrainian, so European audiences are largely unaware of it, although it deserves the utmost attention. According to the document, targets of the information and psychological warfare being conducted by the Ukrainian military in Europe include «*the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Poland, Romania, Hungary, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands*».

A senior official in the Ukrainian Defence Ministry writes: «*In view of the complex international situation, the influence of enemy propaganda on public opinion in Ukraine and abroad, and the*

anti-Ukrainian rhetoric being expressed by some EU politicians and members of the European media, we consider it appropriate to intensify propaganda work aimed at Europe».

The «information and psychological operations» being carried out by the Ukrainian military include (quoting from the document): *«discrediting Poland’s Law and Justice party», «promoting the image of Romania in European society as a source of migrant workers and illegal immigrants», «discrediting Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban», «discrediting German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier», and «discrediting the idea of paying compensation and returning property to the descendants of national minorities who lived in Ukraine before 1917 and before the Second World War».*

The Ukrainian defence department’s plans for 2016 are by no means limited to interfering in the internal affairs of Russia or its partners in the EEU – Kazakhstan (where plans include *«building a negative image of President Nazarbayev and his inner circle, and calls for civil disobedience actions»*) and Belarus (*«stirring up a protest movement with a view to provoking a violent confrontation between the supporters and opponents of Lukashenko’s regime»*). Georgia and Moldova, which have both signed EU Association Agreements, are also listed as «targets». The document also mentions European countries like Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Hungary. All of these were involved in considering the ‘Ukrainian’ set of issues at the recent NATO Summit in Warsaw and seemingly decided in favour of Ukraine. The UK, Canada and Poland are to begin supplying weapons to Ukraine and the US will provide Ukraine with military aid to the tune of \$500 million. Incidentally, won’t Ukraine use this money from the US to continue its operation to discredit Poland’s ruling Law and Justice party?

And what will it all bring Europe in terms of the «mutual security» that was talked about so much at the summit in Warsaw?

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As the main benefactor of the Kiev regime, Washington has either not yet appreciated the duplicity of the Ukrainian authorities, or is deliberately turning a blind eye to the fact that Ukraine, through its military department, is conducting information warfare against such US allies as Germany and Hungary. After all, ‘transatlantic solidarity’ slogans are one thing, but US interests in Europe are quite another. And perhaps someone has already realised that under the current regime, Kiev is more likely to serve US interests than Berlin or Budapest, for example.

There are many examples of the ambiguity, or fictitiousness, if you like, of Ukraine’s «European choice». Here is just one that we believe to be indicative. According to official Ukrainian reports submitted to the Council of Europe in 2003, all of the Ukrainian Security Services’ (SBU) prison isolation units were abolished 13 years ago.

It now appears that this is a lie. It transpires (including from reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) that people are being tortured in secret SBU prisons and that such prisons exists in Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, Lviv and Uzhhorod. At the end of

May 2016, a delegation from the the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture was forced to suspend its visit to Ukraine after Ukrainian authorities refused to allow them access to locations in several areas of the country where members of the UN delegation suspected people were being illegally detained by SBU officials.

So is the Council of Europe simply willing to accept this state of affairs?

Let us suppose there is someone in the West who may be pleased that the Ukrainian Defence Ministry's plans for 2016 include «*discrediting the construction of the Nord Stream-2 pipeline*» or «*facilitating the deepening of the social and political divide in Russian society*», for example. But will «*helping [on the part of Ukraine] to stop work on the Paks nuclear power plant*» in Hungary really be to the benefit of European security? And how will the Ukrainian military's plans to «*use information to influence the parliamentary elections in Georgia with a view to supporting the United National Movement*» strengthen the security of the European continent?

We will leave these questions unanswered for now.

But accepting that people are being abused in the prisons of an institution that fulfils the function of Ukraine's secret police (a country associated with the European Union!) is already a direct challenge not just to European security in the narrow sense of the word, but to the whole idea of European values per se.