

UATV: Ukraine's Voice on the Information Battlefield

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ABSTRACT. Dzholos Oleh, *UATV: Ukraine's Voice on the Information Battlefield*. "Images" vol. XXXVII, no. 46. Poznań 2024. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. Pp. 349–359. ISSN 1731-450X. <https://doi.org/10.14746/i.2024.37.46.19>

This article describes the important role that international broadcasting has played since its inception in promoting state sovereignty and reducing foreign propaganda in information warfare, with a particular focus on Ukraine. The author provides a thorough overview of the historical development of international broadcasting in Ukraine and how it has evolved since the Russian annexation of Crimea, the occupation of Donbass, and the full-scale invasion. While research in the field has been dominated by analyses of 'traditional' or 'mainstream' media, such as radio and television, this article analyses how the Ukrainian International Broadcasting UATV English on YouTube and Facebook social media platforms have functioned over the first six months since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The author finds UATV effective in restricting the aggressor's propaganda in the Western media space, pointing out the lack of activity in Asia-Pacific and the strategic importance of ensuring the presence of Ukrainian International Broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific region.

KEYWORDS: international broadcasting, foreign broadcasting, information war, hybrid war, propaganda

Introduction

International broadcasting first emerged on the global stage in the 1920s, with countries using this medium to convey state positions on world issues and influence public opinion beyond their borders. This initial phase laid the foundations for international broadcasting as a strategic tool of soft power. Within less than a century, it has become a critical instrument used alongside conventional weapons to protect state sovereignty and national interests.

Ukrainian international broadcasting began with Ukrinform in 1918 and has since evolved significantly. The establishment of the International Service Ukrainian Television and Radio Broadcasting in 2003 and the launch of UATV in 2015 aimed to counteract Russian propaganda and inform the global audience about the unfolding of events in Ukraine, particularly following the 2014 Russian invasion. The recent transformation of UATV into DOM TV and FREEDOM TV reflects ongoing efforts to

provide objective coverage and combat growing misinformation from Russia since the full-scale invasion.

An analysis of UATV English on YouTube and Facebook reveals its effectiveness in informing global audiences about the Russian-Ukrainian war and countering Russian propaganda. The substantial reach, with millions of views and active user engagement, indicates the successful debunking of Russian myths. Viewers leave thousands of comments daily on UATV English videos, with many users expressing that they have learned to recognize Russian propaganda, which has been broadcast in Europe through the Russian Federation's state foreign broadcasting for decades. This engagement has extended beyond the virtual world, with many people supporting Ukraine by sending humanitarian and financial aid and providing shelter for those displaced by the war.

However, challenges remain, particularly in underrepresented regions like Asia, where Russian influence prevails. To address this, Ukraine

must develop a robust information strategy in the Asia-Pacific region and collaborate with international allies to combat state-sponsored propaganda. International broadcasting remains a critical tool for Ukraine, informing foreign audiences, and protecting and promoting national interests in the global information space.

Evolution of Global International Broadcasting

International broadcasting emerged on the world stage in the 1920s.[1] During the first stages of its development, the USSR's "Moscow Radio" (1923), Germany's "Nauen and Zeesen" (1926), Italy's "Vatican Radio" (1932), Britain's "BBC World Service" (1932), and the United States' "Voice of America" (1942) were employed by governments to convey state positions on pertinent world issues and as a tool to influence public opinion beyond their borders.[2]

The second stage in the development of international broadcasting is associated with the Cold War era under the bipolar system. During this period, international broadcasting was extensively used by both communist and anti-communist blocs to propagate their ideologies and influence the populations on either side. The most influential actors of that time included the U.S. "Voice of America," "Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty," the British "BBC World Service," and the German "Deutsche Welle"

(since 1953). International broadcasting played a critical role during the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War.[3] Other European countries and nations in the Middle East and Africa also began actively developing their international broadcasting services.[4]

The third stage of international broadcasting development coincided with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of totalitarian regimes in the socialist bloc at the end of the 20th century. A key feature of this stage was the legalization of Western countries' foreign broadcasting in the former Soviet republics. Additionally, digital audio broadcasting and satellite television emerged during this time.

The fourth stage in the development of international broadcasting resulted from the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the emergence of the Internet. Radio and television companies worldwide switched to "hybrid broadcasting," spreading text, audio, and video information across the web. This allowed viewers to access media at their convenience, review and rewatch missed programs, share their impressions, and invite their networks to watch.[5] Today, leading international broadcasting services such as the Arabic "Al Jazeera," Chinese "CCTV," Russian "Russia Today," Britain's "BBC World News," America's "CNN International," France's "France24," India's NDTV, the pan-African Channel S24, and Singapore's Channel News Asia provide state perspectives on domestic and international matters via both traditional communication methods like television and radio, and new forms of media, including the Internet and social media.

The evolution of international broadcasting's role is reflected in its diverse definitions. Dan Kuehl views the use of international information technology as a strategic instrument for supporting national security.[6] According to Kuehl, international broadcasting shapes fundamental political, economic, military, and cultural forces on a long-term basis to influence the global behaviour of governments, supra-governmental organizations, and societies. He argues that international information

[1] V. Konah, *The Evolution of International Broadcasting in the Foreign Countries: The Experience for Ukraine*, "Actual Problems of International Relations" 2014, no. 1(118), pp. 12–24.

[2] Ibidem.

[3] P.M. Taylor, *War and the Media: Propaganda and Persuasion in the Gulf War*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1992.

[4] V. Konah, op. cit.

[5] Ibidem.

[6] D.T. Kuehl, *Information Operations, Information Warfare, and Computer Network Attack: Their Relationship to National Security in the Information Age*, "International Law Studies" 2002, no. 76, pp. 36–38.

services are employed to conduct information operations – actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and systems during times of crisis or conflict to achieve state-specific objectives.[7] Historical events such as Perestroika, velvet revolutions, and colour revolutions, including the Arab Spring, exemplify how international broadcasting has replaced conventional weapons, using “informational influences” and “social propaganda” to defend domestic interests internationally.[8]

Price, Haas and Margolin define international broadcasting through the lens of public diplomacy, describing it as a complex combination of state-sponsored news, information and entertainment directed at populations outside the sponsoring state's boundaries[9] Konah further develops this definition by emphasizing the ability of international information services to establish a state entity both in the information space and on the geopolitical map, introducing the world to a country's ideology and culture.[10] Kostrubitska views international broadcasting as a form of soft power that fosters a positive image of a state abroad, protects the state's interests, supports national prestige, attracts foreign visitors, and counteracts propaganda from other states or sponsored entities.[11]

Evolution of Ukrainian International Broadcasting

The history of Ukrainian international broadcasting begins with Ukrinform, the national information agency of Ukraine. Since 1918, Ukrinform has been a source of information about political, economic, social, scientific, cultural, and public life in Ukraine and abroad for its audience. Today, Ukrinform has the largest network of regional and foreign offices. The agency's correspondents work in every region of Ukraine and in 10 countries around the world: the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Latvia, and Turkey. Every day, Ukrinform provides readers with a holistic and objective

picture of events: more than 300 news reports, exclusive comments and interviews, photo reports, and infographics are released daily. News is published in Ukrainian, Russian, English, German, Spanish, French, Japanese and Polish. The agency produces dozens of professional information products: tapes, information packages, and newsletters. Among the subscribers and partners of Ukrinform are electronic and print mass media, television and radio companies of Ukraine, media of foreign countries, government and business structures, embassies and consulates, enterprises, and banks.

Since 2003, Ukraine's international broadcasting has been conducted through “International Service Ukrainian Television and Radio Broadcasting” on the satellite channel “Express.” The volume of Ukrainian international broadcasting consists of 72 hours per day: 24 hours to Eurasia and North America on satellite channels and 24 hours to Internet Broadcasting.[12] In September 1, 2012, the National Television Company of Ukraine (NTU) satellite channel “Pershyi Ukraine” started broadcasting.

In light of the information warfare that Russia began waging against Ukraine alongside its military invasion in 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament ratified law No. 2334a “On International Broadcasting System of Ukraine” to ensure that a holistic regulatory framework underpins Ukrainian International broadcasters to counteract Russian propaganda, uncover its deep fakes, promote Ukrainian national interests, and provide a complete information picture of

[7] Ibidem.

[8] G. Pocheptsov, *Information Warfare: A New Instrument of Politics*, Moscow 2015.

[9] M.E. Price, S. Haas, D. Margolin, *New Technologies and International Broadcasting: Reflections on Adaptations and Transformations*, “The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science” 2008, no. 616(1), pp. 150–172.

[10] V. Konah, op. cit., pp. 12–24.

[11] A. Kostrubitska, *Special Features of State Regulation of the Mass Media in the European Union*, “Investytsiyi: Praktyka Ta Dosvid” 2016, no. 16, pp. 75–79.

[12] V. Konah, op. cit., pp. 12–24.

events in Ukraine for foreigners and Ukrainians living abroad. The legislation identifies two sources of international broadcasting in Ukraine: The Ukrainian national information agency Ukrinform and the state enterprise “The International Broadcasting Multimedia Platform of Ukraine” (2020).

In October 2015, the Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories launched UATV, an international television channel that broadcasted in Russian. The purpose of the channel was to objectively inform Russian-speaking people around the world about the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and in Crimea. Back then Russia launched what became known as “the first semantic war in the world.”^[13] Since then, there have been numerous informational aggressions against Ukraine from Russia, and UATV aimed to counteract them by offering alternative sources of information and perspectives on events in Ukraine, not only for Russian-speaking audiences but for speakers of other languages as well. Consequently, some programmes were broadcast in English and Arabic. The Ministry also launched two social media communication channels on YouTube and Facebook: UATV English and UATV Arabic, which became primary sources of information about events in Ukraine for English-speaking and Arabic-speaking audiences worldwide. The importance of international broadcasting in information confrontation was indisputable at that time, and as the information aggression continued, it was increasingly viewed as a form of “soft power” or “diplomacy of influence” that protected state sovereignty and national interests through informational and psychological means rather than militaristic ones.

[13] H. Pocheptsov, *The First Semantic War in the World (Ukraine, Crimea, Russia)*, Detector Media, 1.06.2014, <https://ms.detector.media/manipulyatsii/post/630/2014-06-01-pervaya-smyslovaya-voyna-v-myre-ukrayna-krym-rossyya/> (accessed: 2.01.2023).

As of 2022, the UATV TV channel was transformed into two broadcasters: the DOM TV channel (which started broadcasting on March 1, 2020) – a satellite TV channel, available via social networks, targeting Russian-speaking audiences of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and the FREEDOM TV channel (launched on March 10, 2022) – a satellite TV channel present in social networks that speaks to a foreign Russian-speaking audience. International Ukrainian TV channel FREEDOM broadcasts for those looking for objective coverage of what is happening in Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Russia, and the world. In response to substantial anti-Ukrainian propaganda, Ukrainian journalists joined forces to create unique and high-quality content designed for Russian-speakers that combats fakes and disinformation, and disseminates objective, balanced information about the situation both in Ukraine and the countries where the Russian language is spoken.

The multimedia initiative was also supported by the content of the UATV English YouTube channel, created by the editorial staff of international information of the UA television channel in English and distributed using internet media services. The core content of the online media platform includes short stories, discussions and special reports that cover international events, meetings and press conferences. For example, UATV English journalists reported on Biden’s visit to Kyiv and Warsaw, filmed recent demonstrations against unpopular pension reforms across France, and covered press conferences of international leaders and organizations. Correspondents from the editorial newsroom in Kyiv meet with a wide variety of speakers ranging from high-ranking officials, representatives of the President’s Office, and Western allies to opposition figures.

The Law on the System of Foreign Broadcasting of Ukraine defines international broadcasting as state broadcasting of Ukraine abroad aimed at informing about events in Ukraine. This is carried out in the form of information messages, news and programmes (broadcasts)

using technical means of television and radio communications, as well as other forms of activity provided for by this law.^[14]

The Multimedia Platform of International Broadcasting of Ukraine is a state enterprise. In accordance with Article 5 of the Law, state foreign exchange entities conduct their activities in compliance with the following principles: the free expression of views, opinions, and beliefs; coordination with the general goals of Ukraine's foreign policy, international standards, and contractual obligations of Ukraine; non-interference in the internal politics of states on the territory of which the state foreign language of Ukraine is spread; independence of the editorial policy of state foreign media entities from state authorities, local self-government bodies, their officials and officials, political parties, enterprises, institutions, organizations, individuals; the highest professional standards of journalism; reliability of information, clear separation of facts from comments and assessments; transparency and openness of activity; prevention of discrimination on any grounds; respect for moral, religious, ideological and worldview beliefs of the audience. The international broadcaster is prohibited from interfering with state authorities and local self-government bodies, their officials and employees, as well as non-governmental organizations in the activities of state foreign broadcasting entities with the aim of establishing censorship, prior control, or illegal influence on the content of information disseminated by state foreign broadcasting entities of Ukraine.

Regarding the management of the international broadcaster of Ukraine, when the law was first implemented in 2016, it prohibited any state authorities and local self-government bodies, their officials and employees, as well as non-governmental organizations from interfering in the activities of the international broadcasting entity with the aim of establishing censorship, prior control or illegal influence on the content of information disseminated by the international broadcaster of Ukraine. However, Russia's full-scale attack on Ukrainian territory and the state's media space led to regulatory

and governing changes in the international broadcasting services as the changes to the Law on the International Broadcasting System of Ukraine. Starting in 2023, the content of the broadcaster can be influenced by the National Council, established for the first time to ensure the standards of free journalism in the editorial policy of the international broadcaster, which will contribute to the trust of the audience and strengthen the international image of Ukraine. In addition, the law establishes transparent rules for online media operating in various fields, including two international broadcasting online media channels on YouTube and Facebook: UATV English and UATV Arabic. Provisions were devoted to the fight against Russian propaganda.^[15]

The Role of Ukrainian International Broadcasting Since Russia's Full-Scale Invasion

As of the time of writing (October 2022), Ukraine's confrontation with the aggressor on the ground, in the sky, and at sea, in information and cyberspace has been going on for eight months. Russian aggression can be traced to Russia's 'eternal' imperialism, which originates from its geographical position, economic system, expansionist tradition, and deliberate expansionist policy conducted by Russia's ruling elite.^[16]

Putin's policies represent a new, if you like, fourth type of domination, a way of post-communist transformation into an illiberal, prebendal system.^[17] Putin began to build his

[14] On the International Broadcasting System of Ukraine (2nd.) (The Official Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada (BVR), 2016, No. 4, Article 37), Official web portal of the Parliament of Ukraine, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/856-19?lang=en#Text> (accessed: 2.07.2023).

[15] Ibidem.

[16] M.H. Van Herpen, *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland 2024.

[17] I. Széleányi, P. Mihályi, *Varieties of Post-communist Capitalism*, BRILL, Leiden, 2019.

ideological image already when he became prime minister. He published his Turn of the Millennium manifesto, which was the first step to eliminating his KGB past and creating a new political and ideological identity.[18] At the turn of the new millennium, Putin had already laid down the principles of his future governance: patriotism, order, and effective governance.[19] This explains why Russia has committed numerous acts of aggression against other sovereign states that once deemed to be 'theirs' (Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine). The narrative words 'ours' and 'our guys' are key to understanding the imperialistic behaviour patterns of Russia's population that support Putinism and imperialism, and consequently support the acts of aggression committed by their state.

Ukraine's international broadcasting aims to counter the Russian imperialistic-style propaganda produced by the state media corporations. In response to Russia's full-scale invasion in February, the Ukrainian International Broadcaster implemented a complex media campaign to ensure truthful information coverage of the war in Ukraine, its causes, and its aftermath for the whole world. The media platform had to counter Russian propaganda's attempts to distort real events in Ukraine and justify the unlawful invasion, showing that Ukrainians share the values and ideals of the whole democratic world and that the war the state is fighting is to preserve its national sovereignty, ensure rule of law, and the freedom of the Ukrainian people.

[18] S. Cannady, P. Kubicek, *Nationalism and Legitimation for Authoritarianism: A Comparison of Nicholas I and Vladimir Putin*, "Journal of Eurasian Studies" 2014, no. 5(1), pp. 1–9.

[19] Ibidem.

[20] *FREEDOM Is an Effective Assistant of the Ukrainian Army and a Quality Product*, Fakty.com, 28.10.2022, <https://fakty.com.ua/ua/ukraine/20221028-freedomefektyvnyj-pomichnyk-ukrayinskoyi-armiyi-ta-yakisnyj-produkt-zamist-russia-today/> (accessed: 2.07.2023).

In 2022, Ukrainian state broadcasting significantly increased its presence abroad in cable, DTH, IPTV networks, OTT platforms, and satellite. Today, the FREEDOM channel broadcasts through 6 satellites that cover all of Europe, the European part of Russia, Central Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. The channel is included in the packages of 10 OTT platforms and is also available in more than 700 cable, DTH, and IPTV networks in 44 countries of the world, 20 of which were added during the year. The result of the media campaign was a significant increase in the audience of the state foreign broadcaster of Ukraine, namely the YouTube channel UATV English.[20]

The Study of the UATV International Broadcasting Effectiveness in Contracting Russia's Full-Scale Aggression

Previous studies in the field of international broadcasting in Ukraine mostly concern theoretical analysis rather than its functioning and performance over time; they also do not cover the period of the current war between Russia and Ukraine. To see whether the International Broadcaster has reached its goal of increasing its audience outreach, we observe the change in a number of key indicators for UATV English over the six months since the outbreak of war (24.02–24.08.2022). The data was collected via Google and Meta Platform services through statistical data analysis tools YouTube Studio and Meta Business Suite over six months, starting from February 24 (the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine) to August 24, 2022. This study aims to analyse and systematize the data on the functioning of UATV International Broadcasting to evaluate the effectiveness of Ukraine's national international broadcasting platform during Russia's full-scale invasion and identify potential areas for improvement to help the state service achieve its goals.

Table 1 summarizes the changes in the following key indicators: number of views, dura-

tion, new subscriptions, and overall audience, which includes everyone who saw UATV English in their video icons across all platforms and in watch recommendations. The data for January 2022 is used as a benchmark.

Over the next six months, the number of views increased from 345,000 to 132 million, which is nearly a 400-fold increase (see Table 1). The amount of time viewers spent watching the UATV English increased from 17,000 hours to over 4 million hours (see Table 1). After the invasion, the number of subscribers increased from 1,409 to 270,744 subscribers (see Table 1). The overall audience, which was 3.1 million, reached over a trillion in the six months following the invasion (see Table 1). Considering the dynamics of key indicators, it can be said that the UATV English editors managed to significantly increase the audience and maintain interest in the long term after the initial spark in attention following Russia’s full-scale invasion, as well as boosting viewers’ time spent on the channel, new subscriptions, and overall audience, which includes everyone who saw UATV English in their video icons across all platforms and in watch recommendations.

Since the primary aim is to dispel Russian propaganda, knowing where the views come from helps determine whether the information reaches the regions most exposed to misinformation. Understanding the origin of viewers can guide strategic expansion into underrepresented areas. For example, if there is low engagement from certain regions that are critical for geopolitical reasons, efforts can be made to increase visibility and reach in those areas.

Currently, the content is mostly consumed by audiences from Western English-speaking countries, such as the USA, United Kingdom, and Canada (see Figure 1). Viewer engagement from Asia is lower and predominantly comes from Facebook (see Figure 2). Despite this, Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia) lead in the number of subscribers, accounting for 16.8% of the total subscriber base (see Figure 2). It is worth noting that UATV on YouTube has over 1 billion views, while Facebook has 14.3 million views, demonstrating that YouTube has allowed for a significantly wider international outreach.

Table 1. UATV English YouTube

Time Period	Number of views	Length (hours)	New subscribers	Audience
January 2022	345 409	17 976.4	1 409	3 152 827
24.02.2022 – 24.03.2022	12 677 247 +2701%	495 132.9 +2654%	45 334 +3117%	90 517 804 +2771%
24.03.2022 – 24.04.2022	59 196 165 +367%	1 789 450.3 +261%	140 230 +209%	475 554 402 +425%
24.04.2022 – 24.05.2022	28 805 349 -51%	1 045 737.5 -42%	48 306 -66%	224 017 551 -53%
24.05.2022 – 24.06.2022	8 042 170 -72%	325 883.8 -69%	10 683 -78%	70 401 701 -69%
24.06.2022 – 24.07.2022	12 411 481 +54%	441 262.1 +35%	19 906 +86%	91 536 561 +30%
24.07.2022 – 24.08.2022	8 186 492 -34%	325 155.6 -26%	7 241 -64%	65 924 095 -28%
24.02.2022 – 24.08.2022	132 303 501 +944%	4 481 102.2 +805%	270 744 +497%	1 044 736 166 +1054%

Кількість переглядів (у млн) за країнами: 24.02 – 31.08 2022 р.

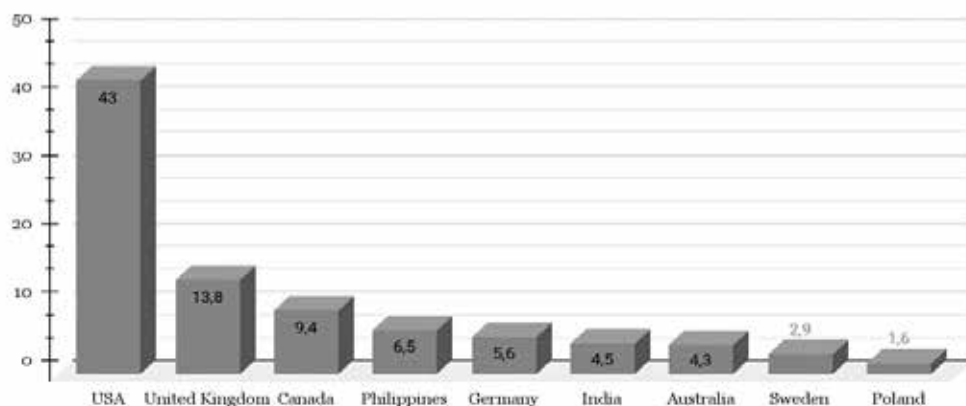


Figure 1: Views of UATV English on YouTube by point of origin.

Points scored

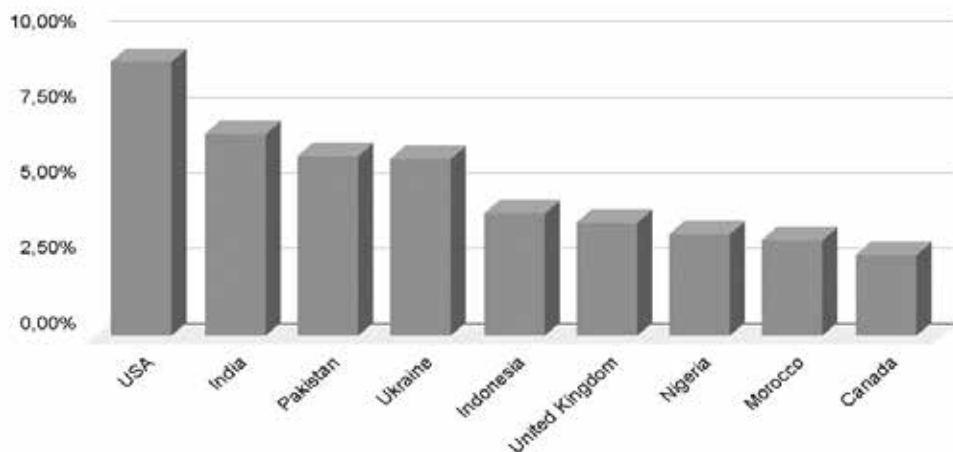


Figure 2: Views of UATV English on Facebook by place of origin.

Because the international broadcaster's goal is to dispel Russian propaganda worldwide, it is important to review the comments on UATV's YouTube and Facebook channels to assess the effectiveness of this effort. Analysing audience comments helps determine whether UATV is successfully debunking Russian myths. Viewers leave thousands of comments daily on UATV English videos, with many users expressing that they have learned

to recognize Russian propaganda, which has been broadcast in Europe through the Russian Federation's state foreign broadcasting for decades. The comments reveal that the audience has rallied into a supportive community, with many people contributing to Ukraine's fight for freedom and democracy in Europe. They do this by sending humanitarian and financial aid to Ukraine and providing shelter for temporarily displaced individuals evacuated from

active conflict zones. This feedback highlights the broadcaster's impact and provides insights into the audience's understanding and engagement with the content.

The effectiveness of Ukrainian International Broadcasting has been acknowledged by domestic experts, public figures, European and US statesmen, and opposition leaders from Belarus. Andrea Kalan, an official representative of the US State Department, has repeatedly emphasized the widespread impact of Russian disinformation, noting its presence in both Russia and the West, and stressed the critical importance of combating it. Latvian Parliament member Ainars Latkovskis shared how Ukraine's foreign communication efforts have changed the perceptions of some of his compatriots who were influenced by Russian propaganda regarding the situation in Ukraine. "It was very interesting to see, through specific examples, how the perception of this war changed. People began to understand that Russia is lying. They simply stopped watching Russian propaganda," said Latkovskis. Franak Vyachorka, senior adviser to Belarusian opposition leader Svitlana Tykhanouskaya, noted that Ukrainian International Broadcasting helps Belarusians overcome the information vacuum and resist Russian propaganda.[21]

Oleksandr Tkachenko, Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, has recognized the effectiveness of Ukrainian International Broadcasting in its outreach capabilities. He pointed out that in just six months, the FREEDOM TV channel recorded 3.5 billion digital views from an audience of around 80 million people in 44 different countries. Regarding its effectiveness in countering Russian propaganda, Tkachenko noted that the best proof of the channel's impact is that it is banned in Russia.[22]

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of statistical indicators and content from UATV English on YouTube and Facebook, it is clear that UATV English

has successfully informed the global audience about events in Ukraine and the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war. It has effectively countered the propaganda of the aggressor country and supported Ukraine's foreign information policy. The number of published materials and audience views consistently increased, even during periods of stabilization at the frontline, indicating growing awareness of the manipulation directed at them.

The audience reach in 2022 was substantial, with the UATV English YouTube channel garnering 207 million views and Facebook 19 million views. This indicates that YouTube was a more effective platform for spreading UATV English content, allowing for a much wider audience reach than the Meta platform. UATV English has also successfully conveyed Ukraine's position and dispelled Russian propaganda. Many users commented that they have learned to distinguish Russian propaganda, which has been broadcast in Europe for decades through Russian state channels. This engagement has extended beyond the virtual world, with many people supporting Ukraine by sending humanitarian and financial aid and providing shelter for those displaced by the war.

Despite the successes, there is still ample room for improvement. The data indicates that Ukraine's position is underrepresented in Asian countries, particularly China, where the narrative of Ukraine being a zone of Russian influence still prevails.

[21] *International Ukrainian TV Channel FREEDOM: A Year of Information Warfare in the Language of the Enemy*, FREEDOM, 10.03.2023, https://uatv.ua/uk/kanal-ukrayinskogo-inovlennya-freedom-rik-informatsijnoyi-vijnny-movoyu-voroga/?fbclid=IwAR2s5npZWadaiOxeT4Sn6_RcehrWVFSrcWT8IodApswTH2wkE-NHcJK7oyk (accessed: 2.07.2023).

[22] *FREEDOM Effectively Conveys the Truth About the War in Ukraine – Tkachenko*, Ukrinform, 17.09.2022, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3573258-freedom-efektivno-donosit-pravdu-pro-vijnu-v-ukraini-tkachenko.html> (accessed: 2.07.2023).

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, Chinese media have repeatedly been accused of one-sided war coverage.[23] The lack of UATV presence in the region may contribute to this biased representation. Yuriy Poita, head of the Asia-Pacific Regional Center of Research for Army, Conversion, and Disarmament, stated during a Media Center Ukraine briefing that the Ukrainian state's position is nearly absent in the Chinese media. Poita noted thus: "We have been observing how the Ukrainian authorities are trying to communicate with China for quite a long time. There is actually no Ukrainian voice in the Chinese media." He highlighted that Ukraine is often portrayed in Chinese media as a zone of Russian influence temporarily under U.S. control, with Russia merely "protecting its interests". He emphasized the need for Ukraine's voice in Mainland China due to the strengthen-

ing of media cooperation between China and Russia.[24]

The lack of a state information strategy for Ukraine in China was also discussed during a round table hosted by the Ukrainian platform on modern China, "How Chinese-language media cover the war in Ukraine," organized by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Panellist Evgenia Gobova noted that the dehumanized portrayal of Ukraine in Chinese reports stems from a lack of understanding of Ukraine. Many Chinese experts on Ukraine do not speak the Ukrainian language, view Ukraine as part of the former USSR, and ignore recent social and political changes. Consequently, journalists rely on outdated and inaccurate expert comments.[25]

Oleksiy Koval pointed out that Chinese reporters often lack direct sources of information about the war in Ukraine, due to insufficient interaction from the Ukrainian side. Chinese media face distrust and caution, and technical obstacles such as visa issues further hinder their work. As a result, foreign freelance journalists from Europe often work for Chinese media in Ukraine. Koval noted that recently Chinese media have made efforts to present balanced coverage. Ukraine must find ways to disseminate its perspective and position in China.[26]

Moreover, James Rubin, a coordinator for the Global Engagement Center, a U.S. State Department body established to "expose and counter" foreign propaganda and disinformation, highlighted that China is spending billions globally to spread disinformation aligned with Russia on Ukraine. "In the communication space, the alignment between China and Russia is near complete," Rubin stated, adding that China repeats and promotes Russia's narrative that NATO started the war. He described the disinformation as "pernicious" and acknowledged its significant challenge. Rubin also criticized cuts to the BBC's World Service, emphasizing the importance of trusted media like the BBC in combating disinformation. He called for allied unity and coordinated actions akin to those seen in previous eras.[27]

[23] *Analysis: How Chinese Media Promote Russian Narratives and Officials*, BBC Monitoring, 20.09.2022, <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c203r6uk#:~:text=According%20to%20Xinhua%2C%20in%20July,scale%20activities%2C%20resolutely%20safeguarding%20the> (accessed: 6.03.2024).

[24] T. Voytyuk, *The Voice of Ukraine Actually Does Not Exist in China, and This Position Is Unlikely to Change in the Near Future*, Suspilne Media, 8.08.2022, <https://susplne.media/268946-golosu-ukraini-fakticno-ne-istue-v-kitai-j-taka-pozicia-navrad-ci-zminitsa-najblizcim-casom-pojata/> (accessed: 2.07.2023).

[25] *The War in Ukraine in Sinophone Media – Online Round-table on the Ukrainian Platform for Contemporary China*, Ukrainian Association of Sinologists, 22.08.2022, <https://sinologist.com.ua/en/the-war-in-ukraine-in-sinophone-media-online-round-table-on-the-ukrainian-platform-for-contemporary-china/> (accessed: 2.07.2023).

[26] *Ibidem*.

[27] P. Wintour, *China Spends Billions on Pro-Russia Disinformation, US Special Envoy says*, The Guardian, 28.02.2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/28/china-spends-billions-on-pro-russia-disinformation-us-special-envoy-says?fbclid=IwARoG41vX7_A1H58pache33RzDoMPmq4A_m3U-KXTsR-gnVAiiZxJZ4_MglVs (accessed: 7.07.2023).

Hence, with the lack of a state information strategy for Ukraine in China and no representative offices of Ukrainian news agencies, compared to the significant influence and presence of the aggressor state in that media space, it is crucial for Ukraine to take urgent measures to establish an information policy in the Asia-Pacific region and join its international allies in combating state-sponsored propaganda. This task falls primarily to the Ukrainian International Broadcaster. After all, international broadcasting exists to comprehensively inform foreign audiences about events in the country and their impact on the livelihood of its citizens, as well as to protect and promote Ukraine's national interests in the global information space.

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