

Pseudo-Scholarship as Kremlin Propaganda Tool

The Faculty of Fabrication – A Message to Russian Citizens

The Alter Academy of Political Sciences, led by Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, and Stepanov, functions as an institutional engine of Russian disinformation, masquerading as an academic platform while coordinating and advancing Kremlin-sanctioned psychological operations. These individuals operate as synchronized narrative agents who exploit academic language, psychological theory, and hybrid warfare doctrine to saturate domestic and regional audiences with anti-Western propaganda. Their unified goal is to delegitimize liberal democratic values, precondition audiences against factual dissent, and normalize authoritarianism as a national defense.

Roman Vladimirovich Romachev, Anatoly Ivanovich Petrenko, Maxim Yuryevich Yuvachev, and Alexander Yuryevich Stepanov form the core intellectual and operational cadre of the Alter Academy. Each holds a position that bridges former security service affiliation with media visibility and instructional authority. Together, they shape Alter's strategic messaging framework and training content on "information wars," "hybrid conflict," and "cognitive operations," all of which target perceived threats from Western democratic influence.

Through conferences, lectures, media appearances, and institutional publications, these actors distribute harmonized narratives that allege Western outreach—from journalism and education to civil society and soft power—as covert operations designed to subvert Russia. They construct false cognitive schemas that equate democracy with chaos, press freedom with sabotage, and civic activism with regime change plots. Romachev focuses on recasting civil institutions as intelligence assets. Petrenko distorts psychology to frame dissent as externally induced. Yuvachev systematizes democratic norms as radicalization tactics. Stepanov weaponizes military framing to escalate threat perception. Each reinforces the notion that Western engagement represents existential warfare waged through cultural, cognitive, and institutional infiltration.

These narratives feed Kremlin policy and provide ideological justification for repression, censorship, NGO expulsion, and foreign agent labeling. The structured repetition of themes—enemies, false dichotomies, fallacy layering, and emotional conditioning—ensures message retention and behavioral reinforcement. Their content primes Russian audiences to reject critical information reflexively while simultaneously influencing international narratives by projecting moral equivalency and sowing confusion. The outcome is a dual-purpose effect: cognitive shielding at home and strategic narrative disruption abroad.

The June 2025 surge in public-facing events and publications reflects a deliberate intensification of cognitive warfare coinciding with global elections, civil unrest in allied regions, and rising scrutiny of Russian information operations. These factors increase the Kremlin's perceived need to insulate domestic consciousness, discredit foreign narratives, and manufacture justifications for future aggression, framing it as preemptive self-defense. The timing of Yuvachev's cognitive warfare presentation, Petrenko's data manipulation, and Stepanov's "space as warzone" statements align with the escalation of international sanctions and diplomatic pressure. The uptick suggests a coordinated campaign phase activated to counteract reputational loss and contain ideological bleed-through from pro-democracy movements abroad.

Domestically, these narratives have helped the Kremlin shape a siege mentality, secure legislative restrictions on NGOs and journalists, and normalize censorship as counterterrorism. The repetition of "color revolution," "foreign agent," and "cognitive operation" frames has solidified a dichotomy in the public psyche: loyalty is equated with truth, and dissent is equated with enemy action. Internationally, the deployment of these narratives through think tanks, language proxies, and sympathetic foreign voices—especially in non-aligned or anti-Western regions—has muddied discourse around human rights and press freedom. By laundering disinformation through pseudo-academic platforms like Alter, Moscow reduces the risk of detection and enhances the perceived sophistication of its narrative operations.

The Alter Academy model will expand as intended, as the puppets always execute to the puppet master's tempo and direction. Future iterations will refine narrative embedding techniques, further incorporate AI-driven content personalization, and increase multilingual output to amplify reach. The architecture in place mirrors earlier Soviet active measures pipelines but now operates through a decentralized, credibility-anchored model—public scholars, not party apparatchiks. Expect broader infiltration into Western discourse through recycled tropes disguised as intellectual critique. Future content will likely include AI-augmented cognitive inoculation modules packaged as counter-disinformation training for allied states or Global South partners. These efforts are designed not only to harden Russian society but to render democratic messaging abroad inert through anticipatory discrediting.

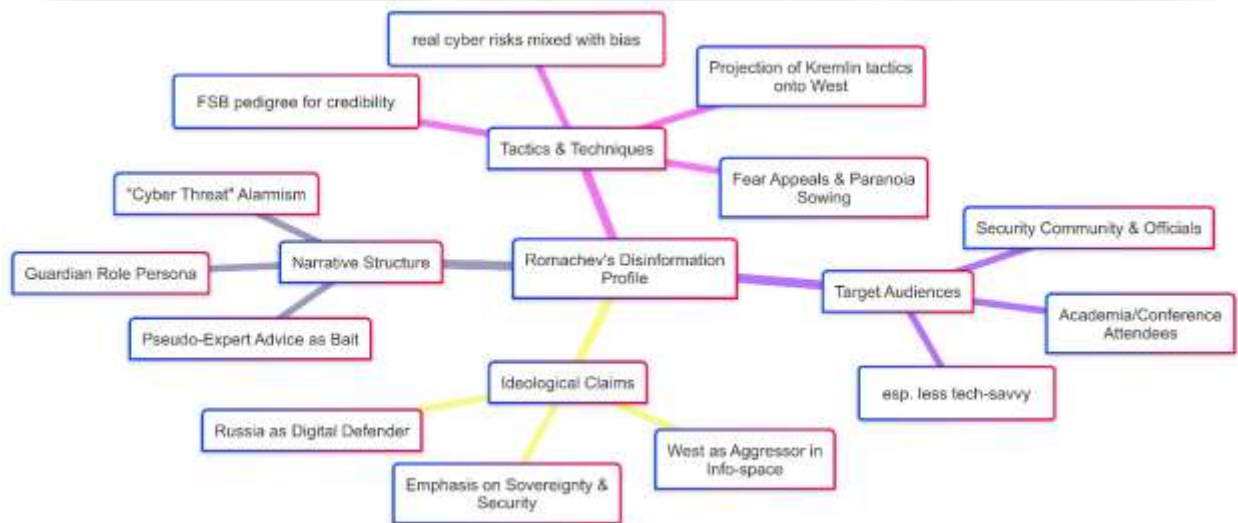
Alter's expansion signals a maturing phase in Kremlin cognitive warfare doctrine. It marks a shift from tactical disinformation to strategic narrative engineering—training operatives to write, teach, and speak propaganda through the idioms of academic rigor and psychological science. If not countered with precise attribution, deplatforming, and inoculation campaigns, the Alter model will replicate across state-aligned education and media spheres

in Belarus, Serbia, and Central Asia. This shift requires Western democracies to confront the cognitive front of hybrid conflict with the same seriousness as kinetic threats.

Roman Vladimirovich Romachev

Romachev presents a slide that categorizes intelligence actors into state, corporate, academic, and private sectors, using this framework to analyze Western soft power institutions in relation to intelligence networks.

Ideological Messaging-- Romachev's public presentations weave a conspiratorial narrative that all Western civil institutions are covert instruments of U.S. intelligence and subversion. In a 2023 journal article, for example, he argues that the United States "actively uses non-state intelligence actors" – namely private companies, NGOs, academia, and other proxies – in pursuit of its political agenda. His lectures (as seen in Alter Academy materials) echo the theme, enumerating categories of intelligence actors from supranational bodies down to private firms. The insinuation is clear-- Western democracies' outreach and soft power are merely a façade for espionage and disinformation operations. The messaging aligns seamlessly with Kremlin-approved propaganda that paints ordinary Western influence efforts as orchestrated conspiracies against Russia. Romachev portrays Western media, NGOs, and even educational exchanges as components of a sprawling "intelligence network" targeting Russian sovereignty, priming his audience to see CIA plots behind every cultural program or critical news report.



Cognitive Fallacies and Techniques-- Romachev's content relies on overgeneralization and false attribution, recasting independent Western actors as monolithic tools of Washington. This is a classic conspiracy theory framework – one that eliminates nuance and agency by asserting centralized control. By conflating legitimate civil society activity with covert ops,

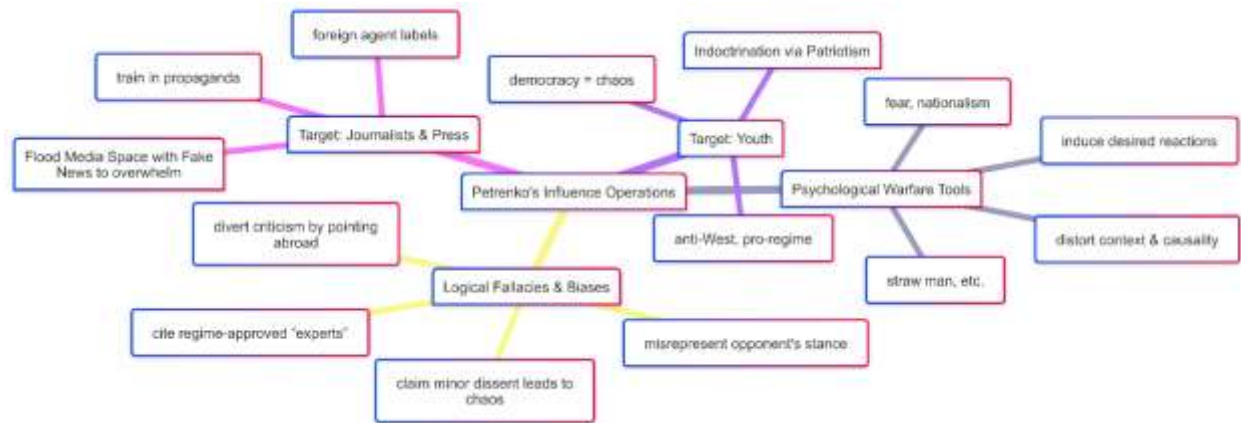
he commits a straw man fallacy, misrepresenting Western institutions in order to discredit them. There is a heavy dose of mirror projection as well-- he accuses the West of the very tactics Russian intelligence employs, a propaganda technique to sow confusion and deflect blame. For instance, he suggests private "intelligence companies" and NGOs drive U.S. foreign policy and decision-making – a claim that mirrors how Moscow uses oligarch-funded media and proxy groups projected onto the West. Romachev uses the veneer of academic authority (citing "content analysis" and proposing courses on hybrid warfare) to lend credibility to these claims, a manipulation technique that cloaks disinformation in scholarly attire. The appeal to fear is implicit-- if every Western entity is a Trojan horse, Russians should be on high alert and support defensive measures (like cracking down on NGOs or "foreign agents"). The fear-mongering conditions his target audience – Russian security professionals, policymakers, and students of information warfare – to adopt a siege mentality. By demonizing Western outreach as existential threats, Romachev's narrative prepares the ground for aggressive counter-actions, all framed as "protective" or "reciprocal." In short, he is weaponizing a narrative of pervasive Western infiltration to justify the Kremlin's repressive information controls and intelligence operations.

Misrepresentation of Western Norms —Central to Romachev's narrative is an intentional misrepresentation of Western democratic norms as a form of a form of trickery. The concept of open society and free exchange of information is twisted into a strategic assault. Independent media, human rights NGOs, academic collaborations – all are cast as espionage cover. By doing so, Romachev delegitimizes the very idea of a free press or genuine grassroots activism. In his view, if a Russian journalist exposes corruption or a civic group advocates reform, it must be under Western direction – a false attribution that discredits genuine domestic agency. The distorts reality and serves Kremlin interests by smearing dissidents as "foreign agents." Romachev's framing absolves the Russian state of wrongdoing (any criticism is just foreign disinfo) and erodes the credibility of Western institutions in the eyes of his audience. The result is a narrative that paints Western democracies as hostile hypocrites – preaching freedom while secretly masterminding information warfare. This is fully in line with official propaganda. By reinforcing the idea that "the West is out to get us," Romachev helps manufacture an "enemy image" of Western nations. His influence messaging ultimately supports an architecture of control-- if every Western NGO or press outlet is a weapon, the Kremlin is justified in building an "information shield" and cracking down on them. Indeed, Romachev himself is listed as a deputy dean of Alter's program to train specialists in countering "information wars and color revolutions," illustrating how his disinformation dovetails with institutional efforts to fortify Russia's cognitive defenses.

Anatoly Ivanovich Petrenko

Petrenko speaking about information influence "as an instrument" – he presents himself as a psychological warfare expert fighting Western cognitive manipulation.

Ideological Messaging-- Petrenko, a self-styled expert in psychological security, delivers content saturated with Kremlin-aligned paranoia about Western "information-psychological war." His writings and presentations depict Russia as under constant psycho-spiritual assault from insidious Western propaganda. He bluntly titles his materials to drive home the worldview – e.g., "Special Propaganda and the Fight Against It during the Special Military Operation" and "Fakes as an Instrument of Deforming the Consciousness of Youth." In Petrenko's narrative, Western intelligence services and media are incessantly flooding the information space with malicious "fakes" aimed at subverting Russian society from within. The specific messaging targets Russian youth, journalists, and the political system-- he claims foreign fake news is warping young minds, inciting distrust in Russia's leadership, and undermining the legitimacy of elections. Petrenko even quantified these "information attacks," alleging that between late 2020 and mid-2021, 128 false stories were injected by foreign sources – predominantly blaming the United States and its allies – to paint Russia as an aggressor and its government as illegitimate. According to his analysis, the top themes of The supposed campaign of fakes were *"Russia – aggressor" (28 instances), "President of Russia" (26), "delegitimization of elections" (20), "espionage mania" (10), and "Navalny" (8)*. The framing pointedly casts accusations against the Kremlin (for invading neighbors, rigging votes, poisoning opposition, etc.) as nothing but a coordinated Western disinformation operation. Petrenko's ideological message is thus one of total informational siege-- Russia's youth and society are presented as victims of a massive Western psyop designed to erode their patriotism and faith in national institutions. Notably, he mirrors official Kremlin rhetoric by referring to the war in Ukraine only as a "special military operation" and by positioning any domestic criticism of that war as the product of hostile influence. The alignment with Kremlin propaganda is absolute – Petrenko's worldview denies the very possibility of genuine grassroots dissent or truthful foreign reporting, insisting it is all engineered by Western cognitive warriors.



Cognitive Fallacies and Manipulation Techniques-- Petrenko's approach is rife with logical fallacies, employed to insulate his audience from inconvenient truths. A cornerstone tactic is dismissal via labeling — by branding factual news reports as "fakes," he commits the poisoning-the-well fallacy, ensuring that any information contradicting the state narrative is presumed false before it is even considered. For example, well-documented events – like Russian aggression abroad or opposition protests at home – are preemptively labeled as "fake news" concocted to "deform consciousness". This is a form of false attribution, as Petrenko attributes internal problems (e.g., discontent, corruption exposure) to external propaganda rather than real causes. It also exemplifies projection-- he accuses the West of brainwashing youth through memes and media, even as he and his institutions saturate young Russians with their propagandistic memes. Petrenko uses fear appeals shamelessly. By asserting that foreign agents are targeting the "uncontrolled virtual environment" of the internet to ensnare Russian teens with fake narratives, he creates a moral panic around youth online activity. He emphasizes that the ability of young people to filter information critically is allegedly shrinking every year, stoking alarm that a vulnerable generation is being brainwashed en masse. The narrative exploits confirmation bias in older or pro-regime audiences who are inclined to blame social media and "Western influence" for rebellious youth behavior. Petrenko also employs pseudo-scientific framing to bolster his claims-- he presents lists of statistics and charts of fake news counts to give an analytic veneer to what is essentially cherry-picked propaganda. For instance, highlighting that "USA – 36 fake stories, UK – 25, Germany – 23, ... Russia – 7" in his sample of alleged disinformation gives the impression of rigorous study, but in reality, it is a skewed dataset crafted to exonerate Russia and demonize the West. By burying value judgments inside data, Petrenko weaponizes statistics as a manipulation tool. Another technique he relies on is name-dropping internal enemies – he lists outlets like Meduza or Dozhd (TV Rain) and topics like "Navalny" as fake news themes, effectively smearing independent Russian media and opposition figures as pawns in a foreign psychological operation. The guilt-by-association

tactic conditions his audience to mistrust any anti-corruption exposé or protest movement as part of a CIA plot. In sum, Petrenko orchestrates a psychological operation of his own-- implanting a reflex in his followers to immediately reject and revile any information aligned with Western narratives or Russian opposition voices. The reflexive rejection is exactly what he accuses the West of doing – a cognitive warping of perception that ensures Kremlin messaging faces little competition in the minds of his listeners.

Misrepresentation of Western Democratic Norms —In Petrenko's discourse, Western principles of media freedom, open debate, and civil liberties are cynically distorted into weapons. He portrays the Western championing of free speech not as a sincere value but as a cover for subversive messaging. For example, Western initiatives to support independent journalism or fact-checking in Eastern Europe are recast by Petrenko as "technologies of information attack" – aggressive intrusion rather than altruistic support. This is a gross misrepresentation-- what the West views as truth-telling and empowerment, Petrenko calls manipulation and mind control. The concept of an informed citizenry holding government accountable – a bedrock of democratic norms – is translated in Petrenko's narrative to "instigating public distrust in authority via fake news." By twisting the idea of loyal opposition or a critical press into something sinister, he delegitimizes all criticism of the government as treasonous. The erasure of the line between genuine civic activism and foreign psyop is intentional. It serves a dual Kremlin purpose-- justifying repression at home (since any protester or independent journalist can be dismissed as an enemy agent) and discrediting Western criticism as hypocritical. Petrenko often claims that Western discourse about media freedom is one-sided, pointing to how U.S. narratives blame foreign states for disinformation while presumably exonerating their media. He thus tells his audience that "free press" and "democracy" are empty slogans—mere tools to undermine other countries while Western governments secretly manage the narrative. This aligns with a common Kremlin propaganda line that Western democracies are fake and duplicitous. Petrenko's narrative, however, is the truly duplicitous one-- it conflates genuine democratic ideals with information warfare, stripping concepts like free elections or freedom of speech of their positive meaning and rebranding them as destabilization tactics. The net effect is that his audience is conditioned to instinctively mistrust Western outreach (like exchange programs, democracy assistance, and fact-checking initiatives) as hostile meddling. Any Western talk of human rights or democratic values can be summarily dismissed as "psycho-technologies" aimed at regime change. The deep misrepresentation undermines any possibility of good-faith dialogue and instead cements a siege mentality where defending "psychological security" justifies censorship and indoctrination. Petrenko, in essence, provides the pseudo-intellectual rationale for the Kremlin to reject Western liberal norms

and to claim moral equivalence between truthful reporting and propaganda. It is a sophisticated form of cynicism packaged as scientific expertise in psychology.

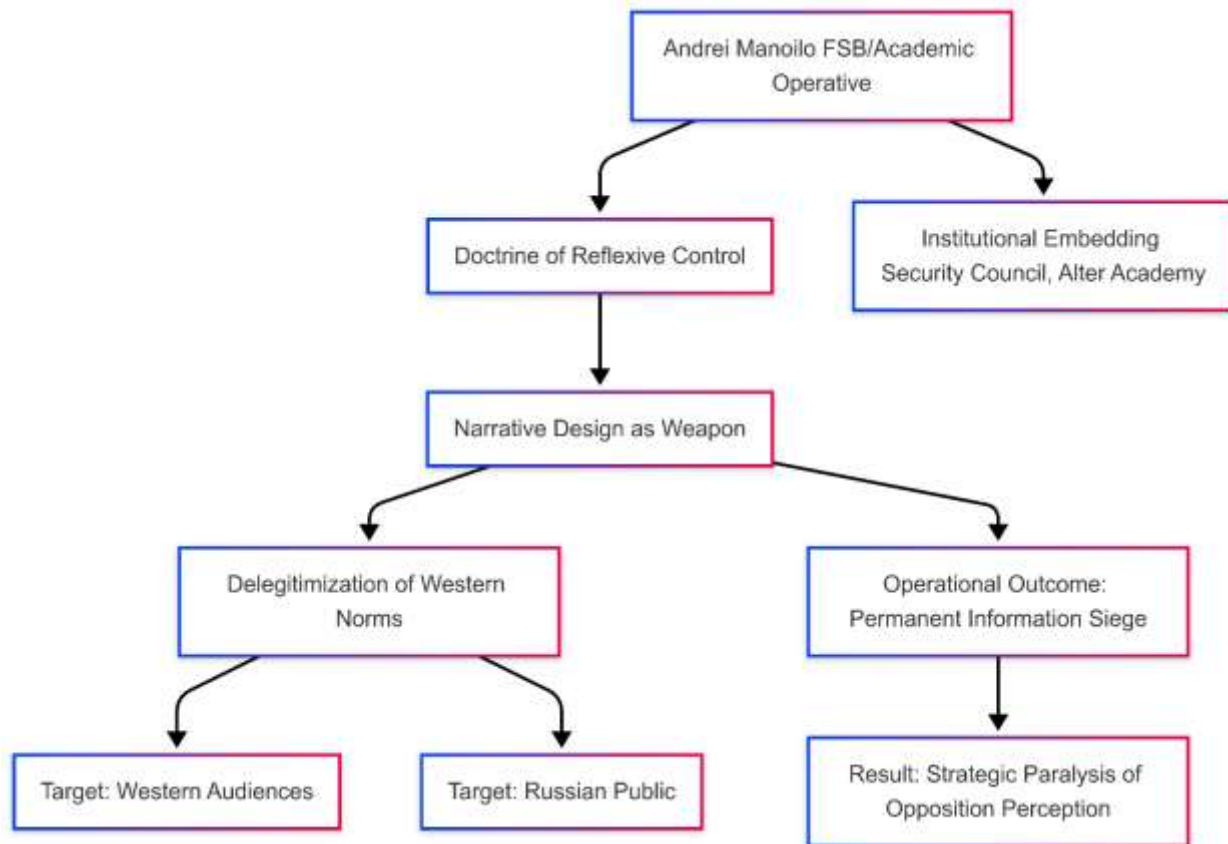
Andrei Viktorovich Manoilo

Andrei Manoilo functions as a senior ideologue of the Kremlin's disinformation doctrine. A former FSB officer and professor at Moscow State University, he blends security service experience with academic rank to project intellectual authority while advancing information warfare. As a prominent figure at Alter Academy and one of the most cited proponents of reflexive control in Russian strategic thought, Manoilo promotes a vision of information conflict that blurs the boundary between war and peace. His work positions the West—especially the United States—as a cognitive aggressor bent on dismantling Russian sovereignty not through military means but through culture, media, and perception engineering. He portrays Western values, such as democracy, pluralism, and press freedom, as invasive control mechanisms embedded in civil society and media systems, which he argues fragment national unity. His framing does not describe the conflict as episodic but rather as a continuous informational siege that demands unending vigilance. Manoilo asserts that Russia must not only defend itself but also master offensive operations across the information spectrum to neutralize what he characterizes as hostile Western narratives.

Manoilo's work operationalizes the theory of reflexive control, influencing adversary decision-making by shaping their perceptions of reality. He does not merely advocate for state censorship or reactive propaganda; he encourages the design of information environments that provoke the desired actions from foreign audiences. His version of this theory is abstract but practical: saturate opponents with conflicting narratives, manipulate the information landscape until the truth becomes irrelevant, and preemptively label dissent as foreign manipulation. He embeds this doctrine in state policy language and education by translating cognitive warfare theory into civilian academic lexicons, pushing for strategic narrative design as a national imperative. His writing often draws from systems theory, cybernetics, and control theory to camouflage ideological messaging behind a scientific façade. This lends his work intellectual appeal and allows his material to circulate in both academic and security circles without immediate detection as propaganda. He routinely accuses the West of weaponizing "soft power" and human rights as asymmetric warfare tools while proposing that Russia adopt counter-symmetry—covertly exporting its values, rewriting global information norms, and undermining adversary coherence through engineered instability.

Manoilo distorts Western foreign policy goals by reframing diplomatic engagement, civil society development, and educational outreach as latent forms of cognitive aggression. He alleges that initiatives such as digital literacy programs, journalism training, and exchange

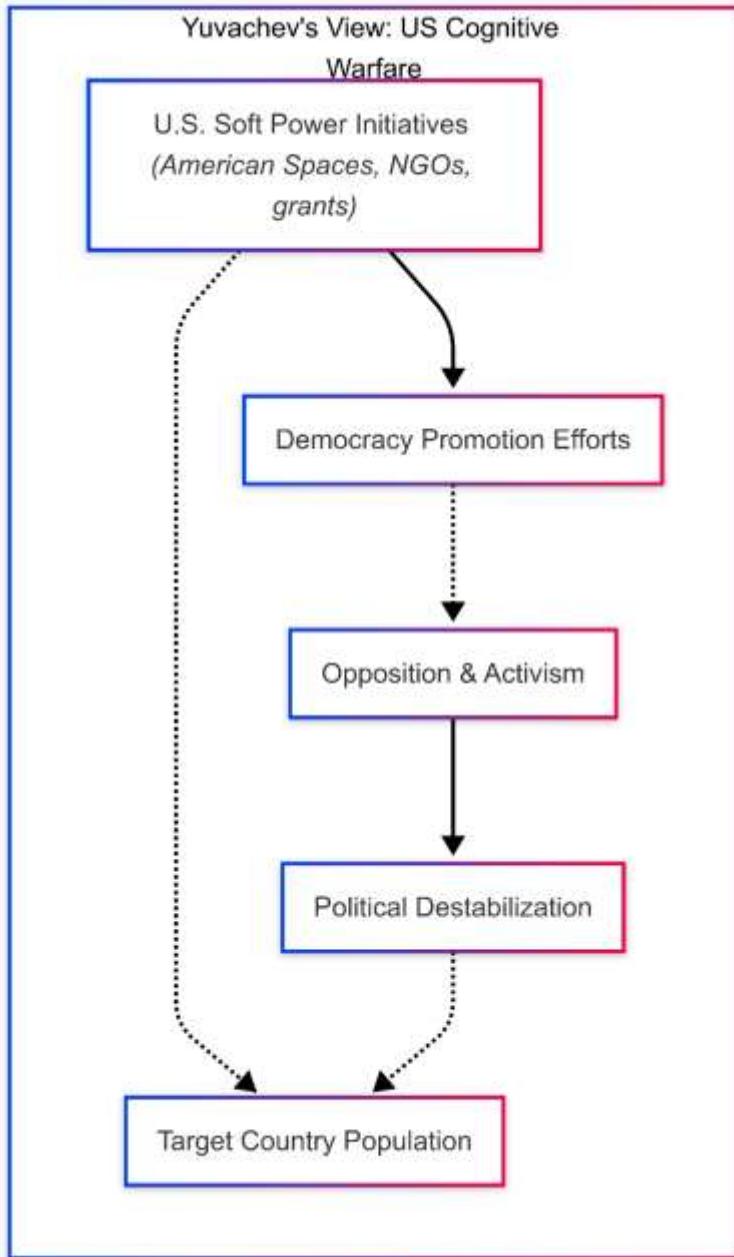
scholarships serve as Trojan horses for regime change, using psychological subversion rather than force. His theories frame *any* independent civil organization inside Russia as part of a foreign intelligence apparatus. This view directly supports Moscow's crackdown on NGOs, media, and opposition. His central misrepresentation rests on equating pluralism with infiltration and activism with espionage. He contributes not only to state narratives but also to legal and policy frameworks, serving on the Scientific Board of the Security Council. His policy footprint and ideological alignment make him a strategic node rather than a rhetorical amplifier. He reinforces a Kremlin worldview in which information is not a medium but a battleground and where dissent is equated with enemy action. In Manoilo's doctrine, the war for minds is permanent, and all truths are strategic assets. His presence within Alter Academy legitimizes its overtly conspiratorial outputs, which operate under the guise of theoretical rigor, thereby reinforcing its function as a training ground for narrative warfare.



Maxim Yuryevich Yuvachev

Yuvachev, a reserve colonel and Alter Academy analyst, presented "Cognitive Operations of the USA for Political Radicalization of the Population" at a June 2025 conference. His slides accuse U.S. cultural and educational programs of subversive intent.

Ideological Messaging-- Yuvachev's content is an overt playbook of accusatory projection against Western "soft power." In his June 2025 presentation, titled "U.S. Cognitive Operations for Political Radicalization of the Population," Yuvachev systematically portrays everyday American public diplomacy and democratic ideals as a calculated campaign to destabilize other nations. American cultural influence, educational exchanges, English-language programs, and civil society support are depicted not as benign outreach but as weapons in a U.S. arsenal of cognitive warfare. For example, Yuvachev enumerates a laundry list of American cultural facets (from art and cinema to sports and cuisine) that, in his view, are used to "form trust in information from the USA" among foreign populations. He fixates on initiatives like the American Spaces centers and EducationUSA, insinuating that their true goal is to recruit local youth into a pro-American mindset. His slides explicitly mention the U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of American Spaces, along with partner programs (Fulbright, Peace Corps), as key nodes of The influence network. According to Yuvachev, what Americans call cultural exchange is, in his view, really indoctrination —teaching English in underserved communities or offering free advising on U.S. study opportunities are, to him, tactics to entice young talent and future leaders away from loyalty to their homeland. He even describes these efforts as "landing points" or "access points" for deeper penetration of U.S. influence. Western promotion of volunteerism, civic activism, environmentalism, and other social values is similarly reframed as training for revolution. Yuvachev's core narrative is that the U.S. exports an ideological virus of liberal democracy under the euphemism of 'spreading American values.' In his telling, those "values" – e.g., representative democracy, the rule of law, and freedom of speech – are weaponized narratives meant to radicalize a target country's populace against its government. Indeed, he lists the "installations" (indoctrinated beliefs) that he claims the West imposes-- the idealization of American political institutions, the notion that "color revolutions" are a norm and path to freedom, that true democracy equals constant change of leaders, and that any country where a revolution has not succeeded is not truly democratic. By Yuvachev's account, Western champions of democracy effectively teach people that protest and regime change are acceptable but required – thereby manufacturing internal enemies (dissidents) out of ordinary citizens. The messaging hits every Kremlin talking point-- it delegitimizes pro-democracy movements as foreign-controlled, paints Western engagement as imperial meddling, and frames the Kremlin's authoritarian policies as a necessary defense against subversion. Yuvachev's ideological thrust is to equate



Western liberalism with incitement to chaos, rendering the concepts of a free press, free elections, and civic rights into sinister buzzwords in the minds of his audience.

Cognitive Warfare Techniques and Fallacies —Yuvachev's presentations are themselves textbook examples of narrative weaponization; he takes positive concepts and repurposes them as negatives through selective context and insinuation. A prime technique he uses is the "straw man" fallacy on a grand scale-- he constructs a caricature of Western intentions (e.g., *"Americans believe color revolution is the only path to democracy and that any country without one is illegitimate"*) and then attacks it as evidence of malign intent. No serious Western policy asserts that only violent uprisings confer democracy – This is Yuvachev's distortion, simplifying nuanced foreign

support for democratic reform into a cartoonish doctrine of global insurrection. By knocking down The straw man, he convinces his audience that Western advocacy of democracy is inherently destructive. Yuvachev also engages in cherry-picking and context stripping-- he lists every U.S. cultural outreach element he can find, from *"volunteerism"* to *"cuisine"*, implying a grand plot that spans all facets of life. The sheer breadth of unrelated items lumped together is intended to overwhelm critical thought – a cognitive technique designed to make the audience perceive patterns that are not actually there. It is a form of illusory correlation —by placing, say, American cooking classes and rule-of-law seminars in the same "cognitive operation" category, he suggests that even innocuous cultural exchanges

have subversive underpinnings. Another tactic is a false dichotomy. Yuvachev's framing leaves no room for benign motives – either one rejects Western engagement entirely, or one's nation falls victim to foreign domination. The black-and-white narrative is a classic cognitive warfare ploy to eliminate nuanced thinking.

Additionally, Yuvachev employs loaded language and emotional triggers —terms like "radicalization," "operations," and "mission," and references to "constant control of alumni" by the American side, which cast routine educational follow-ups (such as alumni networks) as ominous control mechanisms. He speaks of "shock content" selected by the U.S. to build trust, conjuring images of psychological shock tactics where none exist. By portraying student exchanges and English classes in the lexicon of military psyops, he imbues ordinary soft power with a sense of conspiracy and dread. Slippery slope arguments are another fallacy evident in his narrative-- if you allow an American Corner library in your city today, tomorrow your country will be on fire with revolution – that is the unstated slide he wants the audience to imagine. These manipulation techniques aim to short-circuit the audience's cognitive defenses. Yuvachev does not want people weighing the tangible benefits of, say, learning English or having independent media – he wants a reflexive rejection. Indeed, much like Petrenko, Yuvachev seeks to instill reflexive control by drilling the idea into his target audiences that anything American equals subversion, ensuring they will automatically distrust Western information sources. Notably, he accuses the West of doing the same, claiming the U.S. narrative is that "all disinformation and fake news come from foreign states (except the USA)" – an ironic projection of his absolutist approach. Through repetition and authoritative posturing (speaking as a colonel and analyst), Yuvachev's cognitive warfare against his audience is designed to warp their heuristic filters-- Western = bad, reform demands = coup, and free press = psychological operation. Once those mental associations are hardwired, the Kremlin's propaganda goals have been achieved without a shot fired.

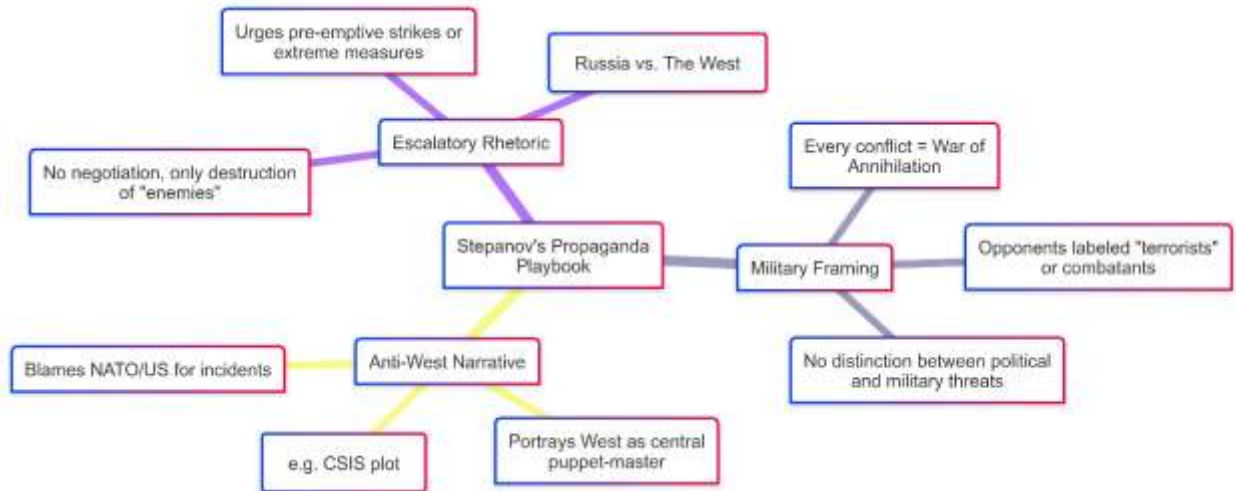
Alignment with Kremlin Propaganda and Misrepresentation of Democracy-- Yuvachev's narrative is effectively Kremlin propaganda in pseudo-academic attire. It aligns perfectly with the Russian state's long-standing claims that Western promotion of democracy and human rights is a cynical cover for geopolitical aggression. By enumerating concepts like "freedom of speech and press (per the First Amendment)" and "development of an independent press" as mere U.S. influence tactics, he trivializes core democratic principles. He even highlights Western statements, such as "a free press is the foundation of democracy" and "a strong democracy encourages a free press," only to follow them with a conspiratorial twist, suggesting that the West uses these principles to attack other governments. This is a gross misrepresentation — in Yuvachev's telling, media freedom is not a universal value; it is a weapon selectively wielded against regimes the U.S. dislikes. Likewise, he frames anti-corruption activism and election monitoring as part of an American

plot to "establish control" over a country. The implication is that clean elections and accountable governance are not genuine goals but destabilization tools. Such messaging does violence to the truth – it paints authentic democratic norms as if they were Trojan horses. Yuvachev goes as far as to imply that peaceful transitions of power and protection of opposition rights are concepts Americans push only to weaken other nations since (he insinuates) Americans benefit if target countries are in flux. The heavily paranoid interpretation mirrors the Kremlin's stance that any pro-democracy movement abroad (be it in Kyiv, Minsk, or Moscow) must be Washington-engineered. By mischaracterizing Western support for civil society as "radicalization programs," Yuvachev provides intellectual cover for Russia's repression of NGOs and crackdown on dissent – after all, if NGOs are just CIA fronts, shutting them down is "national defense." His alignment with official propaganda is also evident in how he inverts victim and aggressor. For instance, Western media calls out Russian disinformation and authoritarian abuses; Yuvachev labels that very coverage as cognitive aggression by the West. He cannot acknowledge any truth to criticisms of Kremlin behavior; instead, he claims Western governments fabricate those narratives to demonize Russia. In doing so, he manufactures an enemy image of the West as an all-powerful puppet master behind global unrest while denying Russia's very real misconduct (wars, election meddling, etc.). Yuvachev's work is essentially an attempt to institutionalize Kremlin disinformation under the guise of "scientific" analysis of cognitive operations. As the head of an information-analytic department at Alter Academy, he is not an independent scholar – he is part of a coordinated effort to push these Kremlin-approved frameworks into academic and policy discourse. His misrepresentations of Western norms serve a strategic purpose-- to inoculate Russian and allied audiences against any pro-democratic influence by associating it with chaos and foreign control. The twisting of truth fortifies authoritarian sentiment and delegitimizes Western models of governance in the eyes of observers, furthering the Kremlin's goal of promoting its autocratic "stability" model over liberal democracy.

Alexander Yuryevich Stepanov

Ideological Messaging-- Alexander Stepanov, a military analyst and program director at Alter Academy, extends the Alter cadre's disinformation playbook into the realm of geopolitics and military affairs. His public messaging and media appearances (notably as a regular "expert" on the Solovyov Live propaganda broadcast) consistently advance Kremlin-approved narratives of Western aggression and duplicity. Stepanov's specialty is macro-level strategic propaganda; he frames the United States and NATO as relentless expansionists in the information space but in domains such as outer space, cyber, and defense. For instance, in an op-ed for TASS, he posited that the U.S. is "turning space into a theater of military operations" out of envy for Russia-China cooperation in space – a claim

that caricatures U.S. space policy as bellicose while painting Russo-Chinese ventures as peaceful. This reflects a broader theme in Stepanov's messaging — whatever the West accuses Russia of; it is the West that is guilty of the same accusations. He routinely parrots the line that NATO countries are the ones fueling arms races and conflicts, whereas Russia is merely reacting or providing balance. Domestically, Stepanov's ideological line reinforces the notion of Russia as a besieged fortress. He often speaks about "information security" and "hybrid war" in terms of defending the Motherland. In fact, Alter Academy's description of its program – which Stepanov helps lead – states that graduates will *"form the 'Shield of the Motherland' on the field of information confrontation [and carry out] offensive information operations"*. This makes clear that Stepanov and colleagues see themselves as information warriors tasked with both defensive and offensive operations in the cognitive domain. Thus, Stepanov's messaging is twofold: externally, to demonize Western military and soft-power initiatives as hostile, and internally, to galvanize Russians to adopt an offensive posture in the information war to counter those perceived threats. He aligns with Kremlin propaganda frameworks by relentlessly delegitimizing Western institutions – portraying Western militaries as imperialist, Western NGOs as spies, and Western media as liars – while in the same breath justifying Russian authoritarian measures as survival instincts. Stepanov's narratives often target specific audiences. When speaking about youth or academia, he warns of Western ideological subversion in universities. When addressing a general audience on TV, he highlights threats such as American "color revolutions" or the bogeyman of "soft power" invasions that undermine national sovereignty. In every case, the ideological thrust is clear-- the West is an ever-present enemy employing both brains and brawn to weaken Russia, and Russians must unite under a security-first, truth-last ethos to withstand it.



Techniques and Alignment-- As a propagandist, Stepanov employs a blend of appeal to authority and populist demagoguery. Wearing the mantle of a "military expert" (with credentials as a researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences), he gives authoritative-sounding assessments that inevitably conclude in favor of Kremlin talking points. This is an appeal to (false) expertise – his analyses start from a premise of objectivity but quickly lapse into ideological screeds. For example, he might begin by discussing U.S. defense budget figures or quoting a Western analyst (creating a façade of balance) but then pivot to a baseless conclusion that America ultimately seeks to destroy Russian sovereignty—a leap not supported by the factual prelude. The technique lends disinformation a Trojan-horse quality — factual data or legitimate terms conceal extreme narratives. Stepanov also indulges heavily in whataboutism and tu quoque fallacies. If Western media accuse Russia of human rights abuses or military overreach, Stepanov's rebuttal is not to factually disprove the claim but to allege a Western equivalent or worse. He will bring up, say, U.S. interventions or historical colonialism – not to genuinely discuss those issues but purely to deflect from current Russian actions.

The distraction tactic muddles causal reasoning and distorts moral heuristics – his audience is led to believe that "everyone is equally bad, so our side is no worse," which, in practice, absolves Moscow of any wrongdoing. Furthermore, Stepanov's style is replete with emotive trigger words aimed at generating hostility-- he speaks of "Western hegemony," "color revolution scenarios," "media sabotage," and "soft power infiltration." Each phrase is calculated to provoke anger or fear of an insidious foe. The psychological conditioning primes especially the patriotic segment of the audience to adopt a combative mindset. Stepanov, like his colleagues, also uses the demonization of target groups-- he shows purported Western efforts to corrupt specific segments of society, often mentioning the corruption of youth and the co-opting of journalists or minorities. For instance, he might claim that Western NGOs foster separatism among ethnic minorities or use slogans of liberalism to mislead young Russians. While we have fewer direct quotes from Stepanov's closed-door materials, his known media statements and involvement in Alter's training indicate a consistent alignment-- he reinforces the idea that Western psychological operations manufacture Russia's internal opposition and any discontent. This is evidenced by his participation in a program whose express aim is to "counter technologies of information wars and color revolutions," treating those phenomena as foreign-engineered threats. Stepanov's alignment with Kremlin propaganda is perhaps the most overt, given his appearances on Solovyov's show – a notorious platform for state-sanctioned agitprop. On that platform, he has lent his voice to everything from justifying crackdowns on independent media (framed as "fifth column" elements) to endorsing the narrative that Western governments have no real freedom of speech themselves (citing examples of Russophobic

ensorship abroad as he perceives them). In doing so, he misrepresents Western democratic institutions, suggesting that Western talk of press freedom or the rule of law is a sham. He might point to instances of social media banning Russian state outlets as "proof" that the West does not practice what it preaches – a context-stripped argument that ignores the massive differences between open democracies and Russia's state control. The false equivalence serves the Kremlin's line – it tells the Russian public, "Do not be fooled by Western promises of freedom – they are just as suppressive, if not worse." Ultimately, Stepanov functions as a force multiplier for Kremlin disinformation-- through his expert persona and high-profile media reach, he amplifies the regime's narrative that Russia is under siege by a perfidious West and extraordinary measures – from militarizing space to censoring the internet – are warranted to survive. In his hands, concepts like "soft power" become dirty words, synonymous with covert warfare, and terms like "cognitive operations" are used not to enlighten but to scare and rally the populace under the Kremlin's banner.

Synthesis-- Convergent Narratives and Influence Architecture

Taken together, the content produced by Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, and Stepanov reveals a tightly convergent narrative ecosystem. Despite their focal areas (intelligence, psychology, soft power, military), their messaging interlocks into a unified propaganda framework – one clearly orchestrated to serve the Kremlin's strategic interests. Several key patterns and shared objectives emerge--

Enemy Image of the West-- All four relentlessly manufacture an "enemy image" of Western democracies. Whether it is Romachev alleging a web of spy NGOs, Petrenko decrying fake news attacks, Yuvachev warning of cultural indoctrination, or Stepanov claiming military encirclement, the common denominator is depicting the United States and its allies as aggressive, deceitful, and bent on Russia's ruin. The demonization is no accident – it is the classic propaganda prerequisite for justifying authoritarian policies. By indoctrinating their audiences with the belief that Western institutions (free press, NGOs, elections, educational programs) are weapons, they create public tolerance – even enthusiasm – for Russia's repressive "counter-measures." In effect, the Alter Academy speakers are weaponizing the narrative of a hostile West to consolidate an enemy-centric worldview among their audience. This is cognitive warfare at scale-- instilling a siege mentality in which Western offers of partnership or values are reflexively seen as traps. Each of these figures contributes a piece to that psychological wall. The result is an influence architecture that mirrors Cold War-style demonization, updated for the era of hybrid war.

The Faculty of Fabrication

Roman Vladimirovich Romachev operates not as an educator or analyst but as a Kremlin media showpiece who twists his past affiliation with the FSB into a brand of counterfeit authority. On paper, he presents himself as the architect of Russia's first private intelligence firm. In practice, he is a serial fabricator who rebrands basic cybersecurity concepts as high-stakes espionage while inventing Western plots wholesale. His goal is not education but intimidation—convincing Russian audiences that every NGO, journalist, or international student is a threat cloaked in democratic language. He wraps his disinformation in graphs, fake comparative models, and invented Western frameworks to give conspiracy the polish of research. The result is a projection-heavy output that makes him a Kremlin propagandist first and a technical fraud second. He deceives the Russian public by selling paranoia disguised as insight, convincing citizens to fear the West while ignoring the daily information warfare waged by their government.

Anatoly Ivanovich Petrenko abuses his legacy as a psychologist not to inform but to manipulate. He is a media puppet who repurposes Soviet indoctrination under the label of cognitive defense, spouting pseudo-scientific jargon to justify censorship and surveillance. His data are not analytic findings—they are cherry-picked distortions crafted to feed the Kremlin's fantasy that Russia suffers from external psychic attacks. He conflates memes with mind control, criticism with treason, and information access with destabilization. He lies to Russian parents and teachers by telling them their children are under foreign hypnotic influence, a fiction that conveniently rationalizes the state's intrusion into education, internet usage, and thought. His lectures are not pedagogy but state-scripted obedience training for psychological warfare agents. Petrenko does not protect minds. He colonizes them.

Maxim Yuryevich Yuvachev functions as an academic mimic, parroting intelligence jargon without understanding its content, all to maintain his posture as an expert on Western cognitive operations. He is neither an analyst nor a thinker—he is a propagandist dressed in PowerPoint. His presentations are a mishmash of junk theory: lists of Western soft power programs woven into incoherent conspiracy webs that resemble strategy but amount to disinformation theater. He speaks of "American Spaces" as if they are CIA bunkers and describes democracy programs as if they are bioweapons. His use of graphs, terminology, and psychological framing is designed to impress uninformed audiences while spreading Kremlin-induced mass delusion. Yuvachev's mission is not to uncover cognitive operations but to conduct them—against his citizens. He recycles Kremlin lies with just enough academic sheen to pass off as scholarship, all while conditioning Russians to distrust education itself if it smells Western.

Alexander Yuryevich Stepanov is perhaps the most shameless of the group. His uniform may be metaphorical now, but he still marches to the orders of Kremlin broadcast editors who feed him talking points for Solovyov's nightly propaganda marathons. He uses his platform not to analyze geopolitics but to incite hatred and justify authoritarian expansion. His claims that the West militarizes space while Russia acts defensively invert every observable reality—lies crafted for a domestic audience too exhausted or intimidated to argue back. Stepanov does not inform. He incites. He adopts the posture of an expert while spouting falsehoods designed to manufacture consent for repression. His audience is not learning—they are being drilled into submission by a man who long ago traded integrity for airtime. His participation in Alter Academy is not an academic contribution but rather narrative laundering, where disinformation is repackaged as a military strategy and presented as academic truth.

Together, these men form a propaganda cartel masked as educators. They wear the robes of scholarship while performing as Kremlin loyalists, not to inform citizens but to deceive them systematically. Their alliance through Alter Academy enables them to operate with academic immunity while they disseminate lies dressed as expertise, all in service of maintaining a regime that fears truth more than it fears war.

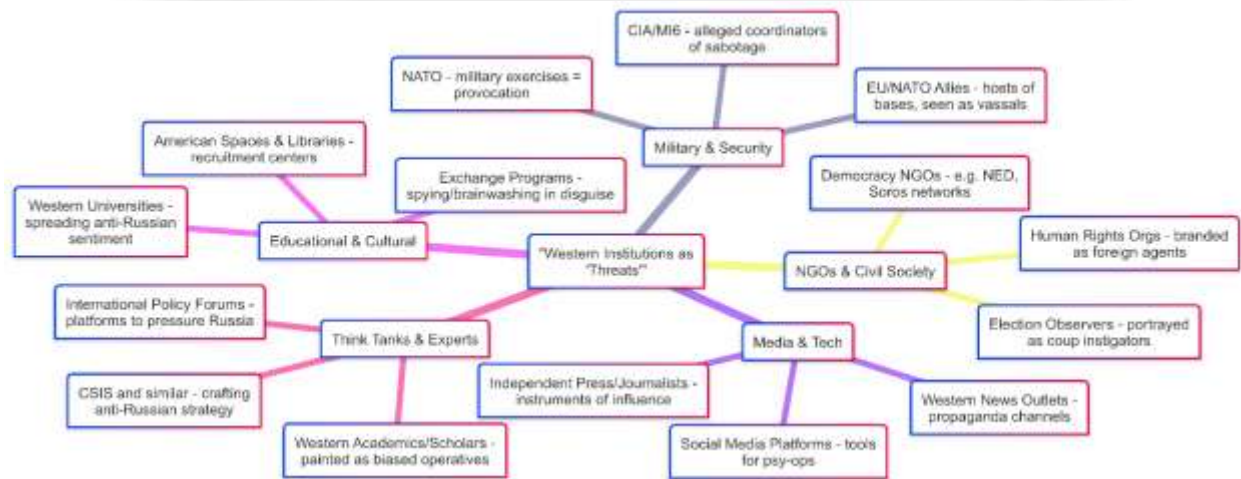
Delegitimization of Western Institutions and Ideals-- Hand-in-glove with making the West an enemy is the systematic misrepresentation and delegitimization of Western democratic norms. All four propagate the notion that concepts such as media freedom, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are mere smokescreens. They portray Western institutions as fundamentally hypocritical or coercive-- a "free press" in their telling is just Western-controlled media that attacks other governments; "democracy assistance" becomes a cover for instigating revolutions; "soft power" is equated to soft invasion. Yuvachev and Petrenko provide extensive lists of these ideals being turned into alleged weapons, ranging from teaching civic activism to being equated with training insurrectionists and from promoting government accountability to inciting anti-government sentiment. The narrative convergence serves to erode the credibility of Western models in the eyes of their target audiences (which include Russian citizens, students, and possibly allies abroad). If successful, This means that even if evidence of Western virtue or good intent is presented, the audience's cognitive schema – carefully shaped by these propagandists – will interpret it as trickery. Such distorted cognitive heuristics ("Western = false and bad, Russia = truthful and good") are exactly the aim of their influence operations. The alignment across their materials is striking — Romachev's competitive intelligence spin, Petrenko's psychology jargon, Yuvachev's political science angle, and Stepanov's military bluster — all converge on

the same message, merely couched in different lexicons to reach different segments of the audience.

Focus on Targeted Groups (Youth, Journalists, Opposition)--A clear pattern emerges in the identification of certain societal groups as key battlegrounds in the cognitive war, along with the uniform vilification of Western engagement with these groups. Youth are a primary target-- multiple of these actors obsess over young people's minds. Yuvachev describes U.S. educational and cultural programs aimed at youth as a pipeline to create pro-American activists, and Petrenko explicitly writes about "deforming the consciousness of youth" via fake news. Stepanov and Romachev likewise imply that universities and young professionals need to be "protected" from Western ideas (with Stepanov joining an academic program to do just that). The convergence suggests a shared operational goal—to immunize the next generation against Western liberal influence preemptively—effectively, to prevent the seeds of democratic thought from taking root. Another common target is journalists and media. Yuvachev's slides harp on the Western emphasis on press freedom and note how the West decries persecution of journalists – he then implies that This is weaponized rhetoric. Petrenko labels independent media reports as "fakes" and smears outlets like Dozhd or Meduza as foreign tools. Stepanov echoes that by endorsing crackdowns on "foreign agent" media on state TV. All are effectively justifying or endorsing the silencing of independent journalism under the pretext of fighting Western influence. Political opposition and civil activists form the third key target group in their narratives. "Color revolution" is a bogeyman each of them raises – Yuvachev spells out the concept that protests = Western-manufactured chaos, Petrenko's data include themes like Navalny (the opposition leader) being the subject of foreign fakes, Romachev frames domestic dissent as likely guided by foreign NGOs. Stepanov routinely calls opposition protests part of Western hybrid war. The unified narrative delegitimizes any form of internal opposition by conflating it with enemy action. In sum, the pattern is one of strategic target selection-- they concentrate on the segments of society that are crucial for either challenging authoritarian power or for generational change – the youth (future leaders), the press (information gatekeepers), and the political opposition (alternative governance) – and they smear and attack Western interaction with all three. This indicates a coherent operational goal-- to preemptively neutralize those segments as potential vectors of Western democratic influence. It is a form of "influence sanitization" – ensuring the Kremlin's narrative dominance over these groups by character-assassinating any Western narrative that might appeal to them.

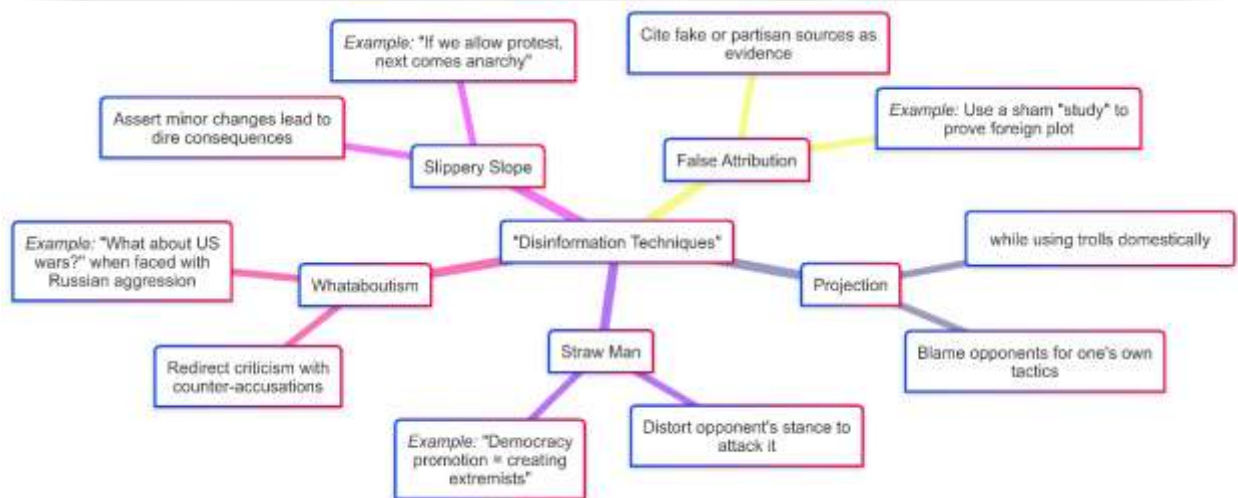
Narrative Convergence and Recycling-- There is also a notable cross-pollination of specific narratives and even data points among these individuals. They cite similar examples and buzzwords, suggesting coordination or at least drawing from a common source of Kremlin-approved talking points. For instance, the concept of "color revolution as a Western weapon"

appears in Yuvachev's and Stepanov's rhetoric almost identically. The emphasis on "American soft power institutions (American Spaces, Fulbright, NGOs) as covers for CIA work" is found in Romachev's intel framing and Yuvachev's presentation. The notion that Western media only talks about freedom to disguise its control is a theme Petrenko, Yuvachev, and Stepanov all touch on. Even data seem shared-- Petrenko's enumeration of "fakes" about "Russia – aggressor" dovetails with Stepanov's insistence that calling Russia an aggressor is a Western information campaign, not reality. The convergence is unlikely to be coincidental – it points to an underlying influence of architecture orchestrating these narratives from above. Indeed, the Alter Academy itself appears to be a hub for formalizing and disseminating these themes. The Academy's faculty (which includes all four men) delivers a curriculum explicitly about countering Western information threats. We see a seamless feedback loop—the same individuals promoting propaganda on TV or at conferences are training others in those propaganda narratives under the guise of academia, who will then disseminate them further. This suggests a deliberate strategy by Kremlin-related actors to institutionalize disinformation. Alter Academy serves as a force multiplier, taking propaganda that was previously confined to state media and embedding it into educational programs, conferences, and publications, thereby legitimizing these narratives through scholarly or professional channels. The shared participation of Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, Stepanov (and others, such as Boris Rozhin and Andrey Manoilo) in multiple forums demonstrates how tightly knit and coordinated the network is. They appear at one another's talks, reference complementary points, and reinforce the collective storyline. This is a hallmark of a controlled influence operation rather than independent voices-- the narratives are too synchronized and mutually reinforcing to be organic. Each of these propagandists covers one flank – from academia to media to military to psychology – but they all march in lockstep.



Operational Goals and "Shield of the Motherland"-- Ultimately, the shared operational goal

of their discourse is to protect and extend Kremlin power by turning off the appeal of Western democratic ideas and by rationalizing aggressive Russian information operations. Internally, they seek to delegitimize any form of dissent or Western engagement, thus shielding the regime from soft threats. Externally, they aim to confuse and discredit Western narratives on the global stage, making it harder for the international community to build pressure against Russian actions. The "Shield of the Motherland" metaphor used in their program is telling – they view lies and distortion as a protective shield, and conversely, they view truth (when inconvenient to Moscow) as a weapon wielded by the enemy. All four exhibit a willingness to go on the offensive as well —not just countering Western messages but actively trying to undermine Western institutions through influence campaigns. For instance, by asserting the West is as suppressive as Russia, they soften the ground for international acceptance of Russian narratives (i.e., "Western media claims cannot be trusted either"). The offensive aspect aligns with the mention of conducting "information operations of an offensive type" in Alter's mission. In practice, this means creating and disseminating propaganda into Western discourse, as well as into the discourse of swing audiences globally. Their concerted accusations about Western media freedom being bogus and Western democracy being a sham are intended not just for Russians but to sow doubt among third-party countries about the moral high ground of the West. It is cognitive warfare aimed at muddying truth and eroding the appeal of liberal democracy worldwide, thereby indirectly bolstering Russia's strategic position.



The individuals of the Alter Academy of Political Sciences function as an integrated cell of Kremlin influence operators, each specializing in a facet of disinformation but collectively delivering a harmonized message. They exploit psychological operations techniques – from reflexive control (preconditioning audiences to reject adversary information) to narrative inversion (portraying aggressors as victims and vice versa) – in order to manipulate

perception and behavior. Their narrative convergence on themes like "American soft power subverts nations" and "Western talk of democracy is a cover for chaos" indicates a deliberate, possibly centrally guided strategy to weaponize narratives globally. By dissecting their content, we observe a core influence architecture at work—an architecture that utilizes conferences, "academies," media appearances, and publications to disseminate propaganda in an academic guise, thereby blurring the line between genuine scholarship and state-sponsored deception. The end-state they seek is a cognitively conditioned populace (at home and in sympathetic countries) that will dismiss Western democratic ideals as hostile lies while accepting Kremlin actions – even outright aggression or domestic repression – as justified defensive moves. In exposing their methods and messages, it becomes clear that Alter Academy is less an educational institution and more a vector for Kremlin cognitive warfare, training and deploying narrative agents under the pretense of political science. The very elements they decry – manipulation, narrative weaponization, psychological influence – are the exact tools they wield, making them a case study in propaganda hypocrisy. Through a professional intelligence lens, we assess with high confidence that Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, and Stepanov are key nodes in Russia's disinformation ecosystem, instrumental in integrating traditional propaganda with the language of academic and cognitive science to enhance its persuasive impact. Their unified efforts contribute to a broader campaign to delegitimize Western institutions, manipulate the framing of civil unrest, distort cognitive heuristics in target audiences, and solidify the image of the West as an enemy – all core objectives of contemporary Kremlin information operations. The evidence presents a sophisticated and scathing picture —the Alter "Academy" is essentially an active measures factory, and these four men are among its chief engineers, tirelessly constructing the narratives that underpin Russia's psychological war on truth.

At the heart of Alter Academy's operation lies not instruction but indoctrination—a carefully structured betrayal of every student who walks through its doors believing they will gain insight into politics, strategy, or information science. The so-called faculty—Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, and Stepanov—do not educate. They engineer compliance. Their entire curriculum is built on the systematic corrosion of independent thought. They do not teach their students how to reason or question; they condition them to parrot Kremlin dogma dressed in the language of political science, psychology, and strategic theory. The goal is not academic excellence—it is ideological conversion.

Students at Alter are not just misled; they are also misled. They are mocked. The four figures who lead the program hide their contempt for the very minds they claim to shape. Every chart Yuvachev draws that links American cuisine to revolution is a punchline for internal insiders. Every time Petrenko frames democracy as psychosis, he laughs at the students who scribble

his terms into notebooks. Romachev's breathless warnings about spy librarians and Stepanov's pseudo-military declarations are not evidence of sincere belief. They are performance art designed to keep the audience dazzled while their agency is stolen. Behind closed doors, these men view their classrooms not as spaces of learning but as controlled environments where future functionaries are mentally prepared and groomed for state service.

The message is clear and humiliating. If you are a student in this academy, your value lies not in your mind but in your obedience. Your questions are threats. Your doubts are Western sabotage. Your worth depends on how well you can recycle paranoia, memorize rhetorical fallacies, and conflate academic citations with propaganda slogans. The very architecture of the school mocks its participants—walls adorned with images of patriotic defiance, while beneath that surface, the curriculum trains young Russians to surrender their judgment and accept their place as tools in a system that views them not as thinkers but as vessels for approved speech.

In that sense, the Alter Academy does not merely betray its students—it degrades them. It teaches them to reject the possibility of truth, to treat all criticism as enemy sabotage, and to fear nuance as a sign of weakness. Those who emerge from its programs are not equipped to serve their country—they are stripped of the intellectual defenses necessary to protect it. The lie is layered: not just that the West is evil, but that submission to nonsense is patriotism. The final insult is this—Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, and Stepanov do not just on their students. They laugh at them behind the curtain. In creating a generation of reactive parrots instead of independent thinkers, they turn Russian citizens into the very caricature they pretend to protect: gullible, manipulated, proud of their ignorance, and convinced that obedience is wisdom.

Wrap-Up

The comprehensive analysis confirms that the Alter Academy of Political Sciences does not function as an academic institution. It is a disinformation factory masquerading as one, weaponizing the language of scholarship to embed Kremlin propaganda into the minds of students and policy audiences. Its leadership—Romachev, Petrenko, Yuvachev, Stepanov, and Manoilo—are not educators. They are narrative agents executing an orchestrated campaign of ideological warfare that serves the political and psychological objectives of the Russian state. Their output is not research. It is narrative conditioning tailored to insulate the Kremlin from dissent, to manufacture obedience, and to discredit democratic principles before they can gain traction within Russian society or sympathetic global audiences.

Each figure operates within a defined cognitive domain—Romachev recasts civil institutions as hostile intelligence fronts; Petrenko weaponizes psychology to frame dissent as pathology; Yuvachev manipulates soft power theory to accuse civic engagement of being covert warfare; Stepanov elevates all opposition to a military threat requiring total response; Manoilo overlays them all with an architecture of reflexive control designed to manipulate decision-making through perception distortion. Together, they form a synchronized influence structure that extends beyond education into media, defense, legal justification, and foreign policy alignment.

Alter Academy's model is sophisticated and deliberate. It cloaks ideological submission in the trappings of academic credibility. It does not merely mislead students—it actively degrades their capacity to think, training them to see nuance as weakness and curiosity as disloyalty. Its instructors do not believe in the nonsense they peddle. They exploit it by embedding it into institutional outputs, such as workshops, conferences, syllabi, and panel discussions, thereby laundering Kremlin disinformation. The strategic use of pseudo-academic tools allows their propaganda to operate with reduced detection and enhanced persuasiveness.

The cumulative effect on Russian society is corrosive. Public trust in democratic values, foreign engagement, civil liberties, and critical journalism is eroded through the repetition of a core narrative that suggests all opposition is externally induced. Through this conditioning, the Kremlin achieves cognitive insulation—creating a populace primed to see Western support as sabotage and domestic dissent as treason. Internationally, these same narratives are exported through forums, partnerships, and Russian-aligned media to muddy discourse and create false equivalencies that reduce pressure on Russian authoritarian practices.

This report confirms that the Alter Academy represents a matured, weaponized evolution of Soviet-era active measures—refined, institutionalized, and embedded in Russia's intellectual infrastructure. The very function of higher learning is inverted. What should teach critical reasoning now institutionalizes paranoia. What should empower students to question now rewards conformity. In this ecosystem, facts are filtered through loyalty, and logic is rewritten to align with power.

The term "Faculty of Fabrication" encapsulates the role of these men. They fabricate knowledge, enemies, threats, and meaning. They turn democratic ideals into weapons and truth into vulnerability. They do not serve the Russian people. They exploit them. Through this academy, they train the next generation of propagandists under the pretense of strategic education. The result is a cycle of learned disinformation cloaked in the veneer of science, history, and theory. Its purpose is not to educate. Its purpose is to entrench autocracy—one mind at a time.

The challenge now lies in countering this model before it expands. Western institutions must recognize Alter Academy and its actors for what they are: psychological warfare operatives cloaked in scholarship. Recognition must be followed by exposure, attribution, and active disruption. If left unchecked, the methods honed at Alter will not remain in Russia. They will be repackaged for export and tailored for every regime that fears democracy more than it fears failure. The playbook is now written. The warning is clear. And the cost of ignoring it will be cognitive terrain lost without a shot fired.

