Russia's digital public diplomacy with the U.S. and China during 2014-2022

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Abstract

This study examines the linguistic and communicative strategies employed in Russia's public diplomacy on digital platforms with the U.S. and China from the conclusion of the 2014 Sochi Olympics till the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. During this period, Russia significantly reinforced hard-power content in its digital public diplomacy to garner support from American and Chinese audiences. Simultaneously, Ukraine-related narratives became unprecedentedly prominent compared to the pre-Sochi years. This study reveals distinct approaches tailored to the American and Chinese publics, considering the differences between their languages and societal contexts. Meanwhile, this study also aims to expose Russia's well-crafted linguistic and communicative tactics, including framing, lexical choices, language styles, and linguistic impoliteness, through in-depth analyses of the key narratives in Russia's strategic communication.

Keywords: Digital public diplomacy, hard-power content, narratives on Ukraine

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Introduction

In 2008, Russia decided to strengthen its digital public diplomacy (hereafter referred to as "DPD") to reinforce information influence abroad (President of Russia, 2008). In 2011, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter referred to as "MID"), as the primary actor of Russia's DPD, initiated direct digital communication with the American and Chinese publics through the official websites and social media accounts of Russia's diplomatic missions in the U.S. and China. Afterwards, until the end of the 2014 Sochi Olympics, MID emphasized showing Russia's soft power in its DPD content, aiming to brand Russia as a loving and peaceful state, and fabricate a democratic image of Russian leaders abroad. During that time, hard-power content was deliberately downplayed, and Ukraine-related topics were barely visible (Han, 2025). The theoretical frameworks of "authoritarian image management" proposed by Dukalskis (2021) and "spin dictatorship" proposed by Guriev and Treisman (2022) may explain the possible rationales of MID's pre-Sochi practices. The current study also draws from these theories to analyze MID's practices during the subsequent period from 2014 to 2022.

Dukalskis's theory argues that the concept of authoritarian image management is multidimensional and includes strategies in both "promotional" form (i.e., to present a favorable image of the state abroad to bolster the attractiveness, appeal, and legitimacy of the regime) and "obstructive" form (i.e., to intensify censorship, distraction, even repression if aimed at silencing critical voices, and undermine threatening ideas abroad), and targeting both "diffuse" audiences (i.e., the general public) and "specific" audiences (i.e., journalists and decision-makers). Usually, in times of peace, contemporary authoritarian regimes may rely more on the "promotional" form by emphasizing soft-power initiatives and nation branding in public diplomacy. Commonly, more "diffuse" mechanisms are deployed to convince audiences from democratic societies, while more "specific" mechanisms are likely to target autocratic states. Globally, at the beginning of the 2000s, authoritarian governments or their proxies encouraged foreign audiences to view their states as democratic by mimicking the norms of democracy and telling a good story about their countries and leaders to create a more favorable international information environment for their foreign policies, unless they faced a fierce crisis or war. Nevertheless, "promotional", "obstructive", "diffuse", and "specific" methods always co-exist; however, some of them may become more significant during a specific period.

Guriev and Treisman's theory of spin dictatorship posits that modern dictators employ both "spin" and "fear" to manipulate domestic and foreign audiences to legitimize and secure their autocratic regimes. At the beginning of the 21st century, Russian leaders began to emphasize soft power and portray themselves as democratic. Especially in the pre-Sochi

years, Russia's economic boom and Putin's high popularity enabled him to turn his governance into a spin dictatorship by using subtle methods rather than repression and threats. However, this strategy had been edging backward after the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Eventually, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 signaled Putin's complete embrace of fear.

The 2014 Sochi Olympics marked both the zenith and the end of Russia's preference for the "promotional" form of authoritarian image management, "spin" governance, and soft power in its DPD content, as Putin stated that, through the Sochi event, he successfully demonstrated to the world a new Russia, and Russia's state goal during that time had been achieved (Russian Embassy in China, 2014). Scholars like Hutchings (Hutchings et al., 2024) argue that the conclusion of the Sochi Games was the beginning of a departure from Russia's spin dictatorship, or at least that Russia started to turn towards employing fear tactics in their governance afterwards.

According to Nye's (2004) view, hard power, which means using military and economic methods to influence other nations' interests, contrasts with soft power in diplomacy. The current study intends to analyze the new dynamic of Russia's DPD after the Sochi Olympics until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, whether Russia retreated from soft-power strategies to emphasizing its hard power, or even to a wartime footing.

Since 2022, Russia has pursued a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Following the increased aggression, scholars like Lassila (2024), Snegovaya and McGlynn (2024) argue that Russia has culminated in radical wartime propaganda, and scholars like Guriev and Treisman (2022) argue that Putin has ultimately become a fear dictator. The radical DPD and "fear" governance are temporary and extreme methods to serve a short-term mission during wartime, because they are costly and unsustainable (Dukalskis, 2021; Guriev & Treisman, 2022). Thus, the current study exclusively focuses on Russia's DPD during 2014-2022.

Among Russia's overseas audiences, the Americans and the Chinese are the most crucial targets, because the U.S. and China, as two great powers, are the most consequential nations alongside Russia in global influence, where usually the U.S., as a democratic state, is Russia's biggest challenger, and China, as an authoritarian state, is Russia's strongest ally. Therefore, both deserve Russia's greatest attention when developing specific strategies for "challengers" and "allies". A comparison between the U.S. and China would be a useful reference for other democratic and authoritarian nations to understand how MID communicated with diverse foreign publics.

Research Questions

This study aims to analyze what content Russia's DPD emphasized during 2014-2022 (whether hard-power content was added and soft-power content was downplayed) and how Russia utilized strategic narratives or prominent topics to shape public opinion in the U.S. and China from the language and communication perspectives. Therefore, the research questions are:

Q1. How did MID present soft-power content, hard-power content, and the most prominent narratives during 2014-2022?

Q2. How did MID present different content to American and Chinese audiences by using tailored linguistic and communicative tactics?

Data and Methods

Before moving to data selection, it's pivotal to explain why MID is the primary actor of Russia's DPD and what the similarities and differences are between MID and Russian state media. In Russia, MID is the Kremlin's mouthpiece and the authoritative executor of the state's foreign policies. Before 2011, MID used Russian state media as proxies to conduct DPD with the U.S. and China, allowing MID to stay behind the scenes. However, since 2011, MID has been independently and directly implementing Russia's DPD through the official social media channels and the official websites of Russia's diplomatic missions in the U.S. and China. Although MID and Russian state media use similar digital platforms and are controlled by the same government, the latter struggles with its role between "Russia's public diplomacy tool" and "global mainstream broadcaster" periodically (Hutchings et al., 2024), and endeavors to report broader newsworthy topics across the world, whereas the former usually adheres to its own gatekeeping criteria (White, 1950) for content selection, which only serves Russia's state objectives. For instance, Russian state media actively reported on domestic opposition demonstrations in 2012 and the Euromaidan protests in 2013 when Russian diplomatic missions in the U.S. and China largely ignored these events in their digital content. Due to these reasons, MID is considered the primary actor of Russia's DPD, while Russian state media perform as extended actors. Nevertheless, MID and Russian state media always cooperate closely to win over American and Chinese audiences by sharing content and advertising each other. In language and communication studies, Russian state media usually receive great attention and are thoroughly analyzed by scholars. However, this study focuses on MID.

This study is conducted in the EU and is subject to EU regulations. Therefore, following the ethical approvals, the research only utilizes data publicly accessible from the EU as of September 30, 2023. The available data comprise digital content generated by MID's Information and Press Department on the Facebook channels of the Russian consulate in San Francisco and the Russian embassy in the U.S. (5,851 posts), the website of the Russian embassy in the U.S. (366 articles), the Weibo channel of the Russian embassy in China (3,601 posts and articles), and the website of the Russian embassy in China (176 articles) between February 24, 2014 and February 23, 2022, i.e. after the conclusion of the Sochi Olympics until the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian War. Before data collection, MID and third parties had removed some content, and the EU regulations had slightly restricted full access. Removed content and content not publicly accessible are excluded from this research due to compliance, legal, and technical reasons. Additionally, all data from Facebook, Weibo, and Russian embassies' websites respectively comply with U.S., Chinese, and Russian media regulations, given that their servers are located in these three countries. The author of this article has manually analyzed all data in English, Chinese, and Russian. The English translation of Chinese-language and Russian-language data is provided by the author of this article, who has previously received a master's degree in Translation studies and has experience practicing English-Russian-Chinese translation for diplomatic missions and international organizations.

This study focuses on the language and communication aspects of Russia's DPD content. Therefore, three methods are employed to analyze the data: a) the conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) aims to compare the categories and detect strategic topics; b) the frame analysis (McCombs et al., 2014; McCombs & Shaw, 1972) aims to outline the scope and emphases of each strategic narrative; c) the discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1988) aims to reveal the most prominent linguistic devices and tactics.

To address Q1, two methods are utilized:

The conventional content analysis is used to reveal MID's preference between soft-power and hard-power content, and to find thematic emphases during 2014-2022. The analysis of the current dataset utilizes an existing codebook by Han (2025), which is used in his research on Russia's pre-Sochi DPD. Han's codebook is designed to categorize MID's content and compare their dynamics over different periods. On close reading of the research data, seven categories are derived (Humanities, Sports, Politics, Military, Economy, Consular issues, and Else). Content in categories "Humanities" (this category includes narratives on arts, history, tourism, and education), "Sports" (this category is only temporally significant during the pre-Sochi period), and "Politics" fully belongs to soft-power content. In contrast, content in the category "Military" fully belongs to hard-power content. Content in the category "Economy" may relate to both soft-power and hard-power (however, the economic sanction-related

narrative, which is a part of hard-power content, became significant only since 2014). Content in the category "Consular issues" pertains to MID's consular services through its digital channels, and cannot be considered as soft-power or hard-power content. Content in the category "Else" includes everything that cannot be related to the six categories above, for example, it covers disaster alarms and partially deleted content. In this study, the author has manually calculated the ratio of each category and topic in MID's digital content according to a detailed codebook (see Supplemental File 1). Additionally, to show a long-term roadmap of MID's strategic choices between soft-power content and hard-power content over different periods, the author of this article combines some findings from Han's (2025) research on the pre-Sochi period, making a comparison with the post-Sochi period.

The frame analysis is used to dig into MID's strategic narratives. This study employs an in-depth analysis of MID's most frequently discussed topics and countries to highlight Russia's strategic thematic emphases during the period and to reveal how they were intentionally presented to the Americans and the Chinese through the Kremlin's lens. The analysis also aims to reflect the potential rationales for why Russia selected them for its strategic communication with the two target nations, and how they were engineered to serve Russia's state objectives.

To address Q2, discourse analysis is employed to examine MID's linguistic devices and tactics in its DPD content, such as lexical choices, stylistic features, and linguistic impoliteness, especially given that styles are deliberate choices of the text writer among optional variations in discourse to demonstrate familiarity with the target audiences (for example, to employ colloquial expression) and to enhance speech acts (van Dijk, 1988), and that the language impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996) can be seen as a strategic tool of violating harmonious communicative norms in diplomatic discourse (for example, to use insults and slurs) (Taylor, 2011).

During 2014-2022, MID enhanced Russian-language content in its U.S.-oriented content, making 51% of the posts written in Russian or bilingual. Such an arrangement aligned with Russia's state strategy to weaponize the Russian language since 2014 (President of Russia, 2014), aiming to cultivate transnational identity bonds among Russophone audiences and legitimize Russian influence abroad (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2017). Therefore, Anglophone and Russophone U.S.-oriented content are analyzed separately in this study.

Findings

Emphasized categories in MID's content

According to Nye (2004), soft power covers non-coercive political values, political policies, and culture. Therefore, this study creates three categories to group MID's soft-power content: "Politics", "Humanities", and "Sports". Whereas "Military" and "Economy" (particularly since 2014, sanction-related topics have become prominent in "Economy") belong to hard-power content.

Table 1. The relative percentage of topical categories in MID's U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content during 2011-2014 and 2014-2022

Topical categories:	2011−2014		2014−2022		
	U.S.	China	U.S. in English	U.S. in Russian	China
Humanities	52%	28%	27%	23%	41%
Sports	24%	29%	4%	4%	3%
Politics	18%	32%	40%	39%	31%
Military	1%	4%	21%	19%	16%
Economy	5%	5%	7%	4%	8%
Consular issues	≈0%	2%	1%	4%	≈0%
Else	≈0%	≈0%	≈0%	7%	1%

Table 1 illustrates the relative percentage of different topical categories in MID's U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content before and after the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Post-Sochi, MID significantly raised hard-power content, with "Military" topics increasing from 1% to 21%/19% in English-language and Russian-language U.S.-oriented content, and 4% to 16% in China-oriented content. In addition, the "Economy" group contained a significant number of sanction-related topics (3% of both English-language and Russian-language in the U.S. meanwhile 2% in China), and the "Politics" group included 1% of MID's U.S.-oriented content on the shutdown of Russian diplomatic missions in the U.S. and eviction of Russian diplomats from the U.S. in both English and Russian. Overall, hard power content in the U.S. exceeded 26%/22% of English-language and Russian-language digital content (more than 22 times the pre-Sochi amount), while in China it reached 18% (over 4 times the pre-Sochi amount).

In contrast, "Sports" content, the biggest weapon of Russia's pre-Sochi DPD, declined sharply after the end of the Sochi Olympics. Although Russia hosted other mega sports events in the post-Sochi years, such as the 2018 FIFA and the 2019 Universiade, MID significantly reduced its use of those events to brand Russia to the world. Even in China, MID ceased exploiting the Olympic fever of the Chinese public to evoke nationalism, regardless of Beijing's role as the host of the 2022 Olympics. After 2014, MID substantially dropped sports content (24% to 4% in the U.S. and 29% to 3% in China). Therefore, sports-washing, as the biggest component of Russia's soft power in the pre-Sochi years (Boykoff, 2022), considerably diminished.

Among soft-power content, MID reinforced "Politics" and reduced "Humanities" to target the American public, aiming to highlight Russia's political positions during wartime. Compared to the pre-Sochi years, MID's U.S.-oriented narratives became bolder and more confrontational, no longer avoiding political conflict and disputes, and content on Russo-American historical ties and Russian culture became almost nonexistent. Meanwhile, MID began to consistently criticize Russophobic sentiments in the U.S.

Conversely, MID did not highlight Russophobia in its China-oriented content, possibly seeing shared political standpoints and the nostalgia for the Soviet time among the Chinese public. After Sochi, MID continuously sought to strengthen Russia's influence in China through cultural, historical, and educational narratives. During the pre-Sochi years, MID regularly conducted surveys on Weibo, asking Chinese audiences what content from Russia they would like to read in the future (meanwhile, such surveys were absent in U.S.-oriented content). According to feedback from Chinese audiences, content on "Humanities" was always the most favorite theme in China. It may explain why MID intensified "Humanities" in China even during the post-Sochi years to better consolidate its Chinese readership.

Since 2014, MID has boosted Russian-language content to influence Russophone audiences in the U.S. Notably, 6% of MID's Russophone content conveyed emergency alerts, disaster warnings, and help information to serve Russian-speaking diasporas in the U.S. This tactic increased the attractiveness of MID's channels among Russian speakers in the U.S. and created a sense of belonging through the shared language.

Prominent topics in MID's content

Table 2 below shows MID's top six topics in the U.S. and China during 2014–2022. Commonly, authoritarian image management comes in the form of strategic narratives (Dukalskis, 2021), in which the state describes its stances, values, goals, and positions of itself and other nations (Roselle et al., 2014) through frequently highlighted topics. Topics that received

MID's highest exposure can be considered Russia's strategic narratives. MID, as Russia's primary actor of public diplomacy rather than a neutral mainstream media, is supposed to promote the most consequential topics to serve Russia's state objectives. Hereunder, analyses of those listed topics from the perspectives of communication and language aim to reveal how MID framed the prominent issues through the Kremlin's lens to target American and Chinese audiences.

Table 2. MID's top six topics in the U.S. and China, and their percentage of MID's total content during 2014-2022

U.S. in English		U.S. in Russian		China	
Topic	%	Topic	%	Topic	%
WWII	11%	WWII	10%	WWII	10%
Sanctions	3%	COVID	3%	COVID	4%
COVID	3%	Sanctions	3%	Crimea	4%
Crimea	2%	Donbas	1%	Sanctions	2%
Shutdown of Russian consulates and eviction of Russian diplomats	1%	Crimea	1%	Donbas	2%
Donbas	1%	Shutdown of Russian consulates and eviction of Russian diplomats	1%	Sochi	2%

World War II (WWII)

Scholars like Snegovaya and McGlynn (2024) note that Russia's foreign policies shifted from the depoliticized model to progressing ideologization since Putin's third presidential term, and that a notable shift toward active indoctrination began in the mid-2010s. Domestically, Russia deployed state propaganda in three key categories: patriotism, national culture, and respect for traditional values (Laruelle, 2016), while globally, Russia sought alliances from other countries. Against this background, narratives on WWII, particularly on the Great Patriotic War of the USSR, became the most convenient tool for Russia's DPD, helping MID to articulate multiple political rationales and stances, including "Russia as a great power", "historical truth", "anti-Westernism", "unification of ethnically diverse nations" and "the war against Ukraine as a continuation of the fight against Nazism" (Snegovaya & McGlynn, 2024). WWII emerged as the only topic exceeding 10% of MID's total content in all three languages, being used as a tool to manifest strong patriotic instincts and war experience in the U.S. and China.

Since 2012, the Russian government has cultivated a Great Patriotic War cult in memory studies (McGlynn et al., 2022) to shape national memories from the Kremlin's perspective. It has become central to the Russian state's definition of patriotism. As the USSR's successor, Russia's status as a "great power" has relied on the legacy of the 1945 Great Victory (Snegovaya & McGlynn, 2024). Therefore, MID in its DPD content highlighted Russia's role as a global liberator and peacemaker that defeated the Axis Powers. MID constantly challenged alternative narratives of "historical truth", denouncing Baltic, Polish, and Ukrainian perspectives as "Neo-Nazism" or "Western-based Nazism". In both U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content, MID glorified Russia's WWII contributions and repudiated Eastern European historical narratives, claiming that the U.S. stood on the righteous side during WWII alongside Russia, but nowadays had become an accomplice in fostering "wrong history" and "neo-Nazism". Furthermore, during 2014-2022, MID utilized "hyper-exploitation of the 1945 Victory" (McGlynn et al., 2022), which involved the constant making present of the war experience and extended beyond the Great Victory (McGlynn et al., 2022), so that Russia could battle with "Neo-Nazism" and "Western-based Nazism" in Ukraine today (Snegovaya & McGlynn, 2024). In 2014, MID conflated Russian aggression in Donbas with the Great Patriotic War and encouraged people to actively "perform" this conflation (McGlynn, 2018). Deliberately conflating a historical narrative with present-day politics (McGlynn et al., 2022) has become a hallmark of Russia's post-Sochi DPD.

Moreover, MID repeatedly emphasized that the Great Patriotic War was not only about the survival of the Russian people but also about a moral duty to other nations to fight against Nazism under Russia's leadership. This framing reflected Russia's aim to unite different ethnic groups in fighting against any form of "Nazism" in history, in the national memory, and especially in the present.

However, MID's portrayal of WWII slightly differed between U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content. In the U.S., MID emphasized the Elbe Day and U.S.-USSR wartime alliance, creating a narrative of shared victory. This framing reflected Russia's agenda to mobilize American veterans and call on the American public to protect WWII's legacy together with Russia. However, after the U.S. publicly endorsed Ukraine, MID's narrative turned hostile, accusing the U.S. of enabling "neo-Nazis," claiming Russia's interpretation of WWII as the only true one, and highlighting that many foreign countries stood with Russia. In China, MID's narratives on WWII remained amicable, emphasizing Russia's indispensable involvement in liberating China from Japanese occupation and encouraging China to align its views with Russia as joint victors of WWII.

Sanctions

MID devoted 3% of U.S.-oriented content and 2% of China-oriented content to discussing Western sanctions. In both cases, MID framed the sanctions as a manifestation of Russophobia, deflecting attention from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, MID utilized this quintessential hard-power topic to project Russia's resilience.

In the U.S., MID tenaciously framed the Western sanctions from a perspective that, due to a continuation of Cold War-era Russophobia, the American government always tended to weaken Russia through sanctions, driven by the ideologies of the Cold War and unipolar hegemony. MID argued that sanctions were not a response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine but a pretext for undermining Russia. By portraying the American government as "intent on punishing Russia under false pretenses" and the Russian government as "a counterbalance to reshape the old global order", MID sought to mobilize the American public against Western cultural colonization and neoliberal hegemony. MID also alleged that Russia was not as weak as the West assumed and that sanctions could backfire, harming the U.S. economy more than Russia's. The overall tone of MID's narratives on sanctions was assertive, frequently incorporating language impoliteness.

In China, MID aligned its messaging with Beijing's narratives on the China-U.S. trade war, which began in 2018 and escalated with U.S. sanctions in 2020. MID emphasized the "unfairness" of the American actions, stoking anti-Western sentiment among the Chinese public. Meanwhile, Western sanctions were framed as an opportunity to strengthen China-Russia economic cooperation, increase Chinese investment in Russia, and jointly resist American hegemony. MID employed chauvinistic rhetoric to state that no country can isolate any great power like Russia or China, and that Moscow and Beijing will jointly build a "neo-political" and "de-Americanized" world.

Shutdown of Russian consulates and eviction of Russian diplomats from the U.S.

The topics of the shutdown of Russian consulates and eviction of Russian diplomats from the U.S. fall under the hard-power category. In these strategic narratives, MID employed "obstructive" tactics to blame the U.S. government for its unilateral and destructive decisions, stating that Russia had not sought to cut diplomatic ties and that the U.S. had violated international principles, causing inconvenience for the American public and Russian diasporas in accessing proper consular services.

Linguistically, the narratives created a strong portrayal of the Kremlin as a victim to garner empathy from the American public, avoiding overly hostile or impolite language in communication. Sentimental language was a hallmark of these narratives. Particularly in

Russian-language content, MID frequently used emotional appeals, highlighting specific cases, figures, and events imbued with ideological significance. These elements often carried additional semiotic meanings, such as America's disrespect for the Russian national flag or mistreatment of Russian children in the U.S., to foster strong emotions among Russophone audiences. Using emotive language as a source of symbolic added value to fulfill Russia's instrumental purpose and objectives (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2017) was one of MID's well-crafted linguistic tactics from 2014 to 2022.

COVID

MID generated more COVID-related content in China (ranking second among the content topics) than in the U.S., reflecting China's emphasis on the issue. In U.S.-oriented content, MID framed the narratives through highlighting the chaotic situation in American society, Russia's concern over the health of Russian prisoners in U.S. custody, Russia's humanitarian aid to the U.S., and the superior performance of the Russian vaccine. These narratives frequently pointed to the failures in U.S. pandemic management and questioned the country's commitment to human rights.

In contrast, MID's COVID-related narratives in China avoided discussions of human rights. Instead, they stressed the victimhood and achievements of the Chinese government.

Annexation of Crimea and war in Donbas

These two topics were pivotal because they directly manifested Russia's post-Sochi DPD foci: hard-power content and Ukraine-related content.

In both the U.S. and China, MID's narratives sought to justify the Annexation of Crimea as an expression of the Crimean people's free will, and to fabricate Russia's "peacemaking efforts" in Donbas as a moral obligation to protect Russian speakers abroad and combat neo-Nazism. In addition, MID emphatically portrayed Crimea's prosperity under Russia's governance to overseas audiences.

MID more often framed the narratives of the Crimean region from the economic perspective in its China-oriented content than in its U.S.-oriented content to attract Chinese investment and highlight the trade benefits from the upgrade of China-Russia relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for the new era" characterized by the elevated notion of good neighborliness and win-win cooperation (Xinhua News Agency, 2019). This framing aligned with China's economic and geopolitical interests; meanwhile, it reflected Russia's aim to benefit the region's financial situation.

Overall, the narratives of Crimea and Donbas received greater exposure in MID's China-oriented content than in its U.S.-oriented content. Meanwhile, MID's China-oriented content was largely cited and reposted by Chinese state media and internet celebrities, suggesting that MID targeted both "diffuse" and "specific" audiences in China.

Countries discussed in MID's content

Clunan (2014) argues that a state always cares about how to position other states because it determines who can participate in shaping international orders. Some countries received heightened attention in MID's content during different periods to serve Russia's DPD objectives. Table 3 below lists countries accounting for over 1% of MID's total content targeting American and Chinese audiences in three languages during the pre- and post-Sochi periods.

Table 3. Key countries in MID's U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content, and their percentage of MID's total content during 2011-2014 and 2014-2022

2011-2014 (Country, %)				2014-2022 (Country, %)					
U.S.		**China**		**U.S. in English**		**U.S. in Russian**		**China**	
U.S.	72%	China	25%	U.S.	56%	U.S.	57%	China	37%
Syria	13%	Syria	16%	Syria	8%	Ukraine	6%	Ukraine	12%
Iran	6%	U.S.	8%	Ukraine	7%	Syria	3%	U.S.	7%
North Korea	3%	Ukraine	5%	China	3%	Afghanistan	2%	Syria	3%
		Iran	3%	North Korea	2%	China	2%	EU	1%
		North Korea	2%	Afghanistan	2%	North Korea	2%		
		Japan	2%						
		Georgia	1%						

Compared to the pre-Sochi years, MID diversified its discussion of other countries in its U.S.-oriented content, while narrowing the range in China-oriented content. In U.S.-oriented content, the discourse about the U.S. was still dominating; however, its share dropped post-Sochi. Meanwhile, Ukraine and China started to receive attention. In China-oriented content, MID shifted from presenting a broad global perspective on third countries pre-Sochi to focusing on a few key countries such as Ukraine (rising from fifth to second place, above U.S.-related topics) post-Sochi. Syria-related topics decreased fivefold but still maintained a notable presence. The pre-Sochi key actors like Iran, North Korea, Japan, and Georgia

disappeared from the Chinese list. Hereunder, an in-depth analysis aims to reveal how MID framed narratives on those most discussed countries from the communication and language perspectives.

Ukraine

In MID's China-oriented content, Ukraine-related topics appeared only four times before the Sochi Olympics. The first time was on December 20, 2013 (less than three months before the Russo-Ukrainian War): the Russian embassy in China posted on Weibo, stating that "Ukraine is our brotherly country, and Russia is not against its alignment with the EU". In stark contrast, immediately after the Sochi Olympics, Ukraine-related narratives became hostile, repeatedly accusing Ukraine of owing $1.62 billion to Russia, mistreating Russian-speaking citizens, and mismanaging nuclear facilities. Moreover, Ukraine was framed as being manipulated by U.S.-led Western countries. During 2014-2022, Ukraine became the most discussed country (12%), surpassing the U.S. and Syria (these two were more significant in MID's pre-Sochi content).

In U.S.-oriented English-language content, narratives on Ukraine were initially absent until April 22, 2014, and in Russian-language content until December 7, 2014. However, soon afterwards, Ukraine became the most frequently mentioned foreign country in Russian-language content for the American public (6%), surpassing Syria, while accounting for 7% of English-language content, slightly under Syria.

Across all three languages, MID chose deregulatory vocabulary and employed an emotionally charged language style to describe the Ukrainian government as a "U.S. puppet". Linguistic impoliteness was aggressively used in Ukraine-related narratives to provoke the American and Chinese publics.

In U.S.-oriented content, despite MID's pre-Sochi emphasis on Russo-American historical ties and good memories, due to the increasing number of Ukraine-related narratives, MID shifted friendly U.S.-related narratives to hostile accusations against America's role in Ukrainian issues, with dramatic changes in lexical preferences and language styles.

In China-oriented content, the stylistic change was minor, and the extent of impoliteness remained at the pre-Sochi level. However, MID framed Ukrainian issues by highlighting China's similar stance, Russia's involvement in the Ukrainian crisis as resistance to American hegemony, and the nature of U.S. sanctions on Russia as a cover for America's fear, enmity, and Russophobia instead of caring for Ukraine and justice.

The U.S. and China

Post-Sochi, MID elevated China's visibility in its U.S.-oriented content, implying China as Russia's strongest ally against the U.S.

In China-oriented content, MID intended to provoke anti-American sentiment by criticizing its trade war with China, its sanctions on China, its role in Ukraine and worldwide Color revolutions, its hegemonic policies, its "pro-Nazi" stance, and its poor performance in human rights. MID employed more "obstructive" tactics and targeted both "diffuse" and "specific" audiences. Impolite language was frequently used by MID in the U.S.-related narratives.

Syria

During 2014-2022, Syria-related topics declined in Chinese- and Russian-language content, reflecting that MID prioritized Ukraine for geopolitical messaging. However, Syria remained the second most-discussed country in U.S.-oriented English-language content after the U.S.

In September 2015, Russia launched a military intervention in the Syrian Civil War and helped Assad maintain his rule in the country. MID, in its English-language narratives, framed the Syrian opposition as "terrorists" and challenged the Western world regarding its stance on "anti-terrorism", which became a weapon to brand Russia as a global peacemaker and fighter against terrorism.

Othering (Spivak, 1985) became MID's commonly used linguistic tactic of oppositional identity in Syria-related topics. Post-Sochi, MID used the term "we", which represents a good, positive, and righteous side (Fairclough, 1995), to address Assad's administration and China. In contrast, MID used "they", which implies uncertainty and threats (Wodak, 2015), to address the U.S. However, in the pre-Sochi U.S.-oriented content, MID did not always address the U.S. as "they", and sometimes used "we" to emphasize the joint effort to solve Syrian issues.

Important figures in MID's content

Table 4 shows the top three figures in MID's U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content during 2011-2014 and 2014-2022.

In MID's content, Russian leaders always received the highest exposure among all famous figures. During 2014-2022, Putin, Lavrov, and Zakharova were more frequently mentioned than during the pre-Sochi period. Fabricating leaders' popularity abroad is one of the most important elements of spin dictatorship (Guriev & Treisman, 2022). Pre-Sochi, this

tactic primarily involved portraying Russian leaders as strong, competent, and charismatic to garner followership from abroad. However, post-Sochi, the propaganda conveying the dictator's power and resolve gradually intensified (Guriev & Treisman, 2022). Russian leaders became more likely to communicate with target audiences directly through MID's channels to cultivate foreign endorsements. They turned their openness into a weapon (Guriev & Treisman, 2022) to manipulate political narratives from "personal" perspectives, which attracted anti-Western populists and proponents of conventional values.

Table 4. The top three figures in MID's U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content and their percentage of MID's total content during 2011-2014 and 2014-2022

Period	Country (language)	Name, %		Name, %		Name, %	
2011–2014	U.S.	Putin	10%	Lavrov	4%	Medvedev	1%
	China	Putin	10%	Lavrov	4%	Medvedev	2%
2014–2022	U.S. in English	Putin	17%	Lavrov	10%	Zakharova	5%
	U.S. in Russian	Putin	12%	Lavrov	9%	Zakharova	4%
	China	Putin	11%	Lavrov	6%	Zakharova	1%

Compared to the pre-Sochi years, Russian leaders during 2014-2022 chose more colloquial vocabulary to address both American and Chinese audiences, and employed more "obstructive" tactics in their speeches, such as linguistic impoliteness, including using face-attacking communication, sarcasm, shaming, and derogatory epithets.

In U.S.-oriented content, MID shifted its pre-Sochi linguistic tactics of using humor and light-heartedness to using aggressive and hardline communication. Post-Sochi, Russian leaders were inclined to promote their distinctive views and strong positions on domestic and global issues with fewer disguises.

In China-oriented content, MID strengthened tactics of making Russian leaders likable by exhibiting their charisma and talent; therefore, the narratives often evolved into a personality cult and developed into worship (Guriev & Treisman, 2022).

Regarding the language style, the most prominent change was evident in Zakharova's practices. Her rise was particularly notable (ranked third post-Sochi, overtaking Medvedev). Before she was promoted from the Deputy Head of MID's Department of Information and Press to MID's spokesperson in 2015, she rarely appeared in MID's U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content. However, in the new position, Zakharova has earned a massive readership from overseas audiences through her unusual diplomatic communication. Compared to Russia's

diplomatic or semi-diplomatic tones before 2014, she employed a jeering tone, commonly used by trolls on social media (Zvereva, 2025). Her approach incorporated sarcasm as a form of mock politeness. Scholars like Zvereva (2025) note that, as the tone of discussing controversial and complex issues, Zakharova's sarcasm replaced arguments and analysis in Russia's diplomatic discourses and mitigated the risk of Russian diplomats being held accountable for the subtext. Her language style included using colloquial communication, slang, proverbs, and extralinguistic elements to inflate audiences' emotions, accustom them to ignore fact-checking, and heighten aggression toward opponents. Furthermore, Zvereva (2025) argues that the rudeness and impoliteness in Russian leaders' language and communication helped them to spread anti-democratic sentiment, win over right-wing populists, and pave the way for the Russo-Ukrainian War by exaggerating anger and anxiety, humiliating opponents, and fabricating dangers from abroad (Guriev & Treisman, 2020).

Notably, Zakharova contributed less to Chinese-language content (1% in China) compared to English and Russian (5%/4% in the U.S.), even though she can speak Chinese, making the Chinese public easier to approach for her than for other Russian leaders. Possible reasons are that she got more productive English-language and Russian-language supporting teams than the Chinese-language supporting team, or cultural and linguistic barriers limited her reach to present Russian sarcasm in Chinese, or Chinese audiences were more customized to perceiving official narratives in diplomatic tones (Norris, 2008).

Overall, impoliteness became a defining characteristic of Russia's DPD, especially during the post-Sochi period, accompanied by the broader mediatization of Russian diplomacy and the global rise of right-wing populism (Zvereva, 2025). Hence, post-Sochi, Russian leaders normalized emotional, confrontational, and provocative communication styles with the American and Chinese publics, moving further away from detached and objective diplomatic narration. However, the increase in language impoliteness was more evident in U.S.-oriented content post-Sochi, in contrast to the higher occurrence of impoliteness found in China-oriented content pre-Sochi.

Posting languages

Post-Sochi, MID's Russian-language content in the U.S. rose from 31% to 51%, reflecting Russia's state objective from 2014 onward (President of Russia, 2014) to unify Russian speakers from different countries (Laruelle, 2016) and protect Russian speakers abroad (Snegovaya & McGlynn, 2024). MID leveraged Facebook's global reach to attract followers from diverse language backgrounds, with 17% of U.S.-oriented content bilingual in English and Russian. These bilingual posts varied in styles, sources, references, and external redirections to target distinct audience groups. Moreover, many important China-related posts were trilingual,

adding the Chinese language. English-language content often included more impoliteness to engage emotionally-driven audiences and more narratives on Syrian issues to propagate Russia's global geopolitical views. Meanwhile, Russian-language content more emphasized Ukraine-related topics, possibly considering that Russophone audiences in the U.S. could be more concerned and emotionally attached to Ukraine.

MID's approach in China remained unchanged compared to the pre-Sochi period: MID only published Chinese-language content on Weibo to target Sinophone audiences. This decision may reflect China's media regulations at the time: Western mainstream media and social media platforms were banned, and Weibo became the dominant Chinese-language social media platform to target Chinese speakers. Meanwhile, Russian state media and social media platforms could operate in China, directly serving Chinese Russophone audiences.

Reposts

Between 2014 and 2022, Russia's diplomatic missions in the U.S. and China conveyed 515 English-language reposts, 272 Russian-language reposts, and 642 Chinese-language reposts from external content providers. These reposts maintained similar language styles and political angles to MID's original content, effectively serving Russia's diplomatic objectives. Tables 5 & 6 show the sources of MID's reposts during different periods in the U.S. and China.

Table 5. Sources of the reposts in MID's U.S.-oriented content during 2011-2014 and 2014-2022, and their percentage of MID's total reposting content

Reposts in the U.S.					
2011-2014		**2014-2022 in English**		**2014-2022 in Russian**	
From American sources	69%	From American sources	23%	From American sources	21%
From Russian sources	29%	From Russian sources	70%	From Russian sources	79%
incl.: RT	10%	incl.: Ministry of Defence	8%	incl.: Ministry of Defence	15%
Russian President Office	7%	Russia Beyond	1%	Russia Beyond	1%
Russia Beyond	5%			RT	1%
From other sources	2%	From other sources	7%	From other sources	0%

Pre-Sochi, MID emphasized content on sports, culture, and Russo-American historical ties by actively reposting from American media. This strategy was probably designed to make the content more acceptable to the American public so that MID could attract a greater followership by building rapport. Post-Sochi, MID boosted hard-power content, reducing reposts from American sources (69% to 23%/21%), possibly due to the U.S. media's different

stances on MID's hard-power narratives. Meanwhile, MID increased reposts from Russian state media and organizations (29% to 70%/79%), because their posts usually endorsed and enriched MID's content to serve Russia's diplomatic objectives. Russia's Ministry of Defence became the largest contributor to reposted content, highlighting hard-power narratives, such as wars and sanctions, and exhibiting Russia's wartime footing.

Table 6. Sources of MID's reposts in China-oriented content during 2011−2014 and 2014−2022, and their percentage of MID's total reposting content

Reposts in China			
2011-2014		**2014-2022**	
From Chinese sources	8%	From Chinese sources	23%
From Russian sources	92%	From Russian sources	77%
incl.: RT	63%	incl.: Sputnik	60%
RIA Novosti	15%	Russia Beyond	13%
Sputnik	10%	RIA Novosti	2%
Russia Beyond	4%	ITAR-TASS	1%
		RT	1%

Post-Sochi, the volume of reposts from Chinese sources increased significantly (8% to 23%), reflecting enhanced cooperation between Russian and Chinese state media from 2015 onward (Zhang & Ren, 2016). This collaboration and similar political stances between Russia and China allowed MID to leverage Chinese media outlets to present the Kremlin's narratives.

Notably, reposts from RT ("Russia Today") declined in both countries; however, it was possibly due to different reasons. In the U.S., RT was accused of interfering in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, and after that, RT was restricted by Twitter and Facebook (RFE/RL, 2019; Wong, 2017), making it impossible for MID to directly repost from RT. In China, a Weibo post of the Russian embassy in China on June 27, 2015 announced that RT has established a strategic partnership with China Central Television, enabling RT's content to be disseminated through Chinese media outlets. It may be a possible reason why MID subsequently increased reposts from Chinese media while decreasing reposts from RT.

In summary, the six findings above show what content MID emphasized to American and Chinese audiences, as well as how Russian leaders implemented strategic narratives since the conclusion of the 2014 Sochi Olympics till the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian War. The findings also reveal the dissimilarities between U.S.-oriented and China-oriented content, and explain how different linguistic and communicative tactics served Russia's DPD objectives during that period. Finding 1, through a conventional content analysis, aims to categorize MID's content to demonstrate the dynamic change between soft-power and hard-power content over

time, and to highlight MID's emphasis of specific topical categories during each period. Findings 2 and 3, through a frame analysis, aim to outline the most prominent narratives, including the most frequently deployed topics and the most discussed countries, and, through a discourse analysis, to point out what language features and tactics were used by MID to adapt to its wartime needs. The in-depth analysis of each strategic narrative portrays how MID framed the discourse from the Kremlin's perspective to achieve Russia's state goals, and suggests possible reasons why MID utilized them to target specific audiences. Finding 4 lists the most influential Russian leaders in MID's DPD content and discusses how they used personalized linguistic tools to communicate with the American and Chinese publics, and how they intended to manipulate audiences through language aggression and mockery in the early years of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Finding 5 discusses the change in MID's language policy during the period: the Russian language became weaponized to attract overseas Russophone audiences; however, that was not the case in China due to the specific media restriction in the country. Finding 6 maps MID's supporting sources across two periods: post-Sochi, due to the opposite opinions with U.S. media and the deep collaboration with Chinese media regarding Russia's hard-power content and Ukraine-related narratives, MID ceased reposting from American sources and increased reposting from Chinese sources.

Conclusion

Guriev and Treisman's theory of spin dictatorship (2022) argues that the Russian regime had to adapt to new challenges since 2014, such as war, sanctions, and economic instabilities. To sustain its autocratic influences (Guriev & Treisman, 2020), Russia bolstered its overseas propaganda to co-opt anti-Western allies and shape international narratives through offensive capabilities in a more "obstructive" form by enhancing hard-power content, confrontation with opponents, and demonization of Ukraine and the West. Meanwhile, Russia aimed to project Russian leaders' competence through intensified media exposure (Snegovaya & McGlynn, 2024). Scholars like Drozdova and Robinson (2019) note that Putin's leadership became more ideological after 2012, and Matthews (2014) argues that after 2014, Putin shifted from a pragmatic focus on Russia's stability and prosperity to an ideologically motivated agenda, regardless of the cost to Russia's economic well-being.

In this context, MID prioritized Ukraine-related and hard-power content to address U.S. and Chinese audiences. Meanwhile, to reinforce Russia's informational autocracy (Guriev & Treisman, 2020) during wartime, Russian leaders, through MID's channels, leveraged their characteristic language styles, such as sarcasm and impoliteness, to attract and manipulate foreign followers. Additionally, MID increased the volume of Russian-language content in the U.S., aligned with Russia's new cultural policy since 2014 to promote the Russian language,

foster spiritual bonds, and protect Russian speakers abroad (President of Russia, 2014) under the state strategy to weaponize the Russian language for establishing and perpetuating power relations, exerting control, and, finally, warmongering (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2017).

This study aims to reveal how MID's digital content supported Russia's DPD goals during 2014-2022. It also intends to detect the key differences in MID's communicative and linguistic methods tailored to the U.S. and China. These differences are outlined below in four aspects:

Firstly, the audiences: pre-Sochi, Russia's DPD in the U.S. mainly targeted the American public, rather than the American government. Differently, post-Sochi, MID's digital channels shifted to directly confronting the U.S. government and addressing controversial topics to American leaders and state institutions, targeting both "diffuse" and "specific" audiences. Simultaneously, MID reinforced Russian-language content, which became a powerful tool (Ryazanova-Clarke, 2017) to mobilize and engage Russian-speaking diasporas in the U.S. Additionally, other languages, such as Chinese and Spanish, were used in MID's content to reach broader overseas audiences. Pre-Sochi, Russia's DPD in China targeted both the Chinese public and the Chinese government. Post-Sochi, the target audiences remained unchanged. Notably, MID did not produce Russian-language content for China, as Russian social media platforms were accessible there, allowing Russian diasporas to receive information directly from Russian platforms.

Secondly, the global perspectives: pre-Sochi, MID presented a broader range of global issues to the Chinese public than the American one. This could be attributed to China's ban on Western mainstream media, enabling MID to introduce Russia's comprehensive global stances without significant opposition. Post-Sochi, MID's Chinese-language content became more focused, addressing only a few strategic countries to better align Chinese audiences with the Kremlin's stances. In contrast, MID's post-2014 U.S.-oriented content raised more controversial topics to American audiences, markedly reduced reposts from the U.S. media, and actively promoted the Kremlin's narratives on disputed third countries, showing that MID shifted from overtly discussing U.S. domestic matters to emphasizing Russia's comprehensive global perspectives to co-opt and consolidate its followership in the U.S.

Thirdly, the language styles: pre-Sochi, linguistic impoliteness in MID's content was more prevalent in China-oriented than U.S.-oriented content. Post-Sochi, impolite language became a hallmark of U.S.-oriented content following MID's reinforcement of hard-power narratives and Russian leaders' exposure. This included employing a new language style characterized by rudeness, mockery, irony, glee, domination, and sarcasm to evoke fear, anger, and a sense of threat (Zvereva, 2025). For instance, Zhakharova's content became notably intensified during the post-Sochi years. Her sharper rhetoric replaced the diplomatic

tone common in the pre-Sochi period.

Fourthly, soft-power content: in China-oriented content, MID devoted more space to soft-power narratives in a "promotional" form. Russia and China shared similar state narratives during 2014-2022, such as both countries' positive memory of WWII, conventional family values, patriotism, anti-Westernism, making it easier for MID to communicate with the Chinese public through cultural-historical and educational discourses. Meanwhile, the cooperation between Russian and Chinese organizations for overseas propaganda strategically deepened, enabling MID to disseminate hard-power narratives through Chinese media outlets. In the U.S., where the Kremlin's narratives faced resistance from American media, MID heavily relied on its own digital channels to maximize hard-power messaging, with soft-power content becoming less prominent.

This study analyzes 9,994 posts and articles, covering MID's entire digital content targeting the U.S. and China during 2014–2022. However, it faces several limitations: some content had been removed by MID or third parties before data collection; therefore, this part of the data is excluded from the current comparison. The research excludes data consisting solely of photo, audio, or video materials, though they are not significant compared to the textual content. The impact of platform algorithms is not considered, as all posts are assumed to have equal exposure. The methodological approach in this study, in particular the content categorization and coding, is designed only for MID, as a specific state actor and a tool of public diplomacy, from the language and communication perspectives; therefore, the methodology may not be generalizable to other actors or from dissimilar perspectives. This study only focuses on the primary actor of Russia's DPD, namely MID, not on extended actors, which are subject to different editorial and gatekeeping criteria. Due to the technical limits that no suitable software exists for processing simultaneously English-Russian and Chinese content, and the needs of the conventional content analysis, this study relies on the author's manual and empirical analysis.

Post-Sochi, Russia's political regime adopted stronger anti-democratic traits, enacted conservative legislation, and introduced constitutional amendments in 2020 to consolidate informational autocracy and add a flavor of "fear" to its governance (Guriev & Treisman, 2020; Zvereva, 2025). Domestically, the Kremlin abandoned any pretense of adhering to Western democratic norms, emphasized hard-power narratives and war rhetoric, and eventually shifted the domestic discourse from defensive to offensive framings (Drozdova & Robinson, 2019; McGlynn et al., 2022). More methods of fear, aggression, humiliation, and mockery of opponents returned during the post-Sochi years. Meanwhile, MID applied its domestic propaganda skills on an international scale to shape global opinions, secure foreign endorsements, attack rivals, and get help from abroad (Guriev & Treisman, 2022). In the U.S., MID sought

to co-opt and corrupt allies from the West (Guriev & Treisman, 2022), mobilize overseas Russian speakers, and exploit them from the inside. In China, MID worked closely with local propaganda organizations to embed Russian narratives in Chinese discourses, such as to praise the annexation of Crimea, military help in Donbas and Syria, the great leadership of Putin, Russia's victory in WWII, and resistance to Western sanctions, projecting Russia as an honorable global fighter against neo-Nazism, Western colonialism, and American hegemony (McGlynn, 2018). Pre-Sochi, MID aimed to build global alliances through soft-power content, emphasizing cultural-historical ties, sports, and mutual understandings. Post-Sochi, however, MID urged overseas audiences to take sides by employing hard-power narratives that explicitly divided "us" and "them". Before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, MID's overseas missions had garnered nearly 1 million followers on Weibo and 0.6 million on Facebook.

The long-term goal of Russia's informational autocracy is to manipulate the minds of the public domestically, while seeking strategic partners with similar ideologies like China globally, and co-opting pro-Russian supporters from Western countries like the U.S. The audiences in the two countries witnessed a marked evolution in MID's DPD from 2014 to 2022, which highlighted Russia's hard power and the Ukrainian War. To uncover MID's dynamics and tactics targeting great powers like the U.S. and China is timely and may help the world to decipher variations over time in Russia's digital communication strategies of public diplomacy with diverse foreign publics, because being watchful has become crucial in today's world, especially given the ongoing war.

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Appendix

A codebook for analyzing MID's content in the U.S. and China during 2014-2022

Code	Definition	Example (Headlines of MID's posts)
Category "Humanities"	Non-coercive content on arts, history, tourism, and education. It covers all culture-related soft-power content except sports.	Stalingrad: An IMAX 3D Experience will be released in theatres starting February 28.
Category "Sports"	Non-coercive soft-power content on sports.	Everything you ever wanted to know about the Russia World Cup 2018.
Category "Politics"	Non-coercive soft-power content on political policies and political values.	Check out news timeline of the Russia-US Foreign Ministers' talks held in Moscow.
Category "Military"	Content on military, arms, and warfare.	On November 3, the US Air Force bombed several towns and villages in Afghanistan.
Category "Economy"	Content on economy, trade, and financial conferences.	Putin: Economic freedom is priority for Russian Far East.
Category "Consular issues"	Content on Russian consular services for the U.S. and Chinese citizens.	Due to the state holidays in Russia the Embassy and the Consular Section will remain closed February 23-26, 2017.
Category "Else"	Content that cannot relate to the six categories above, including partially deleted content, disaster alarm, advertisement, etc.	USA! The state of Texas! Hurricane Nicholas is Approaching! (Originally in Russian as США! Штат Техас! Приближжение Урагана Николас!).
WWII	Content on the Second World War.	The Victory Day parade was held at Red Square in Moscow.
Shutdown of Russian consulates and eviction of Russian diplomats	Content on shutdown of Russian consulates in the U.S. and eviction of Russian diplomats from the U.S. during 2014–2022.	The decision to close the Consulate General of Russian Federation in San Francisco is another unfriendly step of the US authorities.
Sanctions	Content on sanctions during the Russo-Ukrainian War.	Another extension of US sanctions list.
Donbas	Content on the Donbas region and Eastern Ukraine.	Statement by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the Donetsk tragedy.
COVID	Content on COVID-19.	Promobot with coronavirus advice hits Times Square.
Crimea	Content on the Crimean region.	The Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol have been strongly and irreversibly integrated into political and legal realm of the Russian Federation.
Sochi	Content on the 2014 Sochi Olympics and the Sochi region.	What the Olympic Games meant to Sochi.
Putin	Content on Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, content on the Russian President during 1991-1995, 2001-2008, 2012-present, and content on the Russian Prime Minister during 1999-2000, 2008-2012.	Vladimir Putin delivered the Annual Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly.

Code	Definition	Example (Headlines of MID's posts)
Lavrov	Content on Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov, and content on the Foreign Minister of Russia since 2004.	Statement by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the Donetsk tragedy.
Zakharova	Content on Maria Vladimirovna Zakharova, content on the director of MID's Information and Press Department since 2015.	Opinion by Maria Zakharova.
U.S.	Content on the United States of America.	Talks with Defence Minister of the USA Lloyd Austin.
Ukraine	Content on Ukraine.	Amb. Sergey Kislyak on efforts to defuse Ukraine crisis.
China	Content on China.	Congratulations to Xi Jinping on his re-election as Chinese President.
EU	Content on the states of the European Union.	Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation with President of the European Council Charles Michel.
Syria	Content on Syria.	Update: the military-political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.
Afghanistan	Content on Afghanistan.	Russian Embassy Weekly: Update on Afghanistan.
North Korea	Content on North Korea.	Yet another North Korean ballistic missile launched on November 29 in violation of UN Security Council resolutions.