

The 10 Rules of Propaganda

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Lord Arthur Ponsonby was a British diplomat and politician, dates 1871–1946.

This keen and cagey fellow pinpointed 10 rules of propaganda. They are these:

- 1. We don't want war, we are only defending ourselves.*
- 2. The other guy is solely responsible for this war.*
- 3. Our adversary's leader is evil and looks evil.*
- 4. We are defending a noble purpose, not special interest.*
- 5. The enemy is purposefully causing atrocities; we only commit mistakes.*
- 6. The enemy is using unlawful weapons.*
- 7. We have very little losses, the enemy is losing big.*
- 8. Intellectuals and artists support our cause.*
- 9. Our cause is sacred.*
- 10. Those who doubt our propaganda are traitors.*

Just Look at the News

A daily scan of the newswires calls to mind three or more of these propaganda rules. On some days, six or seven. On others still, all 10.

We refer specifically to the conflict presently arage in the eastern European nation of Ukraine.

Let us now consider these rules. We will not take up each of them since some rules relate closely to others. We will instead weld these together. To proceed...

1. We don't want war, we are only defending ourselves.

2. The other guy is solely responsible for this war.

On how many occasions have you read or heard condemnations of Mr. Putin's "unprovoked" act of aggression?

To phrase it differently, when has it *not* been described as unprovoked?

Yet a man can argue very persuasively that Mr. Putin's war was indeed provoked.

The Russian autocrat warned on several occasions that NATO expansion into Ukraine was a "red line."

Russia would not abide the NATO dagger pressing against its vitals (parts of Ukraine actually lie east of Moscow).

Yet the NATO alliance had announced its intentions to incorporate Ukraine — despite Vladimir's moans and grimaces.

A de Facto NATO Member

It is true that no formal offer of membership has come. Yet for years the United States and its NATO allies were arming and training Ukrainian forces.

Why do you think these Ukrainian forces have performed so excellently?

Some have in fact referred to Ukraine as a *de facto* NATO member. It has merely been awaiting the *de jure* formality of actual membership.

You may argue that Mr. Putin's invasion was unjustified. You may argue that it was unnecessary. Your editor himself has maintained these very points.

Yet you cannot argue that it was unprovoked.

Putin's Evil!

3. Our adversary's leader is evil and looks evil.

9. Our cause is sacred.

Here is a very condensed sample of headlines regarding the blackened state of Mr. Putin's soul:

"Vladimir Putin — 'Evil on the Level of Joseph Stalin'"

"Yes, Putin Is Evil"

"Putin Is Evil, Not Mentally Ill, a Psychological Explanation"

“‘Terrifying’ Putin Driven by ‘Evil Forces,’ Says ECB’s Christine Lagarde”

“How Vladimir Putin Became Evil”

And is this not the very face of evil?

The title of the magazine article affixed to this caption bears the title:

“The Secret Source of Putin’s Evil”

Now you have the flavor of it. We could continue but mercy forbids it.

Is Putin Really Evil?

Yet how do these demonologists know if the man is evil? Have they looked under the hood... and glanced his soul?

Perhaps the man is psychologically impaired. Perhaps he goes by a different morality. Perhaps he is simply misguided.

Or perhaps he simply believes his nation is under threat and that his invasion is justified.

No — not justified — necessary.

We would not claim that he is an especially congenial fellow. We would not claim that he is “nice.”

But evil? That we are not prepared to say.

Yet we are prepared to say — and will say — that for the past year propaganda has enjoyed a very brisk circulation.

Evil on the level of Joseph Stalin, as the one headline screamed? This is the work of the propagandist.

No Special Interest?

4. We are defending a noble purpose, not special interest.

Defending Ukraine may certainly qualify as a “noble purpose.” We do not contend otherwise.

Yet there are several arms manufacturers who presently drive an excellent trade.

They must replace all the armaments that have been dispatched to — and continue to be dispatched to — Ukraine.

Are they not a special interest?

Meantime, our spies inform us that a disturbing portion of monies parading under the banner of “Ukrainian aid” has been diverted to the pockets of Ukrainian oligarchs.

We would sort these oligarchs into the category of “special interest.”

“We Don’t Do Those Things”

5. The enemy is purposefully causing atrocities; we only commit mistakes.

We are told that Russia’s calendar of sins is endless. These hellcats are shooting projectiles into apartment buildings, hospitals, schools, churches.

Yet we are likewise told that Russia suffers from an acute ammunition lack. Why would these Russians waste valuable ammunition on these valueless targets?

Perhaps such targets were struck by accident. It is war and incidents as these are nearly inevitable.

Perhaps even Ukrainian forces struck some of these structures unintentionally.

We recall one instance in which a Russian missile struck very near the Polish border, murdering two. As chance would have it the “Russian missile” was an erring Ukrainian air defense missile.

Perhaps Ukrainian forces fired upon Russian forces from these sites. Russians would be justified to return the fire.

Reports of Russian massacring of civilians proliferate widely. Yet closer examination reveals that at least some of these claims are of very dubious validity.

We would be stunned and gobsmacked if atrocities of various sorts have not occurred — perpetrated by both sides.

It is, after all, war. And war is the very negation of civilization.

Yet there is little to no evidence that atrocities are official Russian policy.

That, we hazard to say, is propaganda.

He’s Using Chemical Weapons!

6. The enemy is using unlawful weapons.

“Kyiv Claims Russia Used Banned Chemical Weapon”

“Russia’s Tear Gas Bombings in Ukraine May Be First Step in Dangerous Chemical Escalation”

“Ukraine’s Battlefield Is Haunted by Putin’s Chemical Weapons Legacy”

We assigned our spies the case. They inform us there exists no evidence of Russian chemical weapons use.

Videos have circulated — however — of Ukrainian soldiers preparing chemical weapons for battlefield use. Other videos circulate of Russian soldiers gagging on these chemical agents.

We cannot confirm their trueness.

270,000 Russian Casualties?

7. We have very little losses, the enemy is losing big.

Source after source cites claims of unspeakable Russian deaths and woundings. Figures of 270,000 Russian casualties have been proposed.

Yet the original invasion force consisted only of 190,000 men. Are they all — plus 80,000 others — dead or injured?

The British Broadcasting Corporation decided to do some spade work. They attempted to discern the true number of Russian fatalities. This they did by poring through death notices, funeral announcements, social media and other venues.

What did they discover?

They could only identify the names of 16,071 confirmed Russian fatalities. They concede the possibility that they are undercounting the butcher's bill by as much as 40%.

In all, BBC places Russia's total irretrievable losses (wounded, killed or missing people) at some 144,500.

These figures nonetheless place the actual casualty roster — both killings and woundings — far below the mainstream telling.

We are loathe to employ the word "only" when discussing deaths and woundings. It is a morbid affair. Each man is a unique human creature crafted in the image of his creator.

Yet the BBC's sleuthing indicates strongly that Russian casualty figures are extravagantly exaggerated.

It is in keeping to Propaganda Rule no. 7.

8. Intellectuals and artists support our cause.

How many intellectuals and artists boast Twitter accounts bearing an image of the Ukrainian flag?

They are nearly beyond count.

10. Those who doubt our propaganda are traitors.

Your patriotic editor has been labeled traitorous on many, many occasions — by readers and colleagues alike.

The Propaganda War

Does Russia transmit its own propaganda? We are certain that it does.

Upon reflection we must amend the prior statement — we suspect strongly that Russia transmits its own propaganda. We cannot be certain.

That is because none of it is allowed in. It is all censored out by the Western press. They

have erected a great cordon walling off Russian propaganda.

How else does one explain the universal media claims of Ukrainian righteousness and Russian evil? Of Ukrainian brio and Russian incompetence? Of Ukrainian victory and Russian defeat?

We will merely state that we have been privy to... *conflicting*... reports.

Yet we are aware that by posting the 10 Rules of Propaganda... we will be accused ourself of distributing propaganda — Russian propaganda.

We plead *nolo contendere*... comrade.

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