

Russia's Arabic Propaganda: What It Is, Why It Matters

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Explore the subtle strategies, including information manipulation, that Moscow is using to expand Russian influence in the Middle East.

The Middle East is an expanding nexus of Russian influence, a challenge to both regional stability and U.S. interests. In light of this, a thorough understanding of the subtleties of Moscow's strategies, including information manipulation, becomes vitally important. Although many excellent studies have focused on the Kremlin's disinformation efforts in the West, few have examined its Arabic-language efforts in depth. Indeed, in many ways it appears that Arabic-speaking audiences have been prioritized over Western audiences in terms of Russia's propaganda efforts.

This study explores the tactics Moscow employs to reach its target audiences, focusing primarily on RT Arabic and Sputnik Arabic. Both outlets rely heavily on social media, demonstrating how the Kremlin has exploited the growing Arabic-speaking youth bulge to lay a foundation for long-term influence; developments in the Middle East media landscape have provided fertile ground. Furthermore, RT and Sputnik provide substantial coverage of major regional issues in Syria, Iran, Egypt, Israel, the Gulf, and the West, along with Russia's internal politics. The study examines the coverage of each of these areas, and concludes with policy recommendations.

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