

## Russian 'Active Measures': An Applicable Supporting Tool for Russia's Foreign Policy Objectives in the 21st Century

**Authors :** Håkon Riiber

**Abstract :** This paper explores the extent to which Russian 'Active Measures' play a role in contemporary Russian foreign policy and in what way the legacy of the Soviet Union is still apparent in these practices. The analysis draws on a set of case studies from the 21st century to examine these aspects, showing which 'Active Measures' features are old and which are new in the post-Cold War era. The paper highlights that the topic has gained significant academic and political interest in recent years, largely due to the aggressive posture of the Russian Federation on the world stage, exemplified through interventions in Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine and interference in several democratic elections in the West. However, the paper argues that the long-term impact of these measures may have unintended implications for Russia. While Russia is unlikely to stop using Active Measures, increased awareness of the exploitation of weaknesses, institutions, or other targets may lead to greater security measures and an ability to identify and defend against these activities. The paper contends that Soviet-style 'Active Measures' from the Cold War era have been modernized and are now utilized to create an advantageous atmosphere for further exploitation to support contemporary Russian foreign policy. It offers three key points to support this argument: the reenergized legacy of the Cold War era, the use of 'Active Measures' in a number of cases in the 21st century, and the applicability of AM to the Russian approach to foreign policy. The analysis reveals that while this is not a new Russian phenomenon, it is still oversimplified and inaccurately understood by the West, which may result in a decreased ability to defend against these activities and limit the unwarranted escalation of the ongoing security situation between the West and Russia. The paper concludes that the legacy of Soviet-era Active Measures continues to influence Russian foreign policy, and modern technological advances have only made them more applicable to the current political climate. Overall, this paper sheds light on the important issue of Russian 'Active Measures' and the role they play in contemporary Russian foreign policy. It emphasizes the need for increased awareness, understanding, and security measures to defend against these activities and prevent further escalation of the security situation between the West and Russia.

**Keywords :** Russian espionage, active measures, disinformation, Russian intelligence

**Conference Title :** ICISIS 2024 : International Conference on International Security and Intelligence Studies

**Conference Location :** Singapore, Singapore

**Conference Dates :** January 11-12, 2024