

strategic-culture.org

The website of the Strategic Culture Foundation, an organization with ties to the Russian government that has published false claims advancing the Kremlin's positions.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Score: 12.5/100

Ownership and Financing

Strategic-Culture.org does not disclose its ownership or financing. Website domain records show that the site was registered in Moscow.

According to an August 2020 report titled "Pillars of Russia's Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem," published by the U.S. Department of State's Global Engagement Center, the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF) is directed by Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service and is "closely affiliated with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

The State Department report called the Strategic Culture Foundation "a prime example of long-standing Russian tactics to conceal direct state involvement in disinformation and propaganda outlets, and to cultivate local voices to serve as surrogate messengers. SCF finds obscure Western fringe thinkers and conspiracy theorists and gives their typically virulent anti-Western and anti-U.S. views a broad international platform. It does this while giving the misleading impression SCF is independent and unaffiliated with the Russian government."

In addition, the website for International Affairs, the flagship journal of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lists Strategic Culture Foundation as its "partner." It is not clear what that relationship entails.

The State Department report, as well as Russian business records for SCF, identify the foundation's president as Yury Prokofiev, who served as Moscow's Communist Party chief from 1989 to 1991. Prokofiev, according to the August 2020 State Department report, is also one of the founders of the Russian Organization

-  Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
-  Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
-  Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
-  Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
-  Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
-  Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
-  Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
-  The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

for Assistance to Special Services and Law Enforcement Authorities, an organization that works with Russian security services.

Vladimir Maximenko, the director of the Strategic Culture Foundation, previously served as director of the Russia Unity Foundation, an organization that aimed to promote Russian culture in Ukraine prior to Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Strategic-Culture.org did not respond to NewsGuard's two messages, sent through a general contact form on the site, seeking comment on its reported relationship to the Russian government.

Strategic-Culture.org does not run advertising or sponsored content, nor does it solicit donations.

Content

Strategic-Culture.org publishes English-language commentary on global affairs, advancing anti-Western views on U.S. politics and culture often espoused by the Kremlin. According to the site's About Us page, the Strategic Culture Foundation "provides a platform for exclusive analysis, research and policy comment on Eurasian and global affairs" and "works to broaden and diversify expert discussion by focusing on hidden aspects of international politics and unconventional thinking." The site features dedicated sections for world news, defense, business, and culture.

Articles regularly promote the Russian government's positions and criticize the U.S., often arguing that its global influence is fading. For example, the October 2020 story "Russia's Strategic Intervention in Syria Five Years On – An 'Unpardonable Blow' to U.S. Empire" cited Russia's military involvement in Syria's civil war, which began in 2011, as "an historic and seminal defeat over Western regime-change criminality and complicity with terrorist proxies." A June 2020 article, titled "Signs U.S. International Power Is Declining," concluded that Japan's decision to halt the implementation of an American ballistic missile system "might indicate that The American Century is in the process of ending."

A History section offers analyses of U.S. historical events, with articles such as “The 1804 Northern Secession Plot and the Founding Fathers of the Deep State” and “Treason in America: An Overview of the FBI, CIA and Matters of ‘National Security.’”

The website features dozens of contributing writers, including some who have also published articles in Russian government-owned websites RT.com and SputnikNews.com.

Strategic-Culture.org publishes an affiliated online journal in Russian.

Credibility

Strategic-Culture.org does not provide original news reporting and cites few sources in its commentary, which regularly advances false claims and misinformation promoted by the Kremlin.

For example, Strategic-Culture.org has published multiple articles advancing the false claim that the Syrian government did not use chemical weapons against its own citizens in Douma in 2018, claiming this and other purported chemical attacks were either staged or orchestrated by the U.S. and other opponents of the Syrian government.

A May 2019 story, headlined “CONFIRMED: Chemical Weapons Assessment Contradicting Official Syria Narrative Is Authentic,” claimed that the chemical weapons that killed dozens in Douma “did not arrive in the locations that they were alleged to have arrived at via aircraft dropped by the Syrian government, but via manual placement by people on the ground, where photographs were then taken and circulated around the world as evidence against the Syrian government which was used to justify air strikes by the US, UK and France.”

A November 2019 story stated in its headline that the Douma attack “looks increasingly like a staged chemical attack by the West.” The story stated, “What is harder to swallow? The fact that the chemical weapons arbiter, the OPCW [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons], has habitually lied by doctoring its report on the 2018 Douma chemical weapons attack in

Syria, or the fact that western media won't report on it? Or worse, that it continues to stick to its policy of smearing those who point the finger at the organization and its tainted findings, while remaining loyal to its own echo chamber which promotes the false narrative that Assad was behind it – when the facts fail to support it?"

According to the Violations Documentation Center (VDC), a nonprofit organization that records alleged violations of international law in Syria and reports to the United Nations Security Council, the city of Douma was chemically bombed by Syrian troops loyal to President Bashar al-Assad on April 7, 2018. Douma was the only area in the region that had not yet surrendered to the government, according to the BBC. The VDC report cites a member of the Syria Civil Defence, a group of rescue workers known as the White Helmets, as saying he smelled chlorine in the air after the strike. The White Helmets also shared videos documenting injuries from the attack. The VDC report was confirmed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its March 2019 report, among other sources.

Strategic-Culture.org has published articles that advance the Russian government's false claim that Russia had no involvement in efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

For example, an August 2020 article titled "‘Russiagate’ Hoax Unravels, but Their Anti-Russia Sanctions Don’t" stated, "The evidence that the entire ‘Russiagate’ charge — that Russia’s Government had ‘hacked’ the Democratic National Committee in 2016 — is an Obama Administration hoax (which was continued into Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report), is now starting to come out into public view and be endorsed publicly by retired U.S. intelligence professionals who can’t be fired."

Mueller’s investigation into the 2016 presidential election resulted in the 2018 indictments of 13 Russian nationals and three entities, including the Internet Research Agency, on charges that they hacked into Democratic computers and spread disinformation on social media to influence the election.

The indictments said that the nationals were in communication with members of Trump's campaign, although the Mueller report said that "the investigation did not establish that the campaign coordinated or conspired with the Russian government in its election-interference activities."

Strategic-Culture.org has repeatedly advanced claims that Russia's military agents were not responsible for the March 2018 poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain, claiming that it was a "false flag" orchestrated by the U.K.

A September 2018 story titled "The Skripal Affair – Another False Flag in NATO Litany to Criminalize Russia" claimed that Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, may have been drug addicts — not poisoned by the nerve agent Novichok — which explained why the two were found incapacitated in a park in Salisbury, England, in March 2018.

"There is evidence that Sergei Skripal may have been a drug addict. His movements on the Sunday of March 4 when he was found incapacitated on a public park bench in Salisbury along with daughter Yulia suggest he may have been fixing a drug habit," the article said. The article went on to say that Skripal and his daughter visited a park in Amesbury that was a "haunt" for "two heroin junkies."

In a March 2020 article, titled "Two Years Later: The Skripal Case Is Weirder Than Ever," Strategic-Culture.org claimed that the Skripal case "led to one of the greatest frauds of the modern era derailing all attempts to repair relations between Russia and the west."

In September 2018, the U.K. charged two men suspected of being Russian military agents with attempted murder in Skripal's poisoning. British Prime Minister Theresa May said in a statement that "the two individuals named by the police and CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] are officers from the Russian military intelligence service."

Strategic-Culture.org has also published unsubstantiated claims about COVID-19. For example, a September 2020 story misleadingly reported on the number of COVID-19 deaths in the U.S.. Titled "Going Down in Style: Nancy Pelosi's Illicit 'Blow Out' Exposes Democrats as Above-the-Law Elitists," the story reported, "Sooner or later, the Democrat-run regimes are going to have to decide whether or not it is more dangerous to keep the economy shut down or finally come to terms with a virus that, according to updated statistics by the Centers for Disease Control, is not as fatal as we have been led to believe. Just 6% of the some 160,000 deaths recorded in the United States died from Covid alone, that is, without any other comorbidities."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's report did say that death certificates for 6 percent of COVID deaths only listed COVID as the cause of death. However, in 92 percent of all deaths that mentioned COVID-19, that disease is listed as the underlying cause of death, Jeff Lancashire, spokesman for the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, told FactCheck.org in a September 2020 article. Therefore, the report is not evidence that COVID-19 "is not as fatal as we have been led to believe," as Strategic-Culture.org claimed.

Listing additional conditions or causes on a death certificate was standard practice before the COVID-19 pandemic under CDC guidelines. While the CDC has stated that people with preexisting conditions ranging from obesity to cancer are at an increased risk of dying if they develop COVID-19, that does not mean their death cannot be attributed to COVID-19.

Another September 2020 story advanced the false claim that messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines can alter human DNA, and that such technology might be used in a vaccine for COVID-19. The story, titled "A DARPA-Funded Implantable Biochip to Detect COVID-19 Could Hit Markets by 2021," stated, "An experimental new vaccine developed jointly with the US

government claims to be able to change human DNA and could be deployed as early as next year through a DARPA-funded, injectable biochip.”

There is no evidence to support the claim that an mRNA vaccine would change a person’s DNA. While mRNA vaccines would work differently than traditional vaccines by using a small part of an antigen’s genetic code to help a person develop antibodies, rather than small or inactivated does of an antigen, no vaccine could genetically modify a human’s DNA.

“That’s just a myth, one often spread intentionally by anti-vaccination activists to deliberately generate confusion and mistrust,” Mark Lynas, a visiting fellow at Cornell University’s Alliance for Science group, told Reuters in May 2020. “Genetic modification would involve the deliberate insertion of foreign DNA into the nucleus of a human cell, and vaccines simply don’t do that.”

Because Strategic-Culture.org has published false and misleading claims that often advance the Russian government’s positions, NewsGuard has determined that the site repeatedly publishes false content, does not gather and present information responsibly, and regularly publishes deceptive headlines.

Strategic-Culture.org’s About page says that it “provides a platform for exclusive analysis, research and policy comment on Eurasian and global affairs.” The website does not label its content as either news or opinion. However, the website regularly publishes stories that advance pro-Kremlin views and criticize the West, such as in all of the content cited above. Because Strategic-Culture.org’s content regularly advances views that reflect the Kremlin’s positions and criticize the West, without disclosing such a perspective, NewsGuard has determined that Strategic-Culture.org does not handle the difference between news and opinion responsibly.

Strategic-Culture.org does not articulate a corrections policy, and NewsGuard did not find corrections on the site.

Strategic-Culture did not respond to NewsGuard's two messages, sent through a general contact form on the site, seeking comment on its false claims that advance the Kremlin's positions, its failure to issue corrections, and its failure to disclose its pro-Kremlin perspective.

Transparency

Strategic-Culture.org does not disclose its ownership or identify its editorial leaders. The website does not mention any ties to the Kremlin, despite the connections detailed in the State Department's August 2020 report and its identification as a "partner" in a Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs journal.

Strategic-Culture did not respond to NewsGuard's two messages, sent through a general contact form on the site, seeking comment on the site's lack of ownership disclosure and information about its editorial leadership.

Articles include the names of authors along with their biographical information. Strategic-Culture.org also features a Contributors page, which also lists the writers' biographies.

The site does not run advertising or sponsored content.

History

Strategic-Culture.org launched in 2005 as a Russian-language online journal. The English-language site launched in 2010.

In September 2020, the Strategic Culture Foundation was banned from Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube following reports of its ties with Russian intelligence services. The site's link to the Strategic Culture Foundation Facebook page directs visitors to page titled "Why You Won't Find Us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube," which addresses the allegations of its ties to the Kremlin.

"The Strategic Culture Foundation was banned from Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube following unsubstantiated claims that it was connected with Russian intelligence services and interfered in the US presidential elections on their orders. It means that you can't find us on these platforms and, moreover, if you try to post any links leading to SCF on your personal

page, you will most likely not be allowed to do that. This case provides a glimpse into the dystopian future of suppressing dissident voices by governments previously known as democratic.”

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Send feedback to NewsGuard: [Click Here](#)

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Ownership and
Financing

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