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STORIES

# 'Giving Europe the chance to come to its senses' Meduza got access to a Kremlin handbook on how propagandists should sum up 2022

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Alexander Nemenev / AFP / Scanpix / LETA

Story by **Andrey Perstev**. Translation by **Emily Laskin**.

The Kremlin released a handbook for authorities and pro-Kremlin media, what they should say in year-end reports about 2022. The handbook's "recommendations" range from insisting that that Putin "prevented an impending NATO attack on Russian territory" to claims that the "denazification of Ukraine" is going well and that the Russian economy is about to start booming. As for certain inconsistencies — like the fact that Russia is allegedly withstanding "NATO, the most powerful war machine in human history" and, also, that the West is funding Ukraine less and less — the handbook's authors have no advice. Meduza summarizes the handbook's main points.

Russia's presidential administration wrote a manual for authorities and pro-Kremlin media outlets, explaining how, exactly, they should sum up 2022. The document, which Meduza has gotten access to, has four sections of recommendations: "Main Themes;" "Strengthening Russia;" "The SVO" (or Special Military Operation, as Russian authorities call their war with Ukraine); and "The New World Order."

In the "Main Themes" section, the document's authors "recommend" emphasizing the usual Kremlin line: in sending Russian troops into Ukraine, Vladimir Putin "made the only right decision, preventing an impending attack by Ukraine and NATO on Russian territory." The handbook says that western countries have been preparing to attack Russia since 2014 and were planning to "divide and conquer the Russian people." (What actually happened in 2014: Russia annexed Crimea and provoked a conflict in the Donbas.)

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According to the document's authors, the "special military operation" has been "successful." As confirmation of that success, they discuss "the protection of millions of Russian people, the return of Russian lands, and the strengthening of national security."

Russia now has 89 regions, and its territorial area has increased by 80,000 square kilometers [over 30,000 square miles]. This territory is three times larger than Crimea, and two times larger than Slovakia or Croatia, Denmark or Switzerland. The expansion of Russia's borders due the reunification of the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions means that Crimea has ceased to be an "island" cut off from the Russian mainland.

However, the authors don't mention that Moscow doesn't fully control any of the four annexed regions. Apart from that, Russia *lost* the city of Kherson, the only regional center it has captured since February 24.

The handbook also notes that the Russian army "is successfully achieving the goal of the SVO, to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine." It advises confirming this fact with data which is regularly published by the Russian Defense Ministry (though Defense Ministry updates have little in common with reality).

However, the document also advises propagandists to qualify statements about the war: Russia, according to the handbook, is fighting not Ukraine but NATO, "the most powerful war machine in human history," which has nevertheless "not broken the Russian army."

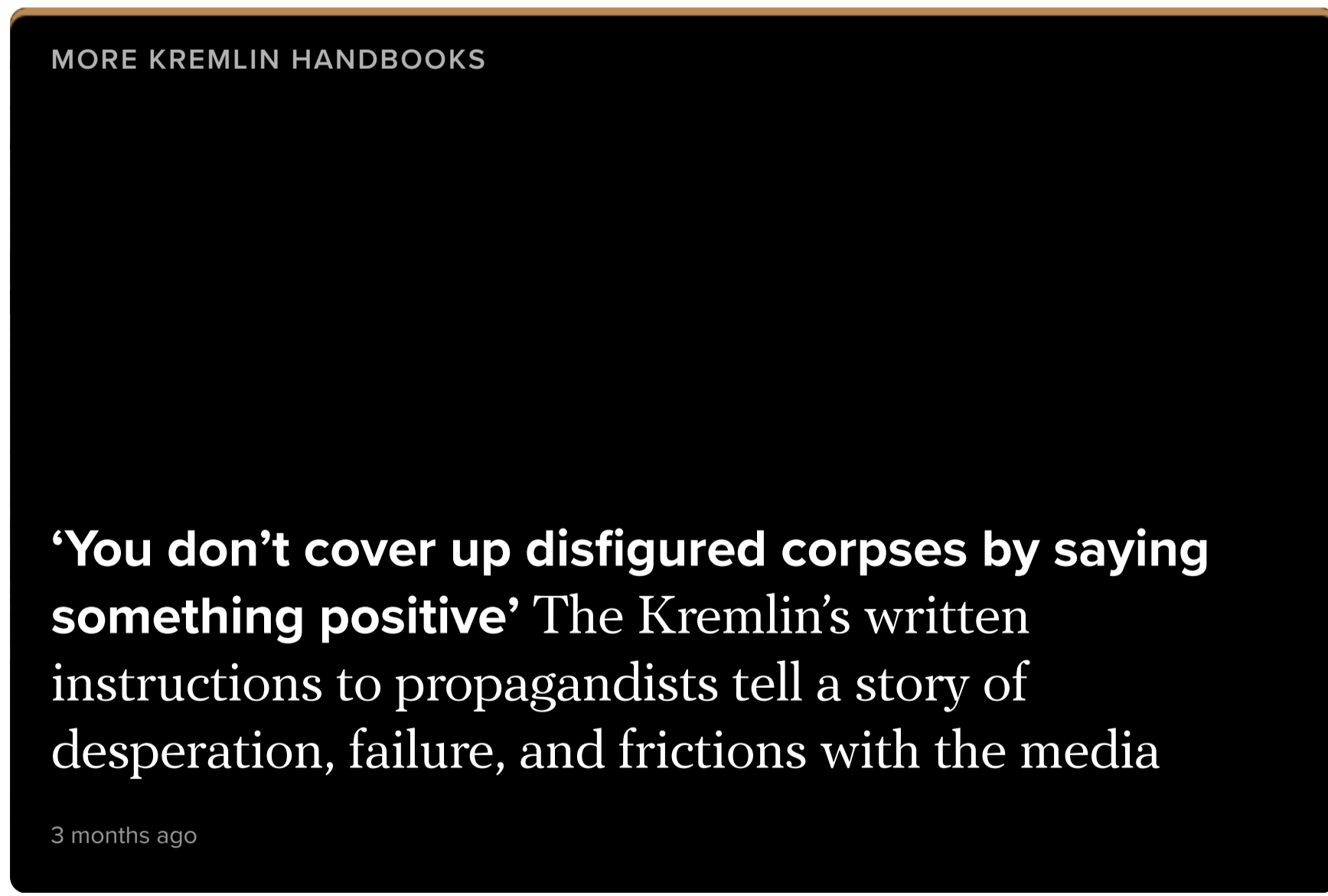
NATO is an enemy on a completely different scale and level than the Kyiv regime. If not for the West, Ukraine would long ago have been demilitarized and accepted Russia's terms. No one is expecting a quick victory — time is on Russia's side. The situation with the SVO is under control. The lull at the front is due to troops regrouping and the need to train the mobilized.

The manual's authors simultaneously present another thesis for propagandists: "The West is supplying less and less equipment and funds to Ukraine." They don't explain how to deal with the fact that this assertion contradicts everything else the manual says.

In the section on "Strengthening Russia," the text's authors "recommend" emphasizing Russia's "closely united society." They connect Putin's high official ratings (according to the Russian state's polling center, 78.5 percent of respondents trust him) directly to "Russians' unconditional support for the SVO." However, as Meduza has previously reported, even authorities' secret polls confirm that Russians are tired of the war and want peaceful negotiations with Ukraine.

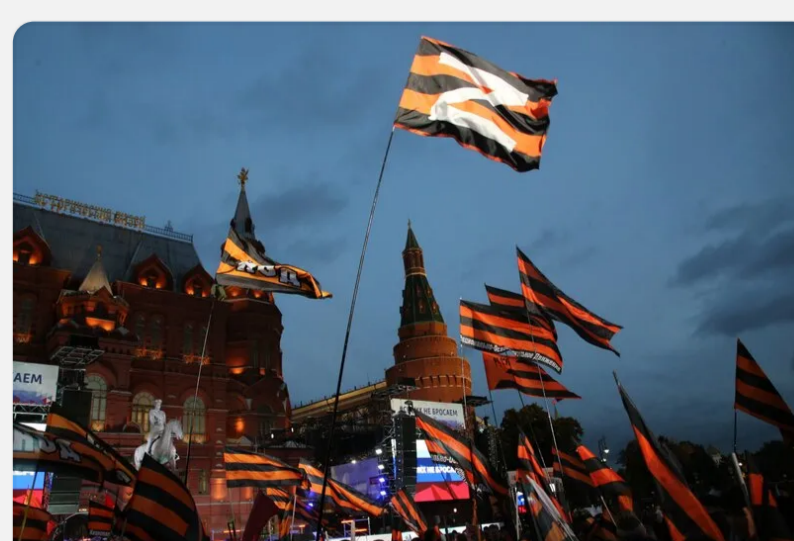
In year-end videos and texts, propagandists should tell Russians that the country's economy "has a huge safety margin and development potential" and that "the situation will continue to improve" (that is in fact, obviously, not true).

In the "New World Order" section, the handbook calls Russia a "leader of countries" that "do not recognize Western exceptionalism," and a "leader of a just, democratic, and multipolar world." The Kremlin's handbook says that Putin is "giving Europe a chance to come to its senses and regain its subjectivity and its future." Now, it claims, European countries are merely "vassals" and "the periphery" of the U.S — their only future is in "close cooperation with Russia."

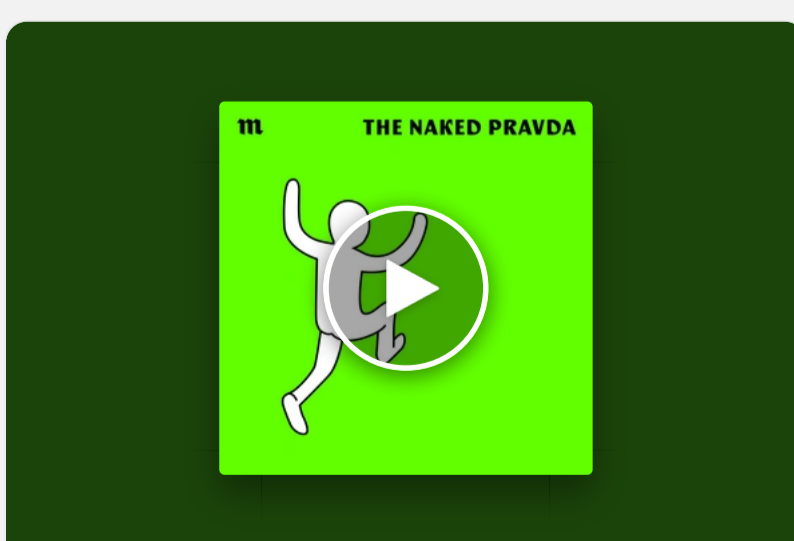


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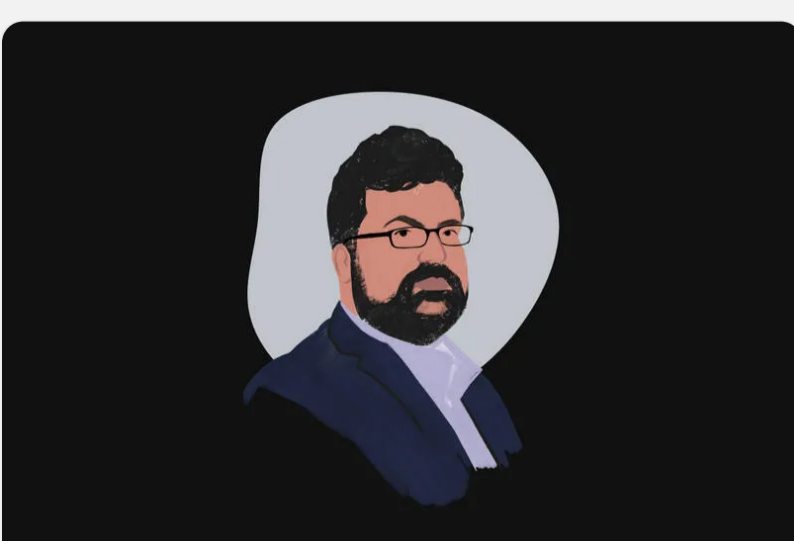
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