
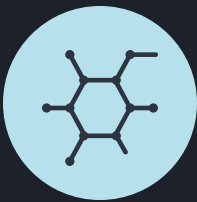




# Russia's Active Measures: Recent CBRN-enabled Influence Operations

J.D. Maddox  
CEO, Inventive Insights LLC  
30 November 2022

# Russia's Active Measures: Recent CBRN-enabled Influence Operations

Russia has leveraged CBRN-related events for tactical "hybrid battlefield" effects, equally accomplishing strategic messaging goals. The emotional impact of seemingly uninhibited CBRN threats can enable "reflexive control" over decisionmakers and broader audiences; however, Russia is equally vulnerable to messaging and reacts poorly to counter-messaging.

	Operations	Physical Effects	Messaging Effects	Counter-messaging Opportunities
	Russian warnings of "false flag" chemical attacks in Syria (2018) and chem/rad in Ukraine (2022)	Battlefield preparation; actual chemical attacks (Syria)	Cover & confusion; legitimization ( <i>jus ad bellum</i> ); audience reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public exposure of Russian plans and underlying intent (intelligence declassification)</li> <li>Strong condemnation under Chemical Weapons Convention protocols and other norms</li> <li>Pressure on Russian allies to intervene</li> </ul>
	Russian disinformation campaign claiming US biolabs in Ukraine (2022 renewal)	None	Cover & confusion; legitimization ( <i>jus ad bellum</i> ); new anti-US conspiracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public exposure of Russian actions and underlying intent (intelligence declassification)</li> <li>Broad international condemnation of Russian disinformation</li> <li>Research and publication of Russian CBRN disinformation cases</li> </ul>
	Russian dissident poisonings (Navalny 2020; Skripal 2018; Gebrev 2015)	Hospitalizations; illnesses and accidental death	Warning; Russian signal of willingness to contravene international norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public exposure of Russian actions and underlying intent (intelligence declassification)</li> <li>Strong condemnation under Chemical Weapons Convention protocols and other norms</li> <li>Investigation and prosecution of criminals</li> <li>Pressure on Russian allies to intervene</li> </ul>
	Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant takeover by Russia (2022)	Attacks on site; power production decline; risk of core failure	Strategic control; cover & confusion; warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear statement of consequences</li> <li>Precise attribution of all attacks and incursions; broadly distributed reporting</li> <li>Public exposure of Russian actions and underlying intent (intelligence declassification)</li> <li>Strong application of Convention on Nuclear Safety protocols; pressure on Russian allies</li> </ul>

*A postscript...*

## **Active Counter-measures:** **Preventive Influence Opportunities**

- Frame a new *positive* narrative (unity, resolve, advantage)
- Drive consistent, resonant messaging
- *Forestall* Russia's spoiler tactics