Twitter Thread by Michael Weiss



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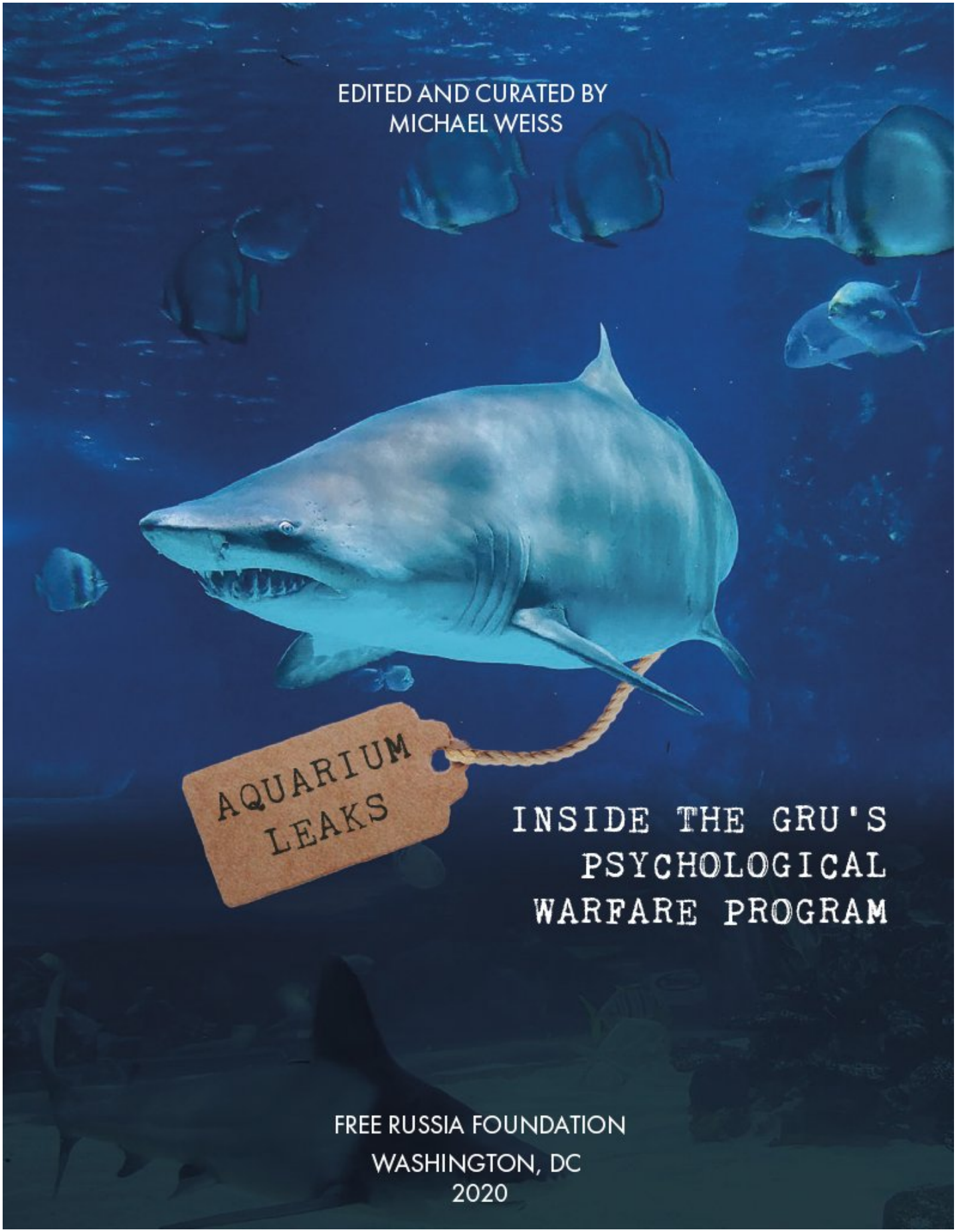
NEW: Several months ago I obtained a tranche of secret Russian military intelligence (GRU) files on psychological warfare. These documents are dated from within the decade and @4freerussia_org has translated them all. https://t.co/ajFhgFMgZv



Two of the documents are lectures delivered by GRU faculty specialists at Russia's Military University (not to be confused with the Military-Diplomatic Academy).

One lecture is a kind of order of battle, explaining how psyops are organized, planned...

... and executed by the GRU, right down to the company levels of each branch of the Russian Armed Forces.

Another lecture explains how to study and attack targets in the West as well as the proper means of interrogating prisoners of war. https://t.co/s8ARSqFWor

We even have a set of exam questions put to the cadets at the Military University and a definition of terms used in the university's coursework -- fun for the whole family!

Finally, we've got an unpublished (well, unpublished until now) memoir by Col. Aleksandr Viktorovich Golyev, once an officer in the Special Propaganda Directorate of GLAVPUR, or the Main Political Department of the Soviet military.

Golyev spent the last years of the Cold War conducting active measures to suppress anti-Communist protest movements in East Germany, Poland and Lithuania.

He writes of how, for instance, he stood up fake loyalist newspaper (printed in Minsk) to counter Lithuanians' push for independence.

Golyev also recalls his manufacture of anti-Chechen propaganda films in the mid-90s (“Dogs of War” and “Werewolves"), which were exhibited to NATO countries by SVR officers stationed abroad, including the future defector Sergei Tretyakov.

Most revealing, however, is what Golyev explains happened to the Special Propaganda Directorate after the collapse of the USSR.

It was transferred, he says, as to the GRU --to the 2nd floor of "the Aquarium," as GRU HQ is known, to be exact, and rebranded Unit 54777. As @AndreiSoldatov and I explain in our introduction to Aquarium Leaks, Unit 54777 has waged a number of recent psychological operations.

One was a concerted information campaign in 2014 advocating Russia's takeover of Crimea -- *before* Putin invaded and annexed the Ukrainian peninsula.

The incorporation of the Special Propaganda Directorate into the GRU had another lasting impact in psywar.

Whereas the directorate had previously been used an influence or manipulation weapon of wartime, once it fell under the remit of a full-time intelligence service (recruiting and running spies, etc.) it became a weapon of peacetime, too.

One GRU lecturer candidly states the fact: there really is no philosophical distinction anymore between war and peace, only differences at the strategic and operational levels. Psychological operations are therefore *constantly* waged against the West. And then there is this:

Psychological warfare is conducted constantly, in peacetime and wartime, by the intelligence agencies of the Armed Forces. The chief feature of psywar in peacetime is that it is organized and conducted both from the territory of Russia as well as the territories of the target countries, but the main targets of informational and psychological influence

In peacetime, we are told, any and all organs of the Russian state as well "civic and religious organizations" can be instrumentalized by the GRU for the prosecution of psywar.

You don't say! As the Washington Post reported a few years ago, Unit 54777 has created cut-out organizations ostensibly dedicated to fostering Moscow's so-called "compatriots policy." One of these is Institute of the Russian Diaspora. https://t.co/uucNLuFC28

The Institute of the Russian Diaspora manages the websites of other likeminded organizations such as the Foundation for Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad, which Putin singled out in 2018 for its “legal aid” work in 20 countries...

... including Syria, Yemen and Libya, as well as its “courses for young human rights advocates.” ■

If you prefer to read the documents in their original language, here's our report in Russian: https://t.co/oKtK9qTOUP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