

WatchDog.MD Community



Case study

NATO SUMMIT IN BUCHAREST

February 2023

Topic of the month: **November 2022**

Case study: NATO SUMMIT IN BUCHAREST

One of the major events of November 2022 was the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bucharest on 29-30 November, where Western leaders were called to assess the implementation of [NATO's strategic concept](#), adopted last summer in Madrid, and to discuss how the West can help Ukraine in the war in which it has been engaged. In this analysis, we set out to find out how the given topic came to be presented by [the main TV channels in Chişinău](#), not before a short introduction to the subject.

Summary

As a case study we chose the news coverage of the NATO Summit in Bucharest. The event is also relevant for the Republic of Moldova as our country participated as an invited party.

After analysing 28 pieces of material produced by the most watched television channels in the Republic of Moldova (RM), we have pointed out cases of disinformation, manipulation and careless mistakes that contributed to the distortion of information. The monitored channels were divided into five categories, depending on how close/far they came to objective reporting of the event. No TV stations were monitored in the study that ignored the subject matter (category 1).

The categories of monitored posts:

Category 2: Those who were furthest away from the real facts and replayed propagandistic narratives or resorted to various manipulative and misinformative methods: RTR Moldova and First in Moldova (Category 2). These are also the stations whose broadcasting has been suspended as a measure to "secure the national information space". In the case of these stations, we found a tendency towards disinformation, mostly hidden "in details".

Category 3: Among those who admitted errors in news editing, presenting inaccurate details or admitting "oversights" that led to distorted messages: Moldova1 and TV8. Even if this time the errors do not indicate any propagandistic intent, they may influence the correct perception of the information to a greater or lesser extent.

Category 4: ProTV Chişinău, PrimeTV, NTV Moldova covered the subject relatively neutrally and fairly, without paying too much attention to it. These stations also admitted to small oversights, but these were not able to influence the main messages of the events.

Category 5: Objective reflection. JurnalTV journalists gave the most attention and broadcast time to the NATO summit in Bucharest. On one of the days of the meeting, the station devoted a package to the meeting that took up almost a third of the news bulletin.

The study provided recommendations for reporters and editors to increase the quality of reporting and help counter disinformation on important issues. As with other analyses, we found the presence of a conscious editorial policy of taking over Kremlin propaganda narratives at some TV stations. In particular, this refers in this case to RTR Moldova and First in Moldova.

THE AUTHORITATIVE CHANNELS VS. PROPAGANDA CHANNELS **the topic in the foreign newspapers**

Coming against the backdrop of Western concerns about the prolongation of the war and the winter energy challenges, the meeting of NATO foreign ministers was an opportunity [to reaffirm the Alliance's unity](#) and strong support for Ukraine.

"Russia bears full responsibility for this war" - this position was [supported](#) both by NATO foreign ministers in [the statement](#) signed on the occasion and separately by Alliance Secretary General [Jens Stoltenberg](#), US Secretary of State, [Antony Blinken](#), Ukrainian Foreign Minister [Dimitro Kuleba](#), and the [host](#) of the meeting.

The meeting was marked [by a number of events](#) which increased its importance, including for our country, which delegated its Foreign Minister to such an event for the first time. This is because, along with Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova was invited as a "partner state" of the Alliance. Finland and Sweden were present at the event as "more advanced" candidates for membership.

Among the important assessments and decisions taken by [NATO ministers in Bucharest](#) were: the adoption of concrete plans in the event of a Russian attack; the decision to support Ukraine as well, regardless of the duration of the war; the acceptance of Ukraine as a NATO member only under the conditions of preserving its sovereignty; the decision to support "now, while it is not too late" - the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

THE NARRATIVES THEY RESURRECT AND THEIR OBJECTIVES **the subject in the international press**

*The events in Bucharest were used as a reason for spreading propaganda messages and, according to the Romanian press, [„the Russian trolls” did not stay away](#) and grossly falsified images and slogans, and even **invented protests** against NATO troops in Romania and against the aid offered to Ukraine, using for this purpose images from various previous protests. At the same time, [Russian propaganda has used and promoted controversial Romanian politicians](#) whose messages are in line with Moscow's interests.*

The narratives actively promoted by pro-Kremlin propaganda:

- *Războiul declanșat de Rusia în Ucraina nu este problema NATO, iar trupele americane*● *Russia's war in Ukraine is not NATO's problem and US troops [have nothing to do in Romania](#).*
- *NATO forces were brought into Romania to help it [annex the Republic of Moldova and part of Ukraine's territory](#)*
- *Moldovan government wants [to force Moldova to join NATO](#)*
- *The West has been arming Ukraine since 2014 [to push it to war against Russia](#), etc.*

"NATO threats"

Most NATO-related accusations are already debunked myths, as our colleague Ekaterina Miscisina notes in her research [CARTOGRAPHING RUSSIAN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE WAR IN UKRAINE](#), conducted under the auspices of Stony Brook University, New York.

The anti-NATO position is a view cultivated for years by the Kremlin-supported media, which began to take shape most obviously after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, when the Alliance emerged in Russian military doctrine as the country's main enemy. The Kremlin inoculates ideas such as:

- *NATO is not a defensive alliance and is a potential aggressor, because it has the means to attack Russia through its bases in Europe, and is using Ukraine to get closer to Russia.*
- *NATO and the US (which, according to the Russian narrative, is the power that "controls NATO") pose a threat that forces Russia to retaliate,*
- *the US spies on Russia using Ukraine, and may even attack the Russian Black Sea Fleet using a military base in southern Ukraine.*

In the following analysis, we set out to find out whether any of these narratives have animated any of the news in the Moldovan press. We try to explain what the Moldovan public, which gets its information

THE TOPIC ON TV STATIONS IN CHIŞINĂU

"NATO SUMMIT" ON TV CHANNELS FROM CHIŞINĂU Disinformation hides in the... details

The topic did not go unnoticed by any of the main Moldovan TV channels (*JurnalTV, Moldova1, PrimeTV, TV8, ProTV, Primul in Moldova, NTV, RTR*), even if some gave it only a few lines and others more news. For a clearer picture, see the tables below, and a brief ranking showing which of the monitored media came closest/farthest from objective reporting of events.

THE LEVEL OF COVERAGE OF THE EVENT

RANKING BY CATEGORY the topic on TV channels from Chişinău

I.	<i>They did not illustrate the event in any way.</i>	—
II.	<i>It was furthest removed from the real facts, rehashing propagandistic narratives or resorting to various manipulative and misinformative devices.</i>	RTR Moldova First in Moldova
III.	<i>They have admitted errors in news reporting, giving (intentionally or unintentionally) inaccurate or erroneous details that may influence the correct perception of the information.</i>	Moldova1 TV8
IV.	<i>They covered the subject relatively neutrally and fairly, yet without giving it too much attention, analysis.</i>	ProTV Chişinău PrimeTV NTV Moldova
V.	<i>They rendered the subject in the most detailed way.</i>	JurnalTV

DETAILED ANALYSIS

CATEGORY II

RTR Moldova, First in Moldova

RTR Moldova

Until the station was suspended (as a measure to „[secure the national informational space](#)”), RTR Moldova news could hardly be found on the Internet, even though the station has an official [website](#) and a [YouTube](#) page. From the materials posted on [Facebook](#), we identified **three news items**.

✚ [The news item](#) (TC 39.31) broadcasted by RTR Moldova on the second day of the NATO meeting, starts with an apparently neutral and balanced tone, but **most of the material has nothing to do with the summit itself and is dedicated more to the Kremlin's statements**.

From the first part of the news we learn, among other things, that the foreign ministers of NATO countries "discussed ways to increase support for Ukraine", that "Ukraine's accession to NATO is not a priority", and that the US and its allies have invested "billions of dollars in aid to Ukraine", "especially in the form of weapons", but also that the Ukrainian foreign minister has asked NATO states to increase this military aid. And **that's pretty much the end of the NATO summit news**.

In the continuation of the material, *RTRM* quotes in detail a Telegram post by the spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry, **taking practically ad litteram the texts of Russian agencies** ([ria.ru](#), [aif.ru](#), [sputnik](#), [lenta.ru](#)) which, on this occasion, intensely promoted the idea that **Russia is a pacifying force, that it acts in Ukraine as NATO did in Serbia and that the Alliance is not a defensive force**.

At the end, the *RTRM* claims that Russia is "attacking the structures of Ukraine's military administration and energy systems" from October 2022, and suggests that this would only be a

"**response to the Crimean bridge attack**", which the Ukrainian side does not recognise. The material thus also ends with one of **Moscow's narratives that Russia has come to bring peace to Ukraine**, which is "solely to blame for the bloodshed on its territories".

Taken out of context and used by Russia as "arguments" for its aggression in the neighbouring country, this information cannot serve as background in the news dedicated to the NATO meeting.

✿ On the same day, RTRM presents another [news item](#) (TC 42.55) on the subject, this time a generally neutral material, containing de facto excerpts from the **statements of the Moldovan Foreign Minister and the NATO Secretary General**.

The Moldovan minister is quoted as saying that [Moldova is a neutral country](#), but neutrality does not mean self-isolation (...) While Stoltenberg talks about common security concerns "*especially in the Black Sea and Western Balkans region*", and that allies are determined to increase support for partners "*affected by Russian pressure*", including Republic of Moldova.

The news precedes a piece on the "close partnership" between China and Russia in the energy sector and Beijing's intention to "deepen" this partnership.

✿ RTRM returns to the subject the day after the summit, this time with a [news item](#) (TC 42.10) reporting, among other things, **on the summit's decisions regarding the NATO-China relationship**, a topic ignored by most Moldovan channels.

The news does not forget to mention that NATO "is ready to increase its support for Bosnia, Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova", but focuses in particular on the "**unprecedented**" **military aid offered to Ukraine**, and presents excerpts from statements on this subject by the NATO leader and the head of American diplomacy, as well as the reaction of the Ukrainian Prime Minister, who thanks for the aid and asks for "*modern air defence systems, Patriot*".

We did not find in any of the RTRM materials in any of the news items the statements condemning Russia's actions – [the NATO foreign ministers' statement](#), or the main statements of the Alliance leader or the US Secretary of State, and only fragmentarily [some of the conclusions of the NATO meeting](#).

Recommendations

In the event of a return to broadcast, we recommend to the station:

- **Avoid Russian propaganda channels as a source of information**, as they are used to promote ideas and perspectives that violate the fundamental values and rights of democracy and free and open societies.
- **Become more rigorously researched**, seek out information that is objective, and ensure that they **carefully evaluate sources of information before accepting them as true**. The language used in the news betrays at times that it was translated from Russian. Some news items are visibly taken from the official Russian press.
- **Indicate the sources of the video material used**. Very often in place of the labels there is a single tag: *youtube*, which is obviously a violation of audiovisual legislation.
- **Pay more attention to the context and background** without which many events can lose their meaning and connotations.
- **Keep (at minimum volume) the original voice of the speakers**, even if they dub the chosen video quotes. The synchronicity used in RTR Moldova news is in 90% of cases fully covered by the moderator's voice. As we do not hear the speaker's voice, it is difficult to qualify the translations as authentic or not.

First in Moldova

The NATO meeting in Bucharest attracted very little attention from the editors of *First in Moldova*, who limited themselves to presenting only two short reports of less than a minute each. But this limited space was **enough to interject distorted messages into the reporting of the real facts - messages that reverberate with the narratives of the Russian propaganda press**.

✿ On 29 November, *First in Moldova* presents an extremely short [studio/intro](#), which it uses only to open a foreign news cluster. The information refers to a single statement by the US Secretary of State that "*the Biden administration has budgeted \$1.1 billion to support the energy sector in Ukraine and Moldova*".

✚ Another [very brief narrative](#) (V/O 25:43-26:15) also opens a cluster of externals. The story abounds with misinterpretations, which appear in the way words are chosen that distort [the authentic messages](#). The idea that *the Alliance is going on the offensive* is inoculated by a simple juggling of terms: "NATO will **expand its presence** in the region - from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea"; "The Alliance intends **to increase its presence** in Eastern Europe".

Without [context](#) and without the important clarification that these actions are a response to Russia's attacks, this information can create false impressions designed to promote one of the Kremlin's favourite narratives that "NATO is no longer a defensive alliance" and "the West is deliberately using the arming of Ukraine to threaten Russia".

First in Moldova states instead that Washington has allegedly "suggested that the European side of NATO should engage in a hybrid confrontation with Beijing" - another erroneous assertion unsupported by any actual quotes that resonate with Moscow's claims that "NATO is controlled by the US" and that "the Alliance poses a threat that forces Russia to retaliate" and that "China and Russia are best friends in their opposition to the West".

Recommendations:

The recommendations are largely the same as for RTR Moldova:

- **Accurately reproduce factual material**, avoid falsehoods and use only relevant and accurate data without taking it out of context and misinterpreting it.
- **Avoid Russian propaganda channels as a source of information.**
- Respect ethical rules and legislation in force.

CATEGORY III

Moldova 1 , TV8

Moldova 1

Moldova 1 (M1) reports **five news items** related to the event under analysis, which would suggest sufficient coverage. However, two of these are short voiceovers, and one is repeated in the logs two days in a row. M1 presents the events relatively evenly. Surprisingly, however, despite being the public broadcaster, M1 gives the event less attention than other channels, even though it would be about the country's interests and Moldova's relations with NATO.

✚ On the first day of the meeting, on November 29, M1 presented in the daily news a short V/O, [NATO MEETING IN BUCHAREST](#), announcing that the Republic of Moldova participates for the first time in the meeting of foreign ministers of the member countries of the Alliance. Among the many details we are given, however, we do not find out what the purpose of this meeting actually is.

✚ In the Prime Time news, however, we already find a developed material, [NATO SUMMIT IN BUCHAREST](#), which is given **the first position in the news** and a rather complex account of the facts. This time we are also informed of the purpose of this meeting: "NATO met to discuss the challenges posed on the Eastern flank by Russia's war against Ukraine".

The Alliance leader's statement that "NATO will continue to stand by Ukraine for as long as needed" is used as the central message. And as video quotes the main statements from the first day of the meeting are shown, in which:

- NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg: the Alliance is "increasing the readiness of its troops" in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- US Chief of Diplomacy Blinken: the US will support Romania as the Black Sea region is "a critical component of NATO's defence".
- Romania's foreign minister Aurescu opts for the fastest possible implementation of Madrid summit decisions aimed at defending the Eastern Flank.

It is also recalled that in a meeting with Blinken, the Romanian President stressed the need for support for the Republic of Moldova.

✚ On 30 November, the news item dedicated to [NATO meeting supporting Ukraine](#) (TC 03:20 - 05:53) appears again in the first minutes of the main newscast, and the central message is that Alliance members "pledged to continue to provide military and economic support to Ukraine to resist Russian invasion". This is, in essence, the meaning of the excerpts of the statements chosen by M1 from the addresses of the NATO leader and the US diplomatic chief. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba also appears in the news with an address calling for military equipment to fight in winter conditions.

At the end, M1 recalls that NATO foreign ministers adopted "a resolution condemning Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, in particular the attacks against the population and civilian infrastructure, as well as Moscow's energy blackmail".

✿ Although an important first for Moldova, [Moldova's participation in the NATO meeting](#) (TC 09:49 - 11:11) **was given a much less prominent place in the diary on the second day of the summit.**

From **the short and untitled material** we only learn that the Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister asked in Bucharest for "NATO support to strengthen the national security and defence sector in line with new developments and requirements".

What follows, without any introduction, is an excerpt from Stoltenberg's statement, which states, among other things, that he recently discussed with Maia Sandu the extension of the partnership with NATO, given that Moldova "wants to preserve its neutrality".

✿ [Succes at NATO Summit](#) (TC 05:08- 06:08) is a short news item based on two posts by Minister Popescu on his Telegram channel. But **only the first** of these refers to the summit.

While other channels paid particular attention to the post, **including N.Popescu's video statement**, M1 simply quoted him in a Voiceover, **which betrays at least the lack of "seriousness" that public television showed in relation to this subject.**

We recommend M1 to pay more attention to:

- **Important declarations**, and in this case especially the [Foreign Ministers' Declaration](#), which contains the position of principle of the member countries of the Alliance. Although, apparently, the document would not be directly related to the Republic of Moldova, **it has repercussions for it**, given its geographical position and the impact of the forces involved in an event such as the one reported.
- **Content of news programmes, avoidance of repetition.** Repeating the same material in two prime time news programmes two days in a row is unacceptable for a serious TV station.
- **Text editing.** We noted several shortcomings that can lead to misunderstanding of messages, such as: misinterpretation of data; inaccurate translations; wooden language that distorts the meaning, *e.g.*: "Iohannis stressed the need for partnership support for the Republic of Moldova" etc.
- **Video editing**, which also betrays a certain sloppiness, often showing arbitrarily chosen images unrelated to the event.
- **The source of the video images**, which is not indicated in any of the news reports, which is a violation of the audiovisual legislation in force, but also disrespectful to viewers.

TV 8

TV8 was among the TV channels that made just **four** news reports: one on the eve of the summit, two on the first day of the meeting and one the day after. However, we regret to say that, whether this was the case or not, the material presented contained incorrect data and regrettable errors.

✿ Reports on the event begin on TV8 already on the eve of the summit, when the station presents a short news item, [NATO summit in Bucharest](#) (TC 06:55 - 08:45). The news item is based on an excerpt (taken from the Romanian channel Digi24) of an interview given by the Romanian Foreign Minister on the occasion of the meeting and emphasises that the main topics of the meeting will be the Alliance's support to Ukraine and the energy security of the region.

Afterwards, the moderator lists what Aurescu called the "premieres" of this summit, including the participation of the head of diplomacy from Chisinau. Here, however, follows a **serious error** committed by TV8 when they call the **Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina - allies**, i.e. "members" of the Alliance, which is a falsehood.

✿ On 29 November, on the first day of the meeting, in the news item [New aid for Ukraine](#) (TC 08:30 - 11:04), **the NATO summit in Bucharest is mentioned only in passing.** From the material, we learn that NATO countries have promised to support Kiev and that the US will provide substantial financial aid to help Ukraine "stand up to the destruction wrought by the Russian army".

The language of the news, namely the **intro, is again shaded by contradictions**, as it states that, quote: *'contrary to expectations, there have been no massive missile attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure'*. Who and why 'expected' these 'massive attacks', and why they 'did not happen' - we do not learn from the news.

A large part of the material is (as the text of the news item "NATO sends aid and money to Kiev" suggests) TV8's attempt to make a list of the aid that the Alliance has decided to give to Ukraine. However, TV8 does not inform **what NATO's latest decisions have been in this regard and does not** list the Alliance's contributions so far. What we do hear is a **list of decisions taken, at various times, by various European states, some of which are not yet members of the Alliance, such as Sweden**. Thus, the aid already received by Ukraine from [France](#) and [Slovakia](#) is being lumped together with the promise of aid announced two weeks earlier by Sweden - which is only a candidate for NATO membership. Other aid offered by other NATO members at the time of going to press is not mentioned.

Towards the end of the news, TV8 editors state that Putin's spokesman, D.Peskov, is quoted as saying that *"There can be no question of negotiations"*. This **quote is taken out of context**. In reality, the statement that day sounded [like this](#): *"Now, no negotiations are possible, because the Ukrainian side denies it completely"*.

✿ However, TV8 also presents a news item more closely related to the ministerial, and even a particularly important one (although it appears second in order), being dedicated to the decisions of the meeting in relation to Moldova.

The news item entitled [Promise of help from NATO](#) (TC 13:29 - 17:22) **is a transmission from Bucharest by TV8's "special envoy"** Cristina Lujan (pre-recorded, probably, as she refers to Jens Stoltenberg's conference as something that is about to happen). Thus, we deduce that the station nevertheless paid special attention to the event, and the reasons for placing the news below in the news program were most likely technical.

✿ The following material, [Important meeting in Bucharest](#) (TC 14:56 - 17:22), repeats de facto the theses announced by the correspondent, illustrating them with excerpts from the officials' statements. The leader of NATO, then the Romanian Foreign Minister, and the US Secretary of State are shown in video clips referring to Moldova. It is mentioned that the country must be helped in its fight against the economic and energy challenges, caused by the war in Ukraine, and that NATO and its allies are ready to provide this practical support.

✿ TV8 also presents a news item on the last day of the summit, gathering under the title [More support from NATO](#) (TC 12:37 - 15:57) topics that are not necessarily related to each other. The reporters place in line with the support Moldova expects from the Alliance - the [statement](#) of the Moldovan Foreign Minister that *"Neutrality does not mean self-isolation, demilitarization..."* etc.

However, TV8 also went in the wrong direction and **confused Moldova's "neutrality" with its "non-militarization"**, as the presenter tells us in the intro of the news. Even with the word "non" in front of it, the term ["militarization"](#) retains its negative connotations, and in the context of a country like Moldova, it sounds inappropriate. Instead, it rhymes perfectly with propagandistic narratives that imply that *"NATO wants to arm Moldova and [use it in a war with Russia](#)"* or that *"The Moldovan government wants [to force Moldova into NATO](#)"*, etc. It is all the more strange to find such language on a pro-democratic channel like TV8, which has no reputation for promoting pro-Kremlin messages.

Recommendations:

We suggest the post to pay more attention to:

- **Documentation**, in order to avoid serious falsehoods, such as *"Moldova - "allied" state"* etc. - inadmissible errors for an authoritative TV station such as TV8.
- **Important statements**, and in this case, especially [the Foreign Ministers' Declaration](#), a fundamental document of the meeting ignored by TV8.
- **Expressions of expression**, but also the avoidance of expressions from the arsenal of the boulevard press, such as *"first man in NATO"*, etc.
- **Writing/editing texts**. We have pointed out mistakes like: *"the head of diplomacy in Bucharest, Antony Blinken"*.
- **Information, much of which is only roughly reproduced**, thus eroding its credibility. E.g. *"an American expert stated to SkyNews"* etc.

*At the same time, in the context of "strong" claims, such as that "new attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure are "expected", not indicating the exact sources is a **manipulative statement likely to create panic**.*



- **Video sources, some of which are not indicated** or are wrongly indicated.
- **The rendering of context and background** without which many events can lose their meaning and connotations.

CATEGORY IV

ProTV, Prime TV, NTV

PrimeTV presented **three** news items related to the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Bucharest, one on the eve of the summit and one in the days to follow. The event was reported accurately, without serious deviations, with only a few small errors, but which did not affect the meaning of the main messages.

✿ The news of 28 November, [NATO summit in Bucharest](#) (TC 08:23 - 11:50), announces the holding in Bucharest of "the most important NATO event since the Madrid summit" and begins with the message of the Alliance leader: "*NATO is here and we will do whatever is necessary to defend all allies (...) and "to cope with Russia" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova and Georgia*". The material continues in the same key and, although it is not de facto directly about Ukraine, the Ukrainian bicolour is present in the pictures.

The news item uses excerpts from the main statements of the day and ends with a review of the agenda of the meeting and does not forget to mention the presence of the Moldovan minister at the event.

✿ The first day of the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting - PrimeTV devotes almost four minutes to the event, highlighting its importance. The channel prefers to report the events according to their **proximity and with an emphasis on the participation of the Republic of Moldova** in the event (the title of the news item [Moldova, on the agenda of the NATO meeting shows this](#)). In this regard, an excerpt from the statement of the Romanian President is also presented, welcoming the fact that this premiere is taking place in Bucharest.

The balanced and well-documented material contains most of the important statements of the day.

✿ And on the second day of the meeting, in a news item entitled [NATO boosts aid](#), PrimeTV focused mainly on Moldova's expectations from the summit and the promised aid in overcoming war crises and reducing dependence on Russia.

It is also mentioned that the Republic of Moldova participated in such a meeting as a partner, and the head of diplomacy in Chisinau stresses that Moldova does not aim to be a NATO member, but wants to strengthen its defence capabilities.

PrimeTV does not forget to report that the participants in the forum presented a joint statement "showing that Russia bears responsibility for the war in Ukraine" - without giving too many details.

PrimeTV also tries to reassure viewers with the fact that "according to analyses from Chisinau, our country is not threatened by a military scenario in the coming weeks and months".

The material ends with Moscow's reaction to the NATO meeting, with Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zaharova quoted (text only) as saying that "*the West is drawing Moldova into an anti-Russian campaign, following a Ukrainian-like scenario*".

Recommendations:

- **Take more care with correct editing and** wording to avoid errors and misinformation.
- **Be more careful when translating synchronicity.** One of the excerpts from Stoltenberg's statement is not translated/subtitled and remained in English. Fortunately, it is not the most important of the quoted statements and seems to be a technical oversight.
- **Use neutral news-closing formulas,** giving preference to background and context information. Ending the news with one side's position (as in the last summit story) is manipulative, equal to "emphasising" its importance.

ProTV produced a total of three news items dedicated to the NATO meeting in Bucharest, one on the first day of the summit and two on the following day.

✿ NATO will step up winter aid to Ukraine, ProTV reports at the beginning of the first day of the [NATO meeting in Bucharest](#) (TC 10:17 - 13:45).

The news begins with the NATO leader's statement stressing that "*NATO will defend every inch of Ukraine (...)*", ProTV also shows an excerpt from the Romanian President's statement welcoming Moldova's presence for the first time at the NATO meeting. In another Synchron, Iohannis calls for "*more defence force on the Eastern Front*".

At the end, the material states that NATO ministers also adopted a Joint Declaration condemning Russia's actions and reaffirming support for Ukraine.

Among the highlights of the summit agenda, **ProTV also finds time for some impressive scenes** to colour the narrative: fighter jets accompanying the NATO Secretary General's flight; Stoltenberg opening the NATO ministerial, banging the "President's hammer" etc.

✿ On the second day of the summit, *ProTV Chisinau* presents two news items. The first, [NATO increases support for Moldova](#) (TC 06:29 - 09:10), is dedicated to the statements at the end of the meeting, with a focus on the relationship between NATO and Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the NATO leader's statements, we learn that the allies have pledged to increase support for the three partners so that it is not "*too late, as happened with Ukraine*".

The position of Chisinau and the synchrony with Minister Nicu Popescu follows, with his statement that "although it is a neutral country", the Republic of Moldova cannot remain indifferent to the war started by Russia in Ukraine, and the government in Chisinau wants to be prepared for any situation.

✿ "No NATO enlargement to Ukraine" and "substantial aid for Kiev on the eve of winter" - these are, according to ProTV Chisinau, the main decisions taken by NATO ministers meeting in Bucharest, to which it dedicates a second news item in the 30 November news, [NATO meeting, day two](#) (TC 09:11 - 11:21)

The day's top news of the day concludes with the Moscow government's response, in which Maria Zaharova says that NATO's aid to Ukraine is prolonging the conflict. ProTV prefers to reduce Moscow's message to a single sentence and doesn't give Russian officials any last words. The journalists prefer to conclude with a brief background that the Bucharest summit is the first such event to take place "on the Eastern flank" since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Recommendations:

- - Use diacritics when translating the quotes and statements used, to make them more intelligible and easier to read and understood for the Moldovan audience, which is sufficiently "spoiled" with the Russian-language news, which translates and voice-dubs all speakers.

NTV Moldova

NTV Moldova has produced a **single**, neutral and balanced **report** on the Bucharest meeting. However, as it avoids presenting the subject in more detail, the channel can be suspected of a subtle form of manipulation by omitting essential information.

On 30 November, NTV Moldova, in its coverage of the [NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#), preferred to focus strictly on Moldova's first participation in the session dedicated to partner countries

In its material, *NTV Moldova* extensively presents Nicu Popescu's [statements](#) in which he says that our country is also affected by the invasion of the Russian Federation, but does not intend to join military alliances, although its neutrality "does not mean self-isolation, demilitarization or indifference to what is happening in the world".

NTV Moldova also presented an excerpt from the statements of the Secretary General of the Alliance, who gives assurances that the Republic of Moldova will receive the full support of NATO states, but will not violate the principle of neutrality.



Recommendations:

- **Give more space to important topics such as the one under review, selective presentation of facts and ignoring essential information is a form of manipulation/disinformation.**
- **Pay more attention to documenting topics to avoid omitting important statements.**
- **Pay more attention to video sources, many of which are not indicated or are wrongly indicated (Example: YouTube)**

CATEGORY V

Jurnal TV

Jurnal TV

Jurnal TV is the TV channel that gave the most attention and airtime to the NATO summit in Bucharest. The news editorial team of the channel managed to write and present **7 reports** on this occasion: one on the eve of the summit, 2 - on the first day and 4 - on the next day of the meeting. Jurnal TV is also one of the few TV channels to broadcast from Bucharest, entrusting **its correspondent in Bucharest not only to present the main points on the agenda of the meeting, but also to ask questions directly at the press conferences of high officials.**

✿ The news cycle dedicated to the Bucharest meeting begins on the eve of the summit with a news announcement, [Stoltenberg in Bucharest](#) (TC 11:15 - 15:21), which contains **a transmission from Cotroceni** by the JurnalTV correspondent - **a gesture that shows the seriousness with which JurnalTV has treated this event.** In his foray (**which appears to be a live broadcast**), the reporter describes the agenda of the NATO Secretary General - a description, **perhaps, too detailed for the audience in Chisinau** - after which follows some excerpts from the statements of Jen Stoltenberg and Klaus Iohannis, which can be summarized in the following messages, which will be found in the background and in the reports in the coming days:

- *We can't let Putin win;*
- *In the face of the Russian invasion, NATO will look for ways to continue to support Ukraine, but also other affected countries such as the Republic of Moldova;*
- *Romania to increase defence spending, will support Ukraine, but also the Republic of Moldova, to overcome the social, economic and energy difficulties caused by the war".*

✿ On the first day of the meeting, Jurnal TV presents a single material [NATO Summit in Bucharest](#) (TC 01:35 - 05:08) dedicated to the event.

"NATO is here, it is vigilant and it is ready to defend every inch of allied territory" begins the news anchor in a solemn tone, quoting the NATO Secretary General. The piece highlights several of the day's key moments, emphasising that the Alliance will increase its presence on the Eastern flank".

JurnalTV presents excerpts from statements by Stoltenberg and President Iohannis welcoming Moldova's presence at the meeting. From the text we also learn that the subject of the energy crisis was discussed and the *"status of strategic bilateral projects" was assessed, "which allows Romania to be an energy supplier in the region".*

✿ In the November 29 news, JurnalTV places another news item indirectly related to the meeting, [Blinken at the „We are People” exhibition](#) (TC 31:27 - 33:39). Although it refers to the cultural program of the US Secretary of State's visit, the news ends with a background that presents some general moments about the NATO meeting.

✿ On the second day of the summit, the station dedicates **four news items** to the event (TC 09:15-21:33), which are all, with the exception of the first item, introduced by JurnalTV's correspondent in Bucharest.

[In his broadcast from Bucharest](#), the correspondent describes what happened as *"a historic day for the Republic of Moldova"*, as his participation in the meeting *"was necessary to understand what its greatest needs are at this time of crisis"*. The journalist then quotes several statements made by the Moldovan foreign minister, such as that Chisinau is holding talks with NATO

to "strengthen its defence capabilities" and that a peaceful solution is "the only possible" solution to the Transnistrian conflict.

The first news item in the grouping presented by the correspondent, [Neutrality does not mean self-isolation](#) (TC 09:15 - 14:19), begins with the statement of NATO Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană (quoted on CARTON), according to which **the Alliance could grant Moldova "the prospect** of being part of the European space and NATO".

Then Nicu Popescu appears with the statement that "*neutrality of the Republic of Moldova does not mean self-isolation (...)*". Compared to other stations, JurnalTV also quotes Popescu's explanation that "**civil society is debating the possibility of revising this principle**" (of neutrality), but that so far "this has not been turned into a 'political process'".

The news also contains **the question asked by JurnalTV reporter to the Romanian Minister of Defence**, according to which Ukraine's victory in the war "*could be a favourable premise for resolving the Transnistrian conflict.*"

NATO plans to increase support for "partners affected by Russian pressure" - Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova.

✿ In the second foray, [NATO: We strongly support Ukraine](#) (TC 14:20 - 16:53), the Bucharest correspondent briefly quotes the main statements of the NATO Secretary General and the US Secretary of State, followed by excerpts from the summing up conferences held by the two.

On the text, the Russian Foreign Ministry representative Maria Zaharova is quoted as saying that "*NATO foreign ministers have confirmed a lack of interest in resolving the war in Ukraine, denying that they are committing "criminal acts"*".

JurnalTV doesn't let the news end with Moscow's statement, and cites Forbes Ukraine data that Russia has already spent \$82 billion on this war.

✿ At the end of the package, the station presents, in a separate news item, [Stoltenberg, answering for Jurnal TV](#) (TC 19:07 - 21:33), the question that **his reporter asked personally to the NATO Secretary General**, namely "*what are NATO's capabilities to reduce the security threat to the Republic of Moldova*" and the official's answer that:

- Moldova is a NATO partner, willing to work closely with Moldova, "*obviously respecting the fact that Moldova does not want to join NATO and wants to keep its neutrality.*"

Recommendations:

The channel would gain a lot if:

- **It could pay less attention to details (those that are less relevant) and more attention to syntheses, so that the overall picture is clearer.** It is important to pay attention to detail, but this should be done in a way that helps the viewer to find their way through the flow of information. For example, on one day, the station devotes a news package to the event, taking up almost a third of the diary. Because of the abundance of data, references and statements, this information can be quite hard to digest.
- They would pay more attention to the editing of the text, **avoiding overly officious, wooden language of official speeches.** Journalism is about providing important and relevant information to the general public, and the use of formal language can make this information seem cumbersome, difficult to understand and boring to viewers.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we conclude that the channels JurnalTV, ProTV, and PrimeTV were the closest in reflecting the realities of the international current events in the case of the monitored topic, and they reported and analyzed the subject in the most detail, clearly and without distorting messages.

TV8 and Moldova1 made a considerable effort to cover the subject on, but these stations presented inaccurate details or allowed themselves to be "sloppy", which led to some distortion of the messages. This kind of deviation does not indicate any propagandistic intent. In order to prevent such situations in the future, we suggest the above-mentioned recommendations described in each individual case.

The most detailed coverage of the events this time was given by JurnalTV journalists, who gave the subject the most attention and airtime. JurnalTV is also one of the few broadcasters that conducted a live broadcast from Bucharest. JurnalTV's correspondent not only presented the main points on the agenda of the meeting, but also managed to ask questions directly to the high officials.



WatchDog.MD

As with other analyses, we found a conscious editorial policy of taking over the Kremlin's propaganda narrative on some TV stations. In particular, this refers in this case to RTR Moldova and First in Moldova.

This analysis is valid for this specific case study and we do not recommend extrapolating conclusions to editorial policies more broadly.



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