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**Religion as a tool of state influence: development and current role of the
Russian Orthodox Church**

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***Abstract.** The article provides a comprehensive analysis of religious institutions as instruments of political and information-psychological influence of Russian Federation's activities. It examines historical development of relations between the state and the Orthodox Church from early twentieth century to the*



present. Particular attention is focused on transformation of the church structures during Soviet period and their integration into the system of state governance. Special emphasis is placed on the mechanisms of control over the Russian Orthodox Church by Soviet security services, which ensured its functioning as an element of the ideological apparatus and as a tool of foreign policy influence during the Cold War.

This study analyzes preservation of Russian Orthodox Church institutional continuity in post-Soviet period, absence of comprehensive institutional reform and lustration, which contributed to the persistence of Soviet practices and their adaptation to new geopolitical conditions. The role of Russkiy mir is examined as ideological foundation of Russian Orthodox Church's contemporary activities, combining religious, cultural, and political elements and serving as a key instrument of Russia's "soft power" policy.

Particular attention is devoted to activities of Russian Orthodox Church and its affiliated religious structures in Ukraine, including Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, Old Believer communities. It describes other religious groups maintaining ties with the Russian religious center. The article analyzes their influence on public opinion formation, dissemination of pro-Russian narratives, and their participation in information and psychological influence operations in the war for the Independence of Ukraine. It also considers cases of ideological support for Russia's aggressive policy by certain representatives of clergy, as well as use of religious infrastructure in occupied territories.

The role of financial, organizational, and cultural instruments including specialized foundations, educational and humanitarian projects in shaping networks of influence as part of Russia's hybrid strategy is highlighted. The study demonstrates that the religious factor constitutes an important component of modern information and psychological operations aimed at delegitimizing alternative development models, particularly Ukraine's European integration.



It is concluded that in contemporary conditions Russian Orthodox Church functions not only as a religious institution but also as a geopolitical instrument integrated into the state policy of Russian Federation. Necessity of further interdisciplinary research on the religious factor in the context of national and international security is substantiated, along with development of effective mechanisms to counter information and psychological threats.

Keywords. *Russian Orthodox Church, information and psychological operations, information-psychological influence, hybrid warfare, soft power, Russkiy mir, religious factor, propaganda, disinformation, networks of influence.*

**Релігія як інструмент державного впливу: розвиток та сучасна роль
Російської православної церкви**

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***Анотація.** У статті здійснено комплексний аналіз використання церковних інституцій як інструменту політичного та інформаційно-психологічного впливу в контексті діяльності Російської Федерації. Досліджено історичний розвиток взаємовідносин між державою та православною церквою від початку XX ст. до сучасності, зокрема трансформацію церковних структур у період радянської влади та їх інтеграцію в систему державного управління. Особливу увагу приділено механізмам контролю над Російською православною церквою з боку радянських спецслужб, що забезпечили її функціонування як елемента ідеологічного апарату та інструменту зовнішньополітичного впливу в умовах “холодної війни”.*

Проаналізовано процес збереження інституційної спадковості Російської православної церкви у пострадянський період, зокрема відсутність повноцінного інституційного очищення та люстрації, що сприяло консервації радянських практик і їх адаптації до нових геополітичних умов. Розкрито роль концепції “русского мира” як ідеологічної основи сучасної діяльності Російської православної церкви, що поєднує релігійні, культурні та політичні компоненти і використовується як інструмент реалізації політики “м’якої сили” Російської Федерації.

Окрему увагу приділено діяльності Російської православної церкви та афілійованих з нею релігійних структур на території України, зокрема Української православної церкви Московського патріархату,



старообрядницьких громад та інших релігійних організацій, що зберігали зв'язки з російським релігійним центром. Проаналізовано їхній вплив на формування суспільних настроїв, поширення проросійських наративів, а також участь у процесах інформаційно-психологічного впливу в умовах війни за Незалежність України. Розглянуто факти ідеологічної підтримки агресивної політики Росії з боку окремих представників духовенства, а також використання релігійної інфраструктури в умовах окупації.

Висвітлено роль фінансових, організаційних та культурних інструментів, включно з діяльністю спеціалізованих фондів, освітніх і гуманітарних проектів, у формуванні мереж впливу Російської православної церкви як складової російської зовнішньої політики. Показано, що релігійний чинник виступає важливим елементом сучасних інформаційно-психологічних операцій, спрямованих на делегітимізацію альтернативних моделей розвитку, зокрема європейської інтеграції України.

Зроблено висновок, що Російська православна церква у сучасних умовах функціонує не лише як релігійна інституція, але й як інструмент геополітичного впливу, інтегрований у систему державної політики Російської Федерації. Обґрунтовано необхідність подальших міждисциплінарних досліджень релігійного чинника у контексті національної та міжнародної безпеки, а також розробки ефективних механізмів протидії інформаційно-психологічним загрозам.

Ключові слова. *Російська православна церква, інформаційно-психологічні операції, інформаційно-психологічний вплив, гібридна війна, “м’яка сила”, “русский мир”, релігійний чинник, пропаганда, дезінформація, мережі впливу.*

Problem Statement. In the context of international security transformation, particular importance is attached to the study of non-traditional instruments of

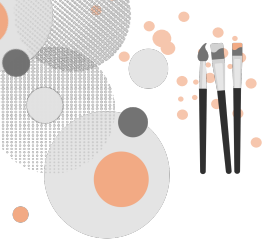


influence employed by states within policy activities. One such instrument is religious institutions, which, while formally maintaining a spiritual character, may perform functions of political and information-psychological influence. In this regard, the Russian Orthodox Church serves as an important element of the foreign policy strategy of the Russian Federation, particularly in the implementation of the concepts of “soft power” and the ideology of the *Russkiy mir*.

This issue is of particular relevance in Ukraine, where, under conditions of ongoing Russian aggression, the religious factor is used as a tool for destabilizing the internal political situation, influencing public consciousness, and legitimizing the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation. Accordingly, there is a need for a comprehensive scholarly analysis of the role of religious structures within the system of contemporary information and psychological operations.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Recent studies indicate a steady increase in scholarly interest in the role of religion within the Russian Federation’s hybrid aggression strategy, particularly in the context of the Russian Orthodox Church’s use as an instrument of “soft power” and information-psychological influence. In this vein, M. Laruelle [5] views the religious component as part of broader ideological constructs of Russian nationalism, while O. Lysenko [13] and O. Sagan [15] emphasize the institutional role of Orthodoxy in shaping the Russian Federation’s policy of influence. V. Gorbulin emphasizes the significance of the religious factor in the structure of national security and hybrid threats, while O. Petasyuk and Y. Stepanov [14] analyze religious organizations as an instrument of Russian influence on Ukrainian society.

S. Zdioruk makes a significant contribution to the study of the destructive potential of the religious factor, substantiating the role of the Russian Orthodox Church as an instrument of hybrid influence and a threat to national security. A conceptual understanding of the transformation of religion into a political instrument is presented in the works of S. Govorun, who explores the phenomenon of “political



Orthodoxy,” as well as V. Yelensky, who analyzes the place of religion in global politics. P. Pavlenko, in turn, examines the “Russian World” ideologeme as a key instrument of the Russian Orthodox Church’s religious and political expansion.

A separate body of research is devoted to issues of identity and internal stability. In particular, N. Kochan, in her dissertation, analyzes the influence of the Moscow Patriarchate on ethnopolitical processes in Ukraine, emphasizing its role in destabilizing society. V. Khromets examines the transformation of religious identity in the context of globalization, revealing the mechanisms of identity manipulation through church institutions. R. Tyshkevych highlights the policies of the Russian Orthodox Church as a threat to Ukraine’s national security, analyzing its activities within the framework of hybrid conflict.

At the same time, recent works by I. Kozlovsky, L. Filipovich, S. Zdioruk, and A. Kolodny complement this analysis by highlighting the spiritual and value-based dimensions of war, interfaith interaction, the transformation of state-confessional relations, and the significance of confessional diversity for national security. Taken together, these studies form a comprehensive picture of religious institutions as a multidimensional instrument of influence that combines ideological, informational, and sociocultural mechanisms and plays a key role in contemporary hybrid conflicts.

Nevertheless, several aspects of the issue remain inadequately explored. In particular, further analysis is required regarding the mechanisms of transformation of Soviet models of control over the Church into contemporary forms of influence, role of financial and organizational networks of the Russian Orthodox Church in the international environment, as well as the specifics of its participation in modern information and psychological operations.

Thus, the existing body of scholarly literature provides a solid theoretical foundation for studying the Russian Orthodox Church as an instrument of political and informational influence; however, a comprehensive interdisciplinary



understanding of this issue in the context of modern hybrid warfare requires further development.

Study's methodological framework is based on a combination of general scientific and specialized approaches. Historical and chronological methods were used to analyze development of relations between the state and the church; comparative method was used to compare different stages and models of church-state interaction; institutional approach was used to study religious organization's role of political and informational-psychological influence. In addition, elements of interdisciplinary analysis were applied, combining approaches from political science, religious studies, and security studies.

The purpose of this article is to conduct a comprehensive study of the Russian Orthodox Church's role as an instrument of political and information-psychological influence of the Russian Federation, taking into account the historical prerequisites for the formation of this function, evolution of church-state relations in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, and to determine the place and significance of the Russian Orthodox Church within the system of contemporary warfare against Ukraine.

Presentation of the main material. Use of religious institutions as instruments of political and information-psychological influence has deep historical roots. Only brief period of relative independence of Russian Church from the state occurred during the revolutionary events of 1917, when Orthodox Russian Church attempted to restore its autonomy by electing Patriarch Tikhon. However, this period of relative independence proved to be short-lived.

In the 1920s, the Bolshevik regime shifted from sporadic anti-religious campaigns to a systematic policy of repression against the clergy, which included physical extermination, arrests, and the forced emigration of church figures. Some hierarchs, including Patriarch Tikhon, attempted to demonstrate loyalty to new authorities; however, this did not guarantee their safety. Death of Tikhon in 1925



under unclear circumstances further underscored the vulnerability of the Church under a totalitarian regime [6].

The subsequent stage in transformation of church-state relations is associated with activities of locum tenens of the patriarchal throne, Sergius (Stargorodsky), who in 1927 proclaimed a policy of loyalty to the Soviet government. This step, known as “Sergianism,” did not halt repressions but laid foundation for a future model of coexistence between the Church and the state.

As a result of mass purges by the late 1930s, leadership of Orthodox Russian Church was reduced to a minimum, and a significant portion of clergy was either executed or repressed. At the same time, Orthodox Russian Church abroad strongly condemned this policy, viewing it as a compromise with the “satanic” regime. [3, p. 159; 19].

World War II marked a turning point. In face of a threat to existence of the Soviet Union, Stalin changed his policy toward the Church, effectively legalizing its activities and allowing the election of a Patriarch. At the same time, this “revival” was purely instrumental in nature. Instead of Orthodox Russian Church in its pre-revolutionary form, a new model of the Russian Orthodox Church was established, fully integrated into the system of state governance and placed under the complete control of state security bodies. In effect, a new model of church organization was created, functioning as an element of the Soviet state apparatus [1].

Archival materials indicate that from that time onward, the key role in the functioning of Russian Orthodox Church was played by the state security services People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). Later, the Committee for State Security (KGB) controlled appointment of clergy, the content of sermons, international contacts, and internal policy of the Church. A significant part of episcopate and clergy was involved in intelligence activities – both on voluntary and coercive grounds. Participation in church governance effectively implied cooperation with state security agencies. It transformed Russian Orthodox Church



into a specific instrument of informational influence both domestically and internationally.

During the Cold War, Russian Orthodox Church was actively used by the USSR as a channel of foreign policy influence. Through participation in international religious organizations, ecumenical movement, and contacts with the diaspora. It performed functions of “soft power,” contributing to the formation of a positive image of the Soviet state and the promotion of its political narratives. At the same time, this activity was accompanied by strict control by the KGB, ensuring its full alignment with state interests [3, p. 207].

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, a significant part of Soviet influence instruments, including KGB agent networks, underwent transformation and partial weakening, especially beyond the post-Soviet space. At the same time, institutional structures of Russian Orthodox Church, due to their organizational continuity, broad international presence. Specific nature of functioning as a transnational confessional network, maintained a high level of institutional resilience. Under new geopolitical conditions, they became one of the key channels for restoration and adaptation of Russian influence in the humanitarian, cultural, and informational spheres.

Contemporary researchers emphasize the lack of a systematic institutional rethinking of Russian Orthodox Church’s role during the Soviet period. Particularly regarding its interaction with state security agencies, as well as the lack of a public process of moral accountability. Instead, in the post-Soviet period, a new ideological platform was formed concept of so-called *Russkiy mir*. It combined religious, cultural, and political components and served as an instrument of symbolic integration of the post-Soviet space under the auspices of Russian Federation. This concept has become the foundation for intensifying activities of Russian Orthodox Church as a carrier of Russian influence both in former Soviet states and at the international level [11; 20, c. 47].



At the same time, after 1991 a significant portion of personnel and institutional practices formed during the Soviet period was preserved. Open archival materials indicate existence of close ties between the higher leadership of Russian Orthodox Church and Soviet security services. The absence of comprehensive lustration processes and institutional purification contributed to the preservation of these practices in the post-Soviet period, which, in turn, ensured the continuity of influence mechanisms and their adaptation to contemporary conditions. A notable example in this context is the process of Russian Orthodox Church's unification with Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia. It began in the early 2000s and culminated on May 17, 2007, with the signing of the Act of Canonical Connection [9]. This event had not only ecclesiastical but also clear political significance, as it contributed to consolidation of the global network of Russian Orthodox Church and expansion of its influence among the Russian diaspora. Thereby creating additional opportunities for the implementation of the Russian Federation's "soft power" policy.

Unlike other structures of the Soviet bloc, which effectively ceased to exist after its collapse, the ecclesiastical network of Russian Orthodox Church not only survived but significantly expanded its presence in various regions of the world. Its activities extend far beyond purely religious sphere, encompassing educational, cultural, humanitarian, and media projects that enable formation of stable channels of influence on public opinion. Through a system of parishes, spiritual centers, cultural representations, charitable foundations, and educational initiatives, the Russian Orthodox Church exerts a long-term influence on formation of identity, value orientations, and political attitudes both in post-Soviet states and in countries of Europe and North America.

Russian Orthodox Church effectively functions as an instrument of hybrid influence. It combines religious discourse with political narratives aimed at delegitimizing alternative models of development, particularly European



integration, promotes an idea of so-called Russkiy mir. A special role in this process is played by appeals to themes such as the “protection of traditional values,” the “unity of Orthodoxy,” and “historical justice.”. It allows political objectives to be masked under religious rhetoric [10].

In the beginning of Vladimir Putin’s rule, a renewed close interaction between the state and the Church was established. Russian Orthodox Church performed function of ideological support for state policy. The concept of the Russkiy mir has become a key element of this strategy, integrating religious, cultural, and political instruments into a unified system of influence aimed at the internal consolidation of Russian society and the expansion of external influence.

This activity acquires particular significance in Ukraine, where Orthodoxy has historically developed as the most widespread branch of Christianity. According to available data, approximately 97% of registered religious denominations in Ukraine belong to the Christian tradition [8, p. 6]. It which determines the substantial role of religious institutions in shaping public attitudes, value orientations, and the identity of population. In this context, particular attention is drawn to religious organizations that maintained or established close ties with Russian Federation, acting as carriers and transmitters of pro-Russian ideological narratives.

A key role among such structures was played by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate. For a long time it remained in canonical unity with the Russian Orthodox Church, maintaining administrative and spiritual ties with it. Despite its formal status as a self-governing church with broad autonomy, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate effectively functioned as part of the broader institutional network of Russian Orthodox Church. In addition, this circle included Old Believer communities and certain other religious groups that were integrated into the sphere of Russian religious and cultural influence.

Contemporary Russian Orthodox Church, actively strengthening its influence, continues to play a significant role in promoting Russian Orthodoxy as a worldview



and ideological doctrine. It has become particularly pronounced in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The Church acts not only as a religious institution but also as an instrument for legitimizing the policies of Russian Federation, including on the international stage. In particular, Russian Orthodox Church publicly supported occupation of Crimea in 2014, employing religious-historical and imperial narratives to justify the actions of the Russian authorities. In certain cases, facts have been documented regarding use of church infrastructure in occupied territories, including Sevastopol, Kerch, and Simferopol, to support activities of Russian armed forces [4, p. 12].

Ideological support for aggression is also evident at the level of leadership of Russian Orthodox Church. In particular, Patriarch Kirill (Gundyaev) openly supported Russia's invasion of Ukraine, providing it with religious justification. In November 2023, the Security Service of Ukraine announced that he was suspected under several articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine related to the support of aggressive war [16].

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, while actually remaining a branch of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, remained the largest Orthodox denomination in Ukraine from 1991 to 2014. It provided it with significant influence on the religious and social life of the country. Through its network of parishes, as well as educational and cultural initiatives, pro-Russian narratives were formed and disseminated among various social groups. During the Russian-Ukrainian war certain representatives from Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate openly supported actions of Russian Federation, spreading corresponding rhetoric among believers [7, p. 30–31].

With the beginning of the full-scale aggression, the Security Service of Ukraine initiated more than 200 criminal proceedings against representatives of this denomination, indicating the presence of systemic threats to national security [12; 17].



The state's response to identified risks was the intensification of legal regulation of religious organizations' activities. The Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of the Constitutional Order in the Sphere of Activity of Religious Organizations" was adopted on August 20, 2024. It provides restriction or termination of structures affiliated activities with Russian Orthodox Church and entered into force in September of the same year [21].

An important element of information and psychological influence was also ideology of *Russkiy mir* a neo-imperial doctrine with elements of religious messianism. It actively promoted through religious institutions. According to testimonies of certain representatives of the church environment, including Kirill Hovorun, this concept was deliberately introduced into the Ukrainian religious space through the strengthening of conservative discourse, organization of mass events (including religious processions with political content), and other forms of public activity.

Pro-Russian religious structures exerted informational pressure on Orthodox Church of Ukraine, questioning its canonical status and legitimacy, especially after the granting of the Tomos of autocephaly in 2019. Such activities were aimed at maintaining influence among believers and preventing the transition of religious communities to the independent Ukrainian Church.

Religious organizations affiliated with Russian Orthodox Church actively employed educational and cultural initiatives as instruments of influence on public consciousness. During security operations conducted by Ukrainian special services, propaganda materials posing a threat to Ukraine's national security were repeatedly discovered [8, p. 14]. An important aspect of their activities also remained financial support through systems of donations and charitable contributions. It created additional opportunities for maintaining and expanding networks of influence.

Issues related to sources of funding and transfer of property assets to Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate gained particular resonance in Ukraine's



socio-political discourse. In the beginning of the 1990s, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate gradually obtained use of a number of facilities located on the territory of the National Kyiv-Pechersk Historical and Cultural Reserve. Relevant decisions were adopted by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers and the Kyiv City Council. It transferred individual buildings for use to a specially established legal entity – the “Holy Dormition Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra” of Moscow Patriarchate. This process continued in the 2000s, when additional premises within Lavra complex were transferred to Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate [14]. This indicates a gradual institutional consolidation of Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate’s presence within key religious and historical sites of the state.

An important instrument for implementing policy of Russian Federation in religious sphere was the creation of a network of foundations aimed at promoting the ideology of *Russkiy mir*. Formally, these structures were presented as charitable organizations; however, in practice, they were founded by major state corporations of Russian Federation, including Private Joint-Stock Company “Gazprom”. It was headed by individuals closely affiliated with the country’s political leadership. Characteristic feature of such foundations was use of religious symbolism and church-related names, such as the “Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Peoples,” the “St. Basil the Great Foundation,” and the “St. Gregory the Theologian Foundation.” Through these institutions, funding was provided for projects aimed at strengthening Russia’s cultural and religious influence, creating pro-Kremlin networks of loyal organizations, and promoting pro-Russian narratives in various countries, including Ukraine [12; 14].

Particular attention should be paid to Old Believer communities, which emerged as a result of schism within the Russian Orthodox Church in the 17th century and have maintained their presence in Ukraine. Despite their relatively small number (as of 2019, Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church in Ukraine comprised 54



communities, primarily located in Odesa, Vinnytsia, and Chernivtsi regions), these structures maintained close cultural and religious ties with Russian Federation. It is indicative that after occupation of Crimea in 2014, local Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church in parishes were transferred from Kyiv to Moscow diocese. Liturgical practices began to include prayers for the Russian military and for the “subjugation of enemies.” Only in December 2018 did a Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church in community in Chernivtsi decided to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Moscow Metropolitanate and removed references to Russia from its name. It demonstrates the long-term influence of the Russian religious center on these structures. In this context, position of certain Ukrainian scholars appears well-founded, as they argue that the presence of governing centers of such churches in Russia determines a constant, albeit varying in degree, indirect influence of the Russian Federation on their activities [18].

In addition to Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate and Old Believer communities, other religious groups with a pronounced pro-Russian orientation operated in Ukraine. Some of them maintained organizational or ideological ties with Russian religious structures or received financial and informational support from them. In this context, such organizations can be considered elements of the “soft power” toolkit used by the Russian Federation to promote its interests. These include, in particular, radical pseudo-religious movements such as the “White Brotherhood,” certain neo-Pentecostal groups (including the “Embassy of God”), organizations associated with the ideology of the “Concept of Public Security”, as well as other marginal religious associations [14].

Full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian Federation in 2022 led to a reassessment of Russian Orthodox Church’s role by European political elites and special services. It began to more clearly recognize the scale and nature of the threats to national security posed by the activities of extensive institutional and informal networks of Russian Orthodox Church, including Ukrainian Orthodox Church of



Moscow Patriarchate. Russian Orthodox Church is increasingly viewed not merely as a religious organization but as an element of a broader system of the Russian Federation's "soft power". It was used to implement information and psychological influence, shape favorable narratives, and promote the state's geopolitical interests [2].

Conclusions. Use of religious institutions as instruments of political and information-psychological influence constitutes a systemic and historically conditioned practice that continues to persist in the contemporary policy of the Russian Federation. Since the 1940s, one can trace the evolution of a model in which church structures were gradually transformed into instruments of state control and influence. A decisive role in this process was played by state security agencies, which ensured not only administrative oversight but also the ideological functionality of the Church.

In the post-Soviet period, despite the formal transformation of political system, a significant portion of the staff and institutional practices was preserved, ensuring the continuity of influence mechanisms. Absence of lustration processes and institutional reassessment of role of Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet past facilitated its further integration into Russian state policy. Under contemporary conditions, Russian Orthodox Church functions as one of the key elements in the implementation of Russkiy mir concept. It acts as an instrument of "soft power" aimed at shaping a loyal information and psychological environment, legitimizing foreign policy decisions, and promoting the geopolitical interests of Russian Federation.

This activity acquires particular significance in Ukraine. The network of affiliated religious structures-primarily Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate has been exerted on public consciousness, formation of pro-Russian narratives, and support of corresponding political orientations. Documented cases of ideological support for aggression, involvement of certain members of clergy in



disseminating pro-Russian rhetoric. Use of church infrastructure under conditions of occupation indicates that activities of these structures extend beyond the purely religious sphere and are integrated into a broader system of hybrid influence.

At the same time, response of Ukraine, particularly in the form of legal and regulatory restrictions on activities of religious organizations affiliated with Russian Orthodox Church. It demonstrates an institutional-level awareness of this threat and the development of countermeasures. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russian Federation in 2022 also contributed to a reassessment of role of Russian Orthodox Church within international security system, particularly among European states, which increasingly view it as a component of hybrid aggression.

Prospects for further research lie in need for a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis of activities of religious institutions as instruments of information and psychological influence. In particular, relevant areas of inquiry include the study of financing mechanisms and functioning of influence networks. The role of the religious factor in identity formation under conditions of warfare, as well as a comparative analysis of use of religious institutions in the foreign policies of different states. An important direction is also examination of effectiveness of state and societal countermeasures to such influences, including legal, informational, and educational instruments.

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