



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 23, 2014

NATO Head: Russia Is Funding Anti-fracking Movement

When the head of NATO [announced on Thursday](#) that Russia is engaged in promoting the anti-fracking agenda to protect its interests, anti-fracking groups denied the charges almost immediately.



Speaking at the British counterpart of the Council on Foreign Relations in the United States, Chatham House (otherwise known as the Royal Institute for International Affairs), Anders Fogh Rasmussen, secretary-general of the North American Treaty Organization (NATO), said:

I have met with allies who can report that Russia, as part of their sophisticated information and disinformation operations, engaged actively with so-called non-government organizations — environmental organizations working against shale gas — to maintain European dependence on imported Russian [natural] gas.

The radical environmental activist group Greenpeace responded immediately, declaiming any knowledge that Russia was somehow helping fund their anti-fracking efforts:

The idea that we're puppets of Putin is so preposterous that you have to wonder what they're smoking over at NATO HQ....

Greenpeace had thirty of its people locked up in Russian prisons last year, threatened with [up to] fifteen years in jail. Mr. Rasmussen should spend less time dreaming up conspiracy theories and more time on the facts.

Another splinter group calling itself Frack Off claimed purity and innocence as well:

The UK [United Kingdom] anti-fracking movement is almost exclusively made up of grassroots community groups organizing against these developments where they live. Beyond Lush [a British "green" cosmetics company], we receive no funding from any corporate donors and have a policy of not taking money from anyone who may want to influence our campaigning efforts.

When pressed on the matter by the *Guardian*, a NATO spokesman expanded on Rasmussen's charges:

Russia has been using a mix of hard and soft power in its attempt to recreate a sphere of influence, including through a campaign of disinformation on many issues, including energy. The potential for Russia using energy supplies as a means of putting pressure on European nations is a matter of concern. No country should use supply and pricing terms as tools of coercion....

We share a concern by some allies that Russia could try to obstruct possible projects on shale gas exploration in Europe in order to maintain Europe's reliance on Russian natural gas.

At present, Russia supplies a significant amount of the EU countries' natural gas, with Germany dependent upon Russia for about a third of its oil and gas needs. Russia also continues to engage in its massive disinformation efforts to promote its agenda worldwide.

For instance, in 2009 author Pete Earley penned *Comrade J: The Untold Secrets of Russia's Master Spy in America After the End of the Cold War*, which told the story of the spy who handled every Russian intelligence officer in New York City. He revealed disinformation strategies to blunt U.S. efforts in 1979 to place missiles in Western Europe by publishing a faked "doomsday report" by the Soviet Academy of



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Sciences about the effect a nuclear war would have on the climate, and sending it to various environmental groups. The report was picked up and published by the environmental journal *AMBIO: a Journal of the Human Environment*, lending it credibility.

In a more recent effort to expose the continuing program of disinformation by Russia, Ronald Rychlak authored *Disinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion and Promoting Terrorism*, which was published last year. In his introduction, Rychlak makes clear that Russia is highly motivated in its efforts to maintain the flow of cash from its customers not only for political reasons, but also for its own survival:

[Russia's] demographics are awful (low birth rate, short life span for men) and its population [currently estimated at 143 million] could conceivably be under 100 million by the middle of the century. It lives almost wholly by selling oil and gas (and uses its leverage with gas to threaten its neighbors with cutoffs). But the recent discoveries of shale gas in many countries, including the United States, Poland and many other locations, could deal Russia a heavy blow. [In the future] its gas may not earn as much income and may be less useful as a weapon, and its oil may be replaced by much cheaper natural gas-based fuels such as methanol.

As far as infiltrating various green groups, Russia's disinformation campaigns (motivated not only by a fervent desire to have a larger say in world affairs but also by the fear of becoming irrelevant in the future) will continue to play a role in not only the debate over fracking, but other areas as well.

As Mark Horne noted in his blog Political Outcast, "Just because the Russian government is hostile to Greenpeace doesn't mean they are not useful to Russia.... It seems quite possible that Russia can send funds through private citizens so that Greenpeace never knows it is Russian money."

Photo of anti-fracking protest in England: AP Images

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics.



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