

Russia is fighting a misinformation war with outdated weapons | The Washington Post

By Philip Bump

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So far, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is unfolding largely as the U.S. government predicted it might.

"We have reason to believe that they are engaged in a false-flag operation to have an excuse to go in," President Biden said last week. "Every indication we have is they're prepared to go into Ukraine, attack Ukraine." He added that he expected the invasion to occur in "the next several days."

Several days later — on Monday, to be specific — Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that his country was recognizing the independence of two regions in which Russia has for years exerted influence. In short order, Russia began moving some of the military forces that had for weeks been massed at Ukraine's border into those areas. The invasion was underway.

The false-flag efforts, though, have been much less successful.

Biden's prediction that Russia would create a pretext for its actions was probably grounded in available intelligence, but it could also have simply followed from recent history. As The Washington Post reported last week, Russia has long used misrepresented acts of violence as a predicate for taking desired action.

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