



# The Atlanticist Anglo-Saxon Reich and All That: How Russia Understands Strategic Confrontation

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**Abstract:** Utilizing the British Broadcasting Corporation Monitoring (BBCM) service to track and analyze the use of the term “Anglo-Saxons” by Russian officials, media representatives, state policy documents, as well as wider advocates of Russia’s narrative, this article surveys how Putin’s regime references it. The term’s meanings are open-ended, dynamic, and evolving, and its applications tend to be context-sensitive. “Anglo-Saxons” functions as an epithet, trope, synonym, metaphor, and analogy in contemporary Russian discourse during Putin’s fifth term. It represents a “collective West” perceived as intent on destabilizing Russia. The supposed threat of “Anglo-Saxons” is used to justify political choices, legitimize internal order, characterize Russia’s alternative geopolitical identity, and outline its vision of a preferred global order. Following a genealogy of the term, tracing its evolving meanings through the medieval, early modern, and modern periods, the article identifies three core ways in which official discourse deploys the “Anglo-Saxon” concept: 1) “Anglo-Saxon Atlanticists” and the “collective West”; 2) the “Anglo-Saxon Reich” – portraying the “fascist Anglo-Saxons elite” and “Ordinary Nazis”; and 3) “Anglo-Saxons” as “Fifth Column” and “Foreign Agent.” Finally, the article concludes by exploring the trajectory of “Anglo-Saxon” usage and reflecting on its efficacy in legitimizing current Russian policies and strategies.

**Keywords:** Anglo-Saxons, collective West, fascist, Nazis, fifth column, foreign agent, Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia, foreign policy, ideologue.

## Introduction

President Putin’s Russia professes to understand strategic confrontation in terms of a struggle over the structure of the international system. The current unipolar

system, as he characterized it in his 2007 Munich Security Conference speech, poses an existential threat to Russia's identity, sovereignty, and statehood: "They tried to force Russia to give up its sovereignty, identity, culture, independent foreign and domestic policy. We have no right to agree with such an approach."<sup>1</sup> The West, in the form of the "Anglo-Saxons" (Англосаксы/*Anglosaksy*) and the "Anglo-Saxon world," eternally encircles and contains Russia, driven by greed for Russia's hydrocarbon wealth, jealousy of Russia's moral dignity, and fear of its military might. Nikolai Patrushev, head of Russia's Security Council, asserts that the "Anglo-Saxon world" wages a permanent war against Russia: "The United States, NATO, and their satellites are using Kyiv's Nazi regime and various kinds of mercenaries to wage a proxy war against our people and country, a war that the Anglo-Saxon world will not stop even with the end of active hostilities in the conflict in Ukraine."<sup>2</sup> A central premise is that Russia's own independence has become the major obstacle to the perpetuation of the current unfair unipolar rules-based pernicious colonial "Anglo-Saxon" order. Alexey Drobinin, Director of the Foreign Policy Planning Department in Russia's Foreign Ministry, states: "But for now, we are watching Anglo-Saxons—or rather, their ruling elites'—attempt to restore the 'unipolar moment' of the early 1990s by force. To achieve this, they are pushing to dismember civilizational commonwealths into segments suitable to be absorbed, in line with the 'divide and rule' maxim."<sup>3</sup>

According to this self-understanding, a strong, strategically autonomous Russia is mankind's last and best hope for a future fair and just multipolar, multilateral, post-colonial, liberated order. As Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov noted in February 2023 before the *State Duma*, those "who imagine themselves the masters of the destinies of people ... are trying to interfere with our efforts by pushing us back decades and even to ruin our national development under the slogans of 'decolonization' and 'preparations for Russia's collapse.' In the process, the Anglo-Saxons and the rest of the collective West that have obeyed them without a murmur are doing all they can to impose their diktat in world affairs. They are doing this to continue controlling the external conditions for the development of all humanity solely for the sake of their own global domination.

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan Egorov interview with Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev headlined "The Liar in the Rye": Ivan Egorov, "Patrushev: The West Has Created an Empire of Lies That Presupposes the Destruction of Russia," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, April 26, 2022, <https://rg.ru/2022/04/26/patrushev-zapad-sozdal-imperiiu-lzhi-predpola-gaiushchuiu-unichtozhenie-rossii.html>. – in Russian

<sup>2</sup> "Patrushev: The West Won't Stop Its Proxy War Against Russia Even After the 'Hot Phase' in Ukraine," *TASS News Agency*, January 29, 2024, <https://tass.ru/politika/19844097>. – in Russian

<sup>3</sup> Alexey Drobinin, "The Vision of a Multipolar World: The Civilizational Factor and Russia's Place in the Emerging World Order," *Russia in Global Affairs*, Opinions, February 20, 2023, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/the-vision-of-a-multipolar-world/>.

They resort to illegal methods, including threats, blackmail, and outright robbery, to punish those pursuing an independent, national-oriented foreign policy.”<sup>4</sup>

This construction appears to legitimize President Putin’s forever rule, a limited-access order regime, Russia’s justification for its full-scale, multi-axis attack on Ukraine, the imposition of Russia’s will on neighboring countries within its self-declared sphere of influence (“historic Russian lands”), and normalizes Russia’s voice and veto in and over global hot spots. Russia self-characterizes its imperial war of aggression in Ukraine as a “Special Military Operation” (SVO), not a war. It suggests that Russia’s victory will serve as a catalyst that will accelerate a move from unjust (“Anglo-Saxon colonialism”) unipolarity, “Anglo-Saxon” hegemony, and decadent globalist universal values (“liberal totalitarianism” and “militant liberalism”) toward “fair multipolarity.” Putin posits that the first battle in the struggle for global order is a fight against “Anglo-Saxon” masters in “neo-Nazi Ukraine”: “The Ukrainian crisis is not a territorial conflict. The issue is broader and more fundamental – we are talking about the principles the new world order will be based upon.”<sup>5</sup>

In this view, Russia is portrayed as an anti-global, anti-colonial leader rallying the world’s “oppressed countries” to “restore historical justice.” As Lavrov asserted: “Western geopolitical engineers are directly provoking crises in various parts of the world. They are following the concept of controlled chaos in order to fish in troubled waters,” and “The global Anglo-Saxon world is looking for opportunities to exclude the peoples of Russia from the system of world distribution of resources.”<sup>6</sup> Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accuses NATO of having chosen Russia as the primary target of its aggressive policy and of using Ukraine as an instrument: “The Anglo-Saxons, under the pretext of confronting the USSR, and essentially with the goal of maintaining the hegemony

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<sup>4</sup> “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s Remarks and Answers to Questions During the Government Hour in the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Moscow, February 15, 2023,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website*, Moscow, February 15, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/press\\_service/photos/meropriyatiya\\_s\\_uchastiem\\_ministra/1854365/](https://mid.ru/en/press_service/photos/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/1854365/).

<sup>5</sup> Text of report “Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, October 19, 2017,” *President of the Russian Federation Website*, October 19, 2017, [www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/55882](http://www.en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/55882).

<sup>6</sup> Text of “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s Remarks at the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security, Moscow, August 15, 2023,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website*, August 15, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/press\\_service/photos/meropriyatiya\\_s\\_uchastiem\\_ministra/1900527/](https://mid.ru/en/press_service/photos/meropriyatiya_s_uchastiem_ministra/1900527/); Sergei V. Lavrov, “Genuine Multilateralism and Diplomacy vs the ‘Rules-Based Order’,” *Russia in Global Affairs* 21, no. 3 (July/September 2003): 104-113, <https://doi.org/10.31278/1810-6374-2023-21-3-104-113>.

of the West under American leadership, continues to be an instrument to ensure the interests of primarily the United States, aggressive and destructive forces.”<sup>7</sup>

Russian military commentator Igor Korotchenko, on Rossiya 1’s *60 Minut* political talk show, stated: “In general, I believe it’s necessary to create a new geopolitical alliance of the global south against the U.S., Anglo-Saxons, and NATO. That is absolutely justified.”<sup>8</sup> according to this view, Russia then acts as a moderator in this post-“Anglo-Saxon” rules-free order, with its unique “state-civilization” status enabling it to function as a global stabilizer, maintaining the global balance of power.<sup>9</sup> More specifically, Lt Gen (ret) Andrey Gurulyov stated that Xi Jinping’s peace plan for Ukraine was not about Ukraine, “It is about the fight against the domination of Anglo-Saxon fascism [...] and about the fight against neo-colonial policies of the West.”<sup>10</sup> On 26 and 27 February 2024, Moscow hosted the “Forum of Multipolarity” and the second congress of the “International Russophile Movement,” respectively. Both events focused, according to Zakharova, on the struggle for a just world without the hegemony of the “collective West.”<sup>11</sup>

For Russia, the inevitability (as Lavrov describes it, an “unstoppable process”) of multipolarity guarantees that US attempts to consolidate its hegemony will fail and that Russia will emerge as a key center of global power – a pole capable of acting as both a rule-shaper and a rule-breaker, exercising an order-producing and managerial role within its sphere of influence.<sup>12</sup> Russia understands that few states in the international system possess real “sovereignty” or “strategic autonomy” – the ability to pursue their own independent foreign policy. All other states are “vassals,” “clients,” and “proxies” of these “civilizational-states.” As “civilizational-states” enjoy super-sovereignty, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all other states are, by definition, limited, with “state-civilizations” deciding the limits. To illustrate, President Putin publicly adopts a tortured logic, claiming that Russia’s SVO will restore Ukraine’s “true sovereignty” when

<sup>7</sup> “Zakharova Accuses NATO of Using Ukraine as an Anti-Russian Instrument,” *TASS News Agency*, Moscow, April 4, 2024, <https://tass.ru/politika/20441313>. - in Russian

<sup>8</sup> “Russian Talk Shows: Ukraine Said to Have ‘No Chance of Success’ on Battlefield,” *BBC Monitoring*, Round-up, April 20, 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Drobinin, “The Vision of a Multipolar World”; Andrey Pertsev, “Putin, the anti-colonialist The Kremlin’s new model of Russian ‘soft power’ will fuel anti-Western resentment in Southern Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia,” *Meduza*, November 11, 2022, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2022/11/11/putin-the-anti-colonialist>.

<sup>10</sup> “Russian TV Show Defends Plans to Deploy Nukes in Belarus,” *BBC Monitoring*, Report, Rossiya 1 TV, Moscow, March 26, 2023. – in Russian

<sup>11</sup> Aleksandr Gasyuk, “Russophiles and Multipolar Fighters from All Over the World Gathered in Moscow,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, February 26, 2024, <https://rg.ru/2024/02/26/rusofily-i-borcy-za-mnogopolarnost-so-vsego-mira-sobralis-v-moskve.html>. – in Russian

<sup>12</sup> “Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov’s Article for Russia in Global Affairs Magazine, 5 May 2023,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website*, May 5, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1867330/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1867330/).

Ukraine merges its people and territory with Russia in a process of “reunification.”

Utilizing the British Broadcasting Corporation Monitoring (BBCM) service to track and survey the use of the term “Anglo-Saxons” by Russian officials, media representatives, state policy documents, and wider advocates of Russia’s narrative, this article examines how Putin’s regime references the notion of “Anglo-Saxons.” It argues that “Anglo-Saxons” became a trope during Putin’s fourth presidential term, symbolizing a malign “collective West” intent on destabilizing Russia. The supposed threat posed by the “Anglo-Saxons” is used to necessitate political choices, legitimize internal order, characterize Russia’s alternative geopolitical identity, and present a vision of its preferred global order. After offering a genealogy of the term, highlighting its evolving understandings in the medieval, early modern, and modern periods, the article identifies three core ways in which official discourse deploys the “Anglo-Saxon” concept: 1) “Anglo-Saxon Atlanticists” and the “collective West”; 2) the “Anglo-Saxon Reich” – “fascist Anglo-Saxons elite” and “Ordinary Nazis”; and, 3) “Anglo-Saxons” as “Fifth Column” and “Foreign Agent.” Finally, the article draws conclusions about the trajectory of “Anglo-Saxon” usage and offers reflections on its effectiveness in legitimizing current Russian policies and strategies.

## **Genealogy: Genesis and Lineage**

The earliest usage of the term “Anglo-Saxons” refers to historical tribes that occupied Britain after the fall of the Roman Empire and the Roman retreat in the 5th century AD. Germanic tribes, the Angles and the Saxons (from the North German plains), invaded the Roman province of Britannia as the Roman legions withdrew. They overcame the Roman “forts of the Saxon shore,” bringing with them their culture and language and assimilating the native Celtic Britons. A mosaic of tribal kingdoms, each with its own dialects and linguistic traditions, existed until the 11th century when King Harold was defeated at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 by William the Conqueror. After the Norman invasion, the subsequent narratives of a “Norman Yoke” (similar to the “Mongol Yoke” in Russian historiography) were accompanied by the notion of an “Anglo-Norman” order. In short, “Anglo-Saxons” are today in Britain associated with heroic myths and legends, such as “Beowulf” and “King Arthur and the Round Table,” lost in the Dark Ages (early medieval history).

Beyond early medieval history, the phrase “Anglo-Saxon” in Western thinking evolved in the early modern and modern periods to become synonymous with an offshore European or transatlantic development model. This model, which gained prominence in the 1980s, championed neoliberal ideals, free-market principles, and privatization. It was underpinned by a Protestant-Calvinistic work ethic, progress, and a legal system based on statutes and precedents. In contrast, the continental Franco-German model, often referred to as “Rhineland capitalism,” was characterized by generous welfare services, a stronger emphasis on social justice, and a more significant role for the government in the economy,

with jurisprudence grounded in Roman law. In this context, the “Anglo-Saxon” variant represents a maritime, naval power, as opposed to a land-based military power.

Tracking BBCM references, the first media outlets to use the term “Anglo-Saxons” were the Iranian Persian language press in the early 2010s, which highlighted the role of the “Anglo-Saxons” in pushing forward sanctions against Iran’s nuclear program. At this time, there were no references to “Anglo-Saxons” in the Russian political discourse. The first Russian government and pro-Kremlin, state-controlled media references began to appear around 2018, drawing a distinction between the Slavic Eurasian civilizational world of Russia and that of Western Europe. Since then, and especially in the lead-up to Russia’s full-scale multi-axis attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Putin and his circle have referred to the “collective West” and “Anglo-Saxons” with increasing frequency. In Russia, the phrase “Anglo-Saxons” is not used as a synonym for a particular Western development model but rather to reference a U.S.-centric world order paradigm. The United States is seen as its global leader, the United Kingdom plays a supporting role as the main U.S. ally, while continental Europe plays a passive role.<sup>13</sup> “Anglo-Saxon” is also used within this paradigm to characterize conspiracy, encirclement, and threat. Two years into the full-scale attack, the derogatory use of the term “Anglo-Saxons” increasingly appears in official speeches and media reports, and state institutions have popularized its usage. In 2023, for example, the Russian Ministry of Culture approved a list of priority topics eligible for state support in film production, including the “popularization of heroism” during the war in Ukraine, the “degradation of Europe,” the “neocolonial policy of the countries of the Anglo-Saxon world,” and the “formation of a multipolar world.”<sup>14</sup>

The foundations of a worldview populated by “Anglo-Saxon” enemies were laid in the early 2000s. Nataliya Narochinskaya, a nationalist historian and politician, produced scathing critiques of Russian “Westernizers” and Western notions of universal human rights. In her major work, *Russia and Russians in World History (Rossiya i russkie v mirovoi istorii)*, she advanced a theory of Russian civilization and positioned Russia as a “civilizational state.” She argued that the Cold War is best understood not as a struggle between totalitarianism and democracy but as a clash of civilizations waged by the West against “post-Byzantine space” for a millennium – beginning in 800 when Charlemagne was crowned emperor by the Pope. Russian Orthodox civilization, based on Orthodox spirituality and holistic-dialectal thinking, diverged from “Western Christianity,” which

<sup>13</sup> Uliana Z. Artamonova, “‘Popcorn Diplomacy’: American Blockbusters and World Order,” *Russia in Global Affairs* 20, no. 2 (April/June 2022): 105-128, <https://doi.org/10.31278/1810-6374-2022-20-2-105-128>.

<sup>14</sup> “Russian Films to Focus on “Anglo-Saxon Neocolonialism,” Promoting Army: The Russian Ministry of Culture Has Identified Priority Topics for State Support for Film Production in 2023,” *Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation Website*, Moscow, November 30, 2022. – in Russian

Narochnitskaya asserted was diminished by the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, and concurrent traditions of humanism, secularism, and Aristotelian rationality. As Robert Horvath notes:

In Narochnitskaya's narrative, Russia's mortal enemies in the modern era were the "Anglo-Saxons," the English-speaking Atlantic democracies. What made the Anglo-Saxons so dangerous was their Puritan, Calvinist heritage, a heresy (*apostasiya*) that perverted their moral sensibility and guided their conduct on the world stage. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which reserved salvation for a divinely-chosen elect and condemned the rest to eternal damnation, fortified the Anglo-Saxons' contempt for alien civilizations and their indifference to the trail of imperial devastation left by their pacification of Ireland, North America, and India.<sup>15</sup>

Narochinitskaya's civilizational ideology was legitimized by Aleksandr Panarin, a professor at Moscow State University, and popularized by Aleksandr Dugin, an ultra-rightist publicist, theorist of multipolarity, and founder of the Eurasian movement, who views geopolitics in classical terms as a struggle between land-based continental powers like Russia and sea-based Anglo-Saxon oceanic powers. Her narrative is now representative of mainstream thinking in Russia. Leonid Slutsky, chairman of Russia's ultranationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and a Russian presidential candidate in 2024, stated in 2021: "We must remember that the ideology of the Anglo-Saxons is, in essence, the ideology of an anti-Christian and therefore anti-human sect. It stands on the precepts of Calvinist Protestantism." He further noted: "The clearest confirmation of the inhumane, fascist nature of Calvinism was the reconquest of Ireland by the fanatical Protestant Oliver Cromwell."<sup>16</sup>

Alexander Shchipkov, a political philosopher, First Vice-Rector of the Russian Orthodox University, stated: "Russians are being forced to claim that Russia is the aggressor in Ukraine. In fact, it is known that Kyiv and the West were planning an attack on Donbas and Russian regions. Two dates are named – April 25 and March 8. Therefore, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief decided to launch a preemptive strike." The logic of this decision is obvious and was voiced by Vladimir Putin: "Russia has no right to repeat the mistake of 1941 and must act proactively." Without missing a beat, Shhchipkov continues: "President Vladimir Putin did not call the West an empire of lies for the sake of a nice word. This is an extremely accurate definition of the essence of how the Anglo-Saxons work.

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Horvath, "The Reinvention of 'Traditional Values': Nataliya Narochnitskaya and Russia's Assault on Universal Human Rights," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 5 (2016): 868-892, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1184230>.

<sup>16</sup> Leonid Slutsky, "The Ideology of the Liberal Democratic Party of the 21st Century Is Anti-fascism," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, June 21, 2023, <https://rg.ru/2023/06/21/ideologiya-ldpr-xxi-veka-antifashizm.html>.

Informational truth, on the other hand, strategically works for the long term and wins.”<sup>17</sup>

For this narrative to work, Calvinism and Cromwell become the early modern ideational transmission belt that bridges early medieval Anglo-Saxon polities with the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, this notional bridge cannot bear their ahistorical weight. Calvinist thinking did not dominate in the post-independence United States, where Thomas Jefferson ensured a separation, not a fusion, of Church and State. In Britain, a restoration of the Stuart dynasty followed Cromwell’s death, and with it, the Anglican Church became dominant in England and the Episcopalian Church in Scotland. The term “Anglo-Saxon” lost its meaning in the process.

As Ivan Timofeev notes, Russia’s current use of “Anglo-Saxons” overlooks several key historical facts. In the early 20th century, for example, “Great Britain seriously considered the scenario of a naval war against the United States. Within the United States itself, in 1861, a civil war broke out between two camps of “Anglo-Saxons,” which claimed more than half a million lives. In 1814, the British burned the White House and many other government buildings in Washington, and a few decades earlier, cultural and civilizational proximity did not help them keep 13 colonies obedient.”<sup>18</sup> Even as a descriptor of the United States, the term is deficient. Indeed, the U.S. ambassador to Russia, Lynne Tracy, has argued that the term “Anglo-Saxons” used by the Kremlin to describe American and British leadership does not reflect reality. The United States, she points out, is “enriched” by immigrants and is a “multinational country where people from all over the world live.”<sup>19</sup>

### Heritage: “Anglo-Saxons” Form and Function

In general, Russia’s political establishment and pro-Kremlin state-controlled media characterize the “Anglo-Saxons” as forming a powerful establishment that acts as instructors, overseers, masterminds, and controllers. These “Atlanticist Nazis” are depicted as the inheritors of Hitler’s ideology of racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic superiority. Just as Hitler sought to deprive Russia of its prospects for independent socio-economic and cultural-civilizational development, the new “Atlanticist Nazis” are seen as continuing that mission. Russia contends that the “Zelensky regime” operates “on instruction from its Anglo-Saxon overseers,”

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander Shchipkov, “Aggression Against Russia’s Intellect: Around the Special Operation in Ukraine There Is a Struggle Between Short-term Lies and Long-term Truth,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, May 30, 2022, [https://www.ng.ru/kartblansh/2022-05-30/3\\_8448\\_kb.html](https://www.ng.ru/kartblansh/2022-05-30/3_8448_kb.html).

<sup>18</sup> Ivan N. Timofeev, “A State as Civilisation and Political Theory,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, Valdai Papers, May 23, 2023, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/a-state-as-civilisation/>.

<sup>19</sup> “US Envoy Questions Russian Use of Term ‘Anglo-Saxons,’” *Vision Newspapers Online*, April 29, 2023, <https://visionnewspapers.com/us-envoy-questions-russian-use-of-term-anglo-saxons/>.



and that “Ukraine is in any case run by Anglo-Saxon masters.” Additionally, the Russian narrative asserts that “Anglo-Saxon colonizers cynically use other nations,” with the Estonian authorities described as “the conduits of the will of the Anglo-Saxon colonial power.” The “Anglo-Saxons” are also accused of holding a “monopoly on the global information streams,” allegedly controlling more than three-quarters of the world’s media, including social networks.

President Putin himself publicly justified his interview with American political commentator Tucker Carlson on February 8, 2024, precisely because Carlson was not part of the “traditional Anglo-Saxon media.”<sup>20</sup> Further reinforcing this narrative, FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov, in an address to the heads of the Russia-led CIS security services in Minsk, accused the United Kingdom and the United States of seeking to prolong the Ukraine war to preserve their “financial hegemony.” He stated: “The Anglo-Saxons’ design is obvious: to expand their capacity to influence the world’s key resources and transit regions, retain the hegemony of the transnational capital based in the U.S. and Great Britain, and camouflage their responsibility for the current global economic crisis.”<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko accused the “Anglo-Saxon” powers of orchestrating a conspiracy within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to block Russian athletes from competing in international sports competitions: “We saw how, at the behest of the Anglo-Saxons, all international organizations, starting with the IOC, began to put obstacles for the participation of our athletes in international sports competitions, and they continue to do so.”<sup>22</sup>

As Russia’s political and media discourse escalated in the lead-up to and after the February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the language used to describe “Anglo-Saxons” has become markedly more violent and extreme. In December 2021, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova described the “Anglo-Saxon tandem” as holding “cannibalistic views.”<sup>23</sup> By April 2022, “Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>20</sup> Artem Efimov, Vitaly Vasilchenko, and Ilya Lyapin, “The Collective West: What Is Putin Really Talking about When He Rails against the West?” *Meduza*, February 20, 2024, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2024/02/20/the-collective-west>; Tucker Carlson, though, might more traditionally be thought as an exemplar of WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) elite in US (inherited wealth and of early colonial “Anglo-Saxon stock”).

<sup>21</sup> “Russian FSB Chief Says US, UK Need Ukraine War for Financial ‘Hegemony,’” *TASS News Agency*, Moscow, June 1, 2023. – in Russian

<sup>22</sup> Duncan Mackay, “Chernyshenko Blames Anglo-Saxon Countries for Russia’s International Sports Isolation,” *Inside the Games*, March 1, 2023, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1134298/chernyshenko-anglo-saxon-conspiracy>.

<sup>23</sup> Yevgeniy Verlin, “Cramped, but Not So Much. Or Not Even at All. Most Political Analysts Regarded the Conclusion about the Alliance between Moscow and Beijing as at Least Premature,” *Republic: Heartland*, December 16, 2021, <https://republic.ru/posts/102639>. – in Russian

respectability” is portrayed as a mere façade, masking “hatred, anger, and inhumanity.”<sup>24</sup> This concept of subterfuge and camouflage as a core element in “Anglo-Saxon” diplomacy is further expressed through the term “diarrhoeal demagoguery”: “In place of diplomacy, the Anglo-Saxons are distinctively substituting coercion, subordination, intervention. For now, they still cover it up with a huge number of increasingly depreciating words – playing at democracy.”<sup>25</sup>

Dmitry Medvedev, Russia’s Deputy Head of the Security Council, also employed this metaphor, intensifying its usage. In September 2022, Medvedev explicitly warned that Russia would consider using nuclear weapons against Ukraine “if necessary.” In his statement, he argued that “our enemies love to make grandiloquent statements, using the terms ‘freedom,’ ‘democracy,’ ‘mission.’ In fact, this is just ritual verbal diarrhea.” He further described this rhetoric as “fountains of diarrhoeal demagoguery, coupled with vicious croaking rhetoric,” which he claimed has become a “long-proven weapon of the Anglo-Saxon world, with which they flood the rest of humanity in an attempt to defend their exclusivity and the right to rule the world.”<sup>26</sup>

Nikolai Patrushev, the former secretary of the Russian Security Council and a key figure within Putin’s inner circle, is perhaps the most consistent and vocal user of the term “Anglo-Saxon,” attributing to this epithet the most malign intent and behavior. For example, in April 2023, he berated the “Anglo-Saxons” and their “inhuman plans” involving “biological research,” stating: “The Anglo-Saxon-led collective West continues to entertain the hope of defeating Russia, isolating on the world stage, and depriving it of its status as a great power capable of resisting the United States and its pursuit of global domination. It is important to understand that we have always stood in their way as they pursue these inhuman plans.”<sup>27</sup>

In November that year, Patrushev warned of an increased risk of sabotage attacks against Russia from Ukraine involving biological weapons, describing this as a potential “biological war” at a meeting of the Scientific Council. He also reiterated Moscow’s longstanding claims that the United States has been attempting to develop “artificial pathogens and microorganisms” in laboratories established in some of Russia’s neighboring countries. Additionally, he argued that “the Anglo-Saxons,” under pretexts he deemed far-fetched, were obstructing

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<sup>24</sup> Ivan Egorov interview with Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev headlined: “The Liar in the Rye.”

<sup>25</sup> Andrey Mukovozchik, “The Anglo-Saxons Only Hide Behind Diplomacy and Democracy. While in Fact They Are Carrying Out Intervention,” *Belarus Segodnya*, June 10, 2022, <https://www.sb.by/articles/kak-v-prorubi.html>. – in Russian

<sup>26</sup> “Putin Ally Says Russia Will Use Nuclear Weapon in Ukraine ‘If Necessary,’” *Telegram* messaging service, September 27, 2022. – in Russian

<sup>27</sup> “Russian TV news: Lavrov at UN, NATO’S ‘proxy-war,’ ‘neo-Nazism,’” Main themes on Russian primetime TV news on NTV, Rossiya 1 and Channel One on April 25, 2022, *BBC Monitoring*, “Roundup,” April 26, 2023.

the creation of verification mechanisms under the conventions on the prohibition of biological and chemical weapons, which would place the biological activities of states party to the Convention under international control.<sup>28</sup>

### **“Anglo-Saxon Atlanticists” and the “Collective West”**

Context matters as it gives meaning. Russia uses the term “Anglo-Saxons” to describe its relationship with Europe and to frame its position as a state-civilization within a global context. While references to “Anglo-Saxons” appear in discussions of both European and global Russian imaginaries, we can infer that its meaning changes depending on the perceived functional utility of the term in Russian discourse, particularly in advancing Russian interests in the context of strategic confrontation.

When imagining the Euro-Atlantic world, Russia identifies a “Western civilization” with distinct Anglo-Saxon and continental Europe components.<sup>29</sup> Russia promotes the notion of a divide between the United States and the United Kingdom (referred to as the “Atlanticists”) on one side and the community of continental European states on the other – a community, it argues, undergoing a “crisis of traditional values.” Interestingly, Russia positions itself, as a traditional Christian (Orthodox) state, as the embodiment of “true Europe” and the defender of “traditional European values” against “foreign values” like those associated with the Anglo-Saxons.

This understanding finds official institutional expression in Russia’s 2023 Foreign Policy Concept, which offers insights into the ideological underpinnings of Russia’s strategic elite. The Concept provides a list of priority areas for Russian regional foreign policy. Notably, the term “Near Abroad” receives its first official usage and is listed as the top priority, while “Europe” ranks eighth and “United States and other Anglo-Saxon states” ninth.<sup>30</sup> The inherent incoherence of the term “Anglo-Saxon” is evident, as the document refrains from specifically naming states deemed “Anglo-Saxon.” Canada is not mentioned at all, while the United Kingdom is given just a brief paragraph. The “U.S. and other Anglo-Saxon states” are described as the “main inspirers, organizers, and executors of the

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<sup>28</sup> “Patrushev Warns of Risks of Biological Threats in Southern Russia,” *TASS News Agency*, April 27, 2022, <https://tass.ru/politika/14492681>. – in Russian

<sup>29</sup> “Article by Alexey Drobinin, Director, Foreign Policy Planning Department, Russia’s Foreign Ministry ‘The Vision of a Multipolar World: The Civilizational Factor and Russia’s Place in the Emerging World Order,’ the Journal ‘Russia in Global Affairs,’ February 20, 2023,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website*, February 20, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1854841/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1854841/).

<sup>30</sup> Alexander E. Konkov, “Rules for a Game without Rules: In Search of a Foreign-Policy Breakthrough,” *Russia in Global Affairs* 21, no. 3 (July/September 2023): 114-126, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/rules-for-a-game-without-rules/>.

aggressive anti-Russia policy of the collective West” (article 62).<sup>31</sup> More specifically, a statement published on Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs website on April 10, 2024, listed 22 representatives from UK state bodies, IT, and legal services sectors who were banned from entering Russia. The reason given: these individuals were deemed “accomplices to neo-Nazis, responsible for the deaths of people and potentially involved in activities against any country whose authorities do not align with the Anglo-Saxons.”<sup>32</sup>

The objective here is to suggest that non-Anglo-Saxon Europe should align with Russia, or “true Europe,” thereby creating a new Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, reminiscent of the alignment achieved on the eve of the Iraq war in March 2003. Russia’s leadership targets not only its domestic audience and the global South but also employs propaganda to influence the political discourse within Europe’s democratic societies. As Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov puts it: “In general, the Anglo-Saxons are significantly ramping up tension on the European continent. In this case, we, the Europeans, have something to think about. When a country outside our continent stirs up tension in our own home, that is wrong, and until we, Europeans, recognize that this harms us, I don’t think the situation can be rectified.”<sup>33</sup> This sentiment is echoed by Andrey Mukovozchik, who argues that the “Anglo-Saxons” are transitioning from using proxies to directly managing the structures they control: “By forcing Europe to impose insane sanctions on Belarus and Russia while simultaneously threatening with sanctions for the development of economic cooperation with China, the Anglo-Saxons have effectively subjugated the European Union.”<sup>34</sup> This theme was then echoed by Republika Srpska’s President Milorad Dodik, who argues that Russia has every right to defend its freedom, state, and people, adding that the “Anglo-Saxons” have pushed the European Union into conflict with Russia in Ukraine, depriving Europeans of cheap Russian gas and thereby weakening the EU economy.<sup>35</sup>

In a global context, the Euro-Atlantic world is no longer the central reference point; the focus is on a united “collective West” – the so-called “civilized world.” This world is led by an elite G7 circle, with a British-American axis at its core (the “Anglo-Saxon core”), which opposes the “Russian world” and other “civilizational states.” Putin first used the phrase “the collective West” during his 2021 annual

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<sup>31</sup> “The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website*, March 31, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/fundamental\\_documents/1860586/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/).

<sup>32</sup> “Statement by the Russian Foreign Ministry on Personal Sanctions against Representatives of Government Agencies, the IT Sector and the UK Legal Services Market,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website*, Moscow, April 10, 2024, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1943473/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1943473/). – in Russian

<sup>33</sup> “Peskov Called London’s Threats to Seize Russian Property an Alarming Signal,” *Interfax News Agency*, Moscow, January 31, 2022, [www.interfax.ru/russia/819336](http://www.interfax.ru/russia/819336). – in Russian

<sup>34</sup> Mukovozchik, “The Anglo-Saxons Only Hide Behind Diplomacy and Democracy.”

<sup>35</sup> “Bosnian Serb leader says Russia has right to defend its freedom,” *Alternativna Televizija (ATV)*, Banja Luka, in Serbian, 9 April 2024.

address to Russia's Federal Assembly and reiterated it in September 2022 when announcing mobilization. He stated: "Russia opposes the collective West," which "seeks to break up the country into parts."<sup>36</sup>

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has accused the United States and the United Kingdom of manipulating the G7 – a group whose relevance, she claims, is "over for good." She criticizes the G7 for making "Russophobic statements based on hatred" and calls for the "acceptance of the objective reality of the multipolar world in the making, without hegemony and neocolonial diktat." Zakharova argues that "G7 has, above all, through the efforts of the Anglo-Saxons, been turned into a certain headquarters for the West's fight against Russia and other independent states seeking to develop legitimate ties with each other." According to her, Washington and London are effectively using representatives from Berlin, Tokyo, Paris, and Rome as "useful idiots" to ensure support for their anti-Russian agenda.<sup>37</sup>

In contrast to the "collective West," Russia is portrayed as a "civilizational state" – a global bulwark against the Western world's "totalitarian liberalism."<sup>38</sup> Russia's 2023 *Foreign Policy Concept* further characterizes Russia as distinct from Europe, describing it as a "distinctive (*samobytnaia*) state-civilization" (Article 4) with its unique historical trajectory, strategic orientation, core values, philosophy of self-sufficient development, and commitment to absolute sovereignty.<sup>39</sup> Russia is also depicted as a "vast Eurasian and Euro-Pacific power," which, due to its continental dimensions, asserts that it can "maintain sovereignty on the civilizational level."<sup>40</sup> In this framework, every "civilization" has a core, along with peripheral areas, which lack full sovereignty. Ukraine, then, is seen as one such contested periphery.

By 2024, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated, "The special military operation began as an operation against Ukraine; over time, it has taken on the form of a war against the collective West, a war in which the countries of the collective West, led by the United States, are directly involved."<sup>41</sup> The special military operation (SVO) represents a collision of "tectonic plates," where Russian victory—or "reunification"—delivers a blow against the unipolar "Anglo-

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<sup>36</sup> Efimov, Vasilchenko, and Lyapin, "The Collective West: What Is Putin Really Talking about When He Rails against the West?"

<sup>37</sup> "Russia criticises G7's 'Russophobic' statement," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Russian, 27 February 2024; Ivan Pankin and Victor Matrosov, "Maria Zakharova on Radio KP: The Anglo-Saxons want to create instability along the entire perimeter of Russia. The protests in Georgia are a prime example of this," *Radio Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 15 March 2023.

<sup>38</sup> Efimov, Vasilchenko, and Lyapin, "The Collective West: What Is Putin Really Talking about When He Rails against the West?"

<sup>39</sup> "The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation."

<sup>40</sup> Mikhail Suslov, "Isolationism, a Broad Eurasian Partnership, and a Left Tinge," *Russia.Post*, April 20, 2023, <https://russiapost.info/politics/isolationism>.

<sup>41</sup> "Kremlin says 'military operation' in Ukraine turned into war with West," *TASS News Agency*, February 14, 2024. – in Russian

Saxon” world and accelerates the shift toward “fair multipolarity.” “Reunification” has become a mystical, sacred mission, justifying militancy, militarism, the cult of power, and hyper-nationalism. In this narrative, war is normalized, and “inevitable” victory is seen as the key to affirming Russia’s true identity as a “state-civilization.”<sup>42</sup>

In 2024, Oleg Stepanov, Russia’s ambassador to Canada, argued that Ukraine has never had true agency, always acting as a U.S. proxy and remaining under external control in line with “Anglo-Saxon methodology.” He claimed, “In 2014, Washington put Kyiv on a short leash. The U.S. has been cultivating Russophobia after failing to shape Ukraine through “orange revolutions” – a “showcase of democracy” according to Anglo-Saxon methodology. The objective was to gain leverage against Russia and initiate a conflict to reestablish Washington’s control over Europe and the collective West during the decline of American-centric imperialism.”<sup>43</sup>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov went further, stating that all European states are now under the sway of an “Anglo-Saxon collective”: “Ukraine is a bargaining chip, a tool manipulated primarily by the United States and Great Britain – an Anglo-Saxon collective, now leading the West. NATO and the European Union, which have lost their independence long ago, are entirely obedient to it.”<sup>44</sup>

“Anglo-Saxons” are portrayed as puppet masters, determined to arm Ukraine and support Ukrainian terrorist attacks against Russia, escalating the conflict while undermining Russian efforts to negotiate a ceasefire and initiate peace talks. FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov claims that the United States and the United Kingdom are using Ukraine as a proxy for perpetrating acts of terrorism and sabotage on Russian territory. According to Botnikov, the Anglo-Saxons are behind the Ukrainian “centers for psychological operations,” which are waging a “massive campaign to destabilize Russia,” fomenting protests, promoting “neo-Nazi ideas,” and recruiting Russian nationals for acts of sabotage and terrorism.<sup>45</sup>

In March 2024, Sergei Naryshkin, head of Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), accused “the Anglo-Saxons” of orchestrating the September 2022 explosions that damaged the Nord Stream underwater natural gas pipelines: “We, of course, had information and circumstantial signs pointing to who had done it.

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<sup>42</sup> Vladimir Pastukhov, “Operation ‘Russian Chromosome.’ What to Do after It,” *Novaya Gazeta*, March 23, 2022, <https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2022/03/23/vladimir-pastukhov-operatsiia-russkaia-khromosoma>. – in Russian

<sup>43</sup> “Ambassador of Russia in Canada Oleg V. Stepanov about ‘Malorossiia and a Little about the Future,’ February 22, 2024,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, February 24, 2024, [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1934361/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1934361/).

<sup>44</sup> “Russia’s Lavrov interviewed by Bosnian Serb TV on Ukraine, B-H, Kosovo,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, in Russian, 4 June 2022.

<sup>45</sup> “Russian TV News: Zelensky US Visit a Fiasco,” Main themes on Russian primetime TV news on NTV, Rossiya and Channel One on December 12, 2023, *BBC Monitoring*, Report, December 13, 2023.

The authors of the act themselves provided those circumstantial signs. The puzzle was complete. And that puzzle evidently points to the authors.”<sup>46</sup>

The “Anglo-Saxons” are accused of not only widening and escalating the war but also derailing peace talks between Russia and Ukraine. Russian state TV daytime talk shows highlighted remarks by David Arakhamia, leader of President Volodymyr Zelensky’s Servant of the People party and head of the Ukrainian delegation during talks with Russia in 2022. Arakhamia claimed that Russia had proposed a cessation of hostilities in spring 2022, conditional on Ukraine abandoning its NATO aspirations and adopting neutrality. However, then-UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson reportedly made a surprise visit to Kyiv and urged Ukraine not to sign any potential agreement with Russia but to continue pushing for a military victory. Olga Skabeyeva, the host of *Rossiia 1’s 60 Minut*, commented: “Arakhamia has now confirmed that everything we said previously was true. The Anglo-Saxons indeed ordered that the war be continued, and Boris Johnson uttered the phrase ‘Don’t sign anything with Moscow – just fight!’.” Military pundit Igor Korotchenko added that it was “important to note that the UK, and the Anglo-Saxons as a whole, especially the British-American axis, are the main ideologues behind continuing a war that holds absolutely no prospects for Ukraine.”<sup>47</sup>

For Putin, the period between the 15-17 March 2024 “election victory” and his 5th term inauguration on 7 May marks a critical phase where “Anglo-Saxon” destabilization becomes the glue that hardens and seals an all-encompassing encirclement narrative. The “collective West” concept also serves as an effective synonym. This narrative of “resistance to encirclement” is expected to be a key performance indicator for Putin’s leadership through 2030. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack at Moscow’s Crocus City Hall on March 22, 2024, Russia’s Communist Party leader, Gennady Zyuganov, claimed the attack was planned by the “Anglo-Saxons.” Speaking to *Rossiia 24*, he said: “Unfortunately, many of our citizens do not fully realize that the Anglo-Saxons, NATO, are conducting a war to destroy the Russian people. This wild, absolutely disgusting, barbaric terrorist attack is clear proof.” He then pointed to the “professional training” and “lack of mercy” of the terrorists, as well as the upcoming 25th anniversary of NATO’s bombing of Yugoslavia, as purported evidence of NATO’s involvement. Zyuganov

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<sup>46</sup> “SVR: There Were Signs That the Anglo-Saxons Blew up the Nord Streams, Then the ‘Mosaic Came Together’,” *TASS News Agency*, March 5, 2024, <https://tass.ru/politika/20163369>. – in Russian. In September 2022, President Vladimir Putin accused “the Anglo-Saxons” of being behind the explosions that ruptured the Nord Stream natural gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea in 2022: “This act of terrorism against critical energy infrastructure, which also belonged to an international joint venture, was certainly, one way or another, organized by the United States of America and the United Kingdom. And they are in any case complicit in this terrorist act.” “Russia Blames US, UK for ‘Terrorist Attack’ on Nord Stream Pipeline,” *TASS News Agency*, September 27, 2023. – in Russian

<sup>47</sup> “Russian Talk Shows: UK’s Johnson Accused of Derailing Ukraine Peace Deal,” *BBC Monitoring*, Round-up, November 27, 2023.

dismissed reports of IS involvement as “crocodile tears” and suggested they were part of a U.S. attempt “to send everyone on a wild goose chase.”<sup>48</sup>

Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev echoed these claims, stating that Ukraine had “financed” the attack but was ultimately “not independent, being run by the Anglo-Saxons.”<sup>49</sup> He asserted that NATO was “being used as a tool for Washington to conduct hybrid wars,” with “its members obediently following instructions to apply economic sanctions, freeze financial resources, conduct intelligence operations, carry out psychological warfare, launch cyberattacks, and are involved in actions to undermine and disorganize the public administration system of countries that do not agree with the policies of the Anglo-Saxons.”<sup>50</sup> Patrushev further reiterated these points when speaking at a regular annual meeting on security issues in Russia’s North-Western Federal District, citing a backdrop of “sabotage and terrorist activities by Ukrainian neo-Nazis using fascist methods.” Ukraine’s actions were directed, he asserted, and “having failed to achieve success on the battlefield, the criminal Kyiv regime, supported by the Anglo-Saxons and their henchmen, and with their direct coordination, deliberately commits acts of sabotage against civilian facilities, shells Russian border regions, uses fire weapons against the civilian population, commits terrorist acts in places of mass gathering of people, organizes assassination attempts on government officials, public figures and journalists.”<sup>51</sup>

There is an obvious tension and dissonance between the Euro-Atlantic and global contexts despite the recurring presence of “Anglo-Saxons” in both narratives. Within the Euro-Atlantic space, there is a division between the “Anglo-Saxon” Atlanticists and the European continental core, of which Russia is considered a part. On a global scale, the order is framed as a struggle between a united “collective West” (the G7) with its “Anglo-Saxon” core—portrayed as an eternal,

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<sup>48</sup> “Briefing: Russia Commentators Sceptical of IS Moscow Attack Claim, Blame Ukraine,” *BBC Monitoring, Insight*, March 23, 2024. This assertion of “Anglo-Saxon” masterminds is echoed by propagandists in Belarus and Transnistria; see respectively: Andrey Mukovozchik, “After the Terrorist Attack in the Suburbs of Moscow, Feelings Are Overwhelming. But They Must Be Followed by Thoughts,” *Belarus Today*, March 24, 2024, <https://www.sb.by/articles/ne-dopustit.html>. – in Russian; Andrey Safonov, “Crocus: Almost a Day Later. 10 Brief Conclusions,” *Facebook*, March 23, 2024, [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid0BwWdfbcSf8QTyzf518J5cxtQDr4vos9QujFJnPR6Qx9vfgzPXgoPZteBh5kK6RI&id=100006431271563&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0BwWdfbcSf8QTyzf518J5cxtQDr4vos9QujFJnPR6Qx9vfgzPXgoPZteBh5kK6RI&id=100006431271563&_rdr). – in Russian

<sup>49</sup> “Russian Weekly TV Highlights: NATO, 75, ‘Devours’ Nations, ‘Creeps in’ on Russia,” *BBC Monitoring, Round-up*, April 9, 2024.

<sup>50</sup> Vitaly Tseplyaev, “‘Bloody History.’ Nikolai Patrushev Explained What NATO Has Come to in 75 Years,” *Argumenty i Fakty*, April 1, 2024, <https://aif.ru/politics/world/-krova-vaya-istoriya-nikolay-patrushev-obyasnil-k-chemu-nato-prishlo-za-75-let>. – in Russian

<sup>51</sup> “Patrushev: Ukrainian Neo-Nazis Are Becoming More Active in Russia,” *TASS News Agency*, Moscow, April 16, 2024, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20559387>. – in Russian. See also: Ivan Egorov, “Patrushev: Russia’s Power and Potential Have Always Irritated the West,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, April 16, 2024, <https://rg.ru/2024/04/16/anglo-saksam-zdes-ne-rady.html>.



existential threat to Russia and as being on the wrong side of history—and Russia, which presents itself as a “civilizational-state” on the right side of history, sitting alongside, as Dugin noted, “Chinese, Indian, Islamic, African, Latin American alternative civilizations to the West, which today are also looking for their own ideas. We are united by the fact that we categorically reject the hegemony of the United States and the unipolar world.”<sup>52</sup>

### **The “Anglo-Saxon Reich” – “Fascist Anglo-Saxons Elite” and “Ordinary Nazis”**

Another related “Anglo-Saxon” sub-theme worth exploring is the notion that the current “fascist Anglo-Saxons” are the intellectual and practical successors of Nazi Germany. This assertion rests on two key claims. First, the “Zelensky regime” itself is Nazi, often labeled a “Nazi Junta,” and since it is seen as a proxy, its “masters”—the “Anglo-Saxons”—must therefore also be considered Nazi. Second, this connection is not merely implied guilt by association; it is argued that the “Anglo-Saxon” powers represent both the intellectual precursors of the “Third Reich” and the inheritors of its legacy.

To illustrate the first pillar, Yevgeny Popov, host of *Rossiya 1’s 60 Minut* morning edition, drew parallels between present-day events and Nazi-era Germany on February 2, 2023, marking the 80th anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in the battle of Stalingrad (now Volgograd). As footage of German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius riding a Leopard 2 tank was shown, Popov stated that the tanks were to be sent on to “Ukrainian neo-Nazis, worthy successors of the Third Reich.” He also pointed out that the tank’s side was adorned with “practically the same crosses” that the Soviet people had seen on Germany’s WWII-era Tiger tanks 80 years ago. Popov then questioned: “Did no one tell Pistorius that he climbed into the tank the day before the anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad, actually on the eve? Or did he forget, or was it intentional?”<sup>53</sup>

In August 2023, both Lavrov and Patrushev separately commented on the role of the “Anglo-Saxons.” Addressing the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security, Lavrov stated that:

The “collective West,” allegedly to “save” the neo-Nazi Kyiv regime, has launched a hybrid aggression against Russia that spanned the military, political, legal, economic, and humanitarian spheres. Numerous facts unequivocally confirm that the Anglo-Saxons and their underlings spent years preparing the Kyiv regime for war, pouring weapons into Ukraine, and sabotaging the unanimously approved UN Security Council resolution on a peaceful settlement that took into consideration the legitimate interests of Donbas residents. On the contrary, the West tacitly and even approvingly observed as the

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<sup>52</sup> Gasyuk, “Russophiles and Multipolar Fighters from All Over the World Gathered in Moscow.”

<sup>53</sup> “Russian Talk Shows: Germany’s Nazi Past Invoked on Stalingrad Anniversary,” *BBC Monitoring*, Round-up, February 2, 2023.

putschist-founded Kyiv regime enacted laws banning the Russian language in education and culture, media, and everyday life.<sup>54</sup>

Patrushev widened the aperture, claiming that, under the dictation of the “Anglo-Saxons,” Russophobia has spread throughout Ukraine and other European countries, particularly the Baltic states, “where everything Russian is also persecuted.” He argued that by installing a “neo-Nazi terrorist regime to power in Ukraine as a result of a bloody coup d’état, the Anglo-Saxons unleashed genocide against the Russian population. Since 2014, the residents of Donbas, and these are mostly Russian people, have been subject to violence and physical destruction.”<sup>55</sup>

On February 18, 2024, Rossiya 1 revisited its familiar anti-Western and anti-Ukraine tropes in a report marking the 10th anniversary of Ukraine’s 2014 Euro-Maidan “Revolution of Dignity.” Dmitry Kiselyov of “Vesti Nedeli” characterized this event as a “bloody coup” that was “supported by the CIA” and enabled by Georgian snipers. He also suggested that current NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg might be considered for a role as a “special envoy” for Ukraine: “If this is the case, then the Anglo-Saxons are acting according to the logic and experience of the Third Reich. After all, a special envoy for Ukraine is exactly the same as Reichskommissar Erich Koch, a Gauleiter, a governor. Dress Stoltenberg in Koch’s uniform – and how organic, isn’t it?”<sup>56</sup> This commentary was accompanied by an image of Stoltenberg in a Nazi uniform.

In justifying Russia’s full-scale, multi-axis attack on Ukraine in February 2022, Dmitry Medvedev argued: “We could not idly watch how the odious nationalist regime of the heirs of Konovalts, Bandera, and Shukhevych [Ukrainian nationalist leaders before and during WW2], with the support of their supervisors, sought to obliterate not only Russia but the entire ‘Russian world,’ of which hundreds of millions proudly count themselves as members.”<sup>57</sup> According to this logic, “Ukraine is a spearhead in the hands of the Anglo-Saxons. They want to kill the Russian bear with this spear.”<sup>58</sup> This kind of thinking is also reflected in the

<sup>54</sup> “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s Remarks at the 11th Moscow Conference on International Security, Moscow, August 15, 2023,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, August 15, 2023, [https://mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/news/1900527/](https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/1900527/).

<sup>55</sup> Ivan Egorov, “Patrushev Accused the West of Unleashing Genocide of the Russian Population in Ukraine,” *TASS News Agency*, September 21, 2023, <https://tass.ru/politika/18805995>. – in Russian

<sup>56</sup> “Russian Weekly TV Highlights: Scarce Navalny Coverage, Focus on Putin, Avdiivka,” Main themes on Russian TV weekly news review programmes on Rossiya 1, Channel One and NTV on February 18, 2024, *BBC Monitoring*, Round-up, February 19, 2024.

<sup>57</sup> Dmitry Medvedev, “Our People, Our Land, Our Truth,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, December 26, 2022, [https://cdnstatic.rg.ru/uploads/attachments/2022/12/25/rg012612\\_a14.pdf](https://cdnstatic.rg.ru/uploads/attachments/2022/12/25/rg012612_a14.pdf). – in Russian

<sup>58</sup> Daniil Bezsonov, “Ukraine Is the Tip of the Spear in the Hands of the Anglo-Saxons,” *For the Glory of the Motherland (Belarusian Military Newspaper)*, December 7, 2023, [https://vsr.mil.by/rubrics/est\\_mnenie/daniil\\_bezsonov\\_ukraina\\_nakonechnik\\_kopya\\_v\\_rukakh\\_anglosaksov/](https://vsr.mil.by/rubrics/est_mnenie/daniil_bezsonov_ukraina_nakonechnik_kopya_v_rukakh_anglosaksov/).

graffiti left by retreating Russian soldiers in a school in Velyka Oleksandrivka, Kherson region. The graffiti reads: “Death to Yankee. Death to the Anglo-Saxons. And to the Jews and Euro-Gay.”<sup>59</sup>

Second, the claim that the “Anglo-Saxons” were the genesis of the “Third Reich,” as well as its supposed role as keeper of the flame in the form of the “Atlantic Reich,” is a provocative element in the Russian narrative. Political analyst Alexei Martynov suggests that Nazi propaganda drew heavily from “Anglo-Saxon” models and originated from British colonial ideology. According to this reasoning, Hitler admired the Anglo-Saxons but was disappointed by Britain’s refusal to ally with him, attributing this to Britain’s unwillingness to tolerate equal partnerships.<sup>60</sup> The assertion is that the British colonial model of racial supremacy largely predetermined the ideology of the “Third Reich.” The idea of “Anglo-Saxon” civilizational supremacy, Senior Russian MP Leonid Slutsky contends, represents a form of “creeping fascism,” which he describes as a strategic tool in the “Anglo-Saxon” struggle against Russia. This ideology, he argues, was “invented to curb the growth of the Russian Empire’s long-term political and economic influence, specifically targeting Russian civilization on the European continent.”<sup>61</sup>

In 2016, then State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin referenced Winston Churchill’s March 1946 “Iron Curtain” speech in Fulton, asserting it served as a “signal for the start of the Cold War” and proclaimed a world order “Anglo-Saxon-style,” where the USSR was marked as an adversary, and Churchill advocated dealing with it “from a position of strength.”<sup>62</sup> In May 2023, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov likened NATO’s eastward expansion to Hitler’s *Drang nach Osten* (Drive to the East).<sup>63</sup> Later in 2023, Nikolai Patrushev, drawing on Alexander Shchipkov’s *Unfinished Nazism*, paints a straight line from the early British colonial model to the “Third Reich” and onward to modern “Atlanticist Nazism.” According to Patrushev, the ideas of the “blackshirts” and “browns” (the legacy of early fascist ideologies) have been adopted by the creators of “color revolutions,” who impose xenophobia to forcibly overthrow legitimate governments

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<sup>59</sup> Ruta Hsu, “Ukraine War Two Years on – Graffiti Left by Russian Soldiers Has a Dark and Sobering Message,” *The Big Issue*, February 23, 2024, <https://www.bigissue.com/news/ukraine-war-two-years-russia-soldiers-graffiti/>.

<sup>60</sup> Marcus Colla, “Book Review: Hitler’s Anglo-Saxon Envy,” *The Lowy Institute*, September 13, 2019, <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/book-review-hitler-s-anglo-saxon-envy>; Geoffrey Roberts, “Review of Brendan Simms, *Hitler: Only the World Was Enough* (Allen Lane, 2019),” *History Ireland* 28, no. 2 (March/April 2020), <https://historyireland.com/hitler-only-the-world-was-enough/>.

<sup>61</sup> Slutsky, “The Ideology of the Liberal Democratic Party of the 21st Century Is Anti-fascism.”

<sup>62</sup> Sergey Naryshkin, “The Reunification of Crimea with Russia Is the Biggest Event in Modern History,” *Izvestiya*, Moscow, March 17, 2016, <https://iz.ru/news/606649>. – in Russian; English translation at <http://duma.gov.ru/news/11941/>.

<sup>63</sup> “Russian TV News: Moscow Advances Its Vision of a New Multipolar World Order,” Main themes on Russian primetime TV news on NTV, Rossiya 1 and Channel One, May 24, 2023, *BBC Monitoring*, Round-up, May 25, 2023.

and create chaos in once stable regions. He claims that “by fomenting ethnic hatred, nurturing and fully supporting extremism, chauvinism and all forms of radicalism, the West creates a real threat to democratic and universal values, security, social stability, and societal unity.”<sup>64</sup>

### “Anglo-Saxons” as “Fifth Column” and “Foreign Agents”

The term “Anglo-Saxons” in contemporary Russian discourse functions as more than a foreign-policy label. Domestically, the term is often used interchangeably with terms like “foreign agent” or “fifth column,” implying both “guilt by association” and drawing a direct line between domestic political opposition, dissent, treason, arrest, incarceration, and even execution or murder. In Russia today, foreign-funded (and thus “Anglo-Saxon”-financed) nonprofit organizations engaged in any form of autonomous civic action are politically suspect, as “Anglo-Saxon” funding implies anti-Russian sympathies that do not align with the ethnocultural mentality and values of Russia as a fully-fledged sovereign, autonomous, strategic actor. This rhetoric serves a dual purpose. First, to silence critics and eliminate potential opposition to the autocratic status quo; second, to provide an abstract but dynamic enemy image that demands the attention of Russia’s strategic decision-makers, who are, of course, alert to and capable of addressing the danger. In other words, this narrative maintains popular support, frames and legitimizes Russian policy responses, and signals increasing autarky and isolation as the preferred direction.

Valery Garbuzov, former director of the Arbatov Institute of the USA and Canada at the Russian Academy of Sciences, published an article on August 29, 2023, in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* titled “On the Lost Illusions of a Bygone Era.”<sup>65</sup> He observed the “tragic pattern” of collapsed empires failing to reconcile with their diminished status, highlighting the post-World War II experiences of the French, British, and, later, the Russian empire after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In Russia’s case, he noted that, as is typical, post-imperial elites exploit anti-American “myths” through rhetoric about supposed Western decline, crises, resistance to globalization, and “Anglo-Saxon” world dominance. After facing widespread criticism from Russian media propagandists, Garbuzov responded with a rebuttal, in which he stated: “And I myself am not a secret West-

<sup>64</sup> Ivan Egorov, “Patrushev: The goal of the Anglo-Saxons Is to Destroy the Russian World, to Dismember the Country and Exterminate the Peoples Inhabiting Russia,” *Rossiskaya Gazeta Website*, November 30, 2023, <https://rg.ru/2023/11/30/patrushev-cel-anglo-saksov-unichtozhit-russkij-mir-raschlenit-stranu-i-istrebit-narody-naseliaiushchie-rossiiu.html>. – in Russian

<sup>65</sup> “Director of the Institute of the USA and Canada Valery Garbuzov on the Lost Illusions of a Bygone Era,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, August 29, 2023, [https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2023-08-29/7\\_8812\\_illusions.html](https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2023-08-29/7_8812_illusions.html). – in Russian

ern intelligence agent; I'm not an Anglo-Saxon spy; and I'm not a domestic enemy of my own Fatherland.”<sup>66</sup> On the initiative of the Presidential Administration, the “Fundamentals of Russian Statehood,” now part of Russian university curricula, is akin to lessons for schoolchildren known as “Talking about Important Things.” A central conspiracy theory animates the core content of this post-Soviet ideological indoctrination: namely, that “the insidious West, led by the Anglo-Saxons and their hirelings both inside and outside the country, seeks to destroy and enslave Russia.”<sup>67</sup>

This domestic context's functional use of the term “Anglo-Saxons” is increasingly echoed in the practices, procedures, and policies of Russia's allies in its neighborhood. In Belarus, political analyst Alyksandr Klaskowski notes that the removal of signs in English at the Minsk Central Railway Station is “a manifestation of the current anti-Western course of the Belarusian authorities.” It also demonstrates bureaucratic conformism, as “junior officials just keep their nose to the wind and try to comply zealously with this rhetoric, this anti-Western ideology from the high command.” Vadzim Mazheyka argues that this reflects “Soviet thinking – that the enemy is in the West, and it is not only Lithuania and Poland, not only the Belarusian Latin alphabet but also the United States and various ‘Anglo-Saxons’ in general, so English is seen as the language of the enemy.”<sup>68</sup>

Russian propaganda is particularly active in deploying the concept of the “Anglo-Saxon” in Central Asia. Prior to September 2021, when the United States and ISAF forces were present in Afghanistan, Russian officials often claimed that Islamic State-Khorasan Province was a Western or U.S. invention, created from among Central Asian nationals to launch attacks against Russian interests in Central Asia and Russia itself. This reinforced a longstanding Russian narrative about Western covert support for Islamist groups – from Chechnya to Syria. Now, “Anglo-Saxons” have been inserted into this narrative. For instance, Sputnik's Tajik service featured Russian economic expert Vyacheslav Nekrasov, who argued that the “Anglo-Saxons” use Afghanistan to create tension on its border with Central Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as to weaken the influence of Russia. He stated, “Of course, there are fewer terrorist attacks, but armed opposition exists in the form of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS – all these groups are present to one degree or another thanks

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<sup>66</sup> Valery Garbuzov, “Valery Garbuzov. Continuation. A Sudden Storm Out of Nowhere,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, September 5, 2023, [https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2023-09-05/10\\_0\\_2309051230.html](https://www.ng.ru/ideas/2023-09-05/10_0_2309051230.html).

<sup>67</sup> V.G., “Brainwashing in University Lecture Halls: V.G. Discusses How Indoctrination Is Destroying Russia's Higher Education,” *Riddle*, November 7, 2022, <https://ridl.io/brainwashing-in-university-lecture-halls/>.

<sup>68</sup> “BBCM: Highlights from Belarusian Newspapers, News Websites, 17 January 2024,” *BBC Monitoring*, Roundup, January 18, 2024.

to the support of the Anglo-Saxons, who continue their anti-Russian politics.”<sup>69</sup> The “Anglo-Saxons” are represented as a malign external force in Eurasia, continually “muddying the waters” and undermining emerging Eurasia Economic Union integration efforts. This propaganda further claims that anti-central government militants and protestors in Kazakhstan’s Zhanaozen, Tajikistan’s Badkhashan, and Uzbekistan’s Karakalpakstan were directed by British intelligence agencies to attempt (but failed) to overthrow the existing order: “So, it could be assumed that the issue of redistributing control over drug trafficking—the key instrument of Anglo-Saxon policy in Central Asia—from now on, will be addressed by the CIA, the ‘cousins’ of Mi-6 in the USA.”<sup>70</sup> Russian messaging continues, alleging that “the Anglo-Saxon masters of the instigators of the current turmoil” have since the 1990s attempted to “kindle ethnic hatred” according to “a long-term strategy implemented by various think-tanks, primarily Anglo-Saxon ones.”<sup>71</sup>

Additionally, Prince Rahim Aga Khan, the eldest son of Aga Khan IV and a board member of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), is accused by pro-Russian media in Central Asia of being part of a broader system of Western NGOs promoting liberal democratic values and expanding Western influence in the region in partnership with structures and funds associated with the United States, United Kingdom, and European states. Russian Telegram channel *AsiaToday* reported that these activities could exacerbate tensions between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, concluding: “And the ultimate beneficiaries of such conflicts will, without a doubt, be the Anglo-Saxons. After all, the Aga Khan family is a key figure in Anglo-Saxon plans for the ‘Greater Waziristan’ project, which could impact all countries in the region.”<sup>72</sup>

Such propaganda can achieve several objectives. First, it defects any internal discontent with central governments onto extra-regional “Anglo-Saxons,” a shared adversary with Russia. With common threat assessments comes shared interest and the promise of unified responses. Second, the portrayal of “Anglo-Saxons” as an alibi implies that opposing them equates to embracing Russian-led

<sup>69</sup> Vyacheslav Nekrasov, “Expert: Afghanistan Is Being Used to Create a Hotbed of Tension in Central Asia,” *Sputnik: Tajik Service*, February 20, 2024, <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/20240220/afghanistan-ochag-napryazhennost-central-asia-1061779780.html>.

<sup>70</sup> UzMetronom Agency, July 14, 2022. – in Russian

<sup>71</sup> Viktor Nikolayev interview with Andrei Grozin, head of the department for Central Asia and Kazakhstan of the Institute of CIS Countries headlined: “Controlled chaos of Karakalpakstan”: “Protests in Uzbekistan Were Organized by a ‘Third Force’: Controlled Chaos of Karakalpakstan,” *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, July 4, 2022, [www.mk.ru/politics/2022/07/04/protesty-v-uzbekistane-organizovala-tretya-sila.html](http://www.mk.ru/politics/2022/07/04/protesty-v-uzbekistane-organizovala-tretya-sila.html). See also: Agency for Ethno-National Strategies director Alexander Kobrinsky, “Kazakhstan May Lose Sovereignty: The West Has Wedged Into Relations Between Moscow and Nur-Sultan,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, July 10, 2022, [https://www.ng.ru/vision/2022-07-10/5\\_8482\\_vision.html](https://www.ng.ru/vision/2022-07-10/5_8482_vision.html).

<sup>72</sup> “Briefing: Aga Khan Activities Seen as Cause for Tension in Central Asia,” *BBC Monitoring*, Insight, March 21, 2024.

integration processes. For instance, on April 9, the privately-owned analytical website *Ritm Yevrazii* (Rhythm of Eurasia), which promotes Eurasian integration, published an article vilifying Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The article portrayed him as a puppet of the West who makes vain attempts to turn Kazakhstan against Russia, stating: “Obedient to the collective West, the *Ukrokomik* [Ukrainian comic] Volodymyr Zelensky, who is ready to sell *Nezalezhnaya* [‘Independent,’ used as derogatory for Ukraine] and exterminate most of its population for a little money, is now completely out of control and becoming entirely unmanageable and undesirable to the Anglo-Saxons.”<sup>73</sup> Third, this propaganda reflects an underlying Russian attitude regarding the actual agency of Central Asian states: they have limited capacity and, without integration with Russia, cannot be protected. Governments that do not align with Russia do so because they are subservient (“Anglo-Saxons” are their puppet masters directing internal dissent). The notion that these states have agency, reflected in genuine policy disagreement with Russia or wish to pursue alternative paths, is not part of this worldview.

## Conclusions

By his fourth presidential term, Putin, his inner circle, and state officials—such as Lavrov, Bortnikov, Naryshkin, Patrushev, Zakharova, Peskov, and Slutsky—began referencing and attributing to the “Anglo-Saxons” a range of highly negative, even fantastical, goals. State propagandists like Kiselyov, Solovyov, and their guests amplified these messages with heightened rhetoric. The term “Anglo-Saxon” has undoubtedly seized the psychological imagination of Russia’s elite: references made by state officials to the “Anglo-Saxons” in interviews, addresses, diplomatic exchanges, and in the *Foreign Policy Concept* are echoed and amplified by state media and further propagated by other state-controlled institutions, including the Russian Orthodox Church and the education system. Since the 2000s, nationalist public intellectuals have developed seemingly “evidence-based” but actually ahistorical narratives around Russia’s “state-civilization” genesis, framing them in opposition to the so-called eternal “Anglo-Saxons” — a constructed, timeless Western adversary rooted in the early medieval period.

This article has surveyed and explored who, when, and in what contexts Russian officials and public figures use the term “Anglo-Saxons” in the context of ever-increasing strategic confrontation. A study of this term’s usage reveals the architecture of Russia’s evolving state ideology. Marlène Laurelle identifies five interconnected elements that shape this ideological framework. First, there is a set of core worldviews and values. Second, there are broad discursive notions — floating signifiers like sovereignty, civilization, conservatism, Eurasia, and the

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<sup>73</sup> Marat Nurgozhaev, “The Tail Bites the Dog: Has Kyiv’s Terrorist Regime Begun to Worry Its Western Masters?” *Rhythm of Eurasia*, April 9, 2024, [www.ritm Eurasia.ru/news--2024-04-09--hvost-kusaet-sobaku-terroristicheskij-rezhim-kieva-nachal-bespo koit-zapadnyh-hozjaev-72627](http://www.ritm Eurasia.ru/news--2024-04-09--hvost-kusaet-sobaku-terroristicheskij-rezhim-kieva-nachal-bespo koit-zapadnyh-hozjaev-72627). See also: “Zelensky Blamed for Trying to Sour Kazakh-Russian Ties,” *BBC Monitoring*, Round-up, 15 April 2024.

“Russian World”—each with its own intellectual history. Third, five major strategic narratives or storylines are employed by Putin’s regime to interpret political and social orders and to adapt to changing contexts: a) Russia as a civilization-state; b) Russia as *katechon*; c) Russia as a defender of traditional values; d) Russia as the anti-fascist power; and, e) Russia as the leading anti-colonial force. Fourth, official state doctrines and concepts, such as Russia’s 2023 Foreign Policy Concept, exemplify the formalization of these narratives. Finally, *ideologemes*, which Laurelle describes as “small key semantic units that reduce complex realities to simplistic slogans and mottos, populate the public space, especially state TV (‘Ukronazis,’ ‘collective West,’ ‘Russophobia,’ etc.)” Remarkably, Russia’s use of the term “Anglo-Saxons” corresponds to each of these elements.<sup>74</sup>

First, and practically, “Anglo-Saxons” is a fungible abstraction that can be used to frame threats and justify corresponding responses. One core function is that of lineage and immutability: from time immemorial, “Anglo-Saxons” in various guises have sought to attack, denigrate, and damage Russia’s legitimate state interests, including blocking Russia’s historically sanctioned “reunification” with Ukraine. This framing suggests that Russia possesses a thousand-year history that qualifies it as a “state civilization.” This identity has been secured only through effective resistance to “Anglo-Saxon” aggression, drawing on a strong alternative strategic identity and values distinctive from “Europe.” Russia defines itself in the negative, by what it is not (“Anglo-Saxon”) rather than by what it is (multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, interdenominational). As Mimi Reitz observes, Russia uses “Anglo-Saxons” to counter and channel “rising ethno-nationalism into an anti-Western narrative of Russophobia, binding the country together as supra-ethnic *rossiiane* in their struggle against the real enemy – the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ world, and blaming grievances on inordinate discrimination.”<sup>75</sup> Only the current leadership and regime continuity can safeguard Russia’s ontological security. While “Anglo-American” could serve as a substitute for “Anglo-Saxon,” the latter term better supports the notion of lineage and abstraction.

Second, the strained logic and conspiratorial elements within Russian “Anglo-Saxon” thinking are evident in the belief that “Anglo-Saxon elites” control global finance and media, act as masterminds, and are ever-present behind the scenes, pulling strings, manipulating events, and advancing their interests. This reflects the tradition of holistic-dialectical thinking in Russia, where a wide aperture encompasses both the real and fantastical, allowing for the continual construction

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<sup>74</sup> Marlène Laruelle, “Russia’s Ideological Construction in the Context of the War in Ukraine,” *IFRI Studies: Russie.Eurasie.Reports*, no. 46 (Paris: IFRI, March 2024), <https://www.ifri.org/en/studies/russias-ideological-construction-context-war-ukraine>.

<sup>75</sup> Mimi Reitz, “Weaponised ‘Russophobia,’” *Riddle Russia*, August 9, 2023, <https://ridl.io/weaponised-russophobia>. See also: Andrey Pertsev, “Russia’s Public Outing,” *Riddle Russia*, October 22, 2022, <https://ridl.io/russia-s-public-outing/>: “Many Russians were happy to repeat propaganda about ‘fascist Ukraine,’ ‘Banderites,’ ‘Anglo-Saxons’ and the horrors of life in the West, without giving them much thought.”



of new, creative alternatives that may bear little resemblance to the reality they purport to characterize. Certainly, Russian “Anglo-Saxon” messaging has not only become more frequent, intense, radical, and linguistically violent (employing imagery and dehumanization effects), but it also increasingly resembles caricature. For example, Patrushev notably asserts: “Some people in America claim that Eastern Europe and Siberia will become the safest places in the event of the possible eruption of the Yellowstone Volcano in the western United States. This is apparently the answer to the question of why the Anglo-Saxon elites are so keen to take ownership of this heartland.”<sup>76</sup> This likely reflects a regime self-radicalization dynamic, driven by a process of elite outbidding. On an individual level, paradoxically, alarmist language about the “Anglo-Saxon” threat, even demanding a nuclear response, signals risk aversion: individuals avoid the risk of appearing less alarmist than their colleagues. The real danger lies in the lack of rationality and proportion.

Third, the notion of an “Atlantic Reich” and “Anglo-Saxon Nazis” illustrates the dynamic and rapidly expanding nature of this denigration. What began in 2014 as a focus on the Azov Battalion and Right Sector in Ukraine has now broadened to encompass the entire “collective West.” The Russian objective of “denazification” in Ukraine presumably now targets a much larger foe. We observe a binary logic at work in structuring Russian thinking. If Russia is anti-Nazi and the USSR defeated the “Third Reich” in the Great Patriotic War, then Russia, as the legal successor to the Soviet Union, is poised to defeat the “Atlantic Nazis” once again in the 21st century. This time, however, Russia aligns with an “axis of resistance” against “Anglo-Saxon hegemony” alongside Iran, Belarus, and North Korea. If “Anglo-Saxons” is a synonym, ultimately, for a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors perceived as “anti-Russian” and Russophobic, then, by definition, Russia’s alternative norms are legitimized, and, as such, embraced and advanced by allies who may share them but are free to practice them differently.

Russia’s use of the term “Anglo-Saxons” may eventually morph into the more comprehensible “Anglo-American” trope or become subsumed under the broader notion of the “collective West.” However, the “Anglo-Saxons” label remains durable. First and foremost, and practically, “Anglo-Saxon” does not preclude Russia from attempting to polarize, divide, and split the “collective West” between its offshore and continental variants. Second, suppose French and German support for Ukraine grows even stronger. In that case, Russia can characterize the European Union as subjugated to “Anglo-Saxon” dominance, allowing Russian disinformation campaigns to target anti-status quo actors and rally them under the “axis of resistance” banner. Third, as Russia’s elite becomes increasingly radicalized by war, their worldview and core beliefs solidify, becoming more

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<sup>76</sup> Andrei Kolesnikov, “Blood and Iron: How Nationalist Imperialism Became Russia’s State Ideology,” *Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center*, December 6, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/11/blood-and-iron-how-nationalist-imperialism-became-russias-state-ideology>.

static, fixed in place, and demanding additional “empirical” validation. The messaging tradeoff inherent in the “Anglo-Saxon” term itself—balancing abstraction and fungibility with comprehensibility/ purchase for internal Russian and external global audiences—becomes significant. These three reasons underscore the multiple roles of “Anglo-Saxons” in Russia’s psychological imagination and help explain why the term “Anglo-Saxons” will continue to dominate Russian geopolitical thinking.

## Disclaimer

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