

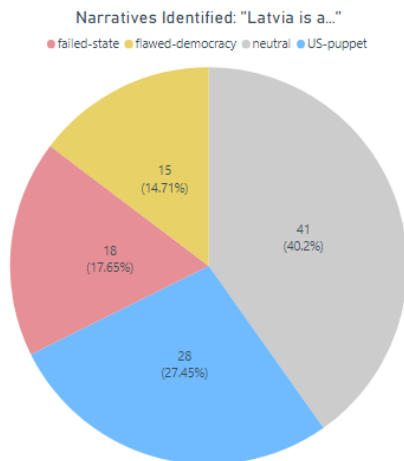
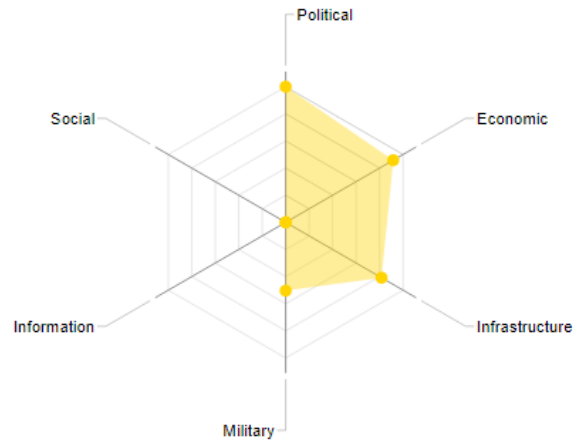
PMESII—Key Points

Political (avg. 1.25): There are two dimensions – the foreign policy and the domestic policy dimension. In the context of foreign policy, one can see this as a reference to Latvia's service to Washington. Within the discussion of the interior, the takeover of the freeports of Riga and Ventspils is used as an excuse to undermine political parties that allegedly gain benefits from said ports, namely *Union of Greens and Farmers* in Ventspils and *Harmony* in Riga. Thereby deceivers are attempting to trivialize the motive of the U.S. – from tackling corruption to simply interfering in interior matters.

Infrastructure (avg. 0.45): Some 8% of the total GDP is made by industries associated with the transit sector and a large part of the business is serviced by the ports in Riga and Ventspils. Russia has stated its intentions to redirect its freight away from the Baltic ports towards its ports on the Baltic Sea. The reasons vary, however, undoubtedly a willingness to show that the Baltic countries need Russia more than it needs them is predominant. This aspect is often mentioned as the result of the strategic failure of the Latvian government.

Economic (avg. 0.36): The Latvian government sacrifices its economic interests in favour of US geopolitical goals. This results in the loss of Latvia's transit business. The only road to prosperity for Latvia is through tight integration with Russia. Messages like these are used to further the narrative of Latvia being a failed state.

PMESII—Areas of State Vulnerabilities



Narratives Identified

The chart on the left shows the number of articles (and percent of total) that contained a manually identified and coded narrative regarding the state of Latvia. Beyond the 40% of articles which presented Latvia in a more neutral way, 27% of the articles suggested that Latvia was actually a *puppet* of the U.S. and serves its bidding over the interests of Latvia.

Why This Matters—Key Takeaways

Kremlin-controlled and pro-Moscow media are spreading the message of Latvia as a puppet state under the control of Washington, which also dictates Latvia's aggressive policy against Russia. Such interpretation of the Baltic states' policy is consistent with Kremlin-spread conspiracy theories about supposed dominance of elites, in which individuals or even entire states do not have any say about their destiny. As a result, a misleading picture is created – that being in close cooperation with Moscow is the only way for Latvia to be genuinely sovereign. Aivars Lembergs has been very well suited for spreading Russian propaganda due to his periodic anti-NATO and anti-USA statements. Russian propagandists often use opinion leaders of target audiences or at least opinion leaders of certain groups within the society (ethnic or social) who regularly voice opinions favourable to Kremlin's foreign policy. In this context, Lembergs has repeatedly helped Russian media with statements about NATO being an occupying force in Latvia or that Latvia should implement a Russia-friendly foreign policy.

Graph Explanations

Timeline: Shows the number of articles published during the monitored period that was deemed to represent the narrative being tracked.

Radar: Shows the average score on the PMESII spectrum for the narrative based on a 1-3 scoring per category that researchers conducted for each article.

