

"Judging Freedom" as a Domestic Narrative Laundering Node for Russian State Media

A Consolidated Open-Source Intelligence Assessment

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Methodology: Open-source intelligence (OSINT) analysis drawing on FARA filings, US Treasury (OFAC) sanctions designations, DOJ indictments, the 2017 Intelligence Community Assessment, State Department Global Engagement Center reports, Voice of America investigations, Russian MFA transcripts, TASS primary-source articles, Creators Syndicate publications, KeyWiki documentation, and primary-source evidence from state-media websites. All quotes verified against original sources.

Executive Summary

"Judging Freedom" (hereafter "JF"), a YouTube program hosted by former Fox News Senior Judicial Analyst Andrew Napolitano (681,000+ subscribers, 2,957 podcast episodes since October 2021), functions as the primary identified domestic narrative laundering node within Russia's post-enforcement foreign influence infrastructure.

Guest network: 20 regular guests with verified connections to Russian, Chinese, or Iranian state media outlets, classified across five tiers: confirmed paid operatives (3), deep documented ties without confirmed payment (1), active contributors to the OFAC-sanctioned, SVR-directed Strategic Culture Foundation (4), direct institutional engagement or state-level recognition (5), and documented frequent state media guests (7). No comparable American media program has been identified with a guest roster of this composition. Four SCF contributors have published articles as recently as February 2026 -- five years after OFAC designation.

Host escalation: Napolitano's relationship with Russian state institutions has escalated from passive citation (2022) through institutional recognition (SPIEF 2024) to direct state-level engagement: two confirmed Moscow trips in 2025 (with a third indicated by pre-event Russian state media speaker listings), a joint two-hour Lavrov interview (MFA transcript published), an exclusive with Alexander Dugin, direct Sputnik interviews, recurring appearances on RT's "The Sanchez Effect," self-disclosed lecturing at Russia's School of International Diplomacy, and formal TASS interviews in which he provided granular White House factional intelligence naming six officials and reporting a private Carlson-Trump meeting. Lavrov told Napolitano: "Please tell Jeffrey [Sachs] how much I enjoy watching his appearances on your show" -- confirming Foreign Minister-level monitoring. This trajectory is consistent with the GEC's documented "proxy sources" cultivation pattern.

Operational infrastructure: RT Russian maintains a dedicated JF catalog page, EADaily extracts content with screenshots on the day of broadcast, professionally dubbed Russian-language episodes appear on Rutube within hours, and RT's German-language service operates a parallel high-volume extraction pipeline spanning September 2023 through February 2026. JF content simultaneously enters Russian-language, German-language, and English-language RT ecosystems through systematic, resourced translation infrastructure.

Comparative significance: JF delivers higher attribution-value propaganda and political intelligence utility to Russian state media than the \$9.7 million covert Tenet Media scheme, at no documented financial cost to Russian institutions, with no criminal exposure, and with structural resilience to the enforcement actions that shut down RT America and collapsed Tenet within days of indictment. No direct foreign funding to JF or Napolitano has been identified. Recommendations span FBI Counterintelligence Division assessment, FARA Registration Unit and OFAC review of guest-level sanctions exposure, and integration into DNI Foreign Malign Influence Center monitoring.

Analytic Judgments

1. Andrew Napolitano's YouTube program "Judging Freedom" functions as a **domestic narrative laundering node** within Russia's broader foreign malign influence apparatus. The show generates content featuring Western-credentialed commentators who deliver Kremlin-aligned narratives in an American media context, which Russian state media then extracts, translates, and redistributes to both domestic Russian and international audiences as independent American expert validation of Russian foreign policy positions.
2. The program's regular guest roster is dominated by commentators with verified, primary-source-documented connections to Russian, Chinese, or Iranian state media outlets. This assessment documents 20 such individuals across five tiers: confirmed paid operatives of Russian state media (3), deep documented ties without confirmed payment (1), active contributors to a US Treasury-sanctioned, SVR-directed outlet (4), direct institutional engagement or state-level recognition without confirmed payment (5), and documented frequent guests on state media platforms (7). These connections range from confirmed paid employment to systematic amplification by Russian state media.
3. The show's relationship with Russian state institutions has **escalated from passive citation to active operational collaboration**: TASS moved from citing the show (2022) to formally interviewing the host (2026). The Russian MFA moved from monitoring the program to hosting Napolitano in Moscow for a Foreign Minister Lavrov interview (2025) and publishing the official transcript on its website. Napolitano has given direct interviews to Sputnik, appeared as a recurring guest on RT's "The Sanchez Effect," traveled to Moscow at least twice (March and October 2025) with a third trip indicated by pre-event Russian state media speaker listings for the Malofeev/Dugin Forum of the Future 2050 (June 2025; physical attendance not independently verified by post-event sources), interviewed Alexander Dugin in Moscow, and disclosed lecturing at Russia's School of International Diplomacy. This trajectory mirrors documented Russian intelligence tradecraft for cultivating proxy sources identified in the State Department GEC's 2020 "Pillars of Russia's Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem" report.
4. The concentration of state-media-connected guests on a single program is **not incidental**. No other identified American media program assembles 20 individuals with verified state-media connections spanning Russian, Chinese, and Iranian outlets into a single guest roster. This concentration constitutes a near-complete directory of Western commentators regularly featured across the Russian state media ecosystem.

Quantified Indicators

Metric	Count
Guests with verified state-media connections	20
Guests with confirmed RT appearances or direct citations	15
Guests with confirmed Sputnik appearances	9+
Guests with confirmed CGTN appearances	5+
Guests with confirmed Press TV appearances	5+
Contributors to SVR-directed SCF (OFAC sanctioned)	4
Confirmed paid employees/contractors of Russian state media	3
Deep documented ties without confirmed payment	1 (Macgregor)

RT 2015 Moscow gala attendees (with Putin)	2
Traveled to Moscow for state events/interviews post-2022	4+
Host direct Sputnik interviews / appearances	2 direct + Lavrov (2023-2025)
Host direct RT show appearances confirmed	2+ (Sanchez Effect 2025, Nat'l Unity Club Nov 2025)
RT DE systematic JF content extractions (kurzclips)	Dozens (Sep 2023-Feb 2026, ongoing)
Host confirmed trips to Moscow	2 confirmed + 1 unverified (Mar 2025, Oct 2025 confirmed; Jun 2025 per pre-event listings only)
Total JF podcast episodes since Oct 2021 (Rephonic RSS count)	2,957
Approximate total JF YouTube subscribers	681,000+

Defining Narrative Laundering

Narrative laundering -- a term established in the disinformation research literature (Meleshevich/Schafer, Alliance for Securing Democracy 2018; Linvill/Warren, Clemson Media Forensics Hub 2023; Stanford Internet Observatory GRU operations white paper 2020) -- is the process by which foreign state-originated propaganda narratives are routed through ostensibly independent, Western-credentialed voices to strip them of their foreign provenance and repackage them as organic domestic commentary. The laundered narratives then re-enter the information environment carrying the credibility of their American hosts rather than the stigma of their Russian state media origins.

The State Department GEC's August 2020 report identified this mechanism as the "cultivation of proxy sources" pillar of Russia's disinformation ecosystem, describing the strategy of using "Western fringe thinkers and conspiracy theorists, giving them a broader platform, while trying to obscure the Russian origins" of the narratives. The September 2024 DOJ indictment of RT employees Kalashnikov and Afanasyeva for the \$9.7 million Tenet Media covert funding scheme confirmed that this cultivation strategy extends to direct financial compensation of American content creators.

Judging Freedom's operational pattern maps precisely onto this pillar:

Stage 1 -- Content Generation: Guests appear on Judging Freedom delivering analyses that align with Russian foreign policy positions -- framing the Ukraine conflict as NATO provocation, characterizing US sanctions as self-defeating, questioning Ukrainian sovereignty, and promoting Russian military narratives.

Stage 2 -- Extraction and Translation: Russian state media outlets -- primarily TASS, RIA Novosti, EADaily, and RT's German-language service -- systematically extract these statements, often on the same day of broadcast, and republish them in Russian and other languages as authoritative American expert commentary. EADaily (<https://eadaily.com/en/search/?text=napolitano>) maintains a searchable archive of systematically republished JF content with screenshots of the original broadcasts.

Stage 3 -- Domestic Redistribution: Russian domestic television programs, notably Vladimir Solovyov's show on Rossiya-1, broadcast translated Judging Freedom excerpts with professional voice-overs. RT Russian maintains a dedicated catalog page for the show (<https://russian.rt.com/inotv/catalog/channel/Judging%20Freedom>). Gilbert Doctorow

confirmed (<https://gilbertdoctorow.com/2025/11/09/you-have-to-have-a-thick-skin-to-talk-geopolitics-in-the-public-agera/>) that hours after English episodes go live, dubbed Russian versions appear on Rutube (<https://rutube.ru/search/?query=napolitano>) with professional voice-overs -- indicating organized, systematic translation infrastructure.

Stage 4 -- Credibility Loop: The same guests simultaneously appear directly on RT, Sputnik, CGTN, and Press TV (<https://presstv.ir>), creating a cross-platform amplification network where identical narratives circulate through both ostensibly independent and state-funded channels. Press TV systematically republishes JF content for Iranian state media audiences.

Stage 5 -- Reciprocal Escalation: Russian state institutions progressively deepen direct engagement with the show, graduating from passive citation to active collaboration -- interviews with senior officials, invitations to state-sponsored forums, direct Sputnik interviews with the host, and formal institutional recognition.

What distinguishes narrative laundering from legitimate media commentary

Legitimate media programs may occasionally interview foreign policy commentators who hold contrarian views. What distinguishes Judging Freedom as a narrative laundering node is the convergence of five factors:

Guest selection saturation: The program's regular guest roster comprises almost entirely commentators with documented state-media connections spanning Russian, Chinese, and Iranian outlets across all five tiers documented in this assessment. This pattern cannot be attributed to coincidence.

Bidirectional flow: State media does not merely cite these voices passively -- it employs them, flies them to Moscow, hosts them at Kremlin-sponsored forums, invites them to interview senior officials, gives the host direct Sputnik interviews, and systematically redistributes their JF appearances to domestic audiences.

Institutional integration: RT Russian maintains a dedicated JF catalog page. TASS cites the show by name. EADaily monitors and republishes with screenshots. The Russian MFA published the Lavrov transcript on its official website. Napolitano lectures at Russia's diplomatic training institution. This is not incidental citation -- it is institutional integration into the Russian state media architecture.

Same-day extraction: VOA documented same-day RIA Novosti citations of Macgregor's JF interviews. Rutube reposts appear within hours with professional voice-overs. This turnaround indicates systematic monitoring and prioritized translation consistent with organized content harvesting.

Escalation trajectory: The relationship has progressively deepened from passive citation (2022) through institutional recognition (2024 SPIEF) to direct state-level engagement (2025 Lavrov/Dugin interviews, Sputnik interviews, diplomatic academy lectures) to functioning as a formal TASS interview subject providing real-time White House factional intelligence (2026). This is consistent with the cultivation pattern described in the GEC's "proxy sources" pillar.

Impact on the information environment: Judging Freedom's function within the Russian influence apparatus is not to generate original propaganda -- it is to generate deniable attribution. When Russian domestic media broadcasts Macgregor saying Ukraine's military is defeated, or Johnson promoting conspiracy theories, or Sachs blaming NATO for the conflict, these are not presented as Russian claims but as the independent assessments of American experts -- a retired Army colonel,

a former CIA officer, a Columbia University professor. This laundering mechanism is more valuable to Russian information operations than direct state-media broadcasting precisely because of enforcement actions against RT and Sputnik.

RT/Sputnik Enforcement Timeline

This timeline documents the progressive US government enforcement actions against Russian state media outlets. Its significance is that multiple Judging Freedom guests maintained or deepened their relationships with these outlets after every escalation -- indicating that enforcement against institutions has not disrupted the proxy cultivation pipeline.

Date	Event
2005	RT launched as an English-language channel funded by the Russian government.
2008	Russian government under PM Putin designated ANO TV-Novosti as a "core organization of strategic importance to Russia."
2010	RT America launched in Washington, D.C. Operated by T&R Productions.
Jan 2017	ICA 2017-01D (joint CIA-FBI-NSA) designated RT as "the Kremlin's principal international propaganda outlet."
Mar 2017	Napolitano suspended from Fox News after sourcing false GCHQ/Obama claim from Larry Johnson, who had floated the conspiracy on RT on March 5-6, 2017.
Nov 2017	DOJ compelled RT America to register under FARA. Filings disclosed \$104.7 million from ANO TV-Novosti. Sputnik registered two days later; filings disclosed \$1,427,016 from Rossiya Segodnya.
Aug 2020	State Dept GEC published "Pillars of Russia's Disinformation Ecosystem," identifying "cultivation of proxy sources" strategy.
Apr 2021	OFAC sanctioned four Russian intelligence-directed disinformation outlets under E.O. 13848: Strategic Culture Foundation (SVR-directed), SouthFront (FSB-directed), NewsFront (FSB-directed, Crimea-based), and InfoRos (GRU-directed, 72nd Main Intelligence Information Center). JF guest Escobar's work documented by the State Department GEC across multiple sanctioned outlets.
Oct 2021	"Judging Freedom" launched on YouTube. Guest roster includes RT/Sputnik contributors concurrent with program launch.
Mar 2022	RT America permanently ceased all live programming. EU broadcast ban. UK Ofcom license revoked. Meta restricted RT/Sputnik.
Mar 2022	Leaked Kremlin memo dated March 3 (obtained by Mother Jones) from the Dept. of Information and Telecommunications Support directed Russian media to maximize use of Tucker Carlson broadcasts. Macgregor was Carlson's primary Ukraine guest. The directive documents the Russian government's pivot to amplifying proxy American voices as direct state media channels were shut down.
Mar 2022	OFAC designated additional Russian intelligence-directed disinformation outlets: New Eastern Outlook and Oriental Review (both SVR-directed), United World International and Geopolitica (Dugin network), plus SCF affiliates Odná Rodyna, Rhythm of Eurasia, and Journal Kamerton. 26 individuals and 7 entities total. JF guest Escobar's work previously documented by State Department GEC across multiple outlets in both the April 2021 and March 2022 designation rounds.
Jun 2024	State Department (via CBP) seized Ritter's passport at JFK to prevent SPIEF travel.
Aug 2024	FBI raided Ritter's home; 25+ boxes seized in FARA investigation.
Sep 2024	DOJ indicted RT employees for \$9.7M Tenet Media scheme. Treasury sanctioned Simonyan and executives. State Dept designated RT/Sputnik as foreign missions. Meta globally banned RT.

Key assessment: By February 2026, every major Russian state media outlet operating in the US has been FARA-registered, had staff criminally indicted, been OFAC-sanctioned, been designated

as a foreign mission, been banned by all major social media platforms, and had its US broadcast operations permanently shut down. The proxy cultivation pipeline documented in this report continued to operate throughout and after this enforcement escalation.

The Host: Napolitano's Direct Engagement with Russian State Institutions

This section provides a comprehensive, source-verified chronological record of Napolitano's direct engagement with Russian state institutions, state media, state ideologues, and Kremlin-sponsored events. Each entry is documented from primary sources and has been cross-verified.

2017: Fox News Suspension and the Larry Johnson/RT Connection

In March 2017, Napolitano was temporarily pulled from Fox News air (March 16-29, 2017; 13 days) after claiming on-air that Obama had directed GCHQ to spy on Trump. The information chain, documented by Media Matters (<https://www.mediamatters.org/research/2017/03/14/fox-news-conspiracy-obama-asked-british-intelligence-wiretap-donald-trump-echoes-rt-interview/215678>), ran: Larry Johnson (former CIA) floated the conspiracy on RT on approximately March 5-6, 2017, from which it reached Napolitano, who broadcast it on Fox News, from which it reached White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer. Semafor later described Napolitano and Johnson as "the sorts of figures the Russians have long cultivated -- rejects from the American mainstream that still have some mainstream credentials, ideological fellow travelers, oddballs sympathetic in some way to the Russian point of view."

Napolitano's permanent departure from Fox came in August 2021 following separate sexual harassment lawsuits (2020-2021), not the 2017 Russia-related incident. He launched Judging Freedom on YouTube in October 2021. Three guests who became recurring JF participants -- John Kiriakou (paid Radio Sputnik host 2017-Oct 2024), Scott Ritter (paid RT contractor Apr 2020-Sep 2024, per his own admission), and Glenn Diesen (50+ paid RT articles in 2021, per his own admission) -- were active paid RT/Sputnik contributors at the time of JF's launch, establishing concurrent operation with Russian state media from the program's inception.

Sources: Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Napolitano); Media Matters (<https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-friends/report-confirms-fox-news-napolitano-repeated-russian-media-his-british-intelligence>); Semafor (<https://semafor.com/article/03/30/2025/a-blogger-in-moscow>)

August 2023: Direct Sputnik Interview

On August 2, 2023, Napolitano appeared on Sputnik's "New Rules" podcast hosted by Dimitri Simes Jr. This direct appearance on Russia's state-owned international news agency predates the TASS interviews and demonstrates that Napolitano's engagement with Russian state media was not limited to passive citation -- he was actively participating as a direct interview subject on Russian state outlets well before the 2025 Moscow travel and TASS formalization.

Sources: <https://sputnikglobe.com/20230802/can-trump-strike-ukraine-peace-deal-1112343550.html>

June 2024: Listed as SPIEF 2024 Panelist

Napolitano was listed as an official panelist at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum 2024 on an RT-hosted panel titled "The Empire of Evil: Has the West Successfully Demonized Russia?" moderated by RT host Oksana Boyko. Co-panelists included Scott Ritter, Jackson Hinkle,

Tara Reade, Karin Kneissl (former Austrian Foreign Minister who relocated to Russia), and Alexander von Bismarck.

Jackson Hinkle's June 1, 2024 X post (archived at archive.vn/3JJIH) confirmed Napolitano was also listed for a Dugin-hosted panel: "Philosophy and Geopolitics of a Multipolar World" alongside Maria Zakharova, Zhang Weiwei (Xi Jinping adviser), Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandela (Nelson Mandela's grandson), Konstantin Malofeev, and Pepe Escobar. A third panel, "The New Media of a Multipolar World," was described as held "at the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation."

Napolitano did not attend SPIEF 2024. On June 3, 2024, Alexander Zyrianov -- the Novosibirsk regional official who organized and sponsored both Ritter's and Napolitano's SPIEF attendance -- was arrested by the FSB on bribery charges. Ritter called Napolitano that morning to warn him, and Napolitano cancelled his flight before Ritter's own passport was later seized at JFK by the State Department.

Note: SPIEF's official program listed Napolitano's credentials as "New Jersey Supreme Court Judge (1987-1995)." This is factually incorrect -- he served as a New Jersey Superior Court judge, a trial-level position. The NJ Supreme Court has only 7 justices and is the state's highest court. This credential inflation also appears in every February 2026 TASS article.

Sources: forumspb.com archive (<https://archive.vn/Et5e8>); Jackson Hinkle X post (<https://archive.vn/3JJIH>); KeyWiki (https://keywiki.org/Andrew_Napolitano); Edward Slavsquat Substack (<https://edwardslavsquat.substack.com/p/justice-for-scott-ritter-and-his>)

October 2024: Eisenhower Media Network Event

Scott Ritter's "U.S. Tour of Duty" teamed with the Eisenhower Media Network for a "Brunch" on October 27, 2024. Featured speakers included Napolitano, Ritter (then under active FBI/FARA investigation), Jimmy Dore, Danny Haiphong, Diane Sare (LaRouche-affiliated), Jose Vega (LaRouche-affiliated), Garland Nixon, Randy Credico, and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson. Panel topics: "The Threat of Nuclear War in the World Today," "The Assault on Free Speech," and "Saving Democracy." This event documents the physical convergence of JF guests with LaRouche movement operatives and Russian-aligned media figures.

Sources: KeyWiki (https://keywiki.org/Andrew_Napolitano); Scott Ritter Substack (<https://scottritter.substack.com/p/operation-dawn-20-endgame>)

March 2025: Moscow Trip -- Lavrov Interview, Dugin Interview, and "My Weekend in Moscow"

In early March 2025, Napolitano traveled to Moscow via Dubai (necessitated by Western sanctions banning direct flights to Russia). A podcast episode titled "[LIVE from Moscow] - Judge and The INTEL Roundtable w/ Johnson & McGovern" was posted March 7, 2025, confirming his presence in Moscow by that date.

The Lavrov Interview (March 12, 2025)

The Russian MFA's official title reads: "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview to the US bloggers Mario Nawfal, Larry C. Johnson and Andrew Napolitano, Moscow, March 12, 2025." This was a joint interview with three Western figures, not a solo Napolitano exclusive. Napolitano told Jeffrey Sachs on his March 12 podcast that he "spent two hours earlier this week with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov." The MFA published the full transcript at mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/2002637/. Sputnik also published the full video interview.

Informally before or after the recorded session, Lavrov told Napolitano: "Please tell Jeffrey [Sachs] how much I enjoy watching his appearances on your show" -- indicating the Russian Foreign Minister personally monitors Judging Freedom.

The Dugin Interview (March 10, 2025)

A two-part exclusive interview with Alexander Dugin, filmed in Moscow. Part 1 published March 10, 2025 (21 minutes, confirmed via Apple Podcasts metadata). 21st Century Wire headlined coverage: "INTERVIEW: Judge Napolitano talks with Alexander Dugin." Topics covered: East-West relations, the rise of Trump, the Ukraine conflict, multipolarity, conservative vs. globalist ideologies, and "civilizational states." Dugin -- described in Western intelligence assessments as one of the most influential proponents of Russian expansionism and neo-Eurasianism -- has advocated for the destruction of Ukraine as a sovereign state and authored "The Foundations of Geopolitics," used as a textbook by the Russian military academy.

"My Weekend in Moscow" -- Napolitano's Own Account (March 13, 2025)

Napolitano published a syndicated column titled "My Weekend in Moscow" through Creators Syndicate (<https://creators.com/read/judge-napolitano/03/25/my-weekend-in-moscow>), syndicated to the Washington Times, Ron Paul Institute, and multiple other outlets. This column is a primary-source document -- Napolitano's own unmediated account of the Moscow trip. All quotes below verified verbatim against the original:

On the invitation: "When an invitation from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the renowned Professor Alexander Dugin to visit them in Moscow arrived in my inbox, it was actually the culmination of a series of emails and telephone calls from Russian-American friends giving me a heads up."

On sanctions: "These absurd executive-ordered regulations, meant to punish Russia for its Special Military Operation in Ukraine, have neither caused a change in Russian military strategy nor harmed the Russian economy." Note: Napolitano capitalizes "Special Military Operation" -- adopting Russia's official terminology.

On Ukraine's 2014 revolution: "This war started in 2014 with a coup against a popularly elected president who sought neutrality for Ukraine. The coup -- orchestrated by the U.S. State Department in conjunction with the CIA and British MI6 -- brought about a series of governments determined to attack their own Russian-speaking population." This is the standard Russian government narrative of the Euromaidan.

On Lavrov and Dugin: "In my interviews with Foreign Minister Lavrov and Professor Dugin, I saw a real appreciation for Trump's approach. These two intellects, both of whom were raised under communism, see its faults, celebrate its demise, and yearn for Realism and Reset. And they are Russian President Vladimir Putin's closest confidants." [Analytic note: Lavrov's proximity to Putin is institutional as Foreign Minister. Dugin's actual influence on Putin is debated among Russia analysts -- some consider it overstated. Napolitano's characterization may itself reflect Russian state framing that inflates Dugin's significance.]

On Russia: "The Russia that Americans have hated no longer exists. In its place is our trading partner and friend." He described Moscow as "the city of lights... midtown-Manhattan hustle and bustle -- but cleaner, happier and friendlier," noting Russia "banished woke and all its absurd fashions."

On JF guests: "Realism -- best articulated in the writings of University of Chicago Professor John Mearsheimer and Columbia University Professor Jeffrey Sachs..." and "This geopolitical

theory of foreign policy -- best articulated by the brilliant former British diplomat Alastair Crooke..." Napolitano explicitly identifies his show's core guests as the intellectual architects of the worldview he adopted in Moscow.

Analytic note: The Washington Times published a rebuttal by Jed Babbin titled "Napolitano's Moscow hallucination" (March 18, 2025), comparing Napolitano to Walter Duranty -- the NYT correspondent who whitewashed Stalin's crimes in the 1930s. From a counterintelligence perspective, this column reads as a voluntary disclosure of a cultivation trajectory: receiving an invitation from a Foreign Minister and state ideologue, traveling via sanctions-circumventing route, conducting interviews with senior state officials, adopting Russian state terminology and narratives in published writing, and positioning his JF guests as the intellectual foundation for a US-Russia 'Reset.'

Sources: Creators Syndicate (<https://creators.com/read/judge-napolitano/03/25/my-weekend-in-moscow>); https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/2002637/; <https://21stcenturywire.com/2025/03/11/interview-judge-napolitano-talks-with-alexander-dugin/>; Apple Podcasts; Washington Times; Sputnik; American Rhetoric (<https://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/sergeylavrovinterviewusbloggers.htm>)

June 2025: Forum of the Future 2050 -- Moscow

The Forum of the Future 2050 was held June 9-10, 2025 at Moscow State University's Lomonosov cluster. Organized by Konstantin Malofeev (sanctioned oligarch, founder of Tsargrad media) and co-organized by Alexander Dugin through the Tsargrad Institute. The Moscow Times (<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/06/09/the-fight-for-souls-and-minds-alex-jones-george-galloway-errol-musk-and-more-attend-far-right-forum-of-the-future-in-moscow-a89383>) described the event as broadcasting "Russia's state ideology and an ultra-conservative, neo-imperialist vision."

Napolitano was listed as a confirmed speaker in pre-event reporting by Komsomolskaya Pravda (May 22, 2025) and RIA Novosti (May 14, 2025), both naming him alongside Galloway, Eric Li, and other confirmed attendees. The published panel-by-panel program (Pravda USA, June 9) does not list Napolitano on any specific panel. KeyWiki documents him among "Speakers that were not on the list" -- a category indicating physical presence without formal program placement -- alongside Rashlin, Eric Li, Escobar, Dugin, Hinkle, and Podolyaka. The Moscow Times' detailed post-event coverage does not independently mention Napolitano, and no photographs or video have been identified placing him at the event, though this is consistent with his off-program status at a 2,000-participant forum.

The forum's "Multipolar World in the 21st Century" panel featured Lavrov alongside Larry C. Johnson, Dmitri Simes, George Galloway, Errol Musk (father of Elon Musk), Jackson Hinkle, Karin Kneissl, Atul Aneja, and Zhang Weiwei. Jeffrey Sachs and Max Blumenthal were listed as invited speakers but do not appear in panel photos. A separate "MAGA in Moscow" panel featured Johnson and Hinkle. The Tsargrad Institute's accompanying "Russia 2050: Vision of the Future" strategy document called for Russian autocracy (citing Alexander III and Stalin as models), "reunification" of Russians abroad (a justification framework for territorial expansion), and described the 2022 invasion as opening "a new era of regional world order."

Sources: https://keywiki.org/Future_Forum_2050; <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/06/09/the-fight-for-souls-and-minds-alex-jones-george-galloway-errol-musk-and-more-attend-far-right-forum-of-the-future-in-moscow-a89383> (Jun 9, 2025); <https://france.news-pravda.com/en/russia/2025/05/22/38733.html> (KP/Pravda France, May 22, 2025 -- confirmed speaker listing); <https://news-pravda.com/world/2025/05/14/1325705.html> (RIA

Novosti/Pravda EN, May 14, 2025 -- confirmed speaker listing); <https://usa.news-pravda.com/russia/2025/06/09/329080.html> (Pravda USA, Jun 9, 2025 -- full published panel program); https://russiapost.info/politics/dark_enlightenment (Marlene Laruelle); Kyiv Insider (<https://kyivinsider.com/western-influencers-grab-russian-cash-legitimizing-kremlin-propaganda-at-moscows-forum-of-the-future-2050/>); anticapitalistmusings.com (<https://anticapitalistmusings.com/2025/06/russia-2050-the-empire-strikes-again-with-help-from-the-vests-useful-idiots/>)

August 2025: Sputnik Interview on Alaska Summit

On August 15, 2025, Napolitano gave a direct interview to Sputnik about the Alaska Putin-Trump summit, stating Putin is in "the catbird seat" and calling Russian battlefield triumphs "rather extraordinary." This was Napolitano's second confirmed direct Sputnik appearance (after the August 2023 "New Rules" podcast), demonstrating a continuing pattern of direct participation on Russian state media outlets independent of the TASS interview relationship.

Sources: <https://sputnikglobe.com/20250815/judge-napolitano-breaks-down-alaska-summit-and-the-chance-for-a-grand-reset-in-russia-us-ties-1122619957.html>

2025: Direct RT Show Appearances and Systematic RT DE Extraction

Independent of the Sputnik and TASS interview relationships, Napolitano has a substantial and ongoing direct presence across RT's programming ecosystem. This presence operates at two levels:

Direct RT show guest appearances: Napolitano appeared as a guest on RT's "The Sanchez Effect" hosted by Rick Sanchez on at least two confirmed occasions -- July 7, 2025 (discussing Ukraine, European security, and Israel) and October 16, 2025 (debating George Papadopoulos on Trump, Ukraine, and Gaza). On November 19, 2025, Napolitano appeared via live link in RT's "National Unity Club" broadcast alongside Maria Zakharova (Russian MFA spokesperson), George Galloway, Danny Haiphong, Mohammad Marandi, Rick Sanchez, Larry Johnson, Pepe Escobar, and Alexander Kazakov. RT also published the full Lavrov interview video in March 2025. These direct appearances establish that Napolitano is not merely a passive subject of RT content extraction from JF -- he is an active, recurring participant on RT's own broadcast programming, appearing on the network that the 2017 ICA designated as "the Kremlin's principal international propaganda outlet" and that has been FARA-registered, designated as a foreign mission, and banned by all major social media platforms since September 2024.

Systematic RT DE extraction: RT's German-language service (de.rt.com) maintains a high-volume, systematic pipeline of JF content extraction under its "Kurzclips" (short clips) category. Confirmed RT DE extractions of JF content span from at least September 2023 through February 2026, covering interviews with Johnson, Macgregor, Doctorow, Sachs, and others. Each clip is translated, contextualized with German-language editorial framing, and tagged with RT's standard disclaimers about EU censorship. The URL pattern and volume -- with clips appearing on topics ranging from Ukraine to Iran to NATO across dozens of individual posts -- indicate a dedicated editorial process, not ad hoc republication.

Sources: <https://www.rt.com/shows/sanchez-effect/621081-andrew-napolitano-europe-empty-promises/> (Jul 7, 2025); <https://www.rt.com/shows/sanchez-effect/626483-ukraine-gaza-trump-intentions/> (Oct 16, 2025); <https://www.rt.com/news/614088-lavrov-bloggers-trump-ukraine/> (Lavrov full interview, Mar 2025); RT DE kurzclips examples: <https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/266724-usa-als-gesetzlose-sachs-rechnet/> (Jan 2026), <https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/260178-ex-cia-analyst-russen-lachen/> (Oct 2025), <https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/252591-us-analyst-trumps-drohungen->

beschleunigen/ (Aug 2025), <https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/240999-us-analyst-russland-sollte-europa/> (Mar 2025), <https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/218393-geostrategie-us-vorgehen-zwingt-russland/> (Sep 2024), <https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/181918-ex-cia-analyst-kaempfe-koennten/> (Sep 2023)

October 2025: TASS Formal Interview in Moscow

On October 22, 2025, TASS conducted a multi-article formal interview with Napolitano in Moscow (MOSCOW dateline), producing at least three standalone articles (<https://tass.com/world/2033733>, <https://tass.com/world/2033589>, <https://tass.com/world/2033299>). Napolitano was accompanied by Larry Johnson (referenced as "my friend Larry Johnson, who's traveling with me"). Topics covered included the New START treaty, Ukraine peace proposals, and Tomahawk missile transfers. This interview confirms Napolitano was in Moscow at least twice in 2025 (March and October), with a third trip (June, Forum of the Future 2050) indicated by pre-event Russian state media speaker listings but not independently verified by post-event sources. The TASS formal interview relationship began months before the February 2026 interview, which was itself an expansion of this October 2025 engagement.

Sources: <https://tass.com/world/2033733>; <https://tass.com/world/2033589>; <https://tass.com/world/2033299>

2025: Self-Disclosed Lecture at Russian Diplomatic Institution

In a November 2025 Judging Freedom episode (transcribed by Gilbert Doctorow, November 13, 2025), Napolitano stated he has been "privileged to lecture" at Russia's School of International Diplomacy. This represents institutional engagement beyond conducting interviews -- it positions Napolitano as a contributing participant in the training of Russian diplomatic personnel. The specific date(s) and content of these lecture(s) are not documented in available open sources.

Sources: <https://gilbertdoctorow.com/2025/11/13/transcript-of-judging-freedom-edition-of-12-november/>

February 24, 2026: TASS Formal Interview

On the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, TASS conducted a second formal interview with Napolitano (Washington dateline, conducted remotely this time) producing at least six standalone articles. TASS identified him as "US analyst and blogger" who "hosts the conservative podcast Judging Freedom," while inflating his credential to "New Jersey Supreme Court Judge" (he served on the Superior Court, a trial-level position).

Verified TASS articles from this interview:

URL	Headline
tass.com/world/2090727	Tucker Carlson trying to talk Trump out of war with Iran
tass.com/world/2090607	Issue of Ukraine's accession to NATO off the table now
tass.com/world/2090613	US now continues supporting Kiev militarily and trying to exhaust Russia
tass.com/world/2090623	Vance, intel chief only urge Trump against aiding Zelensky
tass.com/world/2090815	US actions against Venezuela, Cuba constitute war crimes
tass.com/world/2090949	West acts in 'petty, childish' manner trying to cancel Russia from sports

Key content from the interview:

Iran intelligence: Napolitano told TASS that Tucker Carlson met with Trump on Feb 23 in a "last-ditch effort" to dissuade him from striking Iran. He characterized US military operations as driven by "Zionist pressure" and described the objective as regime change: "This stuff about nuclear weapons is a facade." He named Vance and Gabbard as urging restraint while identifying Miller, Caine (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), Hegseth, and Lindsey Graham as hawkish neoconservatives. TASS inserted an editorial note that Graham is "listed as a terrorist and extremist in Russia."

Ukraine delegitimization: Napolitano declared NATO accession "closed in the minds of American leadership," described Zelensky as "controlled by Banderites and neo-Nazis," and stated: "I shouldn't even call him President Zelensky. He's not the president. He has no legal authority." This terminology directly mirrors Russian MFA official messaging.

Olympics: Napolitano condemned Western restrictions on Russian athletes at the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympics as "petty and childish," framing it as American-driven "cancel culture." (Note: 13 Russian athletes competed under neutral status; Napolitano was criticizing the broader restriction framework, not a total ban.)

Venezuela/Cuba: Napolitano described US actions against Venezuela and Cuba as constituting "war crimes."

Intelligence assessment: The granularity of Napolitano's real-time White House factional intelligence -- naming six specific officials, characterizing their positions, and reporting on a private Carlson-Trump meeting -- provides TASS (and by extension Russian intelligence consumers of TASS reporting) with access-level political intelligence that would typically require a cultivated source. Whether or not this information is accurate, its operational utility to Russian decision-makers assessing US policy dynamics is significant.

Consolidated Engagement Timeline

Date	Event
Mar 2017	GCHQ/Obama conspiracy: Johnson (RT) -> Napolitano (Fox) -> White House
Oct 2021	Judging Freedom launched on YouTube
2022	TASS/EADaily begin citing JF by name
Aug 2023	Direct Sputnik interview (New Rules podcast, Dimitri Simes Jr.)
Jun 2024	Listed as SPIEF 2024 panelist; withdrew after Zyrianov FSB arrest
Oct 2024	EMN event with Ritter, Dore, Haiphong, Sare (LaRouche), Vega (LaRouche)
Mar 2025	Moscow trip: Lavrov interview, Dugin interview, 'My Weekend in Moscow'
Jun 2025	Forum of the Future 2050, Moscow (Malofeev/Dugin) -- confirmed as speaker by Russian state media; physical attendance not independently verified
Aug 2025	Sputnik interview on Alaska summit
Jul-Dec 2025	Direct RT Sanchez Effect appearances (2+ confirmed); Nov 2025 live with Zakharova; RT DE systematic extraction ongoing since Sep 2023
Oct 2025	Moscow trip: TASS formal interview (3+ articles, Moscow dateline)
Nov 2025	Disclosed lecturing at Russia's School of International Diplomacy
Feb 2026	TASS formal interview (6+ articles, Washington dateline)

Guest Roster: Tiered Classification

Appearance counts verified against JF YouTube channel metadata (4,970 total uploads as of Feb 25, 2026) by automated title matching. Counts include all YouTube videos featuring the guest's name in the title (individual interviews, roundtables, specials, and clips). Podcast RSS episode count (2,957 per Rephonic) is lower because it excludes shorts, compilations, and reposted clips.

Tier 1: Confirmed Paid Operatives of Russian State Media

John Kiriakou (former CIA, convicted under Intelligence Identities Protection Act 2012; original Espionage Act charges resolved through plea)

Paid host on Radio Sputnik (2017-Oct 2024). Co-hosted "Loud & Clear" and "Political Misfits" on 105.5 FM in Washington, D.C. Also hosts "The Whistleblowers" on RT. Acknowledged in Consortium News: "I work for Sputnik News. There. I said it." New Republic headline: "The CIA Spy Who Became a Russian Propagandist." RM Broadcasting FARA filings: \$1,427,016 total from Rossiya Segodnya to RM Broadcasting for Sputnik radio airtime on WZHF 1390 AM (Washington, D.C.); Kiriakou's individual compensation not separately disclosed. JF appearances (verified): 3.

Scott Ritter (former UN weapons inspector)

Paid RT/Sputnik contractor (Apr 2020-Sep 2024). Earliest verified YouTube appearance on JF: April 13, 2022. Confirmed: "I am fully committed to obeying US law, and as such will be terminating all contractual relationships with both RT and Sputnik effective immediately." RT contributor page: <https://rt.com/op-ed/authors/scott-ritter/>. FBI raided home Aug 7, 2024 (25+ boxes, FARA investigation). Passport seized at JFK by State Department (via CBP) Jun 2024. No charges as of Feb 2026. JF appearances (verified): 307.

Glenn Diesen (University of South-Eastern Norway)

50+ paid RT articles in 2021. 10 RT appearances in H1 2023. Associate editor of Russia in Global Affairs (Moscow). Valdai Discussion Club member; spoke with Putin Nov 2024. SPIEF 2023 funded by Roscongress. Co-authored op-ed with Arne Treholt (convicted KGB agent). Norwegian Helsinki Committee: Diesen holds "an important role in RT as the Western expert." JF appearances (verified): 32.

Tier 2: Deep Documented Ties Without Confirmed Payment

Col. Douglas Macgregor (ret. US Army, former Sr. Adviser to Acting SecDef)

Macgregor is one of the show's most frequent guests (275 verified appearances, fourth overall) and the primary content vector through which JF material enters Russian state media. His documented connections include:

Direct RT appearances: 2012 (AIPAC/Israel lobby discussion, documented by CNN KFile) and May 2014 (stated eastern Ukrainians "should be allowed to join Russia," endorsed Russian-organized referendums; documented by CNN KFile:

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/04/politics/kfile-douglas-macgregor-german-ambassador-pick/index.html>).

Direct RIA Novosti interviews: Dec 2021 (documented by Julia Davis/Daily Beast), Aug 2025 (European security, republished across Pravda network), additional 2025 interview on Ukraine conflict.

Russian state TV broadcast: Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Macgregor) confirms RT and VGTRK broadcast his clips. Solovyov stated on air: "He is de facto justifying Russia's actions." Newsweek confirmed clips aired "multiple times on Kremlin TV" (<https://www.newsweek.com/how-russia-using-tucker-carlson-propaganda-pawn-1687402>).

Russian government amplification directive: Leaked March 3, 2022 Kremlin memo (obtained by Mother Jones) from the Dept. of Information and Telecommunications Support directed: "It is essential to use as much as possible fragments of broadcasts of the popular Fox News host Tucker Carlson." Macgregor was Carlson's primary Ukraine guest.

Dedicated VOA investigation: "How Russia Uses Retired US Colonel's Ukraine Misinformation for Domestic Propaganda" (Feb 2023) documented same-day RIA Novosti citations of his JF interviews.

TASS citation: tass.com/world/1560505. EADaily republication: Aug 2024.

Tier 3: Contributors to US Treasury-Sanctioned, SVR-Directed Outlets

The Strategic Culture Foundation was sanctioned by OFAC on April 15, 2021 under E.O. 13848. Treasury stated SCF is "directed by the SVR" and "controlled by the SVR's Directorate MS (Active Measures)." Any US person transacting with SCF potentially violates sanctions law.

Phil Girdali (former CIA)

SCF author page at <https://strategic-culture.org/contributors/philip-girdali/>. Also: RT Going Underground (<https://rt.com>), Sputnik (20+ articles), Press TV, Russia Insider. Attended New Horizon Conference, Mashhad, Iran (2018). Spans Tier 3 + Tier 4b. JF appearances (verified): 152.

Alastair Crooke (former MI6, Conflicts Forum)

SCF contributor since 2018; articles as recently as Feb 2026 -- five years after OFAC designation. Content cycle documented by VoxUkraine: Al Mayadeen -> SCF -> JF interview. Valdai Club expert (<https://valdaiclub.com/about/experts/218/>). Napolitano described him in "My Weekend in Moscow" as "the brilliant former British diplomat Alastair Crooke." JF appearances (verified): 189.

Pepe Escobar (Brazilian journalist)

Broadest simultaneous multi-state footprint of any JF guest. RT contributor, Sputnik contributor, SCF author, TASS, CGTN, Press TV. Own bio: "He writes for RT, Sputnik and TomDispatch." The 2020 State Department Global Engagement Center report specifically named Escobar, documenting that his work appeared across five OFAC-sanctioned Russian intelligence-directed outlets: Strategic Culture Foundation (SVR-directed), NewsFront (FSB-directed), SouthFront (FSB-directed), New Eastern Outlook (SVR-directed), and Globalresearch.ca. This means Escobar has a documented presence across outlets directed by both the SVR (SCF, NEO) and FSB (NewsFront, SouthFront). GRU-directed InfoRos (OFAC-sanctioned April 2021) operates in the same ecosystem but Escobar's direct contribution to InfoRos has not been separately documented. Founding member, International Russophile Movement. KeyWiki lists as present at Forum of the Future 2050. JF appearances (verified): 80.

Ian Proud (former British diplomat, Moscow)

SCF contributor. RT Worlds Apart appearance (rt.com). Former HM Diplomatic Service (1999-2023); authored sanctions against Russia -- then contributed to an SVR-directed outlet. JF appearances (verified): 10.

Tier 4a: Direct Institutional Engagement or State-Level Recognition

These guests are distinguished from Tier 4b by documented physical presence at Kremlin-sponsored events, personal recognition by senior Russian or Chinese state officials, paid relationships with Russian state media entities, or evidence of strategic state-level amplification of their work beyond routine citation.

Larry C. Johnson (former CIA/State Dept)

Most cited JF guest in Russian media. VOA (Sep 2024): 403 RIA Novosti articles, 280 Sputnik, 359 Izvestia, 299 Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 445 Lenta.ru, 163 RT -- ~2,000 items in one year. Solovyov show (Dec 2023), Channel One Russia (Jan 2024). Traveled to Moscow for Lavrov interview (Mar 2025). SPIEF 2024 speaker. Forum 2050 "Multipolar World" and "MAGA in Moscow" panels. JF appearances (verified): 329.

Ray McGovern (former CIA)

RT 2015 Moscow gala with Putin, Flynn, Stein. Bio lists RT, Press TV, CCTV, "domestic Russian TV channels." Moscow 2013 for Snowden Sam Adams Award. Ukraine's Center for Countering Disinformation database. Podcast from Moscow March 7, 2025 with Napolitano. JF appearances (verified): 303.

Jeffrey Sachs (Columbia University)

Deepest Chinese state media relationship. CGTN dedicated columnist page. Own website: 37 CGTN, 11 China Daily, 8 Xinhua, 5 Global Times appearances. Multiple Solovyov show interviews (340+ economists signed March 2023 open letter organized by Gorodnichenko/UC Berkeley condemning his Ukraine war positions and Russian state TV appearances; VoxUkraine). Forum of the Future 2050 listed as invited speaker. RT DE clips JF appearances for German redistribution. Lavrov told Napolitano: "Please tell Jeffrey how much I enjoy watching his appearances on your show." JF appearances (verified): 181.

John Mearsheimer (University of Chicago)

RT Going Underground (rt.com confirmed). CGTN Dialogue (own Substack: "hugely popular show on CGTN"). RT DE clips JF appearances (6+ pages). Russian MFA tweeted his 2014 article four days after invasion. Yao Bowen, "Reflections on John Mearsheimer's China Trip: Popularity, Propaganda, and Intellectual Gaps," Asian Affairs 56, no. 1 (2025): 4-14: "Beijing's amplification of his work" = "tactical use of Western intellectuals." JF appearances (verified): 153.

Max Blumenthal (The Grayzone editor)

RT 2015 gala, paid speaker (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/guess-who-came-dinner-flynn-putin-n742696>). Founded Grayzone on AlterNet within one month of gala (Jan 2016); reversed Syria stance from anti-Assad to pro-Assad. Wife Anya Parampil = former RT America anchor. Sputnik: 200+ publications. ASPI (<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/chinas-disinformation-on-xinjiang-is-political-warfare-not-diplomacy/>): Chinese media cited Grayzone 313 times in 14 months. Forum of the Future 2050 listed as invited speaker. JF appearances (verified): 131.

Tier 4b: Documented Frequent Guests on State Media Platforms

These guests have documented, verified appearances on Russian, Chinese, or Iranian state media platforms but without the direct institutional engagement, state-level recognition, or physical presence at Kremlin-sponsored events that characterize Tier 4a.

Aaron Mate (The Grayzone)

RT Redacted Tonight, On Contact. Russian UN Mission briefer (Arria meetings, Mar 2023). Brookings: "15th most re-tweeted by Russian state-backed accounts." ISD: "most prolific spreader of disinformation about Syrian conflict." JF appearances (verified): 108.

Gilbert Doctorow

Near-weekly RT appearances (7+ transcripts in 2025). CrossTalk, Going Underground, Worlds Apart. Confirmed JF episodes reposted on Rutube with Russian voice-overs within hours. Documented systematic Rutube dubbing of JF (Nov 2025). JF appearances (verified): 95.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson (former CoS to Colin Powell)

Multiple RT Going Underground appearances (rt.com confirmed). AEI's Rubin (<https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/policymakers-must-reject-prejudice/>): "regularly a guest on Russian state broadcaster RT." Press TV 2025. CGTN citations. October 2024 EMN event co-appearance with Napolitano. JF appearances (verified): 127.

Prof. Mohammad Marandi (University of Tehran)

Frequent Press TV commentator (dedicated tag page). RT, CGTN confirmed. Adviser to Iran's nuclear team. Father = Khamenei's physician. IranWire (<https://iranwire.com/en/features/134892-who-is-mohammad-marandi-irans-chief-propagandist-in-english/>): "Iran's Chief Propagandist in English." Present at Press TV building during Israeli bombing Jun 2025. JF appearances (verified): 4.

Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatkowski (ret. USAF)

8+ RT op-ed pages (2012-2016). Sputnik person page (6+ articles through 2026). Substack references "my Sputnik friends." JF appearances (verified): 117.

Capt. Matt Hoh (former State Dept/USMC)

RT appearances 2014-2025 (<https://matthewhoh.com/tag/rt/>). Russia's First Deputy UN Rep invited him to UN Security Council Mar 2024. Less extensive than peers. JF appearances (verified): 132.

Amb. Chas Freeman (former US Amb. to Saudi Arabia)

RT op-ed confirmed. CGTN: 2018 one-on-one, 2025-2026 appearances. Sputnik interviews. JF appearances (verified): 82.

Comparative Case: Tenet Media and the Evolution of Proxy Cultivation

The September 2024 DOJ indictment of RT employees for the \$9.7 million Tenet Media scheme provides a documented baseline for Russian proxy operations. Tenet required covert funding, collapsed within days of the indictment, and employed commentators with entertainment credentials. JF operates on YouTube ad revenue, has no documented foreign funding, employs commentators with intelligence, diplomatic, and academic credentials that carry significantly higher attribution value, and is structurally resilient to the enforcement actions that destroyed Tenet. RT editor-in-chief Simonyan's post-indictment admission that RT had launched "guerrilla projects" and "started to work undercover" after the 2022 ban raises whether the cultivation of overt proxy platforms like JF represents one such project.

The distinction matters less than the outcome: JF arguably delivers greater intelligence and propaganda utility to Russian state media than Tenet, at no documented financial cost to Russian institutions, with no criminal exposure, and with structural resilience to enforcement.

Cross-Platform Amplification Network

Open-source research reveals consistent patterns of overlapping participation across platforms that collectively constitute the domestic infrastructure for Russian-aligned narrative distribution. The Grayzone (Blumenthal/Mate, ASPI documented 313 Chinese media citations in 14 months;

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/chinas-disinformation-on-xinjiang-is-political-warfare-not-diplomacy/>), Consortium News, Antiwar.com, the Jimmy Dore Show, and the Schiller Institute/LaRouche movement all share guests with JF. The October 2024 Eisenhower Media Network event placed Napolitano, Ritter (RT), Dore (RT), Haiphong (RT), Sare (LaRouche/RT), Vega (LaRouche/RT), and Wilkerson (RT) on the same stage. The ecosystem effect means a narrative introduced on JF can traverse multiple platforms and state media outlets within 24-48 hours, each citation adding apparent independent validation.

The institutional redistribution infrastructure spans four documented ecosystems: RT Russian (dedicated JF catalog page), EADaily (same-day extraction with screenshots), Rutube (professionally dubbed Russian-language episodes within hours of broadcast), and Press TV (Iranian state media republication). Combined with the RT DE kurzclips pipeline documented above, JF content simultaneously enters Russian, German, Iranian, and broader non-Western audiences through state-controlled distribution channels. URLs for each pipeline are provided in Appendix A.

Analytic Caveats

This assessment documents the structural relationship between JF and Russian state institutions without asserting that every participant is a witting agent. This distinction, while legally significant, is analytically secondary to the findings documented here: the intelligence and propaganda utility that JF delivers to Russian state media is identical regardless of whether any individual participant is a witting agent. The Tenet Media precedent illustrates this directly -- that operation required witting participation and \$9.7 million in covert funding, yet JF achieves greater attribution-value output at no documented cost. Russian state media's extraction, translation, and redistribution infrastructure operates on the content itself, not on the intent behind its production. This is why the documented structural relationship warrants CI assessment independent of intent determination. Four methodological limitations must be stated:

- 1. Ideological alignment vs. coordination:** The Mearsheimer case illustrates reinforcing mechanisms -- professional exile, theoretical frameworks that produce Kremlin-aligned outputs absent Kremlin direction, confirmation bias, audience capture (creator incentives aligning with audience expectations in a self-reinforcing feedback loop) -- that can produce convergence without coordination.
- 2. No documented direct funding:** No evidence of direct Russian government funding to JF or Napolitano has been identified. This is a significant gap. Unlike Tenet Media, the financial pathway (if one exists) has not been documented.
- 3. Source limitations:** OSINT cannot access classified intelligence, financial records, communications intercepts, or travel records that would be available to authorized investigators. Napolitano was confirmed as a Forum of the Future 2050 speaker by pre-event Russian state media reporting (Komsomolskaya Pravda, RIA Novosti) and listed by KeyWiki among speakers present, but physical attendance has not been independently verified by post-event photographs, video, or media coverage.
- 4. Analytic scope:** This assessment documents structural relationships and does not allege criminal conduct, assert that any individual is a witting agent of a foreign government, or make legal determinations regarding FARA, OFAC, or espionage statutes. Those determinations require classified intelligence, financial records, and legal analysis beyond the scope of OSINT methodology.

Recommendations

Tier 1 -- Immediate Action

FBI Counterintelligence Division: Napolitano's documented engagement with Russian state institutions constitutes a sustained, escalating pattern warranting CI assessment. The documented indicators include: (a) Two confirmed trips to Moscow in 2025 (March and October), with a third trip (June, Forum of the Future 2050) confirmed by pre-event Russian state media speaker listings but not independently verified by post-event sources. The March trip was routed through Dubai to circumvent Western sanctions banning direct flights to Russia -- a route Napolitano documented in his own syndicated column. (b) Invitation-based travel facilitated by "Russian-American" intermediaries, as disclosed in "My Weekend in Moscow" (Creators Syndicate, March 2025), which describes the invitation as "the culmination of a series of emails and telephone calls." (c) A joint two-hour interview with Foreign Minister Lavrov in Moscow (March 12, 2025) alongside Larry C. Johnson and Mario Nawfal, with the Russian MFA publishing the full official transcript on mid.ru -- indicating institutional value placed on the engagement. Lavrov separately told Napolitano: "Please tell Jeffrey [Sachs] how much I enjoy watching his appearances on your show," confirming Foreign Minister-level monitoring of JF content. (d) An exclusive two-part interview with Alexander Dugin in Moscow (March 10, 2025). (e) Confirmed as a speaker at the Forum of the Future 2050 (June 9-10, 2025) by pre-event Russian state media reporting from Komsomolskaya Pravda and RIA Novosti; physical attendance not independently verified by post-event sources. The forum was organized by OFAC-sanctioned oligarch Konstantin Malofeev and Alexander Dugin through the Tsargrad Institute, with Lavrov as keynote. (f) Larry C. Johnson -- the single most-cited JF guest in Russian media (~2,000 items in one year per VOA) -- accompanied Napolitano to Moscow for both the March and October 2025 trips. (g) Self-disclosed lecturing at Russia's School of International Diplomacy (November 2025), representing institutional participation in the training of Russian diplomatic personnel. (h) Two confirmed direct Sputnik interviews (August 2023, August 2025) plus the MFA-hosted Lavrov interview separately published by Sputnik with full video. (h2) Direct guest appearances on RT programming, including RT's "The Sanchez Effect" (confirmed July and October 2025) and a November 2025 live "National Unity Club" broadcast alongside Maria Zakharova, establishing Napolitano as a recurring participant on the network designated by the ICA as "the Kremlin's principal international propaganda outlet." Separately, RT's German-language service (de.rt.com) maintains a high-volume systematic extraction pipeline of JF content spanning at least September 2023 through February 2026 -- dozens of individual clips -- indicating dedicated editorial investment across RT's multilingual ecosystem. (i) A formal TASS interview in Moscow (October 2025, three articles) followed by a second TASS interview (February 2026, six articles) in which Napolitano provided granular White House factional intelligence: he named Vance, Gabbard, Miller, Caine, Hegseth, and Graham with positional characterizations, and disclosed a private Carlson-Trump meeting on February 23 that was not in the public record -- the specific data point that elevates commentary to potential intelligence provision for Russian decision-makers. (j) A documented SPIEF 2024 facilitation chain: Napolitano was listed as an official panelist on an RT-moderated panel, with logistics organized by Alexander Zyrianov, the Novosibirsk regional official who was subsequently arrested by the FSB on bribery charges. (k) Systematic credential inflation by Russian state institutions -- TASS and SPIEF both identify Napolitano as a "New Jersey Supreme Court Judge," inflating his actual Superior Court (trial-level) service, consistent with source prestige-building practices. (l) Adoption of Russian state terminology and narratives in published output, including capitalization of "Special Military Operation" and reproduction of the standard Russian government narrative of the 2014 Euromaidan as a CIA/MI6 coup.

Tier 2 -- Near-Term Assessment

FARA Registration Unit: The existing Ritter FARA investigation should be assessed in the context of his 307 documented JF appearances and JF's documented function as a Russian state media content pipeline. Ritter was a self-admitted paid RT/Sputnik contractor (April 2020 through September 2024), with his RT contributor page still live at rt.com. His SPIEF 2024 attendance was organized by Alexander Zyrianov -- the same Novosibirsk regional official who organized Napolitano's SPIEF logistics -- before Zyrianov's arrest by the FSB on bribery charges. This shared facilitation chain connects the two subjects through the same Russian state-adjacent organizer. Separately, Napolitano's own documented pattern may independently warrant FARA assessment: the MFA-published Lavrov interview transcript, invitation-based travel facilitated by "Russian-American" intermediaries (his own disclosure), self-disclosed lecturing at Russia's diplomatic training institution, and three confirmed Sputnik appearances constitute indicators that approach the direction-or-control threshold beyond mere ideological alignment. Kiriakou's paid Sputnik employment (2017-October 2024) overlapped with his JF appearances; RM Broadcasting FARA filings disclosed \$1,427,016 from Rossiya Segodnya for Sputnik radio operations on WZHF 1390 AM in Washington, D.C.

OFAC: Four JF guests (Giraldi, Crooke, Escobar, Proud) maintain active contributor relationships with the OFAC-sanctioned, SVR-directed Strategic Culture Foundation. Crooke published SCF articles as recently as February 2026 -- five years after OFAC designation. Publication of articles for an OFAC-sanctioned entity by US persons (Giraldi, Escobar) may constitute prohibited transactions under E.O. 13848, warranting review of whether the informational materials exemption applies to ongoing contributor relationships with a designated SVR-directed outlet. Escobar's exposure extends beyond SCF: the State Department GEC documented his work appearing across five OFAC-sanctioned Russian intelligence-directed outlets spanning both SVR (SCF, New Eastern Outlook) and FSB (SouthFront, NewsFront) directorates -- all designated in April 2021 or March 2022. Escobar is also a founding member of the International Russophile Movement. VoxUkraine documented a specific content laundering cycle for SCF-tier guests: Al Mayadeen to SCF to JF interview, establishing a traceable pathway from Iranian-aligned media through an SVR-directed outlet to an American YouTube program. Giraldi attended the New Horizon Conference in Mashhad, Iran (2018), adding direct Iranian state institutional contact to his SCF exposure. Crooke maintains Valdai Discussion Club expert status (<https://valdaiclub.com/about/experts/218/>), representing institutional integration into Russia's premier foreign policy think tank beyond his SCF contributor role.

Tier 3 -- Ongoing Monitoring

YouTube Trust & Safety: Assess whether the documented systematic content harvesting and redistribution by Russian state media entities constitutes coordinated influence operations under platform policies. The four redistribution pipelines documented in the Cross-Platform Amplification Network section -- RT Russian catalog page, EADaily same-day extraction, Rutube professional dubbing, and Press TV republication -- constitute systematic, coordinated content harvesting from a single YouTube channel by designated foreign state media entities, including entities banned from YouTube's own platform (RT was removed in September 2024).

DNI Foreign Malign Influence Center: The convergence of JF guests with Lavrov, Dugin, and Malofeev at the Forum of the Future 2050, combined with the TASS institutionalization of Napolitano as a named source and his self-disclosed diplomatic academy lectures, warrants integration into broader assessments of Russian influence infrastructure targeting US audiences. The cross-

platform amplification network documented in this assessment -- spanning the Grayzone, Consortium News, Antiwar.com, the Jimmy Dore Show, and the Schiller Institute/LaRouche movement -- constitutes the domestic distribution infrastructure through which narratives traverse multiple platforms within 24-48 hours. Johnson's ~2,000 Russian media citations in a single year (VOA, September 2024) quantifies the pipeline's throughput from a single JF guest. The leaked March 3, 2022 Kremlin memo directing Russian media to maximize use of proxy American voices after RT America's shutdown documents the deliberate strategic pivot to the proxy cultivation model that JF now operationalizes.

GEC Successor Entity (Note: GEC authorization expired December 23, 2024; functions not formally reconstituted as of February 2026): Monitor JF as a live case study of how Russian proxy cultivation has evolved from the covert Tenet model to an overt, structurally resilient model that achieves greater utility at no documented cost (see Comparative Case section). The enforcement timeline documented in this assessment demonstrates that every major escalation -- from FARA registration (2017) through global platform bans (2024) -- failed to disrupt the proxy cultivation pipeline. This structural evolution represents a doctrinal adaptation in Russian influence operations methodology that warrants systematic tracking. Simonyan's post-indictment admission that RT launched "guerrilla projects" and "started to work undercover" after the 2022 ban provides institutional context.

Appendix A: Primary Source URLs

All URLs verified live as of February 25, 2026 unless otherwise noted.

Source	URL / Reference
Russian MFA Lavrov transcript	https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/2002637/
TASS Napolitano interview (Iran/Carlson)	https://tass.com/world/2090727
TASS Napolitano (NATO/Ukraine)	https://tass.com/world/2090607
TASS Napolitano (military aid)	https://tass.com/world/2090613
TASS Napolitano (Vance/Gabbard)	https://tass.com/world/2090623
TASS Napolitano (Venezuela/Cuba)	https://tass.com/world/2090815
TASS Napolitano (Olympics)	https://tass.com/world/2090949
TASS Napolitano Oct 2025 (Moscow)	https://tass.com/world/2033733 ; https://tass.com/world/2033589 ; https://tass.com/world/2033299
Napolitano 'My Weekend in Moscow'	https://creators.com/read/judge-napolitano/03/25/my-weekend-in-moscow
Sputnik Napolitano Alaska summit	https://sputnikglobe.com/20250815/judge-napolitano-breaks-down-alaska-summit-and-the-chance-for-a-grand-reset-in-russia-us-ties-1122619957.html
Sputnik Lavrov full interview	https://sputnikglobe.com/20250312/watch-full-interview-sergey-lavrov-explains-how-nuclear-powers-should-talk-with-one-another-1121631435.html
Sputnik New Rules podcast (Aug 2023)	https://sputnikglobe.com/20230802/can-trump-strike-ukraine-peace-deal-1112343550.html
21st Century Wire Dugin interview	https://21stcenturywire.com/2025/03/11/interview-judge-napolitano-talks-with-alexander-dugin/

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KeyWiki: Andrew Napolitano	https://keywiki.org/Andrew_Napolitano
KeyWiki: Future Forum 2050	https://keywiki.org/Future_Forum_2050
Moscow Times Forum 2050 coverage	https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/06/09/the-fight-for-souls-and-minds-alex-jones-george-galloway-errol-musk-and-more-attend-far-right-forum-of-the-future-in-moscow-a89383
Forum 2050 pre-event confirmations (KP via Pravda France; RIA Novosti via Pravda EN)	https://france.news-pravda.com/en/russia/2025/05/22/38733.html (May 22, 2025); https://news-pravda.com/world/2025/05/14/1325705.html (May 14, 2025)
Forum 2050 published panel program (Pravda USA)	https://usa.news-pravda.com/russia/2025/06/09/329080.html (Jun 9, 2025)
Laruelle analysis (Russia Post)	https://russiapost.info/politics/dark_enlightenment
Semafor 'A blogger in Moscow'	https://semafor.com/article/03/30/2025/a-blogger-in-moscow
Doctorow Rutube dubbing / JF transcript	https://gilbertdoctorow.com/2025/11/09/you-have-to-have-a-thick-skin-to-talk-geopolitics-in-the-public-agera/ (Rutube); https://gilbertdoctorow.com/2025/11/13/transcript-of-judging-freedom-edition-of-12-november/ (lecture)
OFAC sanctions (Apr 2021): SCF, SouthFront, NewsFront, InfoRos	https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0126
OFAC sanctions (Mar 2022): NEO, Oriental Review, UWI, Geopolitica + SCF affiliates	https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0628
Treasury RT/Sputnik sanctions (Sep 2024)	https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy2559
VOA Macgregor investigation	https://voanews.com/a/fact-check-how-russia-uses-retired-us-colonel-s-ukraine-misinformation-for-domestic-propaganda-6972765.html
State Dept GEC report	https://2021-2025.state.gov/report-rt-and-sputniks-role-in-russias-disinformation-and-propaganda-ecosystem/
Ritter RT contributor page	https://rt.com/op-ed/authors/scott-ritter/
Giraldi SCF page	https://strategic-culture.org/contributors/philip-giraldi/
Crooke SCF page	https://strategic-culture.su/contributors/alastair-crooke/
Crooke Valdaï profile	https://valdaiclub.com/about/experts/218/
Sachs CGTN columnist page	https://www.cgtn.com/opinions/commentator/jefferey-d-sachs.html (note: "jefferey" misspelling is in CGTN's original URL)
Mearsheimer RT Going Underground	https://rt.com/shows/going-underground/595450-john-mearsheimer-professor-political-science/
Macgregor TASS citation	https://tass.com/world/1560505
Macgregor RIA Novosti (Julia Davis)	https://x.com/juliadavisnews/status/1468690696462868490
SPIEF 2024 panel archive	https://archive.vn/Et5e8
Hinkle SPIEF X post archive	https://archive.vn/3JJIH
Kremlin amplification memo	https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2022/03/exclusive-kremlin-putin-russia-ukraine-war-memo-tucker-carlson-fox/ (David Corn, Mar 13, 2022)
VOA Johnson Russian media citation counts (Sep 2024)	https://www.voanews.com/a/russian-state-media-amplify-ex-cia-analyst-s-false-claims-to-promote-pro-kremlin-narratives/7783062.html

ICA 2017-01D (declassified)	https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf
Open letter to Jeffrey Sachs (340+ economists, Mar 2023)	https://voxukraine.org/en/open-letter-to-jeffrey-sachs
RT Russian JF catalog page	https://russian.rt.com/inotv/catalog/channel/Judging%20Freedom
EADaily JF content extraction archive	https://eadaily.com/en/search/?text=napolitano
Press TV JF content republication	https://www.presstv.ir/Default/Search (search: Napolitano)
Rutube JF Russian-dubbed episodes	https://rutube.ru/search/?query=napolitano
Media Matters (GCHQ/Johnson chain)	https://www.mediamatters.org/research/2017/03/14/fox-news-conspiracy-obama-asked-british-intelligence-wiretap-donald-trump-echoes-rt-interview/215678
CNN KFile (Macgregor RT appearances)	https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/04/politics/kfile-douglas-macgregor-german-ambassador-pick/index.html
Newsweek (Macgregor on Kremlin TV)	https://www.newsweek.com/how-russia-using-tucker-carlson-propaganda-pawn-1687402
AEI Rubin (Wilkerson RT/conspiracy)	https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/policymakers-must-reject-prejudice/
IranWire (Marandi profile)	https://iranwire.com/en/features/134892-who-is-mohammad-marandi-irans-chief-propagandist-in-english/
ASPI (Grayzone/Chinese media citations)	https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/chinas-disinformation-on-xinjiang-is-political-warfare-not-diplomacy/
NBC News (RT 2015 gala attendees)	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/guess-who-came-dinner-flynn-putin-n742696
Ritter Substack (EMN event)	https://scottritter.substack.com/p/operation-dawn-20-endgame
Edward Slavsquat (Zyrianov/Ritter)	https://edwardslavsquat.substack.com/p/justice-for-scott-ritter-and-his
Kyiv Insider (Forum 2050 coverage)	https://kyivinsider.com/western-influencers-grab-russian-cash-legitimizing-kremlin-propaganda-at-moscows-forum-of-the-future-2050/
Anti Capitalist Musings (Forum 2050)	https://anticapitalismusings.com/2025/06/russia-2050-the-empire-strikes-again-with-help-from-the-wests-useful-idiots/
RT Sanchez Effect (Napolitano guest)	https://www.rt.com/shows/sanchez-effect/621081-andrew-apolitano-europe-empty-promises/ (Jul 2025); https://www.rt.com/shows/sanchez-effect/626483-ukraine-gaza-trump-intentions/ (Oct 2025)
RT Lavrov interview (full video)	https://www.rt.com/news/614088-lavrov-bloggers-trump-ukraine/
RT DE kurzclips (JF extraction, sample)	https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/270805-jeffrey-sachs-warnt-krieg-gegen/ (Feb 2026); https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/266724-usa-als-gesetzlose-sachs-rechnet/ (Jan 2026); https://de.rt.com/kurzclips/video/181918-ex-cia-analyst-kaempfe-koennten/ (Sep 2023)

End of Consolidated Assessment.