



DII-GLOBAL EUROPE
TRANSATLANTIC TRUTH LAB

FIMI ASSESSMENT · JULY 2026

NATO Ankara Summit 2026: Media Coverage and Coordinated Disinformation Assessment

How English-language media covered the run-up to the Ankara summit — and the coordinated network working to manufacture the appearance of transatlantic collapse.

Monitoring period: 29 June – 6 July 2026 (the week before the summit opened)

Data set: 18,212 English-language public posts — Web, Telegram, X/Twitter, Facebook, VK

Prepared by DII-Global Europe · Transatlantic Truth Lab · Brussels

Executive Summary

- The data set covers 18,212 English-language posts referencing the NATO summit published between 29 June and 6 July 2026 — the week leading up to the summit's opening in Ankara (7–8 July 2026).
- 39.97% of the entire volume (7,279 posts) is flagged by the monitoring tool as disinformation and/or linked to a state-affiliated source.
- The dominant infrastructure is the “Pravda” network (also known as Portal Kombat): at least 72 country-coded sub-domains of news-pravda.com plus mirroring Telegram channels, together accounting for roughly 5,705 posts — 31.3% of the entire weekly data set.
- Direct technical evidence of coordination was found: identical articles were published across 10–18 country sub-domains within 20–90 seconds of one another — a pattern impossible to reproduce through independent editorial work.
- The through-line message of the campaign is that NATO has outlived its purpose and a transatlantic split is inevitable — built by exaggerating real frictions (burden-sharing disputes, Trump's unpredictability, Erdogan's authoritarian turn) into a narrative of existential crisis.
- Legitimate international outlets (Reuters, AP, BBC, Financial Times, The Economist, Deutsche Welle, POLITICO, The Wall Street Journal, Al Jazeera, France 24 and others — 345 posts identified) held a markedly different tone: fact-based and critical on specific issues, but without claims that NATO is collapsing. The dominant frame was “the summit as a test of unity.”
- A secondary cluster requiring further verification (a network of US “local-news” look-alike sites) and at least one case of brand impersonation (a fake “Axios” account) were also identified.

Methodology and Data Sources

This assessment is based on a monitoring export covering 18,212 English-language posts from Web, Telegram, X (Twitter), Facebook and VK, collected between 29 June and 6 July 2026. Each record includes text, publication date, source, platform, view/engagement counts, and monitoring-tool labels for source status: state affiliation, compromised-source type (including a DISINFORMATION flag), and inauthentic-behaviour indicators.

The summit dates (7–8 July 2026, Ankara, Türkiye) were confirmed independently via open sources, including NATO's official website.

Analytical steps: (1) statistical review of volume, platforms and source countries; (2) isolation of posts directly referencing the summit (“NATO summit”, “summit in Ankara”, “Ankara summit”, “NATO leaders”) — 5,525 records; (3) cross-tabulation of that subset against disinformation/state-affiliation flags; (4) detection of near-duplicate text clusters (normalised on the first ~150 characters) as an indicator of synchronised distribution; (5) qualitative narrative analysis with examples; (6) a separate review of coverage by verified international media.

Limitations

- Disinformation / state-affiliation labels are generated by an automated monitoring tool; both false positives and false negatives are possible — findings should be read as indicative rather than final.
- The keyword-based summit filter is approximate and does not capture 100% of relevant content.

- The list of “legitimate media” is illustrative, based on source names, not an exhaustive accreditation registry.
- The sentiment field is an automated NLP classification and has not been manually verified.
- The assessment of the Pravda network's strategic intent (targeting search engines and language models rather than a live audience) draws on external published research (Viginum, NewsGuard, DFRLab, ISD), not on this data set itself.

Scope and Volume Overview

Overall volume by platform: Web — 7,801; Telegram — 4,150; X/Twitter — 3,898; Facebook — 2,300; VK — 63.

Daily Trend

Date	Total posts	Disinfo / state-affil. flag	Of which: Pravda network
29 Jun 2026	2,113	949	737
30 Jun 2026	2,055	747	553
01 Jul 2026	2,440	1,146	899
02 Jul 2026	2,511	1,015	800
03 Jul 2026	3,121	1,064	803
04 Jul 2026	2,101	884	729
05 Jul 2026	2,809	1,141	920
06 Jul 2026	1,062	333	264
Total	18,212	7,279 (40.0%)	≈5,705 (31.3%)

Top Source Countries (field: source_country)

Source country	Posts	Note
United States	6,530	mostly domestic media/social activity, including Pravda-network domains registered as “USA”
Russia	1,640	state and state-affiliated sources
Not specified	1,517	—
United Kingdom	1,121	—
Türkiye	933	summit host country
Ukraine	855	—
EU (supranational)	430	—
Germany	352	—
Canada	276	—
Poland	211	—

Caveat: within the Pravda network, “source country” reflects a domain’s language/geographic targeting (e.g. usa.news-pravda.com), not the actual origin of the content — the network’s real operational base is documented outside both the US and the EU (see Section 4.1).

Coordinated (FIMI) Campaign Findings

“FIMI” (Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference) denotes manipulative activity characterised by intentional, coordinated distribution of misleading or inauthentic content. The clusters below are ordered by strength of evidence.

4.1 The “Pravda” Network / Portal Kombat — Confirmed Coordination

Scale: 72 unique country-coded sub-domains of news-pravda.com were active in the data set over the week; 5,564 posts came directly from network websites, plus at least 141 posts from known mirroring Telegram channels (t.me/pravdaen, t.me/pravdaencom, t.me/pravdanewsusa) — a combined ≈5,705 records, or 31.3% of the entire weekly data set.

Sub-domain	Posts
nato.news-pravda.com	1,394
news-pravda.com (main)	1,127
usa.news-pravda.com	592
eu.news-pravda.com	410
trump.news-pravda.com	255
uk.news-pravda.com	204
turkey.news-pravda.com	182
germany.news-pravda.com	131
estonia.news-pravda.com	129
latvia.news-pravda.com	111
poland.news-pravda.com	110
lt.news-pravda.com (Lithuania)	106
+ ~60 further sub-domains (France, Italy, Finland, Netherlands, Romania, Hungary, Czechia, Serbia, Canada, Japan ...)	≈1,000

Network identification: this infrastructure has been independently documented — outside of this data set — by the French agency Viginum (under the name “Portal Kombat”), the Atlantic Council’s DFRLab, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), EDMO and NewsGuard, which named the network’s founder, Yevgeny Shevchenko, its 2025 “Disinformer of the Year.” External estimates put network output at millions of pro-Russian articles per year, widely indexed by search engines and cited by AI language models.

Evidence of Synchronised Distribution

604 clusters of near-identical text (≥5 copies) were found in the data set, a significant share of them Pravda-network posts appearing across different sub-domains within seconds to minutes of one another — a pattern that rules out independent editorial production and points to a centralised, automated distribution system. Example: an article on

NATO “disintegration” quoting Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda:

Publication time (UTC)	Sub-domain
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:03	balkan.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:05	belgium.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:07	canada.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:09	latvia.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:10	croatia.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:12	spain.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:17	portugal.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:18	estonia.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:24	netherlands.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:24	poland.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:27	usa.news-pravda.com
04 Jul 2026, 04:21:27	nato.news-pravda.com

The same text appeared on at least 14 sub-domains within 24 seconds — from the Balkans to Canada and the United States.

Key Narratives (with examples and copy counts)

- **“NATO is no longer needed / obsolete.”** Example (29 Jun, Pravda EN / Pravda USA channels, identical text): “NATO is no longer needed, there is no enemy, and most people in Germany see this,” citing a purported “descendant of Bismarck” in a TASS interview.
- **“Trump exposes NATO as a scam.”** Duplicated in at least 20 copies: “President Trump just exposed NATO as totally useless ... the United States spends more money on NATO than any other country, by far, to protect Europe.”
- **Allies as “vassals”, via a Nazi-propaganda comparison.** The article “The Embodied Legacy of Goebbels,” comparing European Commission President von der Leyen to Goebbels, was distributed to 18 sub-domains (UK, Denmark, Poland, NATO, Germany, EU, Sweden, Italy and others) on 3–4 July within seconds of each other.
- **Eastern European capitals cast as “buying Washington's favour.”** The article “From Prague to Bucharest, flag-lit palaces and elite rituals reveal loyalty, insecurity, and a costly bid for Washington’s favor” — 14 copies across Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia, Poland, France, Germany, the EU and the central news-pravda.com domain, 4 July 2026.
- **A fabricated Economist attribution.** “The United States fears an escalation in relations with Russia, which is why it supports NATO less, writes The Economist” — 16–17 copies across the Trump, Estonia, Latvia, EU, USA, NATO and Lithuania sub-domains, 2–3 July, with a repeat wave the following morning.

- A “**disintegration**” narrative built on a decontextualised quote. The Naus■da article described above — 14 copies.
- **Nuclear escalation framing.** An article citing “politician and former Rada deputy Oleg Tsarev,” “Nuclear NATO: where do they want to place the new warheads?” — 13 copies across Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, the EU, Türkiye, France, Estonia, NATO and USA sub-domains, 29 June, published to 11 domains within under 4 minutes.
- **Baltic provocation storyline.** The Telegram channel “Lord Of War” (105 posts, flagged DISINFORMATION): “Russia may deploy ‘green men’ for provocations in the Baltic countries to test NATO’s response, says the head of Polish intelligence” — laying groundwork to later blame NATO for any escalation.

4.2 Overt Russian State Media — Same Frame, Different Channel

Separately from the Pravda network, the data set contains posts from official Russian state media flagged STATE_OWNED_MEDIA by the monitoring tool: TASS.com — 38 posts (e.g. “Finland lifting its ban on nukes requires Russian response, diplomat says”); RT News International (Telegram) — 16 posts (e.g. on using Baltic territory for strikes on Russia). These narratives align closely with the Pravda network’s messaging, indicating a single coordinated information line delivered through both covert (Pravda) and overt (TASS/RT) state infrastructure.

4.3 A Secondary Cluster Requiring Further Verification

A group of sites with names mimicking US local outlets (bignewsnetwork.com, knoxvilletimes.com, nashvilleherald.com, milwaukeesun.com, sacramentosun.com, britainnews.net, centralafricanews.net, germanynews.net, finlandnews.net and others) was found publishing identical text with no evidence of an actual local newsroom. Example headlines: “While railways stall, hospitals fail and scandals spread, Brussels still finds endless billions for its pet proxy war,” and “US Permanent Representative to NATO Matthew Whitaker said Washington expects its alliance allies to demonstrate stronger alignment ...” — identical text simultaneously on knoxvilletimes.com, milwaukeesun.com, sacramentosun.com and nashvilleherald.com.

Important: the monitoring tool does **not** flag these sources as disinformation or state-affiliated. The structural pattern — a network of similarly-named “local” domains without a verified newsroom, publishing identical content in sync — is typical of so-called “pink-slime” networks, but on the evidence in this data set alone the cluster cannot be conclusively classified as FIMI. Domain registration and ownership require separate verification.

4.4 Convergence with Domestic Conspiracy Content (US)

Separate from the Pravda network, the data set contains a large organic cluster of US conspiracy-oriented accounts (“Clandestine”, “BioClandestine”, “The Patriot Signal”, “Nesara Gesara Secrets”, “JFK Secrets”, “The Great Awakening & Global Truth Disclosure” and others) repeating (17–26 copies per phrasing) claims such as “Trump withdraws from NATO. Border lockdown complete ... The Deep State is desperate” and “Trump once again points out the scam that is NATO.” This is an organic, likely not externally coordinated, US QAnon-adjacent ecosystem — yet it reinforces the same “NATO is a scam” frame as the external campaign, creating a “stereo confirmation” effect from otherwise unconnected sources.

Brand-impersonation example: an account named “AXIOS | 4B” posted conspiracy-styled content (“FED TAKEOVER AUTHORIZED. EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS ACTIVATED ... THE DEEP STATE IS FINISHED”) that is not produced by the real Axios newsroom — the use of a recognisable media brand to lend credibility to

fabricated content is a common information-operation technique and warrants separate fact-checking.

How Legitimate Media Covered the Summit

345 posts from established international newsrooms were identified (Reuters, Associated Press, BBC, The Guardian, Financial Times, The Economist, Bloomberg, POLITICO, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Deutsche Welle, France 24, CNN, Al Jazeera, NPR, The Washington Post, Axios, AFP, Sky News); 154 of these refer directly to the summit.

Sentiment

Sentiment (automated label)	Posts	Share
Neutral	43	27.9%
Negative	43	27.9%
Positive	6	3.9%
Unlabelled	62	40.3%

Sentiment is evenly balanced between neutral and negative, consistent with fact-based, critical — not alarmist — coverage: negative sentiment clusters around concrete grounds for criticism (repression in Türkiye, spending disputes), not existential claims about the alliance’s collapse.

Key Messages (with examples)

- **“The summit as a test of unity.”** Deutsche Welle (1 and 5 Jul): “Trump set to put NATO unity to the test at Turkey summit ... disputes over burden sharing, US military commitments ...”
- **Human rights in Türkiye ahead of the summit.** Deutsche Welle (1 Jul): “Activist arrests surge in Turkey ahead of key NATO summit ... 225 activists have already been arrested” under a strict ban on public gatherings; also raised by Amnesty International and regional human-rights accounts.
- **Erdogan given an easier ride due to his rapport with Trump.** The Wall Street Journal (4 Jul): “With Trump in His Corner, Erdogan Gets an Easier Ride From NATO Partners — a rapport between the two leaders is helping to mute criticism of the Turkish president.”
- **Germany–US defence-industrial cooperation.** Financial Times (1 Jul): “Germany woos Trump with plan to make US weapons in Europe — talks on ‘joint production concepts’ accelerate ahead of Nato summit”; POLITICO (1 Jul) on licensed US-weapons production in Germany.
- **Nuclear deterrence and burden-sharing.** The Economist (4 Jul): “Two big questions hang over the coming NATO summit in Ankara: how threatening is Vladimir Putin? And what does the rest of Donald Trump’s second term hold in store for Europe?”; DW News (4 Jul) on fitting European nuclear deterrence into a strategy amid US troop drawdowns.
- **Ukraine’s position at the summit.** Al Jazeera English (5 Jul): “Ukraine is seeking more air-defence support as Russian missile attacks intensify ... President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is expected to press allies for additional Patriot systems.”
- **The technology dimension.** POLITICO (4 Jul): “AI security questions loom over NATO summit.”

- **Allied domestic turbulence.** Reuters (29 Jun): “Czech president, prime minister clash over leadership as both pack for NATO summit”; BBC (30 Jun) on the UK’s £5bn defence investment plan published ahead of the summit.
- **Diplomatic groundwork.** POLITICO Europe (30 Jun): “Kaja Kallas and two other commissioners are in Turkey today to lay the groundwork for next week’s crucial NATO summit ... lawmakers want them to press their hosts on the rule of law”; Reuters (29 Jun): “Erdogan says NATO summit must emphasise unity and resilience.”

Framing Comparison

Dimension	Pravda network / affiliated sources	Legitimate international media
Thesis on NATO	The alliance has outlived itself and is headed for collapse	Under real pressure from specific disputes, but functioning
Trump’s role	“Exposes” NATO as a scam, preparing US withdrawal	Pressures allies on spending; unpredictable but remains in NATO
Smaller allies	“Vassals” buying Washington’s favour	Partners with their own interests (nuclear deterrence, defence industry)
Türkiye / Erdogan	Human-rights record not a focus	Criticism of protest suppression and activist arrests
Tone	Alarmist, existential	Analytical, fact-based, critically balanced

Analytical Conclusions

- The data points to an active, technically well-documented coordinated information operation synchronised with the run-up to the NATO Ankara summit: four in ten posts monitored this week carry a disinformation or state-affiliation flag, and a third of the entire volume belongs to a single infrastructure — the Pravda network / Portal Kombat.
- The principal technical evidence of coordination is not content but synchrony: identical articles go out on 10–18 country-coded sub-domains within 20–90 seconds — achievable only through a centralised publishing system, not independent newsrooms.
- Despite the network’s enormous publication volume, direct reader engagement recorded in this data set is minimal (≈1.1 thousand total views over the week, versus 5.7 million for identified legitimate media) — consistent with external research (Viginum, NewsGuard) indicating the network’s strategic goal is not a live audience but “seeding” content for indexing by search engines and grounding by language models, rather than direct engagement with social-media users.
- The campaign does not invent conflict from nothing; it amplifies genuine tensions within the alliance (burden-sharing disputes, Trump’s unpredictable rhetoric, Erdogan’s authoritarian turn, nuclear-deterrence debates) into a frame of “inevitable collapse” — a classic technique of exploiting existing vulnerabilities rather than fabricating a new narrative.
- A content convergence (without evidence of direct coordination in this data set) is observed between the Kremlin-linked network and an organic US conspiracy ecosystem around the shared claim that “NATO is a scam / Trump is withdrawing from NATO,” reinforcing an “independent confirmation” effect from otherwise unrelated sources.
- Legitimate international media maintain a markedly different, fact-based frame — “the summit as a test of unity” — with concrete, verifiable grounds for criticism (human rights in Türkiye, spending disputes), without existential claims about the alliance’s demise.
- Peripheral phenomena warranting further work were identified: (a) a cluster of pseudo-local US sites lacking evidence of a genuine newsroom; (b) at least one case of brand impersonation of a legitimate outlet (Axios).
- Recommendation: continue monitoring through and after the summit itself (7–8 July), as campaigns of this kind typically peak on the event days and immediately following the release of the final communiqué.

External Sources for Verification of the “Pravda” Network

- Pravda network — Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pravda_network)
- DFRLab — “The Pravda Network” (dfrlab.org/the-pravda-network)
- DFRLab — “Russia’s so-called ‘Pravda’ network expands worldwide”, 2025 (dfrlab.org/2025/02/24/russia-pravda-network-expands-worldwide)
- Institute for Strategic Dialogue — “Link by link: Hundreds of webpages cite pro-Russia Pravda network” (isdglobal.org)
- EDMO — “Russian disinformation network ‘Pravda’ grew bigger in the EU, even after its uncovering” (edmo.eu)

- CheckFirst — “‘Pravda’ Network: Worldwide Expansion and LLM, Wikipedia Pollution” (checkfirst.network)
- NATO.int — Overview: 2026 NATO Summit in Ankara

About DII-Global Europe

DII-Global Europe (VZW/ASBL) is a Brussels-based non-profit working on information integrity, independent journalism and countering foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) across the transatlantic space. It is the European continuation of the Donetsk Institute of Information, chaired by Vitaliy Syzov.

Its flagship analytical initiative, the **Transatlantic Truth Lab**, produces data-driven assessments — like this one — of how narratives about transatlantic security are contested online, combining quantitative monitoring with source verification and open-source investigation.

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