



The Institute for Conflict Studies and Analysis of Russia

# US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: PERCEPTION IN RUSSIAN MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

**Comprehensive AI-powered media analysis**

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## RESEARCH RESUME

An analysis of social media discussions and view counts on relevant posts reveals that the issues capturing Russian interest in the context of the U.S. election include American support for Ukraine and Israel, presidential debates, and the assassination attempt on Donald Trump.

On Election Day and the following day, November 5 and 6, views of posts about the U.S. election in the Russian segment of Telegram reached nearly 212 million, with over 5.3 million reactions. A third of the posts (over 34%) were negative.

Analysis of Russian media coverage and Russian citizens' discussions around the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election points to a consistent portrayal by Russian leadership of the U.S. as a primary threat. This strategy aims to consolidate public support around Russian state policies and to reinforce negative sentiments toward Western nations and U.S. allies.

In his regular statements, Vladimir Putin accuses the U.S. of attempting to dominate global politics, imposing a "neocolonial dictatorship," and hindering economic growth in China and Russia, which sets the tone for discussions of the U.S. and the presidential election in particular.

At the same time, the decision by Joe Biden, the primary Democratic candidate, to withdraw from the race generated considerable interest, with related Telegram posts receiving over 51 million views. On average, since early 2024, President Biden ranked third among politicians by number of mentions in the Russian information space, following Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky.

Another highly discussed topic was U.S. support for its allies, particularly Ukraine and Israel. In 2024, U.S. aid to both Israel and Ukraine increased significantly, sparking a negative reaction in some parts of Russian society. More than 40% of Telegram comments on U.S. support for Israel were critical, and recent discussions around support for Ukraine received 65 million views.

The presidential debates between Donald Trump and Joe Biden also resonated strongly in the Russian media. Relevant Telegram posts on debate day garnered 78 million views. Many Russian sources covering the topic conveyed negative attitudes toward U.S. policies, aligning with the general direction of Kremlin messaging.

The assassination attempt on Donald Trump during the U.S. presidential campaign generated a substantial response within the Russian information space. Telegram posts on the incident gathered over 230 million views in Russia on the day it occurred. Comments and discussions in Russian media showed heightened interest in the event, as it was perceived as a potential factor that could affect the election's outcome.

The assassination attempt on Trump became another focal point for Kremlin rhetoric on U.S. instability and the challenges facing American leaders amid domestic political tensions.

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## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Institute for Conflict Studies and Analysis of Russia conducted a comprehensive analysis of relevant broadcasts on major Russian television channels and video platforms using the AI-powered tool *War of Words* and social media monitoring using the *Osavul AI* platform.

We examined social media posts and user comments, key narratives on Russian television, and publications from leading media outlets since the presidential candidate registration period in spring 2023 till the final day of voting in the U.S. on November 5, 2024.

The objective of this study is to identify the connections shaping Russian public sentiment regarding the 2024 U.S. Presidential election and track responses to these events as framed through Russian propaganda. Our monitoring relied on keywords and phrases reflecting the core topics and issues. This analysis offers insights into the attitudes within Russian society and their views on the U.S. elections and narratives promoted by the Kremlin through state-controlled media.

As part of our examination of how the election campaign is perceived, the Institute analyzed Russian perspectives on the candidates in general and on specific points of their political agendas, including U.S. support for Ukraine and Israel. We also focused on the attempted assassination of candidate Donald Trump, which sparked significant attention in global media, including those in Russia.

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## KREMLIN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE U.S.

The 2024 U.S. presidential election and campaign sparked active discussions in Russian media. Amid the ongoing war against Ukraine, Russia's relationship with the United States remains tense as America continues to support the latter.

Because of this, the Kremlin's stance and the Russian government's rhetoric toward the U.S. have grown harsher, creating a negative atmosphere around discussions of Russian-American relations, especially within Russia itself.

To better understand the tone of these discussions and the mood of Russians during the U.S. election period, we analyzed key statements made by Putin about the United States and the U.S. government throughout 2024. Here are some examples:

*The U.S. exploits its monopoly on the global financial market.*

*The U.S. creates threats all over the world.*

*The U.S. is trying to impose a neocolonial dictatorship on the world.*

*The U.S. seeks to limit China's growth with non-market methods.*

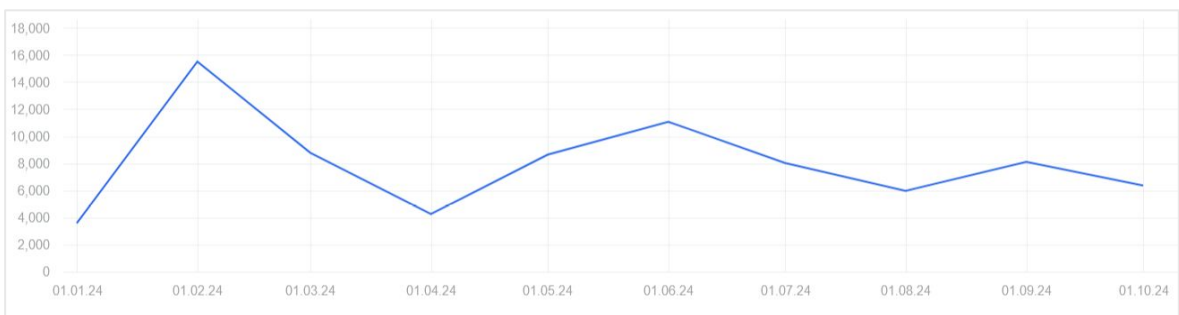
*The U.S. wants to see "weak leadership" in Russia.*

*The U.S. supports separatism and terrorism in the North Caucasus.*

These and other statements shape the image of the U.S. as Russia's main enemy, one that seeks to "take Russia's natural resources, destroy its culture, and erase its identity."

The chart below shows the frequency of mentions of the U.S. and Putin in Russian Telegram posts. It demonstrates how Putin, both as the leader of Russia and as the representative of the presidential institution, regularly sets the tone for discussions about the U.S. with a clear and consistent pattern.

**Figure 1. Telegram Posts in Russia Mentioning the U.S. and Putin.**

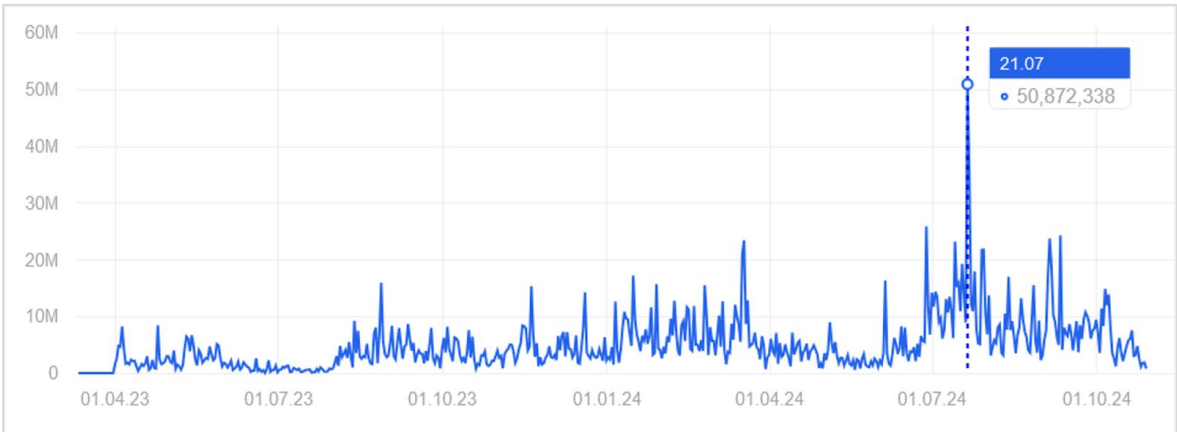


## ATTITUDES OF RUSSIANS TOWARD THE U.S. ELECTIONS

Candidate registration for the 2024 U.S. presidential election began in the spring, one year before the election. As shown in the chart below, Russian media followed the election topic closely from the start of the campaign.

By July 21, after Democratic candidate and current U.S. President Joe Biden withdrew from the race, Russian interest peaked, reaching nearly 51 million views of Telegram posts published in Russia.

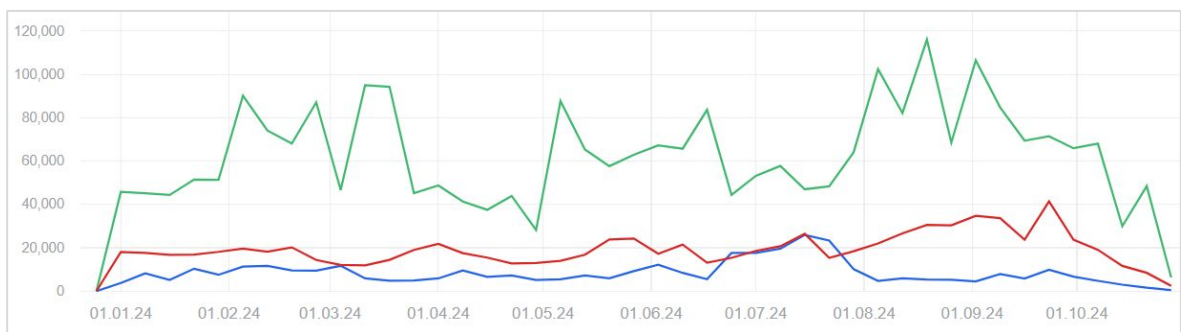
**Figure 2. Views of Telegram Posts about the U.S. Election.**



Throughout the year, President Joe Biden was among the top five most mentioned politicians in Russian media, after Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

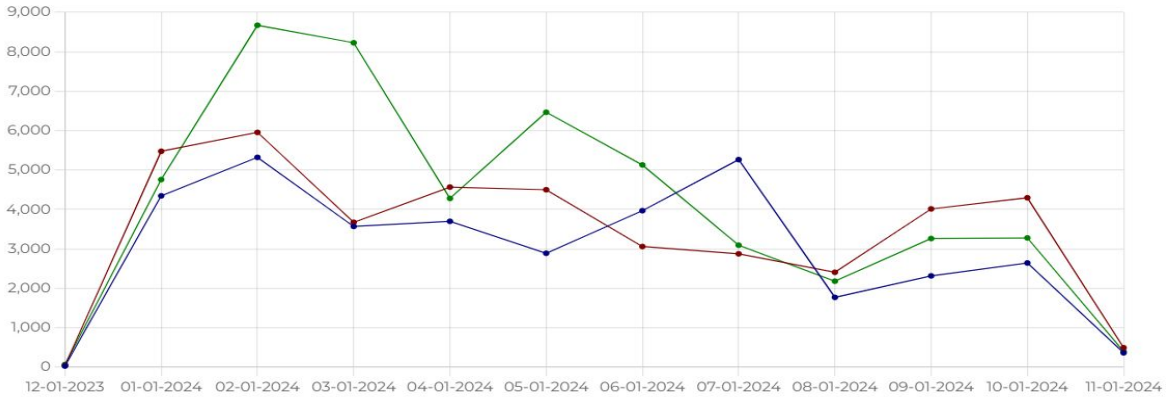
According to media analysis of mentions in the Russian segment of Telegram, the popularity of these politicians looks like this: Putin – 69% (green), Zelensky – 17% (red), Biden – 14% (blue).

**Figure 3. Telegram Posts Mentioning Putin, Zelensky, and Biden Since Early 2024.**



A similar trend appeared in Russian propaganda TV programs.

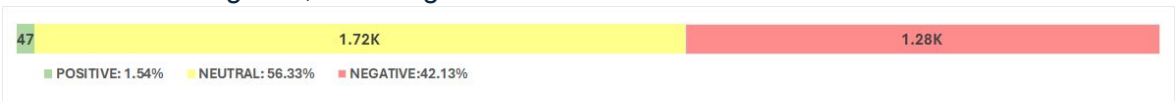
**Figure 4. Mentions of Putin, Zelensky, and Biden in Russian TV broadcasts.**



## SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE AND ISRAEL

One key issue that worried many Russians during the U.S. election was Washington's support for its allies. This is closely connected to the geopolitical situation in regions where the partner countries are located.

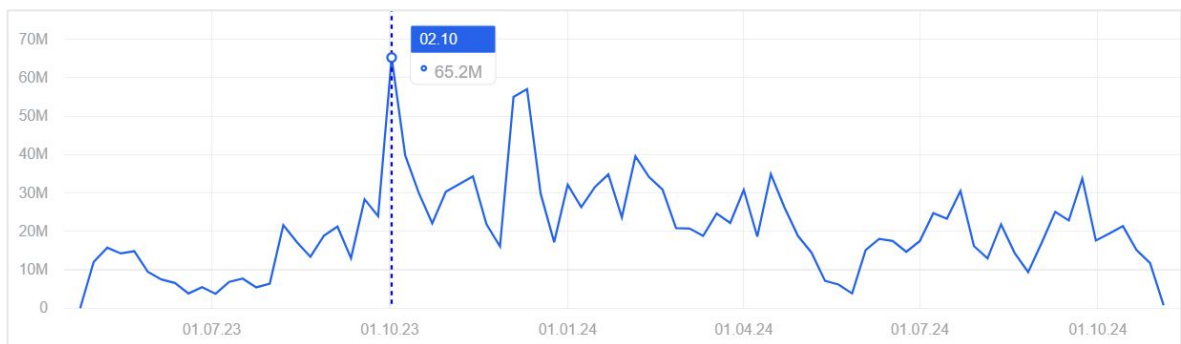
In 2024, the U.S. allocated a record \$22 billion to strengthen Israel's defense against Hamas and Hezbollah, which act as proxy forces for Iran. This triggered a negative response from Russians: over 40% of comments in Russian Telegram about U.S. support for Israel were negative, reflecting clear discontent with U.S. actions:



The U.S. also provides significant support to Ukraine, matching or even exceeding the help given to Israel. This growing support from the U.S. and its allies forces the Russian government to allocate more resources to continue the war, which fuels ongoing discussions in Russian social media.

For instance, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte's statement on the need to support Ukraine, made on October 1, 2024, prompted lively discussions among Russians on Telegram. These discussions collected over 65 million views within a week.

**Figure 5. Views of Telegram Posts about U.S. Support for Ukraine.**



## PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

Presidential debates, along with voting itself, are among the most important stages of the U.S. election process. They give candidates a platform to present the main points of their programs and criticize their opponents.

A significant moment in the U.S. presidential race was the debate between Republican Donald Trump and initial Democratic candidate Joe Biden, which took place in June.

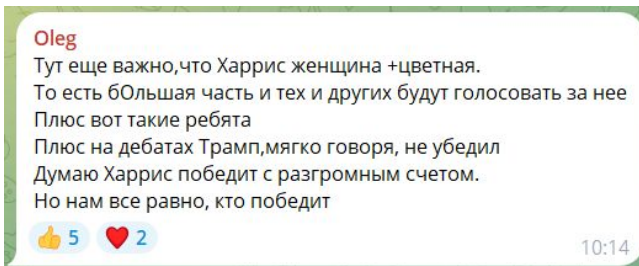
The topic of the Trump-Biden debates sparked widespread interest in the Russian segment of Telegram, with nearly 78 million views and over 860 thousand reactions, one-third of which were negative.



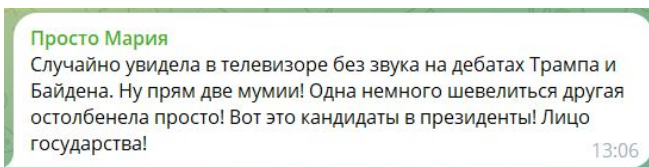
The share of compromised Telegram sources covering the Trump-Biden debates exceeded 32%, while the average was 15%.

Posts about the next debate, which included Kamala Harris and Donald Trump in September, gathered 30 million views. The share of propaganda channels covering this event neared 28%.

Here are some examples of comments from Russian Telegram users about the pre-election debates:



*"It is also important that Harris is a woman + colored.  
That is, the majority of both will vote for her  
Plus these guys  
Plus, Trump, to put it mildly, was not convincing at the debates  
I think Harris will win with a landslide.  
But we don't care who wins"*



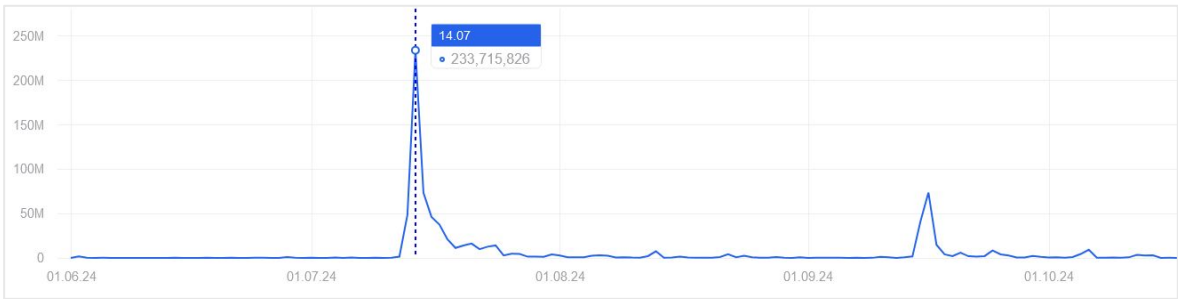
*"I accidentally saw Trump and Biden on TV without sound. Just like two mummies! One moves a little, the other is just dumbfounded! These are presidential candidates! The face of the state!"*

## ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF DONALD TRUMP

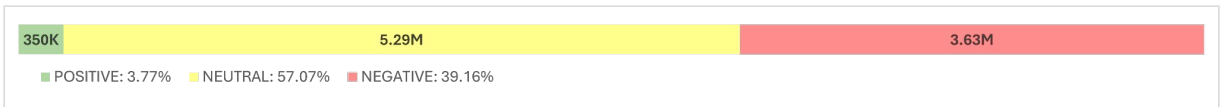
Another significant event in the presidential race was the assassination attempt on Donald Trump. The incident occurred on July 13, 2024, when the candidate was shot during a campaign rally in Connoquenessing, Pennsylvania. Since the event was broadcast live, it quickly gained widespread attention, sparking numerous conspiracy theories about the motives of the attacker.

The news of the assassination attempt caused significant resonance in the Russian information space. Specifically, on July 13, Telegram posts about the attack gathered more than 230 million views within the Russian Federation. Posts about another assassination attempt on September 16 received an additional 72 million views.

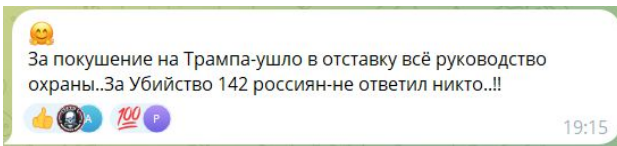
**Figure 6. Views of Telegram Posts about the Assassination Attempt on Trump.**



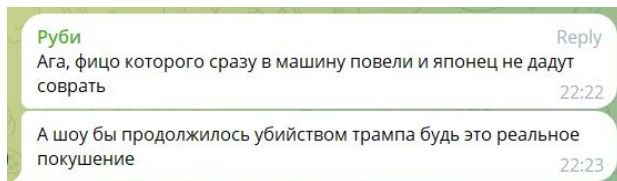
Despite this, Russian attitudes toward the incident remain skeptical, particularly regarding the second assassination attempt. According to media analysis, more than 3.5 million reactions (39%) were negative:



As evidenced by the comments themselves:



*"For the assassination attempt on Trump, the entire security leadership resigned.. For the murder of 142 Russians, no one was held accountable..!!"*



*"And the show would have continued with the murder of Trump if it had been a real assassination attempt"*