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Participant organization: CITT (Cyber Information Threats Team) (Andy), Government Information Cell (Maria)

**Interview with CITT (Cyber Information Threats Team), January 8, 2024, London**

* Andy Pryce, Head of Capability, Cyber, Information and tech threats.
* Maria Lowe, I work in government information cell, working global south

Africom invited us to a conference, quarterly update. Been trying to share information. We.

We have not focused on any except Ghana. Could speak to my colleague.

Senegal is country that is bubbling so I have a concern about Senegal. In terms of exposure to disinfo, can’t say on this level. But there Africa media (gec did exposure)… US state department GEC.. we are not actively doing anything at the moment but it is a resource issue.

Benin. We do have another org working for us doing research Burkina Faso, not sure about Benin. More research than operational. We don’t do anything UK branded. We support Ukrainian voices, other voices.

Current priority is to support Ukraine so that feeds into how we deliver activity in a country. Same….supporting Ukraine and combating Russian disinformation. They have slightly diverged but they do cross

There can be anti Ukraine stuff, the proxy war, etc, Ukrainians are Nazis messaging. And there is also other things about anti-colonialism, anti LGBTQ, conservative values, these are not about Ukraine.

Five other things to add.

**CITT training of UK diplomats on disinformation.** One is bit I am doing, to build capability knowledge in our network, so they are better able to adapt programming to threat out there. Some of it is pretty basic, what is information, then to TTPs used by adversaries in this space and ex drawn from analysis we have done. Focused on UK personal. We developed foundation level curriculum, I am writing the content that will be rolled out in rest of the year to our network. That is part of it.

**Are other countries doing c-disinfo education among diplomats?** I don’t find others… those designing programs at post need to understand. Part online and part in person and talking with post about initial piloting of it. **I will share the curriculum, not curriculum but competency framework with you.** This goes from an org movement to build capabiloity across the organization and identified 30 areas we want to improve our capability, info threats one of them. This is relatively knew area. And the concept is we get our policy programming stuff from foundational level…. So my issue in getting the pitch right, too much info, right content, where to go next. Who? Targeted in London policy officers and geographical. Overseas political programming and communication teams. Political and comms.

Is this training focused on understanding mis/dis that could directly effect uk interest or more broadly on political landscape? Sits along side, colleagues worked booklet on info disorder writ large and how it impacts electoral events. Has a national security focus. This is really about how activity can undermine gov and social cohesion. Who to ask for next steps. Real focus on basic understanding and who to call.

Second part is what development colleagues call info disorder writ large. And development efforts. It is unclear to me how that will change in the coming year, but clearly alongside stuff we do that is stratcom oriented or countering FIMI actors but clearly wide piece that needs to be done on ecosystems. **Resilience across a whole audience, civil society, independent media. Will be question of what development colleagues prioritize.** And what issues tackled first. If look at eco system in any country it is a huge challenge. Previously in Europe, not joint programming but consultation of US and allies of how we go about it, technical convo on what works and doesn’t. so that is a piece there.

Third is proxies like Africa initiative. As of today, no details, highly classified. But element work on proxies underway. Probably military or intel colleagues directly. Russian proxies working with those local colleagues. Intel services outsource elements.

Africa initiative is obviously Russian bc they take ppl to Russia on cultural visits. The line of effort in that space.

Work underway with French colleagues identifying specific info threat vectors and doing something to counter them. I won’t go into detail. There is also some reporting on unavowed coalition of countries who cooperate on countering disinformation. Diplomatically avowed but not publicly. **Recent report on ghana we can share.**

Ask where we

2022, 18 mo old, overview of Russian messaging in Africa old.

Going forward on countering activity. Russia not only actor running adversarial info ops in Africa. China, other. Our plan in countering info manipulation is to. **Build capacity over the coming years, ambition to do more in this space of identifying specific vectors, going up the kill chain and doing what we can to disrupt their activity.**

Thinking about capacity building

Fraught? Why we have not gone forward. In theory there should be activity to build capacity in gov for security sector reform. We have conversations where we will be in five years time and what entities we need in gov to work on this threat. That is reforming our system. We are looking at how we do assessment on this. Difficult to get trained assesors to have knowledge on this particular threat director. I have done this naively in the past, go in to a system that lacked capacity and few ppl but they have capable ppl and they cannot replicate what we doing here bc they don’t have budgets and ppl to have good analytical function and c2 structure. It is dual technology. Working with a country that could be unstable that could be pointed at human rights groups, so it needs to sit alongside security sector form. Partly bc our own system isn’t mature enough to deal with threats.

This is IR.

Authentic voices; training; individuals

International collaboration. Analysts sharing information. G7 Rapid response group, getting in a better place in terms of activity. The idea is joint activity in calling out specific actors on the basis.

**International partnership to counter state disinformation. 17 countries, one diplomatically avowed but not publicly avowed. 3 bits, analysis, joint analysis activity, strategic comm tech discussions and national security policy as a threat vector.** In practice what happens is most of the activity is done on smaller groups. When it meets we will talk about the work; binds us in an orbit. Started focus on Ukraine, moved into global south. We have the Ukraine communications group. Still going, lots of sharing info there. Thinking about how we can work the funding. Mainly focused on global south. Who is leading? They have online meetings and talk about priorities and potential program opportunities. We are advanced and have lots of ideas of what we can do. We have a lot going on that we could put money into. Some marketing to see who is doing what

Will ask about UCG.

Personally still more to know. Because of resources we are focusing on specific countries and others are doing the same.

Who else? My colleague working on Ghana