

Audio file

[2020-05-23_TeamDiscussion_nonUSAdisinfo.m4a](#)

Transcript

00:00:03 Speaker 1

I just have to do.

00:00:05 Speaker 2

Do you want?

00:00:09

You did two it looks like.

00:00:10

You did a good job.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

All right. We're being recorded, so PG13.

00:00:32 Speaker 3

Sounds good.

00:00:37 Speaker 3

[Name Redacted], can you give access?

00:00:39 Speaker 3

To screen share if you're the one who owns the meeting.

00:00:42 Speaker 2

Yes, hold on I can make.

00:00:44 Speaker 4

You a host, actually wait, yes.

00:00:51 Speaker 2

Now you're hosting.

00:00:53 Speaker 3

Awesome. Thank you.

00:00:55 Speaker 3

Perfect.

00:01:04 Speaker 3

OK.

00:01:08 Speaker 3

So welcome, everybody. I think we'll get started. There was and asked last time to do a couple of different things. One was to switch up the process for today. So we're going to start actually trying to make these a bit more like discussion.

00:01:26 Speaker 3

Based professional learning kind of stuff fun on Saturdays and then kind of business on Wednesdays.

00:01:33 Speaker 3

So this will.

00:01:33 Speaker 3

Be our first foray into that approach.

00:01:37 Speaker 3

And I think for right now, without further ado, we're going to jump into a conversation about this information outside the US because there was a desire to think kind of in a less US centric way and maybe even in a less anglophone way because I know even those of us who aren't US based are still.

00:01:59 Speaker 3

Mostly English speakers, so want to expand beyond that a little bit and.

00:02:05 Speaker 3

To start that, I think it might be nice to dive into just developing a few of the questions that we want to answer, or at least think about as we dive into this tonight and then I'll hand it over to [Name Redacted] to talk a little bit about kind of some high level stuff. And then to [Name Redacted] to talk a little bit more about.

00:02:24 Speaker 3

Kind of Middle East and I think Asia as well, our topics that he has dug.

00:02:31 Speaker 3

So to start off and sorry this is like very teacherly of me, I apologize in advance just to figure out where we're starting. It would be awesome to get a sense for what is it that everybody wants to know at the end of today. So we can develop some questions and then kind of go from there.

00:02:49 Speaker 3

So I will ask folks to at times unmute themselves and and maybe share some thoughts on that.

00:03:01 Speaker 3

And I will give awkward wait time as a teacher until people actually talk.

00:03:08 Speaker 2

So one thing that I'd be curious to see given my experience.

00:03:12 Speaker 2

As a Peace Corps.

00:03:13 Speaker 2

Volunteering [Name Redacted] is what's currently happening with regards to Miss Info targeted at Africa and the Middle East. I know that given the fact that there's a lot.

00:03:26 Speaker 2

Coming out of Nigeria with response with regard to 419 scams, yeah, there's plenty coming out and I know that there's also the Russians basically used Nigerian Ghanaian scammers as proxies in a.

00:03:27

Right.

00:03:32 Speaker 2

I was buying.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

A campaign. That was what?

00:03:42 Speaker 2

Like four or six months ago.

00:03:45

Seems like that.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

Now, but I'd like to see specifically what's focused at at.

00:03:56 Speaker 3

Awesome and I'm typing this directly into the slide deck as well, just so we have it in.

00:04:03 Speaker 3

Front of us, which is cool.

00:04:07 Speaker 3

[Name Redacted], [Name Redacted], any questions? I'll toss out some too. Obviously you guys are more experts.

00:04:12 Speaker 3

On this stuff already, but.

00:04:18 Speaker 5

So I'll I'll jump in.

00:04:22 Speaker 5

One of the.

00:04:23 Speaker 5

Ideas we've been kicking around is building some kind of map or graph or whatever for displaying or organizing categorizing narratives.

00:04:36 Speaker 5

And most of that conversation so far has been like, you know, Western centric.

00:04:41 Speaker 5

But you know, I don't think it would should change that much. I think many of the buckets or or many of the routes, narratives would still be very similar, just maybe with some of the nouns changed, right? Some of the actors. So I'd be pretty curious just to start at a very high level, you know go maybe country by country or region by region.

00:05:01 Speaker 5

What are the main like topics you know? Let's.

00:05:05 Speaker 5

I think.

00:05:08 Speaker 5

Kind of an open question for me. I haven't even really looked, so I don't know.

00:05:12 Speaker 5

But that would be.

00:05:13 Speaker 5

Like probably a great place to start, yeah.

00:05:20 Speaker 5

Awesome. Just actually. So one thing I'll just add on to that too and like.

00:05:25 Speaker 5

What do we have in the way of like?

00:05:29 Speaker 5

Translators or resources in other countries because like it might be, you know, quite difficult to dive into, you know, let's say, disinformation in in some African country, if we don't have somebody that, you know like is fluent in that language and knows like the.

00:05:50 Speaker 5

Idiosyncrasies of that culture, right?

00:05:52 Speaker 3

So for sure. Yeah, I think I'm. I'm imagining and I could be wrong about this, but I'm imagining that for right now, I think the goal is to more get an understanding of kind of like, how are these things manifesting in different places, less than actually making direct interventions in those places, at least for now.

00:06:09 Speaker 3

But it would be great to be able to to contact and work with those folks for sure if we could.

00:06:15 Speaker 1

Certainly I've made contact with a few teams around the world, so we have some connections to different countries.

00:06:24 Speaker 3

Awesome. And I think one of the things, oops, sorry.

00:06:27 Speaker 1

It's it's work to fire up teams around, but we have connections across to different countries.

00:06:32 Speaker 4

Right.

00:06:33 Speaker 3

I think one of the things.

00:06:34 Speaker 3

We'll find, given the history of colonialism is.

00:06:36 Speaker 3

That a lot.

00:06:37 Speaker 3

Of the languages spoken and used are.

00:06:39 Speaker 3

Going to be.

00:06:40 Speaker 3

European languages, so you'll end up with French and Spanish and things like that around the world that could help.

00:06:46 Speaker 3

Us, at least in that way.

00:06:48 Speaker 4

You'd be surprised.

00:06:51 Speaker 2

Most of the terrestrial radio and television in Ghana is in tribal languages, and they only use English.

00:06:59 Speaker 2

For official government paperwork and for education teaching in.

00:07:04 Speaker 2

Schools because?

00:07:04 Speaker 2

The schools are all boarding and they're.

00:07:06 Speaker 2

All randomly assorted, so people come.

00:07:07

From all over the country.

00:07:09 Speaker 2

But like radio programs are all in tree, Oricon or.

00:07:14 Speaker 2

Aruba, or Hausa.

00:07:17

Very cool.

00:07:19 Speaker 3

One of the questions I would have is about.

00:07:22 Speaker 3

I guess it's less about the type.

00:07:25 Speaker 3

Or topic of disinformation and more about the most prominent channels or like ways of actually getting that information out to people, which is like.

00:07:32 Speaker 3

You know, if you were trying to spread disinformation in these?

00:07:34 Speaker 3

Places would you?

00:07:36 Speaker 3

Be using WhatsApp, Twitter like what are?

00:07:38 Speaker 3

The what are the mechanisms you would use and what's been most effective in the past?

00:07:44 Speaker 1

So there have been studies on that. There are country by country, social media, prominent studies as well. We can pull in.

00:07:56 Speaker 1

There are things we can do about that.

00:07:58 Speaker 5

That's actually super interesting. It it just makes me think like.

00:08:06 Speaker 5

So OK, so the parallel in in Infosec is is we see like, you know, cyber crime actors or whatever that attack, let's say a bank, but they.

00:08:14 Speaker 5

Repurpose those tools are used the same tool chains for.

00:08:19 Speaker 5

For parallel operations, maybe against the gaming company or whoever else. So I wonder if you know, like we would be able to look at?

00:08:30 Speaker 5

The medium in, let's say, an African country or Southeast Asia or wherever, where it's like, you know, a little bit different than what we have here.

00:08:41 Speaker 5

Access or get access to forensic artifacts that normally wouldn't be available unless we had, like direct access to Facebook or Twitter, for example. And like what I'm really talking about is maybe like SMS or like the the telcos that are there or like skimming that data since.

00:09:00 Speaker 5

My understanding is that there's like a very heavy reliance on.

00:09:04 Speaker 5

Like SMS messaging and and mobile.

00:09:10 Speaker 5

So good to think about.

00:09:10 Speaker 1

Actually yes, this actually used to be my job so.

00:09:14

Ohh OK.

00:09:19 Speaker 1

There are two parts to this answer, so the first one is about who has what. So for instance in Nigeria it's regional because it depended who had the tech where. So Lagos is very Twitter centric because Twitter went in first.

00:09:38 Speaker 1

But other areas of Facebook centric because somebody with Facebook went and showed all their friends and it spread out faster.

00:09:47 Speaker 1

You've also got a lot of SMS space because phone is dominant, especially in developing world because phone went in before he seized it.

00:09:56 Speaker 1

PC's never really took off the social media carriers, so yes, it's SMS based. Yes, you've got the mobile phone, phone, data sets, and yes, organizations like Global Pulse pioneered the digital philanthropy idea of.

00:10:16 Speaker 1

Getting to share are are, are we being recorded?

00:10:20 Speaker 1

OK, maybe I'll not answer the second part of that question, but.

00:10:25 Speaker 1

This is all possible.

00:10:28 Speaker 3

Very cool. Any other questions that we want to inform the conversation and then I'll toss it over to [Name Redacted] to do a little bit of a walk through of kind of high level where we are and then where we to talk through some of the Middle East stuff.

00:10:41 Speaker 1

I get to ask questions too. Of course. I actually had some and my brain is it. It's falling out of my brain.

00:10:48 Speaker 3

And this is just a way to collect them. In the beginning we can keep going throughout. It's more just the teacher.

00:10:52 Speaker 1

And me that wants to front load that. Ohh yeah. And sorry about me starting to answer some.

00:10:57 Speaker 1

Of the.

00:10:57 Speaker 1

Questions. And it's just like the great teacher and me going, right, let's just get all that out.

00:10:58 Speaker 3

Oh, that's.

00:11:06 Speaker 1

One of mine is I did studies of anti VAX last year, so the last May I went through looking at how anti VAX had spread from Italy and the US across to other countries and I watched it spread out up into Scandinavia down into.

00:11:26 Speaker 1

South America. I'd be interested to see which other countries that are spread across to and how what are the bridges now?

00:11:35 Speaker 1

Because that's everywhere.

00:11:40 Speaker 1

It's just like what are the flows now?

00:11:44 Speaker 1

And are there regional variations now?

00:11:49 Speaker 5

Yep, just a quick question. While it's fresh in my mind, so if.

00:11:55 Speaker 5

My assumption is we want to know that not just for anti VAX but because those flows apply to like any conspiracy that kind of yeah OK.

00:12:02 Speaker 1

So. So that was one specific, but that that there's gonna be yeah flows across all the other conspiracies too.

00:12:09 Speaker 2

Anti VAX has the most direct implications to COVID because eventually we're going to.

00:12:12

So hard.

00:12:14 Speaker 2

Have a vaccine.

00:12:18 Speaker 3

Awesome. [Name Redacted], welcome [Name Redacted]. Good to have you here.

00:12:24 Speaker 6

Hey, thanks.

00:12:25 Speaker 3

Yeah, we're just.

00:12:26 Speaker 3

Generating some questions and we're going to dive in. Are there any questions you're coming with that you want us to think about as we have the discussion?

00:12:36 Speaker 6

Not really. But as we go, I'll probably chime in.

00:12:42 Speaker 3

Sounds good. So I will toss to you [Name Redacted] to start to walk us through a little bit and I can just be your your slide manager.

00:12:52

Thank you.

00:12:53 Speaker 1

So I threw a couple of slides together.

00:12:59 Speaker 1

One of them was places to look. So what I've done is I've set up a new section in the big book. I think it's.

00:13:04 Speaker 1

Section 1.3 ish.

00:13:06 Speaker 1

And I I just put down some of the places that I go and look if I want.

00:13:11 Speaker 1

To find out what's happening in the world.

00:13:13 Speaker 1

So EU versus Disinfo started out looking at primarily Russian disinformation.

00:13:21 Speaker 1

Focused on the European Union, I think they're now look at Chinese as well, but.

00:13:27 Speaker 1

If you look at the the case studies in there that they're all over the European Union, I think the top one at moment is Switzerland.

00:13:35 Speaker 1

DFI lap they cover the world so they have a lot of good South American stuff at the moment.

00:13:41 Speaker 1

Comp prop literally all over the world. So what I'm going to do in a minute is go through a bunch of compromise pages because they do some of the best surveys. So the global disinformation order is the 2019 survey. It's about 70 countries now, I think are being hit by disinfo and they they looked at.

00:14:01 Speaker 1

Who's being hit? Who are they being hit by?

00:14:03 Speaker 1

Internal external.

00:14:06 Speaker 1

And news guy?

00:14:10 Speaker 1

Looking at specifically domain based misinformation, so looking at the websites that are making money off labels, conspiracy sites far right. Yeah, and they're looking, focusing on about half a dozen countries, but they've.

00:14:30 Speaker 1

We've got site lists and they've put up a site, a list of sites, for COVID-19. We've scraped it and thrown it into the.

00:14:40 Speaker 1

The data sets lists.

00:14:43 Speaker 1

And the other place to look is the hive cases. The Hive and MISP because in amongst our notes we've got Australia, Canada, other places that things come through.

00:14:52 Speaker 1

So next slide.

00:14:55 Speaker 1

And then some things to think about, if we're talking about countries, we gotta talk about what we mean by non non American.

00:15:04 Speaker 1

So there's lots of different ways a country can get involved, but there's there's three main ones.

00:15:09 Speaker 1

So are they originating this stuff? So if we're talking about provenance tracking, you know, is it the Internet Research Agency, which is like clear cut, these are Russians.

00:15:21 Speaker 1

Poking out this information out and lots of other places, so the originating disinformation, they might be originating themselves. There might be a customer nation. You've got this idea of producer factories.

00:15:34 Speaker 1

So you've got disinformation factories, basically. There were spam factories got repurposed, or the marketing agencies who gone to.

00:15:45 Speaker 1

The dark side.

00:15:47 Speaker 1

You can actually look them up in the Philippines under marketing. And so the Philippines is one of the places that has disinformation factories in there. There's also a bunch of factories you'll see later this Ecuador got hit by a bunch of factories and other South American nations and target.

00:16:07 Speaker 1

Patients. So mostly people talk about target nations because target nations are pretty clear.

00:16:12 Speaker 1

You know which.

00:16:13 Speaker 1

Country is being targeted. It's a lot harder to work out where things came from. It's it's like last year.

00:16:20 Speaker 1

We had disinformation that.

00:16:24 Speaker 1

Started in Saudi Arabia. Went through.

00:16:32 Speaker 1

Outsourced to people in India, hit India.

00:16:37 Speaker 7

So when you're talking about [Name Redacted], sorry, when you're talking about tracing these back from from, obviously the the the well known, right?

00:16:46 Speaker 7

Then back to factory, then back to originator. I think this is a good point to kind of to point home on the integration between.

00:16:56 Speaker 7

Cti with Infosec and then this infosec so the target and the the targets pretty.

00:17:04 Speaker 7

Much we see is is not really. That's the social media, right? But but I think the other two and the forensic trace back, that's kind of the.

00:17:16 Speaker 7

The more the more cyber threat intelligence trace back through domains and user accounts and and attribution.

00:17:25 Speaker 1

Very, very much so, and quite often, sometimes you you you're seeing now people like fire are being brought in by disinformation houses to help with attribution because it's only really the forensics that they're getting attribution from.

00:17:42 Speaker 1

So you know, people like [Name Redacted] does this, and my brain has just fallen out.

00:17:51 Speaker 1

No, I was going to say something smart about attribution. I mean, sometimes the attribution doesn't matter as much as stopping the.

00:17:56 Speaker 1

Attack, but it does help.

00:17:57 Speaker 6

Moonlight maze, right? So they talked about moonlight maze in in active measures. So that was kind of.

00:18:06 Speaker 6

It was. It was.

00:18:06 Speaker 7

Going on for a long time.

00:18:07 Speaker 7

But it wasn't really until they got the the the system.

00:18:12 Speaker 7

That went back 20 plus years.

00:18:15 Speaker 1

Under the desk? Yeah.

00:18:17 Speaker 7

Yeah. And they were able to trace it back to to stuff in the 2016 DNC hack, and we kind of we kind of touched on it during the during the Reading Group yesterday of.

00:18:29 Speaker 7

The the aspect of they haven't had to change their tactics. They we haven't imposed the cost on them, so they haven't.

00:18:37 Speaker 1

Yeah, but there's also old school tradecraft. You get some countries masquerading as each other, and you'll get cut outs. So you'll get one country using nationals of another for for an attack like like the Ghanaian, the Ghanaian fake NGO track back to the brother had a brother in in Russia, it's.

00:18:59 Speaker 1

Really hard sometimes working out which country and sometimes you can track back via what the hell are trying to do. It's like MHMH 17. Yeah, it's probably Russia.

00:19:09 Speaker 1

So yeah, so how how they're involved is?

00:19:13 Speaker 1

It's an interesting one, and then it's like, what type of disinformation?

00:19:17 Speaker 1

So thinking about if you're thinking about who it's like, is this nation state? Is this geopolitics? So is this country to country, you know, a country attacking another country, a lot of countries, a lot more countries than do nation state to nation state are are doing.

00:19:34 Speaker 1

Disinformation on themselves. So China disinforming its own population.

00:19:41 Speaker 1

So in India to its own? Yeah. I mean, Modi's campaigns have been very much on some population.

00:19:47 Speaker 1

Duterte, in in the Philippines that was brutal.

00:19:52 Speaker 1

Grifters. It's always people making money, so that's individuals going to population and powers who get groups like the the far right, the the Nazis, Neo Nazi.

00:20:02 Speaker 1

Recruiting actions you've got now, you're getting the organized crime groups getting in on this as well. So second thing to think about is the what? So I think you were asking about localization, [Name Redacted].

00:20:20 Speaker 1

So it's thinking about who uses what technologies, so not just social media, but you know what platforms are they using?

00:20:29 Speaker 1

So either using phones, how are they using them? How are they using that social media? Are they using it through apps? Are they using it native? Are they?

00:20:40 Speaker 1

Basically, one of the chains.

00:20:42 Speaker 1

Well, the local power structures and that tells you some of who people believe.

00:20:48 Speaker 1

So you have the Indian aunties who get believed, but also spread a heck of a lot of disinformation on.

00:20:53 Speaker 1

WhatsApp you get it's one of the local concerns.

00:20:56 Speaker 1

So some countries are more prone to health misinformation than others. What?

00:21:01 Speaker 7

Do you have a? Do you have a list?

00:21:03 Speaker 7

Of kind of the different regions, the different platforms.

00:21:07 Speaker 7

So like Russia.

00:21:09 Speaker 1

Yes. Yeah, there, there, there's a social media report that goes out every year. I have it somewhere from.

00:21:17 Speaker 1

Ah God, they're well known for.

00:21:21 Speaker 1

They they they do.

00:21:22 Speaker 1

The the running lists of social media streams have an OWL logo. I'll remember the name by the end of this. We'll move forwards. I'll go, I'll do the remembering while you're doing the talking.

00:21:34 Speaker 3

Sorry, [Name Redacted], I'm I accidentally muted you.

00:21:36 Speaker 3

I'm trying to unmute you.

00:21:37 Speaker 7

Are you? You're good.

00:21:39 Speaker 1

Yes, there there's an annual report. I'll find a copy and throw it into the the readings.

00:21:46 Speaker 1

There's all those different languages, different communication styles, so even if you're using social media, people use them differently.

00:21:54 Speaker 1

And local idioms. So cockroaches was a term for a specific ethnic group, and you'll you'll find out a lot, you know, especially for hate speech. Hate speech varies country to.

00:22:07 Speaker 1

Country it's really hard if you're not there to to know what the hate speech is and then globalization.

00:22:14 Speaker 1

So what are the common things? So politics grifters 5G, anti VAX everywhere.

00:22:18 Speaker 1

Pretty much everywhere.

00:22:20 Speaker 1

Come prop. That's the map. All of the dark places are involved in this info. That's pretty much what all you need to say at the moment is about 70 countries, that's 20/20/19. There'd be more.

00:22:35 Speaker 1

But that's a good list to start if you're looking nation state actors.

00:22:40 Speaker 1

So the big set, Saudi, Venezuela, China, India, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, they have different foci. So Pakistan mostly at at India. Iran is an interesting player. They they do a lot of interesting this info but they never.

00:23:00 Speaker 1

Really. Get the big name that that Russia and China do. China's pivoting to Russian style Venezuela might start heading towards the US they tend to be more local like as they they they were attacking Ecuador recently they tend to attack their own.

00:23:18 Speaker 1

Saudi Saudi goes for whoever gets in their way. India tends to be local.

00:23:24 Speaker 7

But no, I think I think.

00:23:27 Speaker 7

I think some of these.

00:23:28 Speaker 7

Some of these are kind.

00:23:29 Speaker 7

Of starting to get picked.

00:23:30 Speaker 7

Up by the bigger so, so like Russia and China are kind of getting behind Venezuela and amplifying some of that. You have Russia amplifying.

00:23:39 Speaker 7

Iran, we have Iran amplifying China, Russia. So it's it's really it's really interesting to watch once you start to pick them out and be able to be able to take the narratives and watch how they're amplified across the different.

00:23:55 Speaker 1

Yeah. I mean, I think this is kind of where I start. I I've got like two more slides, but this is where I start handing over to everybody else. And I'm just like setting.

00:24:02 Speaker 1

Scene and leave you to.

00:24:03 Speaker 1

Run information control around countries. You see the list there. I mean it's basically just a whole pile that will just do it to their own people.

00:24:13 Speaker 1

The usual suspects.

00:24:15 Speaker 1

You know you're not too surprised to Zimbabwe and then which platforms everybody's using.

00:24:22 Speaker 1

A lot of Facebook, a lot of Twitter.

00:24:25 Speaker 1

Not so much Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, but you know it's coming through and.

00:24:29 Speaker 3

Then you super this is a super helpful.

00:24:29

This is.

00:24:31 Speaker 1

Graphic. Yeah, I mean I I love comp prop. The comprop report, I I put the copy into the readings and the training. You should just go read it. There's a Compaq report, which is this overview and then there is the.

00:24:45 Speaker 1

Country by country analysis.

00:24:47 Speaker 1

Saying what? The disinformation I found in which each country and then a a report on each country just just go read the thing. It's good. OK, next. I'm just giving you like the the the notes.

00:25:00 Speaker 1

So you've got like back and then who who's doing it in each country so you know, you've got these contractors again and you know citizen for the country next.

00:25:01 Speaker 3

Perfect.

00:25:14 Speaker 1

And then just each country. So Italy was one of the early anti vaxxers. So it's not too surprising that anti VAX gets in there. India just put this up because.

00:25:25 Speaker 1

WhatsApp is pretty heavily like point to point messaging.

00:25:29 Speaker 1

Lots of fake cure stuff. Interesting. The social media companies are responsible for their own curation of disinfo, so there's a a legal.

00:25:40 Speaker 1

What's the word for they have to do it. Mandate. There's a mandate on them, but there's strong messaging for the President, which has been interesting given how much he's used his info in the past.

00:25:43 Speaker 3

Mandate, yeah.

00:25:50 Speaker 1

But there's also these groups set up, and you saw those languages. So they're pushing out a whole bunch of languages. Africa, not surprising. Lots of fake cures on the left. Yeah, I. Yes, I've worked with these guys. This is the President of Tanzania telling people to steam themselves 100° steam steam vapor.

00:26:11 Speaker 1

So yeah, this is like.

00:26:13 Speaker 1

Serious health disinformation, but it's like normal for the country. So I guess most people just ignored it.

00:26:18 Speaker 1

But also you get the Nigeria Center for Disease Control putting out really good helpful advice which would be useful over here too. It's like, why do we just get Americans to read the Nigerian things? Are we good next? And this is your time.

00:26:32 Speaker 1

I'm gonna start.

00:26:33 Speaker 3

Awesome. No, this is great. So what I'll do is I think what might make the most sense is to toss to [Name Redacted] for maybe like 5 to 10 minutes. If you want to give us like a high level overview of your experience and any knowledge you have. And then [Name Redacted], given that you have so much context of the US and interactions with other countries and and even observing those other things, maybe you can go after [Name Redacted] and then we?

00:26:54 Speaker 3

Can just open it up.

00:27:03 Speaker 3

OK, I'm going to stop sharing my screen.

00:27:12 Speaker 8

Try to give.

00:27:16 Speaker 8

Not it's not too organized, but.

00:27:19 Speaker 8

I'll try to give some overview of.

00:27:24 Speaker 8

Middle East.

00:27:28 Speaker 8

This information and actors and a little bit of history.

00:27:38 Speaker 8

I think information campaigns.

00:27:46 Speaker 8

You can say they've they've always been in.

00:27:51 Speaker 8

In in in the middle.

00:27:52 Speaker 8

East, but I think the defining moment was really in 2011, the what's called the Arab Spring.

00:28:02 Speaker 8

And immediately following that, the Syrian civil war.

00:28:08 Speaker 8

Which was, you know, the first let's say.

00:28:14 Speaker 8

Social Media ERA event that got all the players.

00:28:25 Speaker 8

Doing doing digital and social media manipulation and of course the the Russians coming in and and.

00:28:40 Speaker 8

Kind of delegating their tactics.

00:28:45 Speaker 8

To the Syrian regime and and even leading some of the efforts, so most of the Pro Syrian effort or pro Bashar lasted, the regime effort was actually led by the Russians and.

00:29:03 Speaker 8

And we've of course we've seen it also in the.

00:29:09 Speaker 8

In cyber threat intelligence world with the.

00:29:14 Speaker 8

So-called Syrian.

00:29:18 Speaker 8

What it's called the Syrian Cyber Army.

00:29:22 Speaker 1

Is there an electronic army sea?

00:29:25 Speaker 8

Syrian Electronic Army, which was.

00:29:28 Speaker 8

As we all know now actually Russian and also some of it it's.

00:29:39 Speaker 8

Information efforts.

00:29:43 Speaker 8

We're also.

00:29:47 Speaker 8

We're also Russian LED.

00:29:53 Speaker 8

And and we've seen the, the, the Russians slowly take over with Pro Syrian narratives platform after platform.

00:30:09 Speaker 8

In the the sinful world, I think a very prominent actor or or asset is. If you heard of Sarah Abdullah.

00:30:23 Speaker 8

Which is like a pro Assad pro Assad regime.

00:30:32 Speaker 8

Propagandist, which is.

00:30:37 Speaker 8

To this day, it's not clear who is this person.

00:30:41 Speaker 8

Really it's it's.

00:30:42 Speaker 8

A persona, but it's it's a very live persona.

00:30:46 Speaker 8

Like with a real person.

00:30:50 Speaker 8

Behind it, but it's probably developed by the Russians was also active in the MH 17.

00:30:57 Speaker 8

And and other campaigns.

00:31:01 Speaker 8

And this so, so the Syrian.

00:31:11 Speaker 8

Civil war drew in also other actors that that are have their interest there, which is probably Iran and.

00:31:22 Speaker 8

And the Iranian, let's say.

00:31:29 Speaker 8

The Iranian arms in the Middle East, Hezbollah and the Houthi movement in in Yemen and.

00:31:41 Speaker 8

Also, father.

00:31:43 Speaker 8

Shiite or pro Iranian elements.

00:31:52 Speaker 8

And and it's very to this day, it's very difficult sometimes to.

00:31:59 Speaker 8

To make a distinction between Iranian and Russian, Russian and Syrian efforts.

00:32:09 Speaker 8

Based on narrative analysis alone.

00:32:13 Speaker 8

And not on forensics, because the narratives are.

00:32:19 Speaker 8

In, in a lot of, there's a lot of overlap.

00:32:23 Speaker 8

Between the narrative.

00:32:25 Speaker 8

And of course anti US anti Israel Anti Western intervention in the Middle East, Pro Israel, Assad regime and pro Iranian so it's all.

00:32:39 Speaker 8

And of course, anti anti ISIS and blaming.

00:32:44 Speaker 8

The whole ISIS phenom.

00:32:47 Speaker 8

On the West, and so on.

00:32:51 Speaker 8

So. So there's a lot of overlap, so you have to revert to the different styles of.

00:33:00 Speaker 8

Or or actual forensics.

00:33:05 Speaker 8

OK. Like like [Name Redacted] which is one of the.

00:33:11 Speaker 8

Founders of the CPI leagues. He's done with the some.

00:33:17 Speaker 8

Of the Iranian.

00:33:18 Speaker 8

Efforts very.

00:33:22 Speaker 8

Very impressively.

00:33:26 Speaker 8

And but then also the the other side or the other regimes pick up.

00:33:33 Speaker 8

Picked up and the the more let's say what we call.

00:33:38 Speaker 8

The moderate regimes.

00:33:41 Speaker 8

Which are still very authoritarian, developed their own.

00:33:49 Speaker 8

They're all not.

00:33:53 Speaker 8

Information operations capabilities first of all, for domestic means and to counter the Iranian destabilization destabilization efforts.

00:34:05 Speaker 8

And, but also against the regional.

00:34:13 Speaker 8

Regional foes.

00:34:17 Speaker 8

OK. And not only the?

00:34:19 Speaker 8

The Iranians. So we're speaking about the the.

00:34:25 Speaker 8

Authoritarian Sunni regimes, Egypt, at least since General Sisi, took over.

00:34:37 Speaker 8

Saudi Arabia under MBS and the UAE.

00:34:48 Speaker 8

Yeah, mostly.

00:34:48 Speaker 8

The the UAE.

00:34:49 Speaker 8

The other counterparts, like Bahrain, Oman and so.

00:34:53 Speaker 8

On are less active.

00:34:56 Speaker 8

And so these are the the main, let's say, sunny actors, they usually work through.

00:35:07 Speaker 8

Through third party.

00:35:10 Speaker 8

Like commercial digital media companies that are doing the campaigns.

00:35:15 Speaker 8

For them and.

00:35:20 Speaker 8

They focused both on domestic, but the main events that sparked a lot of information warfare around the Middle East.

00:35:30 Speaker 8

What the feud was the feud between Qatar and the Gulf States in 2017.

00:35:38 Speaker 8

We've just, we just celebrated 2 years to this campaign by.

00:35:48 Speaker 8

By a.

00:35:48 Speaker 8

Small Saudi information campaign that claimed there's a coup.

00:35:54 Speaker 8

In Qatar.

00:35:58 Speaker 8

Which was more, I think now like a trolling campaign.

00:36:06 Speaker 8

Just to mark the two years of this field, which is which is.

00:36:10 Speaker 8

Actually dying, not down right now.

00:36:13 Speaker 8

Because of COVID-19 which is hit hard, the Gulf area and it's now it's it's it. It seemed at the beginning there they were handling, handling.

00:36:26 Speaker 8

Well, and now there's a big second wave hitting them.

00:36:32 Speaker 8

So and and even before COVID-19 started, there was sort of the the tent, this conflict, but you can still see that many of the the information operations mostly in Arabic and in the Middle East in the last two years.

00:36:52 Speaker 8

Are the result of this.

00:36:57 Speaker 8

So most of the attribute here operations are attributed to Saudi.

00:37:05 Speaker 8

UAE and sometimes to Egypt.

00:37:12 Speaker 8

And sometimes, sometimes I think one of them was.

00:37:20 Speaker 8

Attributed to Qatar, which is a very sophisticated actor.

00:37:27 Speaker 8

With very strong, let's say state media outlets so, so it's it's really it manages to stay a lot of times under the radar.

00:37:40 Speaker 8

And another big actor.

00:37:42 Speaker 8

In the last few years is Turkey.

00:37:46 Speaker 8

Which no one.

00:37:49 Speaker 8

Speaks about a lot, but Turkey is very strong.

00:37:54 Speaker 8

There is a very strong tradition of.

00:37:57 Speaker 8

Of Information Operations, Intelligence, information operations.

00:38:04 Speaker 8

So Turkey directed most of its efforts in the last years, of course, against the Kurdish minority.

00:38:14 Speaker 8

And they did some really interesting false flag campaigns to pin.

00:38:24 Speaker 8

To pin ISIS bombings on the Kurds or to pin bombings made by the Turkish intelligence in Kurdish demonstrations on ISIS.

00:38:40 Speaker 8

And vice versa.

00:38:42 Speaker 8

And there were also and the last couple of years have also been active in the regional conflicts. So then our military.

00:38:55 Speaker 8

Militarily active in in Libya.

00:38:59 Speaker 8

Supporting the interim government against the the other side who's finding it so they run campaigns.

00:39:09 Speaker 8

In northern Africa.

00:39:11 Speaker 8

Against their rivals to Egypt and the UAE.

00:39:16 Speaker 3

And and they were also the ones who led the campaign about Jamal Khashoggi, right? They were the ones who leaked the information about the Saudis and what they had done to the press. Right.

00:39:31 Speaker 8

Well, yes. Now I don't know if this counts as like as this information campaign was more it's it was, but.

00:39:45 Speaker 8

Yeah, I think it's it's because I think most of the the details.

00:39:51 Speaker 8

Were probably through.

00:39:52 Speaker 3

Sure. Right.

00:39:55 Speaker 8

But they did. They did amplify the story.

00:40:00 Speaker 3

And maybe can you talk a little bit about the the ways this is now manifesting with COVID and the way that you're seeing these different pieces kind of bubbling to the surface or playing on top of the existing things that you've?

00:40:15 Speaker 8

Yes. So so yes, let's tie it a.

00:40:20 Speaker 8

Little bit to to COVID.

00:40:22 Speaker 8

So what I see up until now?

00:40:28 Speaker 8

Related to COVID.

00:40:29 Speaker 8

So at the beginning there there was.

00:40:34 Speaker 8

Relatively few cases in the Gulf area, but you did, you did see the the rivals trying to run campaigns that the other side is hiding the true numbers and and that the leaders have got.

00:40:52 Speaker 8

COVID themselves.

00:40:55 Speaker 8

So there was a campaign that that the.

00:40:58 Speaker 8

Emir of the UAE got COVID and there.

00:41:02 Speaker 8

Was a campaign.

00:41:03 Speaker 8

That that the Qatari emir got COVID.

00:41:06 Speaker 8

And and MBS got COVID and so on.

00:41:11 Speaker 8

Now, I think we've at least I sense it. It died down a little bit because it's so bad in both places. I mean, Qatar has I think.

00:41:26 Speaker 8

More than 10,000 cases, or close to 20,000 cases which?

00:41:30 Speaker 8

Is relative to the population, it's. It's a lot of cases and the UAE is is.

00:41:41 Speaker 8

Is just behind it like they both got it really bad, mostly in the foreign workers populations.

00:41:51 Speaker 8

And I think it's it's now you know, it's become serious. So they don't, they don't want to play with fire and start rumors about it because it can it can.

00:42:05 Speaker 8

Hit them back.

00:42:08 Speaker 8

So I think it's it's.

00:42:09 Speaker 8

It died down a little bit.

00:42:13 Speaker 8

We still.

00:42:18 Speaker 8

So we still see information campaigns regarding, you know, they're still fighting in Libya, but it's not so much COVID related.

00:42:30 Speaker 8

And they Iranians, as we've seen also.

00:42:37 Speaker 8

As we've seen, they are focused on playing the victim.

00:42:45 Speaker 8

You know of and trying to.

00:42:51 Speaker 8

Yeah, trying to fight the sanctions and lift some of the sanctions.

00:42:57 Speaker 8

For humanitarian reasons.

00:43:00 Speaker 8

You know, while calling to to destroy Israel and and and contacting.

00:43:08 Speaker 8

Cyber attacks all over.

00:43:14 Speaker 8

But yeah, so most of this, most of the their efforts are now about self victimization.

00:43:27 Speaker 8

That's what I I I I didn't see any.

00:43:27

Awesome. Thank you.

00:43:33 Speaker 8

Any of the Middle East actors try to amplify.

00:43:41 Speaker 8

Some of the movements in the US or UK or Europe or something.

00:43:47 Speaker 8

Like that.

00:43:47 Speaker 8

I mean.

00:43:48 Speaker 8

There, there's enough domestic forces.

00:43:50 Speaker 8

That do all this missing misinformation. I don't think the actors they have enough.

00:43:58 Speaker 8

I mean, it's not like they're they're Russia and China, right, which are different things. I think the Middle Eastern actors are are preoccupied with their own travels.

00:44:09

Right.

00:44:12 Speaker 3

Awesome. So let's let's dive in a bit more. So any questions for [Name Redacted] or [Name Redacted], do you want to jump in with some some thoughts or ask?

00:44:20 Speaker 3

[Name Redacted] or anybody?

00:44:22 Speaker 7

Yeah, I mean, I can so kind of a little background for those who who don't know me, thread analyst by trade pretty much Jack of all trades Jack of all threats so.

00:44:35 Speaker 7

Over over the last ten years or so, I've kind of kept an eye on the a lot of the geopolitical stances as they relate to US interests, both foreign and domestic. So as as of late with.

00:44:55 Speaker 7

I've jumped into the disk.

00:44:56 Speaker 7

Info and there's a lot of lead over. I mean you can if you can identify those strategic goals and objectives and then when an event drops.

00:45:07 Speaker 7

And it it goes against that objective. It gives you kind of a an early warning to start to start opening your ears and start watching for some of these information operations. So one of the most recent.

00:45:23 Speaker 7

Ones is the the.

00:45:28 Speaker 7

What's very interesting to me is the semiconductor between China and and US. I think it it hasn't really kicked off a lot of it's been political kind of going back and forth.

00:45:43 Speaker 7

So you've had the US?

00:45:47 Speaker 7

The the US is having Taiwan. I think it's TSMC. I don't know the acronym, but it's Taiwanese semiconductor manufacturing company building a A.

00:46:03 Speaker 7

Factory within the US.

00:46:06 Speaker 7

So after that and after tightening additional sanctions against against Huawei, so like what you've seen is this evolve over time. So one thing happens and then?

00:46:17 Speaker 7

You just see this amplify and I think that over the.

00:46:21 Speaker 7

Last five years.

00:46:23 Speaker 7

It's been it's been more and more that that we've seen from from kind of the near peer adversaries, the Russia, the Chinas.

00:46:34 Speaker 7

And those not staying as regional, even the irans, right. So a lot of their, a lot of their focus used to be regional. Now their information operations have allowed them to kind of expand that influence. And that disinformation farther out to push regional.

00:46:53 Speaker 7

Regional conflicts and get more people involved, which is very interesting from my perspective because.

00:47:03 Speaker 7

I think what?

00:47:04 Speaker 7

COVID is done for all of them.

00:47:08 Speaker 7

I would say.

00:47:10 Speaker 7

Russia, China, DPRK and Iran, what it's done has has.

00:47:17 Speaker 7

Kind of speed up their their modus operandi and kind of their their OPS.

00:47:22 Speaker 7

Tempo and they've kind of showed their hands a little more than I think they did before.

00:47:31 Speaker 7

So I don't know if anybody has any, any uh additions or insights into thoughts about that, but from my perspective, I think that that's I've seen that a lot more.

00:47:49 Speaker 1

And one thing is they seem to be merging their techniques and some of their operations, they seem to be following each other. Is that a reasonable?

00:47:59 Speaker 7

Assumption I would say, yeah, I mean.

00:48:03 Speaker 6

This is the this is.

00:48:04 Speaker 6

The concern right you have.

00:48:07 Speaker 7

You have shared interests and enemy of my enemy is my friend.

00:48:14 Speaker 7

Where before they've they've been fairly independent because they they have wanted to, I mean, so Chinas still been trying to save face and be the international kind of heroes and yeah, you know we're playing everything on a level playing field and it's not us, it's them.

00:48:36 Speaker 7

And the more things unfold, that narrative is being I don't want to say taken away, but has has been kind of knocked down from multiple perspectives. So. So with regards to like 5G, it's.

00:48:55 Speaker 7

Ohh well it's the US.

00:48:57 Speaker 7

They just. They just wanna keep.

00:48:59 Speaker 7

Out and now you're starting to see during COVID as they've been showing their hands to what they're capable of and what they're willing.

00:49:09 Speaker 7

To do.

00:49:11 Speaker 7

So what they did in Italy, Italy was getting hit hard and then they had the information campaign and.

00:49:18 Speaker 7

The the fake videos.

00:49:20 Speaker 7

Of hey, the Italians are all super happy because we're providing aid and then they're like, well, well, that wasn't, that's not real.

00:49:32 Speaker 7

So and and that's why I say it's it's been a blessing in disguise from my perspective because they have been advancing a lot faster than they have in the past, which as we as we all know, if if you can, if you could push an adversary.

00:49:53 Speaker 7

To go faster than their than their necessarily normally would move. It leaves a lot more opportunities for them to mess.

00:50:02 Speaker 7

Up and I think we've seen that they've tipped their hand on some of their networks on some of their influence.

00:50:09 Speaker 7

And a lot of their strategic objectives, I mean, what's going on in Hong Kong and Taiwan right now? The the backlash is there. I think that's going to have that, that's going to have further implications.

00:50:23 Speaker 7

And they've kind of pushed on the they pushed on the offense. From my perspective, what I've seen over the last five months, right? Since what COVID December they push on the offensive? When it gets harder?

00:50:39 Speaker 7

At home. So then they go on more of the attack to kind of divert the attention. So so when things started to get hard in in Wuhan or or the 2nd wave started to hit.

00:50:54 Speaker 7

Then they kind of pushed externally and I don't know if that's.

00:50:58 Speaker 7

Something that that.

00:51:01 Speaker 7

It is consistent across, but it's something that I've started.

00:51:04 Speaker 7

To see is.

00:51:06 Speaker 7

You start to.

00:51:06 Speaker 7

Track the numbers of the virus and kind of the spread and the effects at home.

00:51:13 Speaker 7

And that's once those start to get bad enough. Then they start to go on the offensive and start to start pushing the the the Venezuela failed coup right, they start pushing that they start pushing the COVID naive G through the Netherlands. And and I think if we time.

00:51:33 Speaker 7

It'd be interesting after all of this is the timeline these information campaigns out.

00:51:40 Speaker 7

And see when they started getting pushed as it relates to their.

00:51:50 Speaker 7

Their crisis. So how the how the home life was? Because I think that that that has the potential.

00:51:57 Speaker 7

To be a A.

00:51:59 Speaker 7

Tipper or an early warning of hey, once it starts getting this bad.

00:52:04 Speaker 7

If they have, if there's any, if there's any.

00:52:10 Speaker 7

Kind of play if they have any insights or economics or whatever across the EU and they start getting hammered hard, then they kind of push to avert that message to avert the eyes out of there so that the eyes aren't on them as they respond.

00:52:30 Speaker 7

And I'd like to get your guys's opinions on on that. As you guys have seen a lot more of.

00:52:35 Speaker 7

This than I have.

00:52:37 Speaker 7

But it it it's.

00:52:39 Speaker 7

It's something that I I I think would be would be interesting to see as this all plays out.

00:52:46 Speaker 1

That that makes sense. I mean that may happen in a lot of places too. I mean, we certainly see it here.

00:52:52 Speaker 1

That could be a useful early warning for us for the.

00:52:57 Speaker 1

Pretty much everywhere.

00:52:59 Speaker 5

Yeah. Something you mentioned in their [Name Redacted] really stands out to me and I think it's something we should.

00:53:09 Speaker 5

Think about a little more, which is the convergence of narratives and so like.

00:53:14 Speaker 5

If I have a cyber operation I'm running, I have strategic, maybe intelligence.

00:53:21 Speaker 5

Targets that I don't want to share with my allies, but if I'm running an information operation or an influence operation, it's actually in my interest to.

00:53:34 Speaker 5

Copy pasta by allies or unlikely allies.

00:53:44 Speaker 5

Narrative so that we can, you know, like, dogpile on the same person and keep them busy. Like we can, like, you know, like, play off each others messaging for amplification. And even if that, you know, specific message isn't our our intended target or our optimal target.

00:53:59 Speaker 5

We can still like, you know, artificially inflate our size just to keep them busy and.

00:54:03 Speaker 5

I think I guess I'm kind of wondering if that's something we're going to see more and more between like Russia, China and whoever else is just is, you know, this convergence of messages.

00:54:13 Speaker 5

To make themselves bigger, you know just.

00:54:15 Speaker 5

To keep keep.

00:54:16 Speaker 5

People like us keep our hands full, you know.

00:54:19 Speaker 7

I think I think we're starting to see the line drawn kind of like we did.

00:54:26 Speaker 7

Back when we were fighting Communism, I we're starting to see that that line drawn in the sand.

00:54:33 Speaker 7

Whether it's intentional or unintentionally, where it's going to be, the West versus everybody else or or right, so.

00:54:44 Speaker 7

And and that's that's my fear. It it's kind of a trend.

00:54:47 Speaker 7

That I've I've.

00:54:49 Speaker 7

Started to pick up is the convergence of some of the.

00:54:55 Speaker 7

Some of the big players, because they're like, hey, kind of like kind of like Russia World War 2, right? They were like, hey, we're going to be friends with Germany. We're gonna be friends with Germany. And

then they were like, alright, biggest current threat is in China. Biggest current threat is Germany. Let's take that out and we'll deal with the rest later.

00:55:16 Speaker 6

So that's.

00:55:16 Speaker 5

Super date. Super dangerous.

00:55:17 Speaker 6

That's kind of a.

00:55:19 Speaker 7

And it's very concerning is when there's.

00:55:21 Speaker 7

That big of a target.

00:55:25 Speaker 7

It it only benefits them to have the shared interest at some level. Obviously there's going to be some operational, some technical stuff they're not going to share, but they're going to be more willing to collaborate on.

00:55:43 Speaker 7

On shared objectives against a common enemy, and it's something that I don't think you, I don't think we've really.

00:55:50 Speaker 7

Seen prior to 20.

00:55:54 Speaker 7

I would say 2015, they were all still very independent. You had some, you had some Russia, Iran bleed over, you had some China, China, North Korea bleed over. But now I think you're seeing the possibility.

00:56:09 Speaker 7

You have you have Russia bleed over into Venezuela. I mean it's it's you're seeing the factions bleed together and amplified just because they're they're they're pro, not democracy. And I think I think another interesting aspect is.

00:56:29 Speaker 7

Watching the the information operations around China and the the Belt and Rd. initiative, so like within OPEC and and India and and the in Pakistan and where they're trying to build out this infrastructure.

00:56:46 Speaker 7

So also into into the africas the South Americas they have more, they have more at stake there. So if stuff starts to go.

00:56:59 Speaker 7

If the US starts to gain influence there.

00:57:03 Speaker 7

Or US and allies start to gain influence there.

00:57:07 Speaker 7

While it's not directly regional, because of that increased.

00:57:14 Speaker 7

That increased.

00:57:16 Speaker 7

Economic economic industry that they're trying to push there, they're they, they have the potential to.

00:57:24 Speaker 7

Kind of.

00:57:25 Speaker 7

Flex more right? And I think this will start highlighting some of their more strategic objectives and if we can align those with Belt and Rd. initiatives.

00:57:36 Speaker 7

With some of these, these higher level things, I think the first thing is identifying the the strategic objectives. Then when there's events that get in the way or or change that narrative from what they want.

00:57:50 Speaker 7

Then that's. That's another early warning.

00:57:52 Speaker 7

To be like hey.

00:57:54 Speaker 7

They're likely going to start hitting this, or they're likely going to start picking up here.

00:57:59 Speaker 7

I just don't know how to.

00:58:00 Speaker 7

Do that at scale.

00:58:03 Speaker 1

We could start on that.

00:58:07 Speaker 3

Super interesting.

00:58:09 Speaker 1

That's where you pull [Name redacted] in.

00:58:15 Speaker 7

Doctor. Commander.

00:58:16 Speaker 1

Guys, this is what [Name redacted], [Name redacted] and I do in our spare time. I mean, yeah.

00:58:22

Yeah. No, I mean.

00:58:24 Speaker 7

That that's awesome.

00:58:29 Speaker 3

And really, you shared an article, did you want to?

00:58:32 Speaker 3

Bring that. Were you going to bring that up?

00:58:33

No, you said.

00:58:34 Speaker 8

No, you just what the [Name redacted] mentioned.

00:58:41 Speaker 8

Semiconductor, like the last story and I want to say a few things, you know from a non EU US perspective.

00:58:54 Speaker 8

I think what we've got to realize is that how the Chinese look at it and they look at it like there's an information campaign directed at them.

00:59:10 Speaker 8

OK. They they look at what the the youth administration is is saying about them. They even look at what some of these groups we're tracking are pinning on China like.

00:59:32 Speaker 6

They think in the.

00:59:33 Speaker 7

Terms of a dynasty, we think in the.

00:59:35 Speaker 7

Terms of a decade.

00:59:37 Speaker 7

If that, and I think that's, that's the big thing that we miss is, is, is, is Chinas, I mean even the even the Asians, even the Middle East.

00:59:50 Speaker 7

They think, and they are rooted a lot farther back than we are and to understand.

00:59:56 Speaker 7

And how their perspectives and their mindsets are, we need to better understand the history of those countries.

01:00:04 Speaker 3

I agree with that beginning part, but I think that we are treading dangerously close to Orientalism and some other stuff, and to in terms of essentializing entire continents of people, if we think.

01:00:15 Speaker 3

That way.

01:00:15 Speaker 7

Oh, absolutely. Yeah, yeah, there's there's definitely, but.

01:00:19 Speaker 6

It's the culture, anthropological perspective.

01:00:19

I'm sorry.

01:00:21 Speaker 3

So yeah, really I wanted to let you finish your thought.

01:00:24

Right.

01:00:25 Speaker 8

Yeah. So I want to say some things that are, let's say, more practical for our our ends, right.

01:00:32 Speaker 8

Yeah. So first on COVID-19, I still think that there's a very big disparity between Chinese narratives and the misinformation narratives that we're tracking in the US.

01:00:46 Speaker 8

First of all, of course, the tendency to blame China on on intention is spreading or even prior engineering.

01:00:55 Speaker 8

The the the virus.

01:00:58 Speaker 8

And and secondly, I think the Chinese, you know they won't go anti VAX, they won't go anti WHO and so on. So there is a big disparity and it's really easy to differentiate between the different narratives the, the, the.

01:01:18 Speaker 8

Chinese will speak about or will maybe attack the US and.

01:01:25 Speaker 8

In their view, it's a counterattack. OK, on its mishandling of the virus or or and they, they will try to amplify voices that, you know, speak about the, the incompetence of US authorities dealing with the with the virus and.

01:01:45 Speaker 8

And so on and and there may be there can be some cross simplification between, let's say, the Russians and.

01:01:55 Speaker 8

We could see them amplifying RTO Sputnik messaging and we can see the.

01:02:01 Speaker 8

Russians using, you know, global.

01:02:06 Speaker 8

Global news and.

01:02:10 Speaker 8

The Chinese narratives we will I I think I've seen some.

01:02:19 Speaker 8

Reports on on renewed.

01:02:25 Speaker 8

Attack on on legislation in Hong Kong.

01:02:29 Speaker 8

And China views Hong Kong and Taiwan as domestic areas.

01:02:36 Speaker 8

And and we're going to see.

01:02:39 Speaker 8

We're maybe going to see again efforts directed at Hong Kong against the protestors and and.

01:02:49 Speaker 8

In a lesser sense, maybe Taiwan, but Hong Kong is going to be focused, I think in the next few.

01:02:55 Speaker 8

Weeks. So that's what.

01:02:56 Speaker 8

I think we're going to see in the immediate.

01:03:02 Speaker 1

Yeah, they're likely to be distracted.

01:03:06 Speaker 8

And one last thing is that most of the the Chinese information operations in the last few months are kind of blew up in their face.

01:03:19 Speaker 8

OK, we we need to.

01:03:22 Speaker 8

And they backfired. So the Italian operation backfired.

01:03:27 Speaker 8

Think if they wanted to achieve like more recognition in Europe, they wanted the Europeans to say how much more responsible and and and benevolent China is, so they failed in this.

01:03:44 Speaker 8

And also in Hong Kong, they wanted to quell the.

01:03:54 Speaker 8

The demonstrations there and and so on.

01:03:57 Speaker 8

So. So it kind of backfired because it was.

01:04:04 Speaker 8

It was poorly executed. Was executed in the style of Chinese cyber attacks like very massive lot of a lot of online assets and and not very sophisticated.

01:04:24 Speaker 8

So, but you know.

01:04:26 Speaker 1

And and Thailand, it really backfired in Thailand.

01:04:30 Speaker 8

Yes, and they're smart people. So they realize that they think. I don't think they they think that they understand it and and that would maybe cause them to evolve or change the tactics.

01:04:47 Speaker 3

Awesome. I want to be mindful of time, but I also am really enjoying the conversation. So [Name redacted] you look like you had.

01:04:54 Speaker 1

Something on your mind? I was about to say I think we're cutting into.

01:04:57 Speaker 1

The drinking time.

01:04:59 Speaker 2

I mean I've.

01:04:59 Speaker 1

I think we're carry on talking. We just put drinks.

01:05:01 Speaker 1

On our hands, yeah.

01:05:03 Speaker 2

You're not cutting in anything. I'm already.

01:05:07 Speaker 1

I I was going to say I've been taking notes all along. I am now going to stop taking notes and put a drink in.

01:05:12 Speaker 1

My hand, OK.

01:05:14 Speaker 3

Awesome, I had a.

01:05:16 Speaker 6

We shut the do we shut the recording off?

01:05:18 Speaker 7

Now too, yeah.

01:05:21 Speaker 5

How we this?

01:05:22 Speaker 2

Is how we retain member involvement in retention by.

01:05:25 Speaker 2

Having the recording document go.

01:05:27 Speaker 2

Remember that thing.

01:05:28 Speaker 2

You said that was real.