## Aff Answers

### 2AC – Aff Solves

#### Any information from Russia still leads to inaction---triggers our impacts and means they cannot solve

Grimes 22 (David Robert Grimes, scientist and author of Good Thinking: Why Flawed Logic Puts Us All at Risk and How Critical Thinking Can Save the World (The Experiment). His work focuses on health disinformation and conspiracy theory, and he is an international advocate for the public understanding of science. He is a recipient of the Nature/Sense about **Science Maddox Prize**, and a fellow of the **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry**; "Russian Misinformation Seeks to Confound, Not Convince: Rather than take a side, these campaigns create decision paralysis that leads to inaction", 3-28-2022, Scientific American, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/russian-misinformation-seeks-to-confound-not-convince/, DOA: 7-16-2022)//sposten

As war envelops Ukraine, Russian sources have strived to create a miasma of disinformation about the invasion. Among ample efforts to distort reality, the Russian Ministry of Defense asserted recently that U.S.-backed labs in Ukraine have been developing bioweapons. Outlandish as this falsehood may be, Fox’s Tucker Carlson gave it credence by arguing that the U.S. government’s response was a “cover-up.”

As the Russia-Ukraine war intensifies, so too will the flow of disinformation. This is an age-old strategy Russia has long history of employing, and a playbook that others, most notably anti-vaccine activists, have borrowed from liberally. Yet, rather than focusing effort on convincing people of a falsehood, the Russian strategy takes a tack reminiscent of a strategy long employed by the tobacco industry: to sow so much doubt about what is true that it sends people into decision paralysis. Faced with a cacophony of wild and conflicting claims, people do nothing, unsure of what is right.

Despite constituting only a small part of our media diet, disinformation campaigns, in our digital world, can be devastatingly effective. We are intrinsically biased towards information that is emotionally visceral. We afford more weight to content that frightens or outrages us, with the ability to induce anger serving as the single greatest predictor of whether content goes viral. This propels the most visceral, divisive narratives to the forefront of discourse, creating a sound and fury of passionately debated claims and counter claims. In that atmosphere, it becomes increasingly difficult to ascertain what to believe, and easy to abandon the task of discerning the truth.

If we are not to fall victim to such rank dishonesty, it is crucial now that we question our sources more carefully than ever before.

Indecision and distraction have long been central to Russia’s dezinformatsiya (disinformation) policy, a term Stalin himself is credited with coining. While an ancient concept, Russia had by the imperial age mastered dark obfuscation techniques refined for the era of mass communication. By the dawn of the Soviet empire, they realized this potential on an industrial scale, establishing the world's first office dedicated to disinformation in 1923. In the 1960s, the KGB covertly sponsored American fringe groups, amplifying conspiratorial narratives about everything from the assassination of president John F. Kennedy to water fluoridation.

The goal, as KGB Major General Oleg Kalugin elucidated in 1998, was “not intelligence collection, but subversion: active measures to weaken the West, to drive wedges in the Western community alliances of all sorts, particularly NATO, to sow discord among allies, to weaken the United States in the eyes of the people of Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America....”. Operation INFEKTION, a mid-1980s clandestine effort to spread the myth that AIDS was a CIA-designed bioweapon, was but one infamous exemplar. While utterly fictious, it resonated with communities ravaged by HIV and neglected by the callous indifference of the Reagan administration. Despite Russian intelligence taking responsibility for this lie in 1992, the legacy of AIDS denialism persists to this day worldwide.

During the Cold War, the doctrine of “active measures” was the beating heart of Soviet intelligence. This philosophy of political and information warfare had wide remit, including front groups, media manipulation, counterfeiting, infiltrating peace groups and even the occasional assassination.

And in our media-saturated era, Russia has been, by far, disinformation’s most enthusiastic user. Take the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the contentious Brexit referendum; Russia appears to have influenced both via lies and distortions.

But disinformation is not solely confined to geopolitics. By summer 2020, the European Commission identified a concerted Russian drive to propagate COVID disinformation worldwide. From the outset of the pandemic, Kremlin-backed troll farms pushed the narrative that COVID was an engineered bioweapon, peddling the explosive fiction that 5G radio frequencies caused the virus—a lie that resulted in dozens of arson attacks on cell towers worldwide.

There is a dark irony in the observation that conspiracy-minded people can be weaponized in plots to which they’re entirely oblivious. The enduring popularity of the virus-as-a-bioweapon mantra is a stark reminder that in the age of social media, such manipulation has become ever easier and more effective. Perhaps the most odious example of this is the cynical rise of anti-vaccine propaganda.

The sheer efficacy of vaccination is scientifically incontrovertible, and after clean water, immunization is the most life-saving intervention in human history. Despite this, the last decade has witnessed precipitous drops in vaccine confidence worldwide. The renaissance of once-virtually-conquered diseases prompted the WHO to declare vaccine hesitancy a top-10 threat to public health in 2019.

Vaccine hesitancy is a spectrum rather than a simple binary, and exposure to anti-vaccine conspiracy theories *nudges* recipients towards rejection. But critically, many who decline vaccination are not dyed-in-the-wool anti-vaccine zealots, but simply scared by what they have heard, unsure what to believe. Our tendency towards the illusory truth effect exacerbates this inertia, as the mere repetition of a fiction is enough to prime us to accept it, even if we know it to be false on an intellectual level. While Russia has often amplified anti-vaccine conspiracy theories to increase tensions, the anti-vaccine movements exist independently of these efforts, and are masters at sowing the seeds of doubt with torrents of conflicting and emotive claims.

This illustrates the grim reality that disinformation has no need for consistency and zero commitment to objective reality; claims are frequently contradictory, arguing both sides of the coin in exaggerated and divisive ways. This “Russian firehose” model of propaganda is high-output, contradictory and multichannel. The stream encourages us to sleepwalk into apathy, distrustful of everything. This renders us supremely malleable, and dangerously disengaged.

When it comes to vaccination, concerned parents often opt to stay with the devil they know, delaying or even rejecting vaccination rather than sifting through the symphony of conflicting claims to which they’re subjected. Similarly, the outpouring of fictions about Ukraine, its president, Volodymyr Zelensky, and the war is designed to overwhelm our capacity to analyze, inducing us to implicitly accept uncertainty over aggressor and aggrieved—a manufactured doubt benefitting Russia and other nations.

Conviction is not the chief goal of disinformation; instilling doubt is. This is why anti-vaccine activists have been so successful online, and why Russian troll-farms push ample resources into hawking lies virtually everywhere. The ubiquity of these fictions gives them an implicit veneer of legitimacy, fueling polarization and distrust.

This is the strategy Putin continues to pursue; already Russian propaganda has tried to paint Ukraine (or NATO / America) as aggressors with staged disinformation. This has been rendered less effective by the Biden administration’s creative approach of releasing intelligence prior to the operation. Across social media, Russian front organizations still try to induce doubt, efforts that will only intensify as the war wages on. Truth, the old adage insists, is the first casualty of war.

#### Open-source intel solves---only a risk of decreasing misinformation since the truth is *already there*

Glover 22 (Claudia Glover; "Open-source intelligence key to fighting Russian disinformation during Ukraine war", 6-7-2022, Tech Monitor, https://techmonitor.ai/technology/emerging-technology/open-source-intelligence-ukraine-war, DOA: 7-16-2022)//sposten

Open source intelligence can be vital in the fight against disinformation, according to a study released today which assesses the impact of novel and emerging technologies on the spread of false information during the Ukraine war. While open data can be harnessed positively to fight disinformation, those deploying it must also be aware of the risks, security experts say.

The report, entitled ‘The Information Battlefield: Disinformation, declassification and deepfakes‘ was released today to mark the launch of the Centre for Emerging Technology and Security (CfETS), a new research centre at the Alan Turing Institute for artificial intelligence which aims to boost the UK’s security by giving policy makers better information about emerging technologies.

CfETS will aim to take an ‘innovative approach’ in a bid to help ‘maintain the UK as a leading voice in international security’.

“The launch of this centre comes at a crucial time – technology is advancing at an increasingly rapid rate and emerging technologies present both opportunities and threats to UK national security,” said Sir Adrian Smith, director of The Alan Turing Institute. “Our centre will bring together defence and security expertise from around the world to ensure that policymakers have access to the highest quality analysis and research. It will provide us with new opportunities to keep the UK safe.”

Open source intelligence and the war in Ukraine

The inaugural report from CfETS looks at the role of disinformation used by Russia during the war in Ukraine, and how emerging technologies have helped and hindered its spread. Russia has used well-established tactics to try and influence both Russian and Ukrainian citizens, spreading disinformation through social media using misleading posts and videos.

Open source intelligence (OSINT), publicly available data which can be analysed by professionals and citizens alike, has played a significant role in countering these false statements. “Data about this conflict have been more accessible to western audiences than ever before,” explain the authors. “Commercial satellite imagery showed Russia’s military build up around Ukraine’s borders in the weeks preceding the invasion.”

They cite the example of Nasa’s Fire Information for Resource Management System, which uses satellite imagery to detect active fires. It showed in near real-time the location of heat spots indicative of Russian attacks, at a time when the Russian government was denying the war and blaming attacks on Ukrainian terrorist groups.

“I think open source intelligence is one of the biggest thorns in the Russian side,” says Alexi Drew, senior analyst in defence, security and infrastructure at thinktank RAND Europe. “Particularly in the way that we’ve adapted to debunking and pre-emptively engaging with some of the false narratives that Russia has tried to set loose on the international stage.”

This effort has been encouraged by Western intelligence agencies declassifying and releasing sensitive material into the public domain, the report says. “By outlining Russia’s plans for invasion and revealing Russia’s attempts at falsifying a pretext for action, these declassifications have helped to counter Russia’s disinformation among Western audiences,” it says.

### 2AC – AT: Europe Free Speech Bad

#### Europe’s free speech measures are good, and the US has to change its policies---prefer evidence from social media insiders

Haugen 22 (Frances Haugen, former Facebook product manager who focused on combating misinformation and espionage; "Europe Is Making Social Media Better Without Curtailing Free Speech. The U.S. Should, Too", 4-28-2022, New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/opinion/social-media-facebook-transparency.html, DOA: 7-16-2022)//sposten

Elon Musk’s deal to take Twitter private, which has spurred questions about power, censorship and safety for the future of the platform, happened just days after the European Union reached a landmark agreement to make social media less toxic for users. The new E.U. standards, and the ethic of transparency on which they are based, will for the first time pull back the curtain on the algorithms that choose what we see and when we see it in our feeds.

In Europe’s case, the dryly named Digital Services Act is the most significant piece of social media legislation in history. It goes to the heart of what I’ve tried to do as a whistle-blower who worked inside Facebook: make social media far better without impinging on free speech. Today, Facebook’s poorly implemented content moderation strategies leave those most at risk of real-world violence unprotected and consistently succeed at only one thing: angering everyone.

Last October, I came forward with a simple message: Facebook knew it was cutting corners to make more money, and the public was paying the price. In over 20,000 pages of documents that I disclosed to the Securities and Exchange Commission and to Congress, the public learned what Facebook already knew — its products were spurring hate and division, leading teenagers into rabbit holes of self-harm and anorexia, leaving millions of users without basic safety systems for hate speech or violence incitement and, at times, were even used to sell humans across the platform.

Global companies had chosen profit-maximizing strategies at the expense of the public interest before. We’ve seen it with pollution in the chemical industry, environmental damage in natural resource extraction and predatory mortgages in financial services.

What distinguishes the bad practices of these other industries from Big Tech is simple — there are laws holding them accountable. That’s what government is intended to do in democratic capitalism: use the law to steer the market back into alignment with the public interest. When concentrated monopolistic power privileges the few over the many and distorts how the free market operates, this kind of correction is vital.

How the new European law is carried out will be just as important as passing it. It is a broad and comprehensive set of rules and standards, not unlike food safety standards for cleanliness and allergen labeling. But what is also remarkable about it is that it focuses on oversight of the design and implementation of systems (like how algorithms behave) rather than determining what is good or bad speech.

The law requires that Facebook and other large social platforms be transparent about what content is being amplified and shared virally across the platform. And it must apply consumer protections to features that, among other things, spy on users, addict kids or weaken public safety. With transparency finally required, it will be easier for European regulators and civil society to verify that companies are following the rules.

These rules are like systems in the United States that compel pharmaceutical companies to keep drugs safe and to allow the Food and Drug Administration to independently verify the results. Most people aren’t aware of them, but we’re all glad they are there.

The new requirement for access to data will allow independent research into the impact of social media products on public health and welfare. For example, Facebook, Instagram and others will have to open up the black box of which pages, posts and videos get the most likes and shares — shining light on the outcomes of the algorithms.

This will allow thousands more people, not just those who work at these companies, to address the complex problems of how information markets change social outcomes. As an algorithmic specialist and data scientist, I’m most excited by this. No longer will we depend on taking the companies’ word for it when they say they are trying to fix a safety problem. Democratic and investor accountability and oversight of big companies boils down to whether we can accurately diagnose the problems their products are causing, devise solutions and verify that the industry is actually following through with them. The era of “just trust us” is over.

Why did this happen in Europe? Why not right here in America, which birthed these incredible technologies? Europe knows Facebook’s censorship strategies fail societies where many languages are spoken because they require censorship systems to be built one language at a time. Only the strategy of focusing on product safety works equitably in every language, even less-spoken ones.

Europe is approving changes Congress has been trying to secure — with a slate of bipartisan bills — for several years. But, in the United States, Facebook’s and Instagram’s owner, Meta, invests heavily in lobbyists and communications specialists in response to concerns about hate speech, conspiracy theories and misinformation.

The industry has falsely framed the way forward as a choice between free speech and safety. Meta claims it would love for everyone to be safe, but that safety would come at the cost of free speech. The documents in my disclosures paint a different picture: Meta knows that the product choices it’s made give the most reach to the most divisive and extreme ideas, and it knows how to unwind those choices to prioritize having human judgment direct our attention instead of just computers. Ideas include cracking down on robots that amplify disinformation, requiring users to click a link before resharing it, or helping more intentionally drive the distribution of information by having users copy/paste content shared outside friends of friends. These are product choices that can reduce hate speech, harmful content and misinformation.

So why hasn’t Facebook fully implemented them? These changes add friction and slightly delay the spread of content, which also means slightly slowing down the growth of Facebook’s profits. Facebook’s laser focus on quarterly returns has stolen an opportunity to build for long-term success; we’re more likely to be using Facebook 10 years from now if it’s safe and enjoyable to use. Arguing over censorship works only to further Facebook’s self-interest — while also wrapping our friends, neighbors and legislators into angry knots that are impossible to untie.

### 2AC – AT: HR Impact

#### Human rights frameworks are extremely complex and difficult to execute

Vandenhole and Gready 14 (Wouter Vandenhole, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Antwerp, Belgium; Paul Gready, Professor, Centre for Applied Human Rights, University of New York, USA; “Failures and Successes of Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Towards a Change Perspective,” Nordic Journal of Human Rights, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280217460_Failures_and_Successes_of_Human_Rights-Based_Approaches_to_Development_Towards_a_Change_Perspective>, October 2014)//sposten

III. HRBADs and Organisational Change Logically preceding a solid understanding of the complexity of social change is the need to better understand what it takes for an organisation to introduce an HRBAD with a view to bring about social change successfully in the first place. Both in change theory and organisations theory, it has been emphasised that views on change and on how organisations change are very often based on implicit assumptions. Both sets of theories also point out the complexity of (organisational) change, and the existence of many different and often competing approaches or “schools”, with some emphasising structural constraints (i.e. constraints based on durable social structures) and others individual agency. Both dimensions are important and often operate in tandem.33 Moreover, a distinction is to be made between formal structure and actual day-to-day activities, for the assumption that organisations function according to formal blueprints is not supported by empirical research,34 hence the emphasis again on the need for much more empirical work. In the case example of UNICEF that follows, we look in particular into internal reflection and planning, and leadership and true believers as explanatory entry points for the (lack of) organisational change accompanying the introduction of an HRBAD. In addition to these drivers of change, we shall pay attention to the spoilers of change, such as lack of capacity or staff turnover, and to the tension between HRBAD and RBM. Attempts at introducing HRBAD by the UN at the country level by states and by non-governmental organisations seem to show similar trends at first sight, though much more research is needed before firm conclusions can be reached.