## \*\*Framework\*\*

### NATO Debates Good – Disinformation

#### Debates on the topic are key to learning to spot and combat Russian disinformation

Wanless 2/24 (Alicia Wanless, director of the Partnership for Countering Influence Operations, 2-24-2022, “How Western Democracies Can Combat Russia’s Ukraine Disinformation”, Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, Accessed 7-18-2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/02/24/how-western-democracies-can-combat-russia-s-ukraine-disinformation-pub-86523> )//kpt

After months of amassing troops around Ukraine’s borders, **Russia’s** [**invasion**](https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/ukraine-crisis-ukraines-turbulent-history-since-independence-from-russia-in-1991-a-timeline-2786339) of its neighbor was **met with** frantic condemnation from world leaders and an outpouring of **support on social** media. Russia has long been priming the information environment for this invasion, identifying and exploiting regional grievances in eastern and southern Ukraine since the country’s independence in 1991, and [more recently in fabricating pretenses](https://medium.com/dfrlab/how-ten-false-flag-narratives-were-promoted-by-pro-kremlin-media-c67e786c6085) for starting a war of its own making. While Russian narratives continue to be [amplified by state media](https://medium.com/dfrlab/russian-outlets-steadily-increased-claims-that-ukraine-will-start-a-war-144d60fe10b9), as well as American politicians seizing the opportunity to attack opponents at home, Western **democracies** must not be sucked into merely refuting Russian claims. They **must shift** **focus to** the **disastrous consequences** of this war. At the same time, they **must not lose sight of** other **pressure points** Russia has been pushing **in** its **digital sovereignty** efforts.

Russia hasn’t exactly been subtle about its interests in Ukraine, whose proximity and overlap in populations has encouraged local[elites to cooperate with their bigger neighbor](https://www.amazon.com/Ukraine-Crisis-What-Means-West/dp/0300211597) in the past. Oligarchs have frequently sided with Russia for their own financial gains, often controlling [Ukrainian media outlets](http://ukraine.mom-rsf.org/en/) to further their agendas. Russia has been adept at understanding regional divisions in Ukraine, conducting extensive [surveys in the east](https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/special-resources/plot-destroy-ukraine/) to identify issues to exploit, such as existing political cleavages. This has been made easier in part by the [close cultural ties](https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/ukraine/252-nobody-wants-us-alienated-civilians-eastern-ukraine) between Russia and Ukraine’s Donbas region.

One narrative pushed by Russian politicians since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been particularly troubling: that parts of Ukraine are Russian and need to be recovered. The widespread commentary from Russian officials deepened fears of what Russia might “[take back](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/near-abroad-9780190069513?cc=us&lang=en&).” Indeed, Putin predicated his 2014 annexation of Crimea on the fact that Russians made up the majority of the population there and needed to be [protected from Ukrainian oppression](https://www.brookings.edu/book/imperial-gamble/). In this latest escalation, **Russia** has **sought to manufacture justification for** **invading** **Ukraine**, including [claims that Russians are facing genocide](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/putins-absurd-genocide-claims-cannot-hide-his-war-crimes-in-ukraine/) in rebel-held areas. Russia has also [long weighed in](https://wcfia.harvard.edu/publications/everyone-loses-ukraine-crisis-and-ruinous-contest-post-soviet-eurasia) on Ukrainian elections, making its desired outcome known.

The tropes now being proffered to justify a Russian invasion of Ukraine are old—one cannot simply walk into an information ecosystem hoping to shape it. But democracies face a new question: What is to be done?

One possibility is that democracies seeking to respond to this crisis could take a page from the Russian playbook. Russians seeking to influence the information environment often rely on inundation and repetition—a tactic frequently overlooked in the West, given that media outlets prefer novel stories over repeated facts. However, nothing is stopping Western officials from resurfacing key points. Much like Russian officials and their supporters point out past American mistakes, American officials could **recycle examples of how Russians** have **misled** **audiences in the past**, or caused harm, and thus constantly reinforce how unreliable they are as a source.

Another tactic is to appeal to Russians. This will be much harder, as many Russians are skeptical of Western sources. However, there are early indications that this conflict is not popular domestically. Russian citizens in some cities have [taken to the streets](https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1496870591483330560?s=20&t=d0EJiP5MvOKcnIFKQAhpkg) to protest the war. High-profile Russians have [publicly](https://www.instagram.com/p/CaWghGfspVE/) [decried](https://www.instagram.com/p/CaWj5NCl-9k/) the invasion. The ties that bind Russians and Ukrainians will make any losses incurred by Russians extremely unpopular. Amplifying those losses as much as possible will be demoralizing for Putin at home.

Democracies also **need to have counterfacts ready**. Russians and sympathetic Ukrainian politicians have long painted Ukrainians as fascists, pointing to World War II and modern far-right groups as evidence. While Nazis drew support from upward of a quarter million Ukrainians, some 2 million were taken back to Germany as little more than slave laborers, and yet millions more [enlisted in the Soviet Army.](https://www.scribd.com/audiobook/333228450/The-Gates-of-Europe-A-History-of-Ukraine?utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=google_search&utm_campaign=3Q_Google_DSA_NB_RoW&utm_device=c&gclid=CjwKCAiA9tyQBhAIEiwA6tdCrJEHf9aiVohqa42Flp3hyNgmjtEef_mgz0JYxcWgpdubvz2dpQXSZBoCZd4QAvD_BwE) This is to say nothing of what Ukrainians suffered under the Soviet Union, from forced migrations to deliberate famines and the Chernobyl disaster. Moreover, **Moscow** now **uses de-Nazification** **as** a **pretense for invasion while fostering** a network of [**far-right groups abroad**](https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/02/27/with-friends-like-these-kremlin-s-far-right-and-populist-connections-in-italy-and-austria-pub-81100). Democracies need to assert that if Russia is so concerned about such elements, Putin should [start cleaning his own house first](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/08/russia-is-co-opting-angry-young-men/568741/).

In addition, **democracies** **need** to keep **an eye on** the wider **geopolitics**. An **invasion** uncontested by Western partners in any form but sanctions and stern warnings might **encourage** other **actors in Europe to** see an opportunity to **revise borders**. And there are alarming signs of **conservative voices** on the other side of the Atlantic **pushing Russian talking points**. It doesn’t seem like a stretch that the same forces behind the protests that took over Ottawa for three weeks could be further provoked to erode support for interventions to help Ukraine. Likewise, **Russia** has been [**advocating** at the UN](https://www.lawfareblog.com/why-are-authoritarians-framing-international-approaches-disinformation) for greater control over domestic information ecosystems—a form of **digital sovereignty**. It is **crucial** that Western **democracies formulate** a **response** in line with democratic values, lest Russia do so **first**.

All the pretty words of support are meaningless if they cannot be backed up with actions. Many Ukrainians felt abandoned by the West in 2014, and actions like evacuating foreign embassies and advisers when the Ukrainian government was calling on them once again fed a narrative of abandonment. When such news is used by the Russian media to draw parallels with the abandonment of Afghanistan, it reinforces a Russian narrative that the West does not care about Ukraine. Beyond sanctions, Western democracies must find meaningful gestures of support. One such way these countries can aid Ukraine is to join the fight against Russia’s long-standing disinformation campaign by taking pages from Putin’s own cyber playbook—holding the Russian regime to account for its lies and past failures, while spotlighting the costs ordinary Russians are paying for this folly.

### Scenario Analysis Good---IR

#### Scenario analysis in the international realm is good---allows nuances and complexities in IR and deconstructs dogma and bias!

Sus and Hadeed 20 (Monika Sus, assistant professor at the Polish Academy of Sciences and fellow at the Center for International Security at the Hertie School, and Marcel Hadeed, research associate at the Dahrendorf Forum, 2-19-2020, “Theory-infused and policy-relevant: On the usefulness of scenario analysis for international relations”, Contemporary Security Policy, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1730055> )//kpt

Added-value of **scenario analysis** for IR scholarship

As Tomé and Açıkalın (2019) point out, in order to **fill** the **gap between IR theory and real-world problems**, “an increasing number of scholars have come to embrace a spirit of intellectual openness, recognizing both the need for greater flexibility in the theoretical formulations and the possibility of complementarity by other theories and approaches” (p. 12). This section discusses the added value of scenario analysis as a complementary approach to traditional IR methods. The most obvious advantage of scenario analysis as a methodology, grounded in the reservoir of foresight studies, lies by definition in its **ability to tackle future events**. As mentioned before, there are no specified instruments within traditional IR methods which would allow scholars to go beyond past and present. The only exception is forecasting, one of the formal methods in IR, which is, however, distinctly different from foresight.9

The underlying logic of forecasting is to provide predictions about the future by drawing on mathematical models and big data-sets based on known patterns. Thus, it is not particularly suitable to accommodate discontinuities. Foresight, as described above, aims at going beyond existing patterns by developing alternative futures based on an innovative combination of multiple driving forces. Its goal is to capture a set of possible futures and learn from them by examining the causal relations between driving forces and their different evolutions. By applying scenario approaches, **scholars can** thus **account for evolving dynamics and discuss** such **timely issues** as the consequences of Brexit for both British and EU-security, economics and politics (Brakman, Garretsen, & Kohl, 2018; Martill & Sus, 2018; Musolff, 2017; Verschueren, 2017; Ziv et al., 2018). Yet, scenario analysis offers more than the possibility to talk about the future. We see a fourfold merit of adding scenario analysis to the range of methods applied by IR scholars.

**Confronting enduring assumptions**

As we presented in the previous section, the main feature of explorative scenarios, which are the subject of this paper, is to stimulate creative thinking by **challenging** the **deeply held assumptions** of their authors. In other words, this method is helpful for **overcoming enduring cognitive** **biases**—mental errors such as linearity, presentism, and group think caused by the subconscious and simplified information processing of humans (Heuer, 1999, pp. 111– 112). Humans have the **tendencies to focus on the present** at the expense of the future **and** to **think about the future in** **linear terms** **by extrapolating past trends** into the future. As Gaddis (1992) points out, “we tend to **bias** our historical and our **theoretical analyses too much toward continuity** (…) we **rarely** **find a way to introduce discontinuities into theory**, or to attempt to **determine** **what causes them to happen**” (p. 52). Even if Gaddis does not explicitly mention scenarios, he refers to the concepts underlying scenario approaches (Han, 2011, p. 51). Scenario analysis attends to “deeper, otherwise left implicit, assumptions about continuous and linear patterns of development” (Wilkinson et al., 2013, p. 707). The process of scenario development invites the participants to reveal and question convictions which have so far remained unchallenged, and to question the linearity of world developments.

The ability of reexamining one’s own assumptions and going beyond linear patterns of development is essential for IR scholarship. To illustrate it with two examples: IR scholars and historians did not think that the Soviet Union could collapse and were startled by its fall, the peaceful resolution of the Cold War and the transformation of the bipolar system (Davis, 2005; Gaddis, 1992). In a similar vein, United States scholars were for decades so convinced of China’s economic, political, and cultural limitations that they neglected the possibility of its sudden ascent and were taken by surprise when it happened (Hundley, Kenzer, & Peterson, 2015). Interestingly, since the rise of China became evident, the United States debate on its future has been marked by a similar linearity of thought, leading to single-outcome predictions of China’s long-term future (Kerbel, 2004). In both cases, the discipline proved incapable of anticipating events of such importance, because scholars took for granted the status quo instead of confronting their bias towards linearity and detect manifestations of upcoming change. As a result, two major geopolitical surprises—the end of the Cold War and the rise of China have at first been neglected, forcing academia to catch up.

Against this backdrop, **foresight helps IR scholars** to **exit** the **tunnel vision** on world affairs and discover potentially valuable nonlinear lines of development. These can be both innovative in terms of scholarship, and policy-relevant by offering a reflection on unexpected discontinuities. Thus, it can **facilitate** the **intellectual capability to think the unthinkable** (Porter, 2016, p. 259).

**Bringing forward new research questions**

Scenario analysis starts with confronting one’s enduring assumptions and **developing multiple causal possibilities**, through which scholars can potentially discover topics that have not been examined before. One of the greatest challenges for any scholar is to identify innovative venues for research that might bring the discipline forward and advance publicity for one’s work. In Lakatosian terms, such an ability is often considered an evidence of a progressive research program.10 Since the prime feature of scenario analysis is to **detect** **rapid and significant shifts in trajectories**, or the forces behind them, this method succors when **defining** **new pressing topics for academia**. In particular, as mentioned in the previous section, scenario analysis enables the detection of both weak signals and wild cards. By **drawing attention to** these hitherto **overlooked** but potentially pressing issues, scenario analysis can identify **research agendas** for further investigation (Barma et al., 2016). Therefore, scenario analysis seems to be the right tool to advance innovative research since it helps scholars drive their research into new areas, away from moribund topics that have been followed for many decades. By “identifying questions of likely future significance” (Barma et al., 2016, p. 6), scenario analysis can contribute to combatting the proliferation of researchers in fields occupying the political status quo, such as Soviet or Japan studies in the United States in the 1980s. At the same time, innovative research topics confront the uncertainties that are crucial for policymakers to be monitored closely.

**Dealing with the complexity and interdisciplinarity of real-world issues**

Another added value of the scenario analysis for IR scholarship lies in its ability to **provide comprehensive causal reasoning and** thus to **tackle complex issues**. As mentioned in the introduction, the **world’s complexity** combined with abrupt shifts poses a challenge for IR scholarship. The possibility to accommodate **multiple driving forces**, to take into account **different values** they might take and finally to **combine them** with each other and see how they affect the dependent variable, **makes** the **scenario approach** quite **unique**. Traditional IR methods work with a limited number of independent variables, formulate and test hypotheses usually based on the relation between a single causal variable and the dependent variable. Investigating complex causal trajectories is therefore not possible. Against this background, we agree with Barma et al. (2016) and his colleagues who argue that scenarios are highly apt for dealing with complexity and uncertainty and **providing academia with a tool for “actionable clarity** in understanding contemporary global issues” (p. 1).

Moreover, the scenario approach helps to **tackle** the **challenges of interdisciplinarity** that is **tied to complexity**. By drawing on the **active participation of people from different disciplines**, **backgrounds, and** with different **expertise** in the scenario development process, it brings interdisciplinarity to the table by default. The key advantage of the approach is that this interdisciplinary conversation takes place prior to and during the research phase, rather than after it. This distinguishes the scenario approach from other methods that bring interdisciplinary perspectives together but do not facilitate a discussion between them, rather letting them passively co-exist. By exploring the dynamics between seemingly unrelated vectors of change (key drivers), scenario analysis can be useful for shedding light on developments that would have been overlooked by narrower research designs. In security studies, for example, scenario **analysis** can **connect the dots between hard, soft, traditional and non-traditional understandings of security** and capture the interplay of economic-societalenvironmental and technological changes. Imposing interdisciplinarity also helps to **counter** the “**hyper-fragmentation of knowledge**” that “makes it difficult for even scholars in different disciplines to understand each other, much less policy-makers and general public” (Desch, 2015, p. 381).

Complex real-world issues that were tackled using scenario analysis include the Israel-Palestine conflict (Stein et al., 1998), Turkey’s geopolitical environment (Çelik & Blum, 2007), the prospects of the United States– China conflict (Friedberg, 2005) and the consequences of Brexit for EU foreign and security policy (Martill & Sus, 2018). An examination of these topics without the application of interdisciplinary approaches would not be possible precisely due to their multifaceted character.