# \*\*\*INFO WARFARE NEG\*\*\*

The information warfare aff and neg was produced by: Drew Chico; Cyrus Esmailzadeh; Maggie Howerton; Sarah Kwon; Lenox Leverett; Raleigh Maxwell; Avi Shah; Ahsan Tahirkheli; Cy Turner

# Topicality

## T-Cybersecurity

### 1NC---T Cyberattacks

#### Cybersecurity means protecting and recovering networks from cyberattacks.

Alison Grace Johansen 22, writer for Norton, an American software company, “What is Cyber Security? What you need to know.” Norton, 4/28/22, https://us.norton.com/internetsecurity-malware-what-is-cybersecurity-what-you-need-to-know.html<https://us.norton.com/internetsecurity-malware-what-is-cybersecurity-what-you-need-to-know.html//Wompus>

**Cyber security is the state or process of protecting and recovering** networks, devices, and programs **from any type of cyberattack**.

Cyberattacks are an evolving danger to organizations, employees, and consumers. These attacks may be designed to access or destroy sensitive data or extort money.  They can, in effect, destroy businesses and damage your financial and personal lives —  especially if you’re the victim of identity theft.

Cyberattacks also are on the rise. According to an Identity Theft Resource Center (ITRC)  2021 annual data breach report, there was a 68 percent increase in reported  U.S. data compromises from 2020 to 2021. Moreover, breaches related to cyberattacks  represented more attacks than all other forms.

What’s your best defense? A strong cyber security system has multiple layers of  protection that are spread across computers, devices, networks, and programs. This  guide can help you decide if you need one of the cyber security plans offered by  companies, and which kind may be right for you.

However, a strong cyber security system doesn’t rely solely on cyber defense  technology; it also relies on people like you making smart cyber defense choices. The  good news is that you don’t need to be a cyber security specialist to understand and  practice good cyber defense tactics. This article can help.

#### Cyberattacks are operations to destroy and disrupt the operation of a network---excludes disinformation schemes

Qinghui Liu 21, researcher at Zaozhang University in Shandong, China, “A comprehensive review study of cyber-attacks and cyber-security; emerging trends and recent developments.” Science Direct, November 2021, [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352484721007289#](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352484721007289)!

| Type of cyber action | Nature and characteristics |
| --- | --- |
| Cyber-crime | Cyber actions taken only by non-governmental attackers. |
| Cyber-crime | The cyber action is carried out by a computer system and is merely in violation of criminal law. |
| **Cyber-attack** and cyber-warfare | **The purpose of a cyber-attack** **is to destroy and disrupt the operation of a computer network.** |
| Cyber-attack and cyber-warfare | The attack must have political or security purposes. |
| cyber-warfare | The effects of a cyber-attack are the same as an armed attack or the cyber act took place in the context of an armed attack. |

#### Vote neg for limits and ground---it outweighs precision---including non-offensive cyber-operations explode the topic and dodge core generics.

### 2NC---Intent to exclude

#### Cybersecurity refers to info and cyber operations---preventing disinformation is neither.

Eneken **Tikk and** Mike **Kertutten 20**, Executive Producer of the Cyber Policy Institute, Estonia, and lead of the 1nternat10nal Law project at CPI and the Erik Castrén Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland, and Director of Strategy at the Cyber Policy Institute, and Senior Research Scientist at the Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia, “Routledge Handbook of International Cybersecurity,” published in 2020 by Routledge

Since this is a **handbook of cybersecurity**, **the relationship between** the **concepts information operation** **and cyber operations** deserves special attention here. The main difference between the concepts is that **cyber operations** **are method-driven** whereas **information operations are purpose-driven.** **Cyber operations refer to actions conveyed in** or via **cyberspace.** Information operations, on the other hand, are defined by the objective of affecting decision-making or opinion. This conceptual relationship has only been explicit in the US military doctrine since 2013 (United States Joint Staff, 2013, p. I-5). In the light of this conceptual relationship, the two concepts effectively intersect**: information operations are realized by cyber operations**. An example of the intersection is the alleged Russian influence on the US presidential elections in 2016, in which cyber methods were deployed to collect the information needed in the information operations against Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

Disinformation is often associated with information operations, with the connection between disinformation and propaganda being thoroughly discussed in the literature on the latter. **Even if** the common perception of **propaganda** often assumes that it **is based on lies**, **disinfo**rmation **is not a** defining **characteristic of propaganda**. Indeed, disinformation is often avoided in propaganda in order to preserve its credibility. **Following the** established **relationship** between disinformation and propaganda, **we exclude disinformation** **as a** defining **characteristic of** **our definition** of **information operations**, even if it may be regarded as a method in the process.

## 2NC

### 2NC---Cyberattacks = Damage or Destroy

#### A cyberattack means to damage or destroy a network---not spreading false information.

Oxford ND Oxford Dictionary, “Cyberattack,” https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/cyberattack#:~:text=%2F%CB%88sa%C9%AAb%C9%99r%C9%99t%C3%A6k%2F,information%20on%20it%20without%20permission

**an attempt by hackers to damage or destroy a computer network or system.**

# Disads

## DOD Tradeoff

### Link---scale up

#### Moderation tech is impossible to scale up or requires robust infrastructure changes.

Valerie Wirtschafter 21, senior data analyst in the Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies Initiative at the Brookings Institution, 8-25-2021, "The challenge of detecting misinformation in podcasting," <https://www.brookings.edu/techstream/the-challenge-of-detecting-misinformation-in-podcasting/>, cy

A research agenda

The potential for misinformation to go largely unchecked on podcasts is clear. But what is the scale of this problem? To explore that question, I recently examined more than 8,000 episodes of popular political podcasts. By using machine learning and natural language processing to match transcriptions of the podcasts with a fact-checking database of false or misleading political claims, I found that more than one-tenth of the episodes shared potentially false information.[1] These flagged episodes have collectively received more than 100 million views, likes, or comments.

This false content spans a wide range of topics in U.S. politics, from immigration (e.g., the idea that most DACA recipients are “hardened criminals”) to elections (e.g., that “eight Iowa counties have more adults registered to vote than voting age adults living”) to abortion (e.g., that Democrats “position on abortion is now so extreme that they don’t mind executing babies after birth”). These sharing patterns often spike around key political events, such as the 2020 election, and have become more common over time.

The research project is ongoing and will expand to cover both more podcasts and more types of misinformation, including claims that have been linked to foreign influence operations. But for now, these early results indicate that popular political podcasts are serving as an important vector for the proliferation of misinformation.

Policy implications

Based on my preliminary research, the spread of false material via podcasts represents an underappreciated problem that will require infrastructure-level changes distinct from content moderation policies already in place on social media platforms. Unlike other forms of media in the iPhone age, podcasts are more difficult to moderate due to limitations with respect to audience engagement and the nature of podcast distribution mechanisms.

Consider the role of the consumer in policing content. Like Facebook or Twitter, podcast distributors largely rely on the “crowd” to identify objectionable content, but the process for reporting this material as a listener is not straightforward. Apple’s podcasting app allows users to report concerns about episodes, but the reporting tool only provides a limited number of concerns to choose from, none of which encompass false or misleading content. Where Apple does specify guidelines about inaccurate or misleading content, these largely relate to podcast metadata and copyright issues. At present, Spotify provides no obvious way for users to report issues with specific episodes and only vaguely delineates content that is prohibited on the platform.

The decisions made by Apple and Spotify ultimately have downstream effects across the industry. Most of the smaller players in the field lack the financial resources to carry out extensive content moderation and look to larger companies like Apple and Spotify to determine what should be removed. In making it difficult (or all but impossible) for users to report misinformation, Spotify and Apple effectively remove the crowd from helping curb the spread of false or misleading content. Tackling misinformation in podcasts may require reincorporating the audience in some capacity—from enabling users to comment or leave reviews on specific episodes to further experimenting with ways to transform podcasting into a conversation between the creator and the audience.

From an infrastructure perspective, the nature of the RSS feed, which is open-sourced and accessible by design, represents a significant hurdle for content moderation. For example, Apple’s podcasting app—one of the most widely used apps for streaming episodes—aggregates content across thousands of approved RSS feeds. Once Apple approves a feed, it does not control the content added to these feeds. Although Apple can remove the RSS feed from its platform, some smaller platforms allow any content on an RSS feed to be played through their services, making it easy for listeners to access a removed podcast elsewhere. As a result, a content moderation decision at one platform, like removing a single episode urging listeners not to get a COVID vaccine, may not affect its availability via other platforms. Addressing the moderation of misleading material instead requires a fundamental rethinking of the broader podcast infrastructure.

This latter infrastructure-level change will be difficult to implement but is fundamental to addressing the risks associated with the spread of misinformation. The spread of online misinformation has already demonstrated its ability to undermine deliberative democracies, and podcasts represent an underappreciated avenue through which such information proliferates. Internationally, misinformation shared via podcasts may resonate with and be amplified by foreign actors intent on sowing discord in U.S. politics. As a first step, it is critical to understand the scope of this problem in order to identify appropriate policy solutions to address the spread of misinformation within the unique contours of the podcasting space.

### Link---investigations

#### Misinformation investigations are a money suck

Victoria Smith and, Natalie Thompson 20, Security Officer at Group-IB, research analyst with the U.S. Cyberspace Solarium Commission, 12-7-2020, "Survey on Countering Influence Operations Highlights Steep Challenges, Great Opportunities," <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/12/07/survey-on-countering-influence-operations-highlights-steep-challenges-great-opportunities-pub-83370>, cy

LACK OF FUNDING

Almost 40 percent of respondents in the community survey cited a lack of funding as the most or second-most important challenge. In the targeted survey, six respondents also emphasized the precariousness of funding. The PCIO’s research has found that many organizations working to research or counter influence operations are nonprofit, heavily reliant on donations and grants. It is therefore not surprising that funding is a concern, given the growth in new initiatives in this field and increasing competition for the same funding.

One community leader was concerned that long-term funding insecurities are having a detrimental impact on output; without funding security, decisions about recruitment and training cannot be made. Another leader was concerned that financial challenges might incentivize research organizations to compromise their independence or methodological rigor in an effort to attract resources and attention. A third respondent suggested that donors want reassurances of results in return for their money, but in a field with so many unknowns, it can be hard to promise results. The respondent had the impression that some donors are more drawn to headline-grabbing claims of successful interference in political campaigns or persuasive conspiracy theories and that this leaves fewer resources for research on under-the-radar issues and long-term investigations that have no guarantee of success. Another respondent also noted that investigations tend to be skewed toward retrospective analysis of known influence operations instead of prospective experiments. The latter analysis is more expensive and uncertain but could reveal deeper insights.

### Link---reach calculation

#### Even calculating reach of misinformation is a resource drain.

Clare Wardle and Nic Dias 18, U.S. Director of First Draft, Joint Doctoral Student in Communication and Political Science <https://mediawell.ssrc.org/2018/10/30/10-questions-to-ask-before-covering-misinformation/?pdf=49652>, cy

When should we publish stories about mis- and dis-information? How much traffic should a piece of mis- and dis-information have before we address it? In other words, what is the “tipping point,” and how do we measure it? On Twitter, for example, do we check whether a hashtag made it to a country’s top 10 trending topics?

How do we think about the impact of mis- and dis-information, particularly on Twitter? Do we care about how many people see the content? Or do we care about who sees the content? In particular, is Twitter important in virtue of the number of people who use it, or is it important because certain groups, like news organizations and politicians, use it? How do our answers to these questions change how we evaluate the impact of information?

How do we isolate human interactions in a computationally affordable manner? When we talk about the “reach” of a piece of content, we should be referring to how many humans saw it. Yet, identifying the number of humans who saw a piece of information can be difficult and computationally expensive. What algorithms might be devised to calculate human reach (at least on Twitter) in a timely and inexpensive way?

### Link---enforcement

#### Even if the center’s inexpensive, enforcement isn’t.

DHS 21, Department of homeland security, “Combatting Targeted Disinformation Campaigns,” <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/phase_ii_-_combatting_targeted_disinformation.pdf>, cy

An alternative to naming specific domestic threat actors is to alert information consumers to those threat actors who assume fake persona or claim to have credentials which they do not have. The status of the threat actor plays an important role in influencing the perceived trustworthiness of that threat actor.20 Someone who claims to be an epidemiologist will likely be viewed as more reliable on the topic of coronaviruses than a person who claims to be a bus driver.

Information consumers who assume fake personas or claim fake credentials to deceive others for illegitimate purposes have no moral or legal standing for protection for their fraud, which is a form of disinformation. Revealing that credentials are fake can be accomplished without identifying the threat actor by name or by other information which can be tied to a specific person.

Threat actors who spread disinformation often seem to act with impunity, facing few negative consequences for the harm that they cause. In some circles, their disinformation may enhance their status and generate lucrative opportunities for them due to the attention that they draw. Legal actions against threat actors are available, but limited in number, and invariably costly and time-consuming. In a deeply divided society, shunning and ostracism no longer have the practical import they may have had in earlier generations. The lack of perceived consequences encourages threat actors to continue their activities. We acknowledge the challenges in today’s environment and believe that punitive measures are less effective than measures which provide information about the threat actors upon which information consumers can make better informed decisions.

# Counterplans

## DOS/Non-Military

### Solvency---DOS---Information Warfare

#### The DoS solves---old agencies for countering disinformation were reorganized and placed in the jurisdiction of the DoS and multiple empirics prove.

USACPD 20, United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy, tasked by Congress with "appraising U.S. Government activities intended to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics and to increase the understanding of, and support for, these same activities.” “PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND THE NEW “OLD” WAR: COUNTERING STATE-SPONSORED DISINFORMATION” <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Public-Diplomacy-and-the-New-Old-War-Countering-State-Sponsored-Disinformation.pdf> //lenox

As we gathered background information for this report, we noticed a pattern: experts and practitioners alike became quick to turn to the past for cues on how to proceed in the future. In fact, the discussion of the historical framework of disinformation as a threat area revealed a common understanding that the challenge of disinformation is “not new.” Several of our interlocutors spoke reverently of the tools of the Cold War and cited the merits of the United States Information Agency (USIA), Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), and, most notably, the Active Measures Working Group (AMWG) as successful instruments of PD in countering disinformation.2 However, these experts agreed that they might be over-emphasizing the similarities between the disinformation threat then and now, while perhaps unintentionally underestimating the differences. Much of the apparatus that supported Cold War-era counter disinformation efforts still exists today, albeit in a somewhat disaggregated form. In 1999, USIA closed down as an independent foreign affairs agency. Its information, cultural, and exchange components were integrated into the Department of State as, respectively, the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Meanwhile, oversight of USIA's regional programs was turned over to the State Department’s geographic bureaus. USIA’s broadcasting components became part of the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG–now the U.S. Agency for Global Media, or USAGM). The AMWG was formally disbanded in 1992 with no heir apparent; and at the BBG, the establishment of an independent board of directors removed direct USG editorial oversight and created a firewall between Congress and the independent journalism operations within the VOA and RFE/RL. In addition to the structural changes that have occurred since the integration of USIA functions into the Department of State, the rapid convergence of connection technologies -- the internet, mobile and social networks -- have fundamentally altered the domain in which information competition occurs. About half of the world’s population has access to one another via the combination of internet and social media access and mobile phones, which allow for disintermediated peer-to-peer communication at scale. The global information space is marked by a constant fight for attention, and viewership is determined by complex interactions among algorithms, professional media outlets, corporate brands, and user generated content via apps on mobile devices. As a consequence, modern public diplomacy practitioners find themselves in an environment that offers an overabundance of information—what Joseph Nye presciently described as a “paradox of plenty” that leads to a “scarcity of attention.”3 This shift has irrevocably changed the information environment in which PD officers operate, and it gives an asymmetric advantage to those who would attempt to alter, obscure, or destroy the very concept of objective truth. Initial efforts to meet the most recent iteration of these challenges began in the 2010s, during a period of what some have described as U.S. government “overexuberance” about the ability of emerging social media technologies to advance democratic values. By the time the Arab Spring began to unfold in 2011, new policies were established that encouraged State Department officials to establish online profiles and pages with the intent to amplify public affairs messaging through these increasingly influential mediums. However, constrained by bureaucratic inertia and, perhaps, overconfident that “traditional” public diplomacy measures transposed to the online space (i.e., press releases, photos from speaking events and conferences, etc.) would have the intended effect, innovation on USG social media platforms largely stopped there. While these official Department social media accounts now number in the hundreds, most PD officials agree that for a number of reasons, including but not limited to the risk aversion that arises from engaging in an often-frenetic online environment, the overall impact remained relatively muted. With the intensification of Russian disinformation efforts following Ukraine’s “revolution of dignity” and the subsequent annexation of Crimea in 2014, it became increasingly clear that the social media space had become, in effect, the front line in a new global competition for influence. Shortly thereafter, the threat of disinformation expanded far beyond the borders of Eastern Europe to become the subject of intense focus from Washington, D.C. to the Silicon Valley. The 2017 National Security Strategy included a section on Information Statecraft warning about the exploitation of “marketing techniques.”4 Meanwhile, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg described efforts to combat disinformation on his platform as an “arms race,”5 and Apple CEO Tim Cook warned that personal data was being “weaponized against us with military efficiency.”6 To paraphrase Peter W. Singer, whose 2019 book LikeWar7 explored this phenomenon in depth, tech executives were starting to sound more like national security experts, and national security experts were starting to sound more like tech executives. Recognizing a Resurgent State-Sponsored Disinformation Threat: 2016-2017 In the early stages of Russia’s attacks on Ukraine’s integrity in the global information space, the State Department’s Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR) developed a nascent set of counter-disinformation tactics. But formal and far reaching alterations to PD CSD infrastructure originated with the passage of the May 2016 Countering Foreign Propaganda and Disinformation Act, which became a part of the 2017 NDAA. The first legislation tasking an official lead in government-wide counter disinformation efforts since the Cold War, the NDAA signaled that the USG once again recognized disinformation as a high-priority threat that warranted immediate action. The State Department’s GEC, established by Executive Order in March 2016, became the prime vehicle for CSD. It was originally envisioned as a mechanism to counter violent extremist (CVE) messaging and “foreign propaganda and disinformation” operations.

#### The DoS has the capabilities to counter Chinese and Russian disinformation operations --- GEC proves

Bill Gertz 22 (Bill Gertz, a national security correspondent for The Washington Times, studied English literature at Washington College in Chestertown, Md., and journalism at George Washington University, 4-7-2022, "State Department works to counter Ukraine disinformation from China," Washington Times, https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/apr/7/state-department-working-debunk-chinese-disinforma/, DOA: 6-28-2022//Smarx Ahsan)

China’s propaganda and disinformation operations are actively promoting pro-Russian narratives about the invasion of Ukraine, supporting Moscow‘s positions and blaming the U.S. for the conflict, according to the State Department center involved in trying to counter the operations.

The department’s Global Engagement Center (GEC) is leading U.S. government efforts to expose foreign propaganda efforts, including Chinese state media reports and official statements claiming that the Pentagon is developing biological and chemical weapons in Ukraine, a spokesman tells The Washington Times.

The center is “leading the State Department‘s efforts to recognize and understand [Chinese] information manipulation related to Ukraine, and we are deeply engaged with colleagues across the department as well as international and interagency partners to raise awareness of PRC propaganda and disinformation,” the spokesman said.

In addition to rebutting Chinese state media claims about U.S. bioweapons research in Ukraine, the counter-disinformation operations aimed to expose Chinese amplification of Russian propaganda prior to the invasion in late February.

The laboratories located in Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia operate safely and securely and are not involved in any biological weapons research, according to Jerry L. Mothershead, a medical doctor directly involved in the program from 2010 to 2016. The laboratories are part of the Pentagon’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency that ran the Cooperative Biological Engagement Program to support research on local diseases.

“The actual amount of pathogens at those central labs that can actually do any research wouldn’t even fill a broom closet, and there are rigorous biosafety and biosecurity controls over them, including destruction if need be,” Dr. Mothershead said.

Chinese state media, echoing Russian government allegations, has regularly reported the laboratories were engaged in biological weapons work. The disinformation also has been repeated by some U.S. conservative media outlets.

Kerry Gershaneck, a former Pentagon official and author of the book “Political Warfare,” said China’s professions of neutrality in the war are undercut by Beijing’s open sympathy for Russian President Vladimir Putin’s reasons for invading, support shown through media warfare, psychological operations and cyberattacks.

“Beijing’s external narratives are designed to undermine NATO, [Ukraine] and the U.S., and to support Moscow’s disinformation and propaganda designed to confuse global reaction to Putin’s aggression,” Mr. Gershaneck said. “Internally, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is exploiting Russia’s war to hypernationalize the Chinese people.”

U.S. officials say the laboratory program is typical of government programs that continue on autopilot, seemingly without end, under legislation passed after the collapse of the Soviet Union that requires continued funding from a percentage of annual defense spending bills.

Aside from the laboratory propaganda, Chinese disinformation efforts include support for Kremlin claims that Ukraine is a “core interest” for Moscow and that the military operation was a legitimate national security interest of Russia in the face of aggression from the U.S. and its NATO allies.

“PRC propaganda and disinformation efforts have evolved since then and Beijing has increased its use of Russian false narratives and is now also introducing disinformation of its own to advance the PRC’s agenda,” the GEC spokesman said.

A pair of disinformation themes

The State Department center has identified what it says are two main disinformation themes promoted in Chinese narratives. The first is the claim that the U.S. and NATO ignored Russian security concerns through the expansion of the alliance in Eastern Europe near Russia’s border. This narrative also advances the argument that the U.S. is exploiting the Ukraine conflict to suppress Russia.

The line of Chinese disinformation centers on what the spokesman said is the baseless assertion that the U.S. is working behind the scenes to prolong the war that has already killed thousands of people.

For example, a recent editorial in the Chinese Communist Party-controlled People’s Daily claimed that U.S. “lobbyists, military corporations and Capitol Hill” held a champagne toast to celebrate the crisis.

“Obviously, we condemn such incendiary, meritless claims,” the GEC spokesman said.

To counter the disinformation, the GEC is helping promote the narrative that the conflict and ensuing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine are the direct result of Mr. Putin’s unprovoked military aggression.

“The State Department will continue to raise awareness among partners and allies of the PRC’s propaganda efforts and call out Beijing’s attempts to shift blame while it continues to stand by Moscow and refuses to acknowledge Russian atrocities,” the spokesman said.

Through its information operations, the department will continue focusing its public diplomacy and related efforts to making sure world publics get accurate information on the Russian aggression.

China’s government, mainly through its Foreign Ministry spokesmen, insists that Beijing is strictly neutral toward the conflict. However, the Russian point of view on the crisis has been constantly promoted in China‘s state media.

Chinese narratives are controlled by the Propaganda Ministry, which exercises strict control over all media in China, including newspapers, television and newer online social media.

The ministry recently produced a documentary film called “Historical Nihilism and the Soviet Collapse” that is being shown to the 95 million members of the Chinese Communist Party, reportedly portraying Mr. Putin as a hero for seeking to restore the Soviet Union and restore the image of brutal Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

While the Chinese government seeks to promote the view of Chinese neutrality and support for peace, Chinese information outlets internally create the impression that Russia is a victim of U.S. aggression.

The Chinese domestic propaganda is also promoting the recently strengthened close ties between Beijing and Moscow highlighted in the Feb. 4 cooperation agreement that says relations between the two states have “no limits.” Chinese students are being indoctrinated in the “correct” view of the Ukraine war, while state media blame Washington for the conflict, according to The New York Times, which first disclosed the documentary.

“The most powerful weapon possessed by the West is, aside from nuclear weapons, the methods they use in ideological struggle,” the documentary narrator states.

The documentary was labeled for internal party use, but video and a transcript of the film were circulating within China recently.

Under President Xi Jinping, who since coming to power in 2012 has pushed a return to hardline communist policies, Chinese propaganda has asserted the U.S. is secretly promoting “color revolutions” around the world aimed at regime change in authoritarian and communist countries.

Retired Navy Capt. Stu Cvrk said China is trying to have it both ways — supporting Russia while offering to lead an effort to resolve the conflict. He noted the Chinese Foreign Ministry echoing of Russian claims about the U.S. labs in Ukraine.

“Official Chinese comments have been propagated throughout independent media sympathetic to the Russians,” Capt. Cvrk said.

Chinese social media trolls on Twitter and other platforms also are engaged in promoting pro-Russian propaganda, often in collaboration with Russian online allies.

“They backed the Ukraine biowarfare lab fake story to the max,” said Charles Smith, who closely monitors official Chinese social media activity disseminated by Wumao, or the “50 Cent Army” of Chinese government-linked propagandists.

Recently, Chinese government online agents have challenged reports of Russian military war crimes in executing Ukrainian civilians as fake news.

Another social media propaganda theme promoted by the Wumao is the idea that Ukraine’s government is “nothing but Nazis,” Mr. Smith said.

“The Russian trolls work closely with the PLA-run Wumao and often post together,” Mr. Smith said, using the acronym for the Chinese military, the People’s Liberation Army.

The State Department did not provide details on the GEC operations to counter Chinese disinformation. However, in the past the center has approached news media outlets and social media companies with intelligence identifying false narratives.

In many cases, social media companies will shut down known foreign government disinformation social media accounts in response.

The Global Engagement Center website lists several examples of Russian disinformation, but has no public material on Chinese propaganda and disinformation operations.

#### The State Department has the means to counter authoritarian disinformation

Bechara and Novelo 22 (Diego Ramos Bechara, covering National Security at the nation’s capital as a full-time journalist, Allison Novelo, journalist at Northwestern University, Medill News Service, 3-15-2022, "State Department: We're fighting spread of propaganda, disinformation from Russia," UPI, https://www.upi.com/Top\_News/US/2022/03/15/senate-hearing-authoritarianism-vladimir-putin/5921647351139/, DOA: 6-30-2022//Smarx Ahsan)

WASHINGTON, March 15 (UPI) -- The State Department is conducting "extensive media outreach" to fight the spread of propaganda and disinformation coming from Russia, officials told lawmakers Tuesday.

"That includes two Russian language media, like Meduza, as well as two U.S. government-supported Russian language media like DRL and Voice of America," State Department official Jennifer Hall Godfrey told members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during a hearing on combating authoritarianism.

According to Godfrey, the senior bureau official for public diplomacy and affairs, Russian engagement on these platforms has "doubled" since the Kremlin revoked access to VOA online and despite continued efforts to "shut down" these outlets.

"We have a Telegram [messaging account] to keep in contact, which has not yet been found by the Russian government -- these are indigenous Russian language platforms that we're engaged on," she said.

"We continue to engage through Twitter, Facebook, and even though the Russian government has tried to shut down those platforms, we still see Russian citizens accessing them, and we'll continue to use all those means to continue to communicate with Russians."

Godfrey's remarks come after Russian journalist Marina Ovsyannikova was detained after running onto the set of one of Russia's most-watched news programs, Vremya, holding a sign that read in Russian: "No war, stop the war, don't believe the propaganda, they are lying to you here."

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., called Russia's attempt to spread disinformation an iron curtain -- essentially hiding the truth from the public -- and he praised Ovsyannikova for her protest. According to Van Hollen, the majority of Russians believe Russian propaganda.

Lawmakers, State Department officials and experts referred to this incident to highlight how autocratic regimes are able to limit the spread of information.

"They do so by kicking out independent media," Godfrey said. "They do so by telling their own journalists and citizens what they may or may not say."

Authoritarian governments, such as Russia and China, often leverage information and manipulate media outlets to attack the national security of the United States and its allies, the senators were told.

According to Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., authoritarian regimes have grown in strength over the past 16 years, and he cited a Freedom House report that only roughly 38% of the global population lives in democratic countries.

Uzra Zeya, the undersecretary for civilian security, democracy and human rights at the State Department, said the Biden administration has prioritized bolstering legitimate media outlets by proposing increasing the amount spent on media freedom by 40% in the fiscal year 2022 over fiscal year 2020.

To which Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who chairs the Senate subcommittee that oversees foreign aid, said more bipartisan focus is needed to make sure these requests make it into a final spending package.

"We had the chance to visit Poland in particular with a cable channel that is under a lot of pressure in terms of maintaining a free and open media," said the lawmaker, who traveled last month with two other Democratic senators to Germany, Poland and Lithuania.

"You requested a 40% increase. That is not what we were able to deliver here."

After senators finished hearing from the two State Department officials, two experts offered suggestions for how lawmakers should use policy to deter authoritarianism. They highlighted Russia, but also cited Venezuela and the People's Republic of China.

Anne Applebaum, a staff writer at the Atlantic and senior fellow at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Agora Institute at Johns Hopkins University, suggested putting an end to transnational kleptocracy and centering democracy-building in foreign policy.

However, Applebaum emphasized fighting disinformation -- be it in Russia, China or Venezuela.

"Autocrats understand the importance of controlling opinion inside their own countries and influencing debates around the world," she said.

"Hundreds of Russian journalists have fled Moscow: Why not start a Russian television channel? We should increase funding for independent media outlets, support grassroots efforts to run media campaigns."

Committee Chairman Bob Menendez, D-N.J., touted his bipartisan measure designed to do just that.

"We must counter the dangerous narratives, which authoritarians spread to manipulate, to distract and to cause people to question whether democracy has anything to offer the modern world," Menendez said.

"This is one of my passions, and I intend to use your testimony as a foundation for our legislative initiative in this regard," he said.

Van Hollen also said using all avenues of communication is vital.

"This is the information equivalent of an arms race, and Russia will continue to put up blockades, and we need to use all the latest technology to try to make sure that we get information to the Russian people," he said.

#### The DoS can effectively beat Russian information operations --- Africa Proves

Pecquet 22 (Julian Pecquet, the founder and editor of Foreign Lobby Report, a US news site that offers comprehensive coverage of foreign influence operations in Washington and beyond, 5-25-2022 "US looks to expose Russian propaganda in Africa," Africa Report, https://www.theafricareport.com/207268/us-looks-to-expose-russian-propaganda-in-africa/, DOA: 6-30-2022//Smarx Ahsan---Edited for Spelling)

The State Department's counter-propaganda arm has released its first-ever report on Russian disinformation in Africa as the Joe Biden administration looks to expose the Kremlin following the invasion of Ukraine.

The Global Engagement Centre, which leads and coordinates US efforts to “recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign propaganda and disinformation”, released a three-page bulletin on Russian activities on 24 May. The report focuses particularly on Mali and other Sahel countries where the Kremlin-linked Wagner Group of mercenaries operates.

“Russia deploys disinformation across different continents for varied objectives, often working through tested proxies to support Kremlin foreign policy objectives indirectly, which provides a level of deniability,” the report states. “In some parts of Africa – including, most recently, Mali – Kremlin-linked proxies exploit instability to gain influence, particularly through disinformation and the deployment of the Wagner Group forces.”

A spokesperson for the State Department describes the report as “part of the State Department’s overall public exposure efforts to counter Russian disinformation”.

“We are releasing these substantive products to the public to counter Russia’s false narratives and propaganda with reporting that shines the light on Kremlin lies,” the spokesperson tells The Africa Report. “This bulletin is our first on Russia’s disinformation efforts in Africa.”

Evolving target

The Global Engagement Centre was created under President Barack Obama in March 2016. Its original mission was to contest the “information battlespace” with the Islamic State and “break the recruiting efforts of violent extremists abroad”, according to its first coordinator, Michael Lumpkin.

Disinformation is one of the Kremlin’s most important and far-reaching weapons

Housed at the State Department, the interagency organization also draws on staff from the departments of Defence, Treasury, Justice and Homeland Security as well as the Intelligence Community and the US Agency for International Development. Its mandate: to coordinate, integrate, and synchronize government-wide communications with foreign audiences to counter disinformation campaigns.

Over the years its mission has evolved, with Russia emerging as a core concern over the past couple of years.

Since January 2020, the center has notably issued a slew of reports on Russian chemical and biological weapons disinformation in Ukraine, featured the Kremlin’s top propagandists and denounced the Russian state-owned and state-directed media RT and Sputnik.

“Disinformation is one of the Kremlin’s most important and far-reaching weapons,” the Global Engagement Centre says at the top of its web page. “Russia has operationalized the concept of perpetual adversarial competition in the information environment by encouraging the development of a disinformation and propaganda ecosystem.”

The new report on Africa comes as the Biden administration has been lobbying African countries to join the West in denouncing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Washington not only hopes to see the continent defend the rules-based international order but is just as keen to make sure that the surge in food, fuel and fertilizer prices that has devastated Africa gets blamed on Moscow rather than its own sanctions campaign.

“The impact on Africa of this conflict [is] a direct result of this war, and Putin is to blame,” Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland tells The Africa Report in an exclusive interview.

Focus on Wagner

The new report is almost entirely devoted to the Wagner Group and its manager and financier, oligarch and President Vladimir Putin ally Yevgeniy Prigozhin.

The Treasury Department sanctioned Prigozhin in 2019 for his alleged role in seeking to influence the 2018 midterm elections through his Russian troll farm, the Internet Research Agency (IRA).

More sanctions have followed, most recently in March when the Biden administration targeted Prigozhin and his family as part of its bid to turn key oligarchs against the Ukraine war.

The Global Engagement Centre says Wagner’s intervention in Mali has been marked by false narratives since the very beginning.

“Pitching themselves as able to counter the terrorist threat, Wagner Group forces deployed to Mali in December 2021 amid a barrage of targeted disinformation to hide its arrival and activities,” the US report says.

Russia’s intensified application of disinformation and the use of the Wagner Group across Africa has spread a trail of lies and human rights abuses

The group is accused of using a network of Facebook pages to promote Russia as an “alternative” to France and the West in Mali while encouraging the postponement of local elections. Since then, the State Department says, Russia has deployed its propaganda weapons to deflect responsibility for the Wagner Group’s alleged involvement in the massacre of at least 300 civilians in the village of Mourah in central Mali while concocting a fake video purporting to show dug up bodies near a former French base outside the Malian village of Gossi.

Beyond Mali, the State Department points to takedown notices on Twitter and Facebook that allegedly exposed IRA efforts to:

* trick journalists in Nigeria, Cameroon, The Gambia, Zimbabwe and the Republic of Congo into publishing articles on its behalf;
* introduce a pro-Russia viewpoint in the Central African Republic (CAR)’s political discourse; and
* promote Russia and denounce French foreign policy in CAR, Madagascar, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, South Africa and the CAR diaspora in France.

“Russia’s intensified application of disinformation and the use of the Wagner Group across Africa has spread a trail of lies and human rights abuses,” the State Department bulletin says. “Despite US, EU, and UK sanctions and exposure of Prigozhin-linked entities that spread disinformation, these actors continue operating in Africa, exploiting turbulent situations through disinformation to sway public support for the Russian government to expand its influence.”

Beyond Russia

Idayat Hassan, the director of the Centre for Democracy and Development in Nigeria, welcomes the Global Engagement Centre’s latest report.

“We need to actually pay more attention to the role disinformation is actually playing on the continent, and how it’s actually stealing the hope of citizens and dampening trust in democracy as well,” says Hassan, who co-authored the November 2021 article titled Russian Disinformation Is Taking Hold in Africa.

She worries that disinformation is increasingly finding its way offline, not only in newspaper and broadcast reports, but also in rallies in places like Mali and CAR where Russian flags are now commonplace. She says not only are a “multitude of actors” engaged in disinformation in Africa besides Russia, including countries such as China and Turkey, but also local African nations and groups that are taking a page from Moscow’s playbook to launch their own assaults on the truth.

Although Africa’s reduced reliance on Western narratives isn’t inherently a bad thing, Hassan worries that the continent risks aligning itself with illiberal actors. At the same time, the rise of information warfare presents real risks of further destabilizing the region.

What’s needed, she says, is a comprehensive approach that avoids once again turning Africa into a battlefield where great power rivalries play out, this time in the information space.

“The emphasis [should be] to ensure that actions are taken in such a manner that it is not viewed as a geopolitical warfare,” Hassan says. “I think we need a kind of new global order, addressing disinformation… It’s not just about Russia. There is actually a coalition of actors — from nation-states, to businesses, to individuals — and we just have to do something to address what the influence industry currently looks like, especially if we want to promote democracy and guarantee human rights.”

#### The State Department has the capabilities to fight disinformation --- Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy proves

Nike Ching 21 (Nike Ching, VOA’s State Department Bureau Chief, she has traveled with four secretaries of state under Democratic and Republican administrations, 10-27-2021, "US State Department Creates Bureau to Tackle Digital Threats," VOA, https://www.voanews.com/a/us-state-department-creates-bureau-to-tackle-digital-threats/6288123.html, DOA: 6-30-2022//Smarx Ahsan)

WASHINGTON — The State Department is creating a new Bureau of Cyberspace and Digital Policy to focus on tackling cybersecurity challenges at a time of growing threats from opponents. There will also be a new special envoy for critical and emerging technology, who will lead the technology diplomacy agenda with U.S. allies.

On Wednesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the organizational changes underscore the need for a robust approach for dealing with cyber threats.

"We want to make sure technology works for democracy, fighting back against disinformation, standing up for internet freedom, and reducing the misuse of surveillance technology," Blinken said in a speech on modernizing American diplomacy.

Blinken said the new bureau will be led by an ambassador-at-large. The chief U.S. diplomat is also seeking a 50% increase in State Department's information technology budget.

The announcement comes as hackers backed by foreign governments, such as Russia and China, continue to attack U.S. infrastructures and global technology systems to steal sensitive information.

Earlier this year, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said that more countries are relying on cyber operations to steal information, influence populations and damage industry, but the U.S. is most concerned about Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

The U.S. technology giant Microsoft said on Monday that the same Russia-backed hackers responsible for the 2020 SolarWinds breach of corporate computer systems are continuing to attack global technology systems, this time targeting cloud service resellers.

A senior State Department official told reporters on Wednesday that Washington has been clear with Moscow that cyber criminals targeting the U.S. is "not acceptable." The United States has asked the Russian government to "take action against that type of criminal behavior."

Confronting cyberattacks continues to be "a high priority" in U.S. relations with Russia, the senior official said.

China is also considered to be one of the United States' main cyber adversaries, having coordinated teams both inside and outside of the government conducting cyberespionage campaigns that were large-scale and indiscriminate, according to analysts.

Over the past year, experts have attributed notable hacks in the U.S., Europe and Asia to China's Ministry of State Security, the nation's civilian intelligence agency, which has taken the lead in Beijing's cyberespionage, consolidating efforts by the People's Liberation Army.

In addition to expanding the State Department's capacity on cybersecurity, Blinken also unveiled other steps to modernize American diplomacy, including the launch of a new "policy ideas channel" that allows American diplomats to share their policy ideas directly with senior leadership, building and retaining a diverse workforce, as well as a plan to "reinvigorate the in-person diplomacy and public engagement."

The organization changes to beef up resources and staffers to tackle international cybersecurity challenges came after the State Department completed an extensive review of cyberspace and emerging technology.

### Competition---DOS---AT: PDCP

#### The plan uses the DOD.

Catherine A. Theohary 18, Specialist in National Security Policy, Cyber and Information Operations, “Information Warfare: Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, crsreport: R45142 version 5 //chico

IW = Information Warfare

Within the U.S. government, much of the current information warfare doctrine and capability resides with the military, making it the de facto center of gravity. 23 DOD is also relatively wellfunded, leading some to posit that the epicenter for IW activities should be the Pentagon. Some fear that military leadership of the IW sphere represents the militarization of cyberspace, or the weaponization of information that would counter the principles of global internet freedom. Title 10 U.S.C 2241 prohibits DOD from domestic “publicity or propaganda,” although the terms are undefined. It is unclear how IW/IO relate to this so-called military propaganda ban.

## EU

### 1NC---CP---EU

Next OFF is the Counterplan:

#### **Text: The European Union should,**

#### Finalize the NIS Directive.

#### Coordinate attribution of cyberattacks, adopting a pooling of capabilities on a voluntary basis.

#### Integrate CyCLONe into the EU cyber ecosystem.

#### **The Counterplan solves disinformation –** our evidence assumes Russia conflict

Arthur Laudrain 22 (Arthur Laudrain, DPhil candidate in Cybersecurity at the University of Oxford (Wolfson College), Rotary Scholar for Global Peace, and Fellow at the European Cyber Conflict Research Initiative, Arthur de Liedekerke is a Project Manager at political advisory Rasmussen Global and a non-resident fellow at the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University (ISPK), Germany, 3-30-2022, "Russia’s Cyber War: What’s Next and What the European Union Should Do.," Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/blog/russias-cyber-war-whats-next-and-what-european-union-should-do, DOA: 6-22-2022//Smarx Ahsan)

Contrary to widespread expectations, the use of cyberweaponry in the Russian war with Ukraine has so far been limited. To date, the only significant, sophisticated operations with suspected Russian involvement are the attacks on communications giant Viasat’s satellite networks, attempts to install data-wiping malware on Ukrainian government systems, and attacks against two major Ukrainian telecommunications firms.

There are several reasons that can plausibly explain why cyber operations have remained marginal in the conflict. First, the Ukrainians have done a good job at bolstering their digital defenses, helped in part by their American allies. There are also the inherent limitations of cyberattacks: in an all-out kinetic war, missiles offer a faster and more effective means of achieving strategic objectives than lines of code.

Last, but certainly not least, it is worth remembering that we are in the early stages of a war that will drag on, potentially for months, leaving plenty of time for new Russian cyber operations. Apparent reluctance to use cyber capabilities beyond limited operational-level hits or disinformation campaigns may well abate as fears of spillover or retaliatory Western cyber responses diminish. The European Union (EU) must act now, while the intensity of cyber conflict outside Ukraine is still relatively low, to bolster its defenses and prepare for the specter of wide-ranging, damaging cyber operations later in the conflict.

Even if the Russians agree to a truce, cyber and disinformation efforts would be one of the few avenues available to them to inflict damage on Ukraine in the gray zone below the threshold of direct confrontation. As the Russian military shifts its objectives, resources and bandwidth will be freed up to fight from the rear. A cornered Moscow–with few other options left on the table–is likely to resort to the cyber domain, as other pariah states have done, as the ideal vector to circumvent isolation, spy on and disrupt Western defense plans, steal technology and intellectual property it will be cut off from, and heighten its global nuisance with disinformation operations. Recent attacks on a major Ukrainian telecommunications firm, Ukrtelecom, have heightened fears that Russia’s stalling military campaign could cause it to turn to cyber operations as another means of achieving its aims.

The EU has adopted new frameworks, including its much vaunted Strategic Compass, which, in the long term, will improve cybersecurity in the bloc, and potentially reduce the risk of catastrophic Russian cyberattacks. However, the EU needs to take more steps in the short term to shore up cyber defenses and mitigate the threat of Russian cyber operations.

First, the EU should get its own house in order. The revised Network and Information Security (NIS) Directive–better known in Brussels circles as NIS 2–should be finalized in the coming months and will aim to further strengthen the security of supply chains, streamline incident reporting obligations, and introduce more stringent supervisory measures for a large number of operators of essential services and enterprises across the EU. While NIS 2 represents a step in the right direction, the EU still has some way to go in implementing harmonized cybersecurity rules across the bloc’s own institutions.

Second, the EU and its Member States have a role to play in discouraging and deterring cyberattacks by demonstrating a willingness to act and impose costs on perpetrators. The first-ever operational deployment of the EU’s Cyber Rapid Response Team to Ukraine, alongside similar teams from the United States, was a welcome signal in this respect. One way to impose further costs would be by pushing for coordinated attribution of cyberattacks at the EU-level. On the offensive and deterrent side, the EU should adopt a pooling of capabilities on a voluntary basis. Similar programs already exist among other groups, such as NATO’s Sovereign Cyber Effects Provided Voluntarily by Allies (SCEPVA) program, which the EU could use as a model for its own programs.

Third, the EU should ensure it is better prepared by leveraging the tools it already has at its disposal. Intelligence sharing and situational awareness have proven vital before and during the war in Ukraine, but the future effectiveness of these strategies in deterring and mitigating cyberattacks will be reliant on Member States willingness to contribute with timely and actionable intelligence. In the short term, the Cyber Crisis Liaison Organisation Network (CyCLONe), a recently created group bringing together the executives of the EU’s twenty seven national cybersecurity authorities, should be used to its full capability and integrated with the rest of the EU cyber ecosystem. CyCLONe, with their wealth of operational-level expertise, should be able to brief political decision-makers in the Council more frequently. On the military side, the EU still lacks a fully fleshed-out cooperation mechanism for military cybersecurity alerts, despite this being an objective since the 2014 EU Cyber Defence Policy Framework. Ensuring cooperation among both civilian and military groups is vital given the specter of Russian cyberattacks.

Supporting Ukraine is every democracy’s duty. Russia will attempt to undermine this support through cyberattacks and other means. The EU needs to shore up its cyber defenses at home to ensure all Members can continue to aid Ukraine in the future.

## UN

### 1NC---CP---UN

#### The United Nations should create a United Nations General Assembly committee to manage international information networks.

#### The CP solves

Hanci Lei 19, is based at Brown University and majored in Economics and Political Science. He worked at a Think Tank in Washington D.C., June 2019, " Modern information warfare: analysis and policy recommendations," Emerald Publishing, https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/FS-06-2018-0064/full/pdf?title=modern-information-warfare-analysis-and-policy-recommendations //AShah

\*\*IIN = International Information Networks

\*\*IW = Information Warfare

Recognizing the rapid evolution of information technologies over the past few decades, one important policy that may facilitate the development of norms around information warfare is the development of a UN General Assembly (GA) committee to manage IIN. The United Nations is an institution that has the power to deal with “peace and security” and “governance” issues; it has historically been a forum where states can express their views and establish norms as the find “areas of agreement and solve problems together” (United Nations, 2018). So, there is potential in using this institution to manage IW. This committee could have a mission similar to the Disarmament and International Security Committee, whose mission is to deal with “disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and [seek] out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime” (General Assembly of the United Nations, 2018). Similarly, an “Information Infrastructure Management Committee” can deal with “safe development of information infrastructure, global challenges and threats to the security of information infrastructure, and seek out solutions to the threat of information warfare.” Such a committee can allow states discuss potential weaknesses to information infrastructure in an international forum, thus giving the issue more international recognition. Having more states recognize the threat of IW and discuss common ways IW manifests itself will reduce the challenges of managing perceptions because states would be better able to identify whether or not they are under attack by publically examining past examples of IW and creating defined international norms on the issue. Images and narratives could still be manipulated; however, if methods of manipulation become well known and identified by the international community, they would become less effective as states would be better able to identify whether or not they are subject to such manipulation. Finally, by publicly identifying manipulation tactics, the costs of using IW effectively would also be driven up substantially because the increased demand for rapid innovation of IW tactics to keep up with the exposure of such tactics would ensure that only the richest states – ones that have little incentive, as discussed earlier, to develop the infrastructure necessary to be able to launch sustained IW campaigns – have the resources to use IW as an effective policy tool. Thus, driving up the cost of IW mitigates the threat of attacks from illiberal or nonstate actors.

# Kritiks

## Capitalism

### Cap K---Link---Info Warfare

#### Countering disinformation relies on a false, ideological narrative of media objectivity---that naturalizes capitalism and the security state

Joseph Bernstein 21 is a senior reporter at BuzzFeed News and a 2021 Nieman Fellow. “Bad News: Selling the story of disinformation,” Harper’s Magazine, <https://harpers.org/archive/2021/09/bad-news-selling-the-story-of-disinformation/> //chico

An even more vexing issue for the disinformation field, though, is the supposedly objective stance media researchers and journalists take toward the information ecosystem to which they themselves belong. Somewhat amazingly, this attempt has taken place alongside an agonizing and overdue questioning within the media of the harm done by unexamined professional standards of objectivity. Like journalism, scholarship, and all other forms of knowledge creation, disinformation research reflects the culture, aspirations, and assumptions of its creators. A quick scan of the institutions that publish most frequently and influentially about disinformation: Harvard University, the New York Times, Stanford University, MIT, NBC, the Atlantic Council, the Council on Foreign Relations, etc. That the most prestigious liberal institutions of the pre-digital age are the most invested in fighting disinformation reveals a lot about what they stand to lose, or hope to regain. Whatever the brilliance of the individual disinformation researchers and reporters, the nature of the project inevitably places them in a regrettably defensive position in the contemporary debate about media representation, objectivity, image-making, and public knowledge. However well-intentioned these professionals are, they don’t have special access to the fabric of reality.

This spring, in light of new reporting and a renewed, bipartisan political effort to investigate the origins of COVID-19, Facebook announced that it would no longer remove posts that claimed that the coronavirus was man-made or manufactured. Many disinformation workers, who spent months calling for social-media companies to ban such claims on the grounds that they were conspiracy theories, have been awkwardly silent as scientists have begun to admit that an accidental leak from a Wuhan lab is an unlikely, but plausible, possibility.

Still, Big Disinfo can barely contain its desire to hand the power of disseminating knowledge back to a set of “objective” gatekeepers. In February, the tech news website Recode reported on a planned $65 million nonpartisan news initiative called the Project for Good Information. Its creator, Tara McGowan, is a veteran Democratic operative and the CEO of Acronym, a center-left digital-advertising and voter-mobilization nonprofit whose PAC is funded by, among others, Steven Spielberg, the LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman, and the venture capitalist Michael Moritz. The former Obama campaign manager David Plouffe, currently a strategist at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, is an official Acronym adviser. Meanwhile, a February New York Times article humbly suggested the appointment of a “reality czar” who could “become the tip of the spear for the federal government’s response to the reality crisis.”

The vision of a godlike scientist bestriding the media on behalf of the U.S. government is almost a century old. After the First World War, the academic study of propaganda was explicitly progressive and reformist, seeking to expose the role of powerful interests in shaping the news. Then, in the late 1930s, the Rockefeller Foundation began sponsoring evangelists of a new discipline called communication research. The psychologists, political scientists, and consultants behind this movement touted their methodological sophistication and absolute political neutrality. They hawked Arendt’s “psychological premise of human manipulability” to government officials and businessmen, much as the early television ad executives had. They put themselves in the service of the state.

The media scholar Jack Bratich has argued that the contemporary antidisinformation industry is part of a “war of restoration” fought by an American political center humbled by the economic and political crises of the past twenty years. Depoliticized civil society becomes, per Bratich, “the terrain for the restoration of authoritative truth-tellers” like, well, Harvard, the New York Times, and the Council on Foreign Relations. In this argument, the Establishment has turned its methods for discrediting the information of its geopolitical enemies against its own citizens. The Biden Administration’s National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism—the first of its kind—promises to “counter the polarization often fueled by disinformation, misinformation, and dangerous conspiracy theories online.” The full report warned not just of right-wing militias and incels, but anticapitalist, environmental, and animal-rights activists too. This comes as governments around the world have started using emergency “fake news” and “disinformation” laws to harass and arrest dissidents and reporters.

One needn’t buy into Bratich’s story, however, to understand what tech companies and select media organizations all stand to gain from the Big Disinfo worldview. The content giants—Facebook, Twitter, Google—have tried for years to leverage the credibility and expertise of certain forms of journalism through fact-checking and media-literacy initiatives. In this context, the disinformation project is simply an unofficial partnership between Big Tech, corporate media, elite universities, and cash-rich foundations. Indeed, over the past few years, some journalists have started to grouse that their jobs now consist of fact-checking the very same social platforms that are vaporizing their industry.

Ironically, to the extent that this work creates undue alarm about disinformation, it supports Facebook’s sales pitch. What could be more appealing to an advertiser, after all, than a machine that can persuade anyone of anything? This understanding benefits Facebook, which spreads more bad information, which creates more alarm. Legacy outlets with usefully prestigious brands are taken on board as trusted partners, to determine when the levels of contamination in the information ecosystem (from which they have magically detached themselves) get too high. For the old media institutions, it’s a bid for relevance, a form of self-preservation. For the tech platforms, it’s a superficial strategy to avoid deeper questions. A trusted disinformation field is, in this sense, a very useful thing for Mark Zuckerberg.

#### Countering disinformation relies on a false narrative of an “algorithmic fix”---that masks the material conditions that enable violence.

Joseph Bernstein 21 is a senior reporter at BuzzFeed News and a 2021 Nieman Fellow. “Bad News: Selling the story of disinformation,” Harper’s Magazine, <https://harpers.org/archive/2021/09/bad-news-selling-the-story-of-disinformation/> //chico

This finding resonated with earlier research suggesting that disinformation typically needs the support of political and media elites to spread widely. That is to say, the persuasiveness of information on social platforms depends on context. Propaganda doesn’t show up out of nowhere, and it doesn’t all work the same way. Ellul wrote of the necessary role of what he called “pre-propaganda”:

Direct propaganda, aimed at modifying opinions and attitudes, must be preceded by propaganda that is sociological in character, slow, general, seeking to create a climate, an atmosphere of favorable preliminary attitudes. No direct propaganda can be effective without pre-propaganda, which, without direct or noticeable aggression, is limited to creating ambiguities, reducing prejudices, and spreading images, apparently without purpose.

Another way of thinking about pre-propaganda is as the entire social, cultural, political, and historical context. In the United States, that context includes an idiosyncratic electoral process and a two-party system that has asymmetrically polarized toward a nativist, rhetorically anti-elite right wing. It also includes a libertarian social ethic, a “paranoid style,” an “indigenous American berserk,” a deeply irresponsible national broadcast media, disappearing local news, an entertainment industry that glorifies violence, a bloated military, massive income inequality, a history of brutal and intractable racism that has time and again shattered class consciousness, conspiratorial habits of mind, and themes of world-historical declension and redemption. The specific American situation was creating specific kinds of people long before the advent of tech platforms.

To take the whole environment into view, or as much of it as we can, is to see how preposterously insufficient it is to blame these platforms for the sad extremities of our national life, up to and including the riot on January 6. And yet, given the technological determinism of the disinformation discourse, is it any surprise that attorneys for some of the Capitol rioters are planning legal defenses that blame social-media companies?

Only certain types of people respond to certain types of propaganda in certain situations. The best reporting on QAnon, for example, has taken into account the conspiracy movement’s popularity among white evangelicals. The best reporting about vaccine and mask skepticism has taken into account the mosaic of experiences that form the American attitude toward the expertise of public-health authorities. There is nothing magically persuasive about social-media platforms; they are a new and important part of the picture, but far from the whole thing. Facebook, however much Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg might wish us to think so, is not the unmoved mover.

For anyone who has used Facebook recently, that should be obvious. Facebook is full of ugly memes and boring groups, ignorant arguments, sensational clickbait, products no one wants, and vestigial features no one cares about. And yet the people most alarmed about Facebook’s negative influence are those who complain the most about how bad a product Facebook is. The question is: Why do disinformation workers think they are the only ones who have noticed that Facebook stinks? Why should we suppose the rest of the world has been hypnotized by it? Why have we been so eager to accept Silicon Valley’s story about how easy we are to manipulate?

Within the knowledge-making professions there are some sympathetic structural explanations. Social scientists get funding for research projects that might show up in the news. Think tanks want to study quantifiable policy problems. Journalists strive to expose powerful hypocrites and create “impact.” Indeed, the tech platforms are so inept and so easily caught violating their own rules about verboten information that a generation of ambitious reporters has found an inexhaustible vein of hypocrisy through stories about disinformation leading to moderation. As a matter of policy, it’s much easier to focus on an adjustable algorithm than entrenched social conditions.

Yet professional incentives only go so far in explaining why the disinformation frame has become so dominant. Ellul dismissed a “common view of propaganda . . . that it is the work of a few evil men, seducers of the people.” He compared this simplistic story to midcentury studies of advertising “which regard the buyer as victim and prey.” Instead, he wrote, the propagandist and the propagandee make propaganda together.

One reason to grant Silicon Valley’s assumptions about our mechanistic persuadability is that it prevents us from thinking too hard about the role we play in taking up and believing the things we want to believe. It turns a huge question about the nature of democracy in the digital age—what if the people believe crazy things, and now everyone knows it?—into a technocratic negotiation between tech companies, media companies, think tanks, and universities.

But there is a deeper and related reason many critics of Big Tech are so quick to accept the technologist’s story about human persuadability. As the political scientist Yaron Ezrahi has noted, the public relies on scientific and technological demonstrations of political cause and effect because they sustain our belief in the rationality of democratic government.

Indeed, it’s possible that the Establishment needs the theater of social-media persuasion to build a political world that still makes sense, to explain Brexit and Trump and the loss of faith in the decaying institutions of the West. The ruptures that emerged across much of the democratic world five years ago called into question the basic assumptions of so many of the participants in this debate—the social-media executives, the scholars, the journalists, the think tankers, the pollsters. A common account of social media’s persuasive effects provides a convenient explanation for how so many people thought so wrongly at more or less the same time. More than that, it creates a world of persuasion that is legible and useful to capital—to advertisers, political consultants, media companies, and of course, to the tech platforms themselves. It is a model of cause and effect in which the information circulated by a few corporations has the total power to justify the beliefs and behaviors of the demos. In a way, this world is a kind of comfort. Easy to explain, easy to tweak, and easy to sell, it is a worthy successor to the unified vision of American life produced by twentieth-century television. It is not, as Mark Zuckerberg said, “a crazy idea.” Especially if we all believe it.

### Cap K---Link---Greenwashing

#### The “information-ecosystem” metaphor greenwashes the environmental impacts from big data and legitimizes neoliberal narratives of the market existing as a natural phenomenon rather than an artificial one. Reject the plan in favor of information ethics.

Timothy B. Norris et. al 21, library assistant professor in research data science Libraries and the Center for Computational Science at the University of Miami. Has a Ph.D in environmental studies from the University of California Santa Cruz, Todd Suomela digital pedagogy specialist at Bucknell University. Has a Ph.D. in communication and information from the University of Tennessee, “Information in the ecosystem: Against the “information ecosystem,” First Monday, <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6847/6530> //chico

5.3. Green[wash]ing the information economy

It is difficult to argue that anything ecological is wrong or bad. Using the term “information ecology” (as a set of relations) may imply that information systems form part of “everything” good. Lucas, et al. (2012) made a strong argument that the purpose of using the information ecology metaphor (as a set of relations) is to bring individuals back into the solution. The authors focus on human-centric design with less visible technologies. Their arguments are politically conservative for the ‘liberation’ of information from regulation; the information ecology (as a set of relations) will be self-regulating, based in free-market neoliberalism, and generate profit opportunities for businesses.

The description of the early development of ecological thought in the first part of this paper showed how closely the discourse of markets and environment could be aligned to a discussion of ecology. The early mirroring between the economy and ecosystem was supplanted by later ideas incorporating complex systems, cooperation, and autopoesis. In their view of ecosystems, Lucas, et al. (2012) harkened back to the some of the earliest uses of the term “ecosystem” a usage that many ecologists have now dismissed. Perhaps Lucas, et al. used the word ecology, instead of economy, because they knew that with the word economy, the artificiality of the system would be revealed to readers and the inevitable naturalization of the system that they described would be that much more difficult.

The danger of using the language of information ecosystems and ecologies is that very real environmental impacts of information economies will be less visible. As an example, the “cloud” is anything but a cloud. It is literally tons of digital storage devices (spinning metal disks) residing in air-conditioned complexes with thick steel walls and concrete encasings, consuming enormous amounts of energy [32]. All the equipment on which our information technologies depend draw significant quantities of natural resources from the environment (metal, plastic, energy, and rare earth minerals), eventually becoming part of a waste stream returning to the environment. In many parts of the world, extraction and recycling are unregulated industries with negative environmental and social impacts [33]. The cloud relies on these very material industries. How long will it be until negative environmental outcomes of high-flow liberated data will become apparent?

The information ethic in this critique is based upon explicitly acknowledging that information systems are human creations, not natural phenomena. It follows the same argument that the free market is a myth; better said, the so-called “invisible hand” of Adam Smith is subordinate to institutions created by humans [34]. This does not deny the possibility of creating greener and friendlier information systems; instead it creates opportunities to emphasize the human role in these processes.

## Security

### Link---Hybrid War

#### The AFF presents the paradox of liberal security---hybrid warfare is not an anomaly but rather the true nature of war, making the AFF a product of endless securitization and turning cooperation. The alternative is an interrogation of war, laying bare the indistinguishability of politics and warfare.

Maria Malksoo 18, Researcher at the International Centre for Defence Studies, Tallinn, Estonia and a Lecturer at the Institute of Government and Politics, University of Tartu, Estonia. Her main research interests include critical security studies, political anthropology and European memory politics. “Countering Hybrid Warfare as Ontological Security Management: The Emerging Practices of the EU and NATO” *European Security 27(3)*, pp. 374-392 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2018.1497984> //lenox

NATO “Hybrid warfare” has emerged as yet another “resilience test” (Stoltenberg 2015a) for the Alliance in its post-Cold War existential search for a new purpose and mission. Moreover, the hybrid insecurity predicament enables the allies to bring together the renewed focus on NATO’s traditional mission (i.e. endorsing collective defence in order to counter the main geopolitical contestant of the North Atlantic Alliance in Europe) and the Alliance’s post-Cold War out-of-area military expeditions. While “tak[ing] on two different forms of strategic challenges simultaneously” – that is, “the Russian hybrid warfare approach” and that of “other non-state actors like ISIS to the south” – remains NATO’s “greatest challenge”, the common idea behind these “hybrid strategies” endorses the relevance of “a comprehensive approach across the DIMEFIL spectrum” (i.e. diplomatic/political, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, legal) for NATO (Breedlove 2015, p. xxv; cf. Bell 2012, pp. 225-226). The “beauty of the hybrid warfare concept” is accordingly seen to lie in its ability to “provide[] tools for a comparative strategic perspective of NATO’s southern and eastern flanks, while allowing for a differentiated response” (Johnson 2015, p. 276). NATO’s motto in the face of these twofold challenges is called to be “adopt, adapt, adept”: the new strategies adopted to deal with the hybrid threats to NATO’s East and South need to be accompanied by NATO’s adaptation of “its structure and readiness to become adept at handling the new challenges it faces” (Calha 2015, p. 9). Countering hybrid threats posed by Russia and the Islamic radicals threatening the territories, populations, interests, and values of the Alliance thus enables NATO to endorse its continuing relevance by constructing a strong narrative and maintaining its OS as the core security guarantor for its members (cf. Flockhart 2012, pp. 78-79). The softer, partnership geared, or so-called “Jane” narrative of the early-post Cold War NATO is clearly giving way 23 to a more familiar, hard security-focused “Tarzan” self-vision and public representation (see further Flockhart 2011). Calling the kettle black is the least of NATO’s worries: Russia’s use of “proxy soldiers, unmarked Special Forces, intimidation and propaganda, all to lay a thick fog of confusion; to obscure its true purpose in Ukraine; and to attempt deniability” is explicitly dissected in outlining NATO’s emerging counter-strategy to hybrid engagements of the sort (Stoltenberg 2015a). Yet, just the traditional set of NATO’s capabilities is clearly deemed to be insufficient in the face of, inter alia, “sophisticated disinformation and radicalization campaigns” (Stoltenberg 2015b), this more forceful and traditional antagonist-driven agenda reflects NATO’s long-pursued comprehensive approach – that is, “a combination of military and non-military means to stabilize countries” (that others use to “destabilize”) (Stoltenberg 2015a). “Hybrid” is accordingly coined as “the dark reflection” of NATO’s comprehensive approach, and accordingly, early warning and situation awareness, good governance and the resilience of societies become equally essential parts of deterrence and defence against hybrid threats (Stoltenberg 2015a). This necessitates “renewed attention to strategic communications” and public outreach and education “to build up public awareness and resilience” and “strengthen the role of an informed civil society in every member state” (Calha 2015, p. 10).13 NATO declared its readiness to address the specific challenges posed by “hybrid warfare threats” in the Wales Summit Declaration of 5 September 2014 as a forceful response to the conflict in Ukraine. While NATO’s traditional toolbox of collective defence is hardly perfectly geared for “insidious and ambiguous threats” (Johnson 2015, p. 270; Calha 2015, p. 4), countering hybrid warfare emerges as a continuing relevance and resilience test for the Alliance. NATO’s institutional responses to “hybrid threats” have been further detailed in its Readiness Action Plan, a roadmap for building capability packages, a comprehensive concept for creating an enhanced NATO response force, in a classified strategy for hybrid warfare and a cyber security action plan. Altogether, the ambiguity and gradient nature of hybrid tactics directly challenge the ontological underpinnings of NATO’s core mission and strength as hybrid activities might “progress incrementally towards a threatening situation while remaining under NATO’s Article 5 threshold” (Calha 2015, p. 4). The detection and definition of a threat hence becomes significantly less straightforward, pointing at the need to renegotiate the scope and substance of NATO’s collective defence clause (i.e. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty) in light of the contemporary hybrid engagements. Conclusion This article has brought the notion of OS to bear on the thus far heavily policy-oriented hybrid warfare literature. As hybrid threats epitomize ontological insecurity, NATO and the EU’s synergistic discourse and emerging practice on countering the hybrid menace emerges as an attempt at the institutionalization of their organizational OS-seeking. Tackling the hybrid challenges of the day in apparent unison further provides NATO and the EU a silver lining of a tightened cooperation between the two organizations. Further research could map the complex interactions between the OS-seeking strategies of these distinct intergovernmental institutions and their member states/societies with regard to countering hybrid warfare. It would be interesting to investigate, for example, how the traditional lines of division within the European community along the more Russia-friendly and Russia-wary countries might tap into the institutional dynamics of hybrid threat management of the EU and NATO. Moreover, the newly established special sub-institutions to confront hybrid threats within the EU along with the organizationally unaffiliated Centre of Excellence could themselves develop their own 25 identities, OS drives and placating routines, potentially generating organizational fragmentation and inter-agency tensions instead of bolstering the OS of the Union as a whole (cf. Steele 2017). With regard to the ethical drawbacks of effective hybrid threat management, such endeavour points at the problematic prospect of compromising the already fuzzy distinction between politics and war – as according to the hybrid warfare paradigm, all politics becomes reduced to the potential build-up phase for a full-blown confrontation. In that sense, hybrid warfare is close to the criteria of “minimal wars, which consist in merely threatening the enemy with negotiations held in reserve” (Clausewitz 1976, 604, emphasis in the original). The alleged “minimality” of such a way of warfare nonetheless has considerable potential to induce broad and deep securitisation of various public policy processes in the Western societies and their supranational organizations in question. Hybrid warfare and the emerging institutionalization of its countering practices highlight the paradox of defending democratic security communities, as the efficacy of such defence might in fact be detrimental to some of the core organising principles of democracy. An alternative approach would be to argue that hybrid warfare, and the countering practices it is generating, have simply brought the nature of the modern power out into the open. As Foucault maintains in his Society Must Be Defended, liberal “civil peace” must be understood as a secret form of war, for “war is the principle and motor of the exercise of political power” in general (Foucault 2003, p. 18). Viewed from such a perspective, hybrid warfare and its emerging management practices by the EU and NATO enable us to see what politics is allegedly all about anyway – “the continuation of war by other means” (Foucault 2003, p. 15). For the EU and NATO, hybrid warfare embodies not just the unsettling of the politics/war distinction but raises the fundamental question about the practical distinguishability of their physical and ontological security in the first place.

# ADV---Russia

## Squo Solves

### 1NC---Squo Solves Russia

#### Existing pushback solves information warfare---Ukraine has made people more aware of disinformation campaigns

Philip Seib 22, professor of Journalism and Public Diplomacy at USC, 5/9/22,”Why Russia is losing the information war,” https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/why-russia-losing-information-war/mh

Poor Vladimir Putin. Sitting at his long table by himself, confronting failure. The Russian military machine, weighed down by its antiquated hardware and obsolete tactics, can barely hold its own against Ukraine. The Russian economy is on life support. The archenemy, NATO, is poised to expand further, adding Finland and Sweden to its ranks. The Kremlin is not a happy place.

Putin’s information war is also **not going well**. Just a decade ago, things were very different. Russia had embraced information warfare as a low-risk tool to undermine adversaries. Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the general staff of Russia’s armed forces, wrote in 2013: “The very ‘rules of war’ have changed. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness.”

For the Kremlin, information warfare is a key facet of Russia’s version of public diplomacy. With little (if any) allegiance to truth, Russia’s messaging to global publics accentuates self-justification as it pursues dangerous adventurism.

In line with this, in 2014 Russia unleashed a flood of propaganda about its need to rescue the supposedly oppressed Russian minorities in eastern Ukraine, and followed with a de facto invasion. In 2016, Russia’s information efforts directed at the American electorate proved effective, as the Kremlin’s internet trolls helped put Donald Trump in the White House. These successes crowned years of Russian information skirmishing directed at the Baltic States and other former Soviet properties that Putin wanted to reclaim.

Given Russia’s apparent preeminence in information warfare, taking control of Ukraine seemed well within the Kremlin’s grasp. This year, as its troops massed along the Russia-Ukraine border, **Russia’s information attacks were relentless**, claiming that Ukraine was riddled with corruption, was run by Nazis, and was not really a nation. Once again, with this messaging as a foundation, Russia rolled into Ukraine.

Despite its past successes, **Russia’s information strategy did not work this time**. The reason, in a word: pushback.

Resistance to past Russian information efforts was usually too little, too late. Especially in the United States in 2016, the breadth and effectiveness of the Russian campaign was not fully recognized until after the election, and little was done in timely fashion to respond to Kremlin influence.

In 2022 that has changed, and counterattacks against Russian information efforts have taken place on many fronts. Western journalists now recognize that they have a responsibility to address Russian lies with timely reporting, and to find ways to circumvent barriers to delivery of that reporting. Although the Russian government tries to keep its citizens from seeing unfriendly news content, the ever-expanding universe of information technology provides workarounds. For example, the Telegram messaging service offers channels that can be used by Russians to peruse content from global news media. Also, millions of Russians work around censorship by downloading a virtual private network (VPN) that allows them to access online information that is banned by their government.

Western governments’ information agencies are also assertively responding to Russia. The United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) has undertaken a massive effort to create an information “ring around Russia” that delivers programming designed not only for Russians, but is also directed to publics in countries such as Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, and other neighbors of Russia. Since the February invasion began, the agency has also introduced a new Ukrainian- and Russian-language satellite channel that reaches all of Ukraine and parts of Russia. While the Kremlin silences independent media voices within Russia, demand for content from abroad grows. During the first three weeks after Russia’s invasion, USAGM verified more than one billion video views of its Russian-language programs across social media platforms. The agency reports that interviews with grieving Russian mothers whose sons were killed in combat are among the most widely viewed.

Ukraine itself is doing a remarkable job of presenting its story to the world. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is ubiquitous. Whether he is walking through Kyiv or addressing the United Nations, Zelenskyy forcefully calls upon the world to assist his country. He has become a media superstar, admired as the Ukrainian David standing up to the Russian Goliath. Besides Zelenskyy, Ukrainian officials and individual citizens flood social media with words and images about their resistance to the invader. This content is often heartbreaking, as it vividly illustrates the human costs of war, but for now it keeps Ukraine at the forefront of debate about the geopolitical future.

In response, the Kremlin relies on connecting with presumably sympathetic Russian-speaking minorities in Ukraine and elsewhere. It also broadcasts anti-American messaging about Ukraine to parts of the world where suspicion of the United States runs high. But in the contest for Western public opinion, Russia is finding itself overmatched.

### 2NC---Squo Solves Russia

#### The US is ramping up information warfare against Russia --- plot exposing proves

Max Boot 22 (Max Boot, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow for National Security Studies, 2-10-2022, "Why the U.S. Ramped Up Its Information War With Russia," Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/why-us-ramped-its-information-war-russia, DOA: 6-24-2022//Smarx Ahsan)

For years, American officials have lamented that the United States fights with one arm tied behind its back when it comes to waging information war—i.e., the battle for “hearts and minds.” Adversaries including the self-declared Islamic State and the Kremlin are free to spread lies and conspiracy theories, while the U.S. government generally feels compelled to hew to the truth in its public pronouncements (even as it often tries to conceal scandalous misconduct). U.S. adversaries find it easy to beam propaganda into the United States—often under false pretenses via social media—but it is harder for independent information to penetrate into more tightly controlled media spaces in countries such as China, North Korea, and Russia.

Now, as the crisis over Ukraine escalates, the Joe Biden administration seems to have developed an effective technique for waging information war. Rather than allowing President Vladimir Putin’s government to freely disseminate ludicrous conspiracy theories about anti-Russia plots involving the West and Ukraine, the administration has chosen to fight back by releasing intelligence reports about Russia’s attempts to create a justification for an invasion of Ukraine.

Plots and Fake Attacks

On January 23, the British government, acting in cooperation with the United States, announced details of a purported Russian plot to install a pro-Moscow regime in Kyiv. It even went so far as to name a pro-Russia former member of the Ukrainian parliament as Putin’s preferred puppet.

On February 3, the Biden administration released information about a Russian scheme to film a fake attack on Russian territory or on Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine to manufacture a justification for an invasion. The administration said Russia had already recruited people who would be involved in the fake attack. Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby said the plan was to result in “a very graphic propaganda video, which would include corpses and actors who would be depicting mourners and images of destroyed locations, as well as military equipment at the hands of Ukraine or the West, even to the point where some of this equipment would be made to look like it was Western-supplied.”

The United States has also released copious details about Russian troop movements on Ukraine’s border, along with assessments that a Russian invasion is likely. The administration has even shared information about reported dissension within the ranks of the Russian military over a possible attack on Ukraine.

A senior U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, explained the administration’s strategy to the Wall Street Journal: “We’ve seen [Russia] run false-flag operations and use the confusion to launch military action many times in recent history. Exposing these plots makes it that much harder for Russia to execute them.”

A Legacy of Provocations

Journalists are naturally skeptical of the U.S. intelligence, given the U.S. government’s history making claims that did not pan out—most notoriously about the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which was used to justify the U.S. invasion in 2003. But there is indeed a long history of Russia using so-called false-flag operations to justify aggression. In 1939, the Soviet Union shelled its own troops near its border with Finland to justify an invasion of that country. In 1968, KGB agents in what was then Czechoslovakia concocted threats against the Soviet Union and even claimed to have found a “Made in USA” arms cache to justify a Red Army crackdown on the Prague Spring reform movement.

In 1999, Russian intelligence operatives are believed to have bombed Russian apartment buildings to justify an invasion of Chechnya. And the Russian invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 were both accompanied by copious disinformation, including the use of “little green men” (i.e., soldiers in green uniforms devoid of Russian army insignia) to disguise the role of Russian military forces. The Kremlin even blamed the CIA for shooting down a Malaysian airliner over Ukraine in 2014—an act actually carried out by Russia-backed separatists using a Russian air defense system.

A New Era of Info Ops

In the past, the United States was caught flat-footed by Russian information operations. Exposing Russian plots in real time appears to be an effective response, even though doing so raises concerns about exposing the U.S. intelligence community’s “sources and methods,” and journalists question whether the U.S. government’s claims can be trusted.

At the very least, the U.S. reports throw sand into the gears of the Russian military machine and force the Russian government to wonder where Western intelligence agencies are getting their information, which could possibly lead to a search for traitors within its own ranks. The reports also neutralize Russian propaganda and allow the United States to try to control the narrative rather than ceding to Putin and his propagandists.

Given the growing importance of information operations in modern warfare, that is no small achievement. It has already paid off in considerable Western unity in the face of Russian threats to Ukraine. Whether the U.S. actions will deter a Russian invasion of Ukraine, however, is still unclear.

## AT: IL

### IL---Russian Info Ops Fail

#### No impact to information wars and it solves itself---propaganda tactics empirically collapse the attacking states.

CRI 21, publishes novel research at the leading edges of global risk mitigation, governance design and culture. Their content explores the key challenges and existential threats facing humanity, and the underlying problems with current approaches for addressing them, “It's a MAD Information War”, <https://consilienceproject.org/its-a-mad-information-war/> //lenox

While the 2016 U.S. election was a watershed in computational propaganda, the same phenomenon has basically swept the planet, beginning as early as 2010. Ukraine, Estonia, China, Iran, Mexico, the UK, and the U.S. have all had major politically significant incidents of computational propaganda.[[12]](https://consilienceproject.org/its-a-mad-information-war/#fn-12) Research on computational propaganda is underway at various academic centers and think tanks, including at the Oxford Internet Institute, the Stanford Internet Observatory, and the Digital Forensics Lab of the Atlantic Council. The focus has been largely on the techniques, organizations, and forensic approaches, revealing a dangerous new frontier of digitally enhanced irregular warfare. We posit that this frontier leads toward mutually assured destruction, like all frontiers of arms races in weapons technologies.  
In one sense, mutually assured destruction in the context of information war is simple. It has been known from the earliest days of military strategy: you can be blinded by your own smokescreen, and even more so when your enemy is using one too. The use of powerful information manipulation tactics to coerce the enemy requires the creation of organizations that specialize in making and using such tools of war. History suggests that it can be hard to achieve trust and collaboration in governments that maintain large and complex propaganda operations. Stalin’s demise in Russia can be at least partially attributed to this lack of trust. Stalin spent his last days in a bunker, paranoid and suffering the consequences of creating an almost completely manipulated information environment. Accounts show that during the Cold War, both the CIA and KGB used deceptive techniques to convince their own government agencies of the success of their campaigns (i.e. the agencies propagandized their own colleagues to ensure continued support for their work). Societies that depend on the politicized control of information end up shrouding both political leaders and the masses in mere simulations of reality.[[13]](https://consilienceproject.org/its-a-mad-information-war/#fn-13)

We have reached a point at which a difference in magnitude has become a difference in kind.

The idea that any group of leaders is immune to the cognitive and emotional distortions they inflict upon the masses is misleading. While a small political elite might know more than most other members of their society, they are nevertheless limited epistemically by their position as problem-solvers who are segregated from actual free and open streams of information. They cannot readily trust high-ranking officials in their own intelligence and military, who themselves are employed in the practice of information manipulation and are interested in keeping their jobs and reputations. They also cannot rely on well-educated and expert members of the general population, who in fact have been lifetime subjects of information manipulation. Nor can they rely on input from foreign nations, who are systematically trying to control what information is available to their adversaries, and how it is framed. Over time, a downward spiral of distrust and confusion degrades decision-making and problem-solving capacities until the social system collapses, as occurred eventually with the Soviet Union.[[14]](https://consilienceproject.org/its-a-mad-information-war/#fn-14)  
Politically motivated information asymmetries produce only short-term gains. Social systems of this kind are undone by the long-term consequences of the damage inflicted on public sensemaking. The dangers of what is possible when centralizing and politicizing the control of information have long been noted by those arguing in support of open societies. However, under the conditions created by advances in digital technologies, problems of information war have become more complex.

#### Russian Information Warfare campaigns are ineffective

Jeff Schogol 22, senior Pentagon reporter with Task & Purpose. He reports on both the Defense Department as well as individual services, covering a variety of topics that include personnel, policy, military justice, deployments, and technology, May 2022, " Russia actually isn’t as good at information warfare as everyone thought," Task & Purpose, https://taskandpurpose.com/analysis/russia-propaganda-war-ukraine/ //AShah

Prior to kicking off its mega-sized Charlie Foxtrot in Ukraine, the Russians were widely regarded as masters of deception and propaganda.

Whether it was Russian troops masquerading as “little green men” in Crimea in 2014 or the successful hacking of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign, the Kremlin set the gold standard for subterfuge. As Russian President Vladimir Putin was poised to send his forces into Ukraine in February, the State Department warned that Russia’s invasion could be preceded by an elaborately staged “false flag” operation as a pretext for war, just as the Nazis had done in 1939 when they claimed Poland had attacked Germany.

But far from being the juggernaut of neo-Soviet disinformation that the West had expected, Russia’s information operations about the war in Ukraine have largely sucked. Just prior to the invasion, Russia claimed that a Ukrainian roadside bomb had killed three people inside separatist-held eastern Ukraine, yet the skull of one of the charred bodies that the Russians paraded in front of sympathetic media showed signs that it had undergone an autopsy procedure, meaning the person was dead before being placed at the scene of the alleged attack.

Since then, Russia has claimed that the reason its troops were forced to abandon their advance on Ukraine’s capital of Kyiv was that Russia never wanted the city anyway, and the initial attacks were just part of an elaborate ruse meant to distract Ukrainian forces from Russia’s real military objectives in the Donets Basin. (As comebacks go, this is one step above: ‘Fine, I didn’t want to be your date to the stupid prom in the first place!’)

More recently, Russia’s government has unconvincingly claimed that the Ukrainians did not sink the cruiser Moskva, once the flagship Russia’s Black Sea Fleet; and Russian propaganda has accidentally used pictures of criminals Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow as well as a Marine in World War II to honor the Soviet Union’s victory over the Nazis in the Great Patriotic War.

One reason why Russian information operations are flailing is “they don’t have a lot of material to work with,” said Marek Posard, an expert on disinformation with the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit research organization.

“There’s only so much you can do when X number of your generals are being killed in theater,” Posard told Task & Purpose. (In this case, the Ukrainians claim to have killed 12 Russian general officers.)

The United States and other Western nations tend to do better at information warfare when they tell the truth, and right now the facts are not in Russia’s favor, because the invasion of Ukraine has revealed how the Russian military is not as professional as many thought it was.

“The military operations in Ukraine clearly are not going well for the Russians,” Posard said. “You can’t hide the fact that civilian casualties are high. You can’t hide the fact that the Russians are shelling targets that they should not be shelling. You can’t hide the fact that there are Russian soldiers lying dead and there’s tanks on the side of the road that have been blown up.”

However, the Russians have often made mistakes and used flimsy claims as part of their propaganda efforts because their goal is to flood the airwaves with as much disinformation as possible, said Olga Lautman, an expert on Russia and Ukraine.

Back in 2014, Russian media claimed without any evidence whatsoever that the Ukrainian military had crucified a 3-year-old boy in the city of Slovyansk, said Lautman, a senior fellow with the Center for European Policy Analysis, a nonprofit research institutin.

While the story was discredited in western media, Russian information operations are not supposed to make sense, she said. Instead, these operations are intended to create confusion.

“It’s just meant to put out so much propaganda and so many different points to make the person throw their hands up and just say, ‘I don’t know what the truth is,’” Lautman told Task & Purpose.

In fact, sometimes the Russians will cook up completely contradictory narratives in which some propaganda claims discredit other propaganda assertions, Lautman said.

“It is not meant to direct you in any which way,” Lautman said. “It is not meant for a critical thinker. It is more meant to pollute the information space with so much disinformation that the person can’t get to the truth.”

Separately, the Russians also launch very targeted propaganda campaigns against specific people or on certain issues, and those efforts tend to be more thought out, she said. For example, the Russians are currently putting a lot of time and effort into claims that the Ukrainian government is kidnapping journalists to silence them.

Since Russia attacked Ukraine in late February, though, its information operations have been weaker than in the past because foreign media have been on the ground to discredit Russian propaganda, Lautman said. The New York Times recently exposed Russia’s lies about the massacre of Ukrainian civilians in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha.

As long as the media coverage continues, Russia’s propaganda campaign will remain weak, Lautman said. “When it wanes, then you will see Russia’s disinformation operations being a lot more successful because they’ll be able to get their message across,” she said.

#### Russia’s failing miserably at spreading misinformation about Ukraine---if they can’t do it at home, they definitely can’t do it at the international level

Bermet Talant 22, freelance journalist from Oxford, 3/1/22, “Russia is losing the information war,” https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/russia-losing-information-war/mh

Zelensky’s defiance and candor have sparked admiration at home and abroad. A month ago, 53 per cent of Ukrainians thought he wasn’t capable of defending the country in the event of the Russian invasion. Now, his people call him a true leader they are proud of.

This frank and direct communication is a stark contrast to Russian President Vladimir Putin’s pre-recorded rambling diatribes, and the silence around the war enforced in the Russian media, as the Kremlin, once again, tries to obscure the scale of its involvement in Ukraine.

In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea without resistance by getting its invading soldiers to strip off their military insignia. Although later it acknowledged its troops had indeed been involved, this simple sleight of hand allowed it to control the narrative.

Russia subsequently effectively obscured its direct role in the conflict in Ukraine’s east, portraying it as a civil war and bona fide pro-independence insurgency. Kremlin propaganda successfully spread the false belief (still widespread among some) that Ukraine is run by neo-Nazis and has committed a “genocide against Russian speakers”.

Since Putin’s invasion, however, Ukraine has dictated the story.

Putin’s justification of the invasion as a “liberation of the Ukrainian people from a nationalist regime” and the “defense of Russia from the NATO threat” has fallen on deaf ears  – even, possibly, at home. More Russians are speaking out against the war and taking to the streets to protest. Sanctions and international support for Ukraine keep coming, turning Russia into a diplomatic and economic pariah.

Although diplomatic efforts to prevent the war failed, the decision of the United States and the United Kingdom governments to release intelligence reports about Russia’s invasion plans in real-time was unprecedented and forced Putin to catch-up, rather than set the narrative as in the past.

Ukraine is relying on years of first-hand experience in countering Russian propaganda narratives.

Now, the Ukrainian government continues a transparent and proactive communications strategy, largely through the effective use of social media. Throughout the day, official accounts rapidly distribute news from the battlefield, warn of airstrikes, and instruct citizens on how to help the defense efforts. Four major oligarch-owned media groups have teamed up with the parliamentary channel to broadcast the same program in unison, amplifying a single narrative. Political differences and criticism over domestic policy have faded, and the trust of the Ukrainian people for their leadership and army is palpable.

By contrast, Russian state media are portraying the war as simply a limited operation in the east, and are not covering the reality of Russian military strikes on cities across Ukraine, including Kyiv. A minority of independent media outlets in Russia that report on the existence of a full-scale war, citing Ukrainian official sources, have received orders to remove “false information” from the state watchdog under the threat of being blocked.

Amid secrecy and censorship in Russia, Ukraine has taken control of the narrative by releasing reports on losses on both sides, videos of captured Russian soldiers, and footage of destruction from Russian airstrikes. Although Ukraine’s approach has not been immune to hyperbole and selective presentation of facts, it is incomparable with Russia’s attempts to create a distorted parallel reality.

Ukraine, of course, is relying on years of first-hand experience in countering Russian propaganda narratives. Since 2015, Russian media outlets and social networks have been banned in the country. And, despite criticism, the National Security Council has in the last year closed four pro-Russian television channels owned by Ukrainian politicians. Civil society has relentlessly promoted Ukraine’s account of its history against Putin’s falsified version.

Ukraine’s edge in the ongoing information war also due in part to the West’s own experiences with Russian hybrid warfare. Since 2014, the Kremlin has meddled in US elections, conducted cyberattacks, and made a number of assassination attempts of dissidents abroad. The Russian use of troll farms is well known by now, and Kremlin-funded multilingual broadcaster RT is widely recognised as a propaganda outlet (and now suspended by a local broadcast partner in Australia).

Social media use is widespread, and there has been a boom in open-source research following the downing by Russian-backed forces of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine in July 2014.

The movements of Russian troops have been documented in high resolution by satellites. Online sleuths have quickly debunked claims made by Russian and separatist media on Kyiv’s supposed plans of attack. A video of a purported sabotage attempt at the behest of Ukraine turned out to be fake, and announcements by separatist leaders of emergency evacuations of civilians were exposed to have been recorded in advance of explosions that were blamed on Ukraine. Facebook and Google have banned Russian state media from running ads on their platform. Moreover, Anonymous hacker group has declared a cyberwar on Russia taking down its government websites and state media.

Fierce fighting continues on the streets of many Ukrainian cities. But it’s clear that this time the Kremlin likely won’t be able to sow confusion, conceal its crimes, or cloud the international response.

### IL---Russian Info Ops Inevitable

#### Russia is relentless. The plan is a drop in the bucket.

Terry L. Thompson 20, lecturer in cyber policy at the Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland, Baltimore County, “No Silver Bullet: Fighting Russian Disinformation Requires Multiple Actions,” Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, vol 21, no 1, pp. 182, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/766401> //chico

These efforts by the United States, EU, and NATO provide an improved deterrent against Russian disinformation. But the Russian effort to sow discord and mistrust is relentless. Inspired by President Vladimir Putin's desire to turn Americans against one another and armed with increasingly sophisticated cyber operators in the Russian military, Russian disinformation has become a powerful twenty-first-century information weapon that will not be easily defeated. (22) Russian tactics are constantly evolving, and rapid advances in artificial intelligence and deep-fake videos will make detecting disinformation and other active measures increasingly difficult in 2020 and beyond.

### IL---No Escalation

#### Russia can’t use info warfare effectively---won’t escalate

Bill Bray 22, author on defensive actions, 1/4/22, “The Information Warfare Myth,” <https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/01/04/the_information_warfare_myth_810446.html> //mh

Russia’s troop buildup on the Ukrainian border may culminate in a full-scale invasion. Or it **may be meant to coerce NATO to negotiate** and concede to some of Vladimir Putin’s demands regarding Ukraine’s future. But one thing it surely demonstrates is that the efficacy of information warfare to achieve political and security objectives is greatly overstated. The U.S. military and national security community should take note.

One could be forgiven for concluding Vladimir Putin’s Russia is the world’s grand practitioner of information warfare. It’s a conclusion Putin ostensibly promotes, if, for no other reason, because it conjures an image of power that may be **more illusion than reality.**

The potential destructive effects of cyberattacks are serious, and it is no overreaction on the part of Western intelligence and military services to take that threat seriously. But even cyberattacks, at least as thus far practiced, seem far more bark than bite when evaluating what they achieve beyond imposing some costs on the target nation.

Western democracies should take heart at how Ukraine has stood firm against a ruthless and pervasive Russian information warfare campaign. In 2014, following the Maidan protests in Kyiv that ultimately ousted Ukraine's pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich, Russia intensified a broad information warfare campaign against Ukraine. This campaign aimed to undermine Ukrainian popular support for the nation’s pro-European leadership. Or, if that did not work well, to at least sow discord and confusion to a point in which Ukrainians eventually would become apathetic about their government’s decision to defy Moscow.

Russia has been employing all the information warfare tools it can muster for nearly eight years, including cyberattacks, disinformation, and pro-Russian influence campaigns. Yet all evidence indicates the Kremlin has failed through information warfare alone to keep most of Ukraine in Russia’s political, economic, and cultural orbit. This contrasts with the parts of Ukraine Russia physically seized (the Crimea) or is engaging in a proxy war using local insurgents (the Donbas).

Contrary to the Russian narrative, Ukrainians were never as anti-Russian as Moscow claims. For example, in 2010, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology recorded that 93 percent of Ukrainians surveyed in all regions had a favorable attitude toward Russia, with 22 percent of the population believing the two states should reunite. Yet in 2016, only 17 percent of Ukrainians reported having a favorable attitude toward Russia. More recent polling confirms Ukrainian public opinion remains at historic lows.

On the question of NATO accession, in 2010, shortly after Yanukovich was elected, in part to improve relations with Russia, only 28 percent of Ukrainians supported NATO accession. A June 2017 poll by the Democracy Initiatives Foundation showed Ukrainian support for joining NATO at 69 percent. Polling in 2021 showed that number remaining above 60 percent. Finally, Russian meddling in Ukraine’s information space has galvanized Ukrainian distrust of Russian media, prompting the ban of Russian social media sites and media outlets in the country.

Not only has Moscow’s information war against Ukraine proved to be remarkably anemic, but it may ultimately be counterproductive. Russia already has conducted cyberattacks against the Ukrainian financial industry and power grid, and Moscow will undoubtedly continue such attacks. It is doubtful, however, that more cyberattacks and a broader, more intense information warfare campaign (if that is even possible) can turn the tide and help Russia achieve lasting political objectives in Ukraine. Moscow has likely come to this realization, hence the threat of physical aggression.

U.S. military information warfare advocates have, for years now, tended toward the hyperbolic in predicting its significance. Information warfare is not insignificant, particularly cyber warfare, but it thus far has a dismal record at achieving foreign policy or military warfighting objectives. What, exactly, did the United States achieve through information warfare methods in Iraq and Afghanistan? Perhaps information warfare, particularly cyber and electronic warfare, will play a more decisive role against a technologically sophisticated adversary.

### IL---AT: Baltics---Squo Solves

#### SQUO solves Russia disinformation in the Baltics - they have instituted new programs to track disinformation campaigns

Alexandra Sarlo 17, is currently a PhD candidate in Political Sciences at University of Pennsylvania. Alexandra specializes in Comparative Politics. She also holds an MA from Georgetown University in Russian and East European Studies and a BA in Russian from Cornell University, July 2017, "Fighting Disinformation in the Baltic States," Foreign Policy Research Institute, https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/07/fighting-disinformation-baltic-states/ //AShah

The main techniques Baltic states have used to counter disinformation from Russian media sources involve fining or suspending channels that display overt biases. For example, Latvia fined PBK three times in 2014 for showing fake or biased broadcasts from Russian news. The radio station Autoradio Rezekne was also fined once. PBK was fined again in 2015. These fines, while highly publicized, were less than $5,000 each, and the fine for the radio station was equivalent to $885. Latvia also temporarily suspended the Russian television station RTR Planeta in 2014 for alleged incitement to war, which violates Latvian media law. Latvia has provided a space for the work of independent Russian news site Meduza, founded by journalists fired from Russian news site Lenta.ru over their coverage of the war in Ukraine. Lithuania has also fought back against Russian disinformation, repeatedly suspending RTR Planeta.

Estonia found itself facing an extremely hostile information environment as early as 2007. At that time, Estonian government institutions, newspapers, banks, and other companies were subjected to weeks of cyber-attacks after the removal of the Bronze Soldier, a Soviet war memorial, from central Tallinn. In 2015, Estonia began broadcasting a new Russian-language channel, ETV+, to provide an alternative for the Russian-speaking population. However, the new station has been hampered by regulations that require live programming to be translated directly into Estonian. It has been more popular with Estonian-speakers than with the Russian-speaking minority, who have access to a wide range of better-resourced channels directly from Russia that are under no such regulation.

International efforts are also targeting Russian disinformation in the Baltics. The NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence, based in Riga, seeks to strengthen strategic communications within the Alliance, in part by studying Russia’s strategic information campaign in the Baltic and Nordic countries. This effort includes examining how contentious historical events—especially pro-Russian narratives surrounding World War II and the Soviet takeover of the Baltic states—are interpreted in Russian media. It also monitors issues like online robot trolling and devises methods to repel hostile influence. Aside from the Baltic states, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom are all involved in the center.

#### NATO is already increasing its presence in the Baltics – that’s sufficient to deter Russia

William Gallo 22, foreign policy and international affair correspondent, 3/23/22, “After Russia’s Ukraine Invasion, Baltics Push for Permanent NATO Presence,” <https://www.voanews.com/a/after-russia-s-ukraine-invasion-baltics-push-for-permanent-nato-presence-/6497246.html/mh>

The small Baltic countries, whose militaries have long been dwarfed by that of neighboring Russia, are renewing their push for NATO to establish a larger and more permanent presence on their territory following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — with a combined population of only about six million people — have long been seen as some **of NATO’s most vulnerable nations**. The countries joined the Western military alliance in 2004 but are connected to the rest of European NATO countries by only a narrow corridor, which lies between the heavily armed Russian exclave of Kaliningrad and Russia-allied Belarus.

The Baltics, former Soviet states, have watched with concern as Moscow tries to reassert influence across Eastern Europe. However, they have also been encouraged as **Western countries fortify the NATO alliance in response to Russia’s invasion** of Ukraine.

NATO had no forces in the eastern part of the alliance until 2014, when it decided to deploy four multinational battlegroups on a rotational basis to the Baltics and Poland in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea. The **NATO presence was further strengthened** this year after Russia attacked Ukraine. In total, the **Baltics now host about 7,700 foreign NATO troops** — **nearly twice as many** compared to earlier this year.

### IL---AT: Baltics---No Invasion

#### New European NATO army checks Russian expansionism AND any possible Baltic invasion

Andre Damon 22, Writer and editor for the World Socialist Web Site specializing in geopolitics and economics, 6/27/22, “NATO announces plan for massive European land army,” <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2022/06/28/sosw-j28.html> //mh

In what NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg called the “biggest overhaul of our collective deterrence and defense since the Cold War,” the US-led NATO alliance has announced plans to build a massive standing land army in Europe, numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

Stoltenberg said NATO would increase its “high readiness forces” sevenfold, from 40,000 to 300,000, deploying tens of thousands of additional troops, as well as countless tanks and aircraft, directly to Russia’s border.

The move will entail a massive diversion of social resources to NATO’s ongoing war with Russia and planned war with China, draining treasuries throughout Europe and North America and fueling demands for the elimination of social services, the slashing of wages, and the gutting of workers’ pensions.

Stoltenberg said the creation of this massive fighting force was a response to the “new era of strategic competition” with Russia and China.

He called the plan “a fundamental shift in NATO’s deterrence and defense,” embracing not only the war with Russia, but “the challenges that Beijing poses to our security, interests and values.”

As a part of this massive expansion of its fighting force, NATO will increase the numbers of troops stationed in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to the “brigade” level, meaning approximately 3,000 to 5,000 troops.

The Financial Times reported, based on an interview with Stoltenberg, that the plan will “include new structures in which Western NATO allies, such as the US, UK and France, would pledge their ships, warplanes and a total of more than 300,000 troops to be ready to deploy to specific territories on the alliance’s eastern flank, with graded response times starting from the opening hours of any attack.”

Instead of troops deployed to the Baltics serving as a “tripwire,” the new plan would envision NATO fighting a war against Russia directly on the borders of these countries on NATO’s eastern battlefront.

Stoltenberg boasted that “2022 will be the eighth consecutive year of increases across European Allies and Canada,” adding that NATO’s target of two percent of economic output going to military spending will be “considered a floor, not a ceiling.”

#### No Russia invasion AND the Baltics are ready for it

Richard Milne 22, Nordic and Baltic Bureau Chief and European correspondent, 3/8/22, “War in Ukraine: will the Baltics become the ‘new West Berlin’?,” https://www.ft.com/content/d711c884-653d-4336-a490-b9075e5ce82f/mh

The three Baltic states have been trampled over by everyone from the Russians and Soviets to the Germans, Swedes and even Ottomans in the past few centuries. But, even as the world wonders whether they will be next on Russian president Vladimir Putin’s invasion list after Ukraine, there is a counterintuitive sense in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that they are as **safe as they ever have been**.

“If you look at the past 800 to 900 years of history, an argument could be made that we have **never been so secure**. Because we have so many very powerful allies, we’re an independent country with our own standing army, a free and open and flourishing trade and investment environment,” says Krisjanis Karins, Latvia’s prime minister.

This confidence is largely due to the **backing of the US and Nato**, which are jointly rushing to reinforce and reassure those countries on the frontline between the military alliance’s eastern flank and Russia.

In a stand-off between the west and Russia that many are calling a second cold war, the Baltic states are increasingly viewed as this generation’s West Berlin. A part of Nato territory that may be all but impossible to defend in itself, but which western officials underscore to Moscow will be heavily avenged in the case of any attack.

Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, reiterated this on Tuesday after a whistle-stop tour of all three Baltic countries. He told an audience in Estonia that the US and the military alliance would “**defend every inch of Nato territory**”.

In more than a dozen interviews with senior Baltic officials, including all three presidents and numerous ministers, all suggest there is **no immediate threat** to their region but that **they are ready** for whatever Russia might throw at them, as they have been for decades. There are still security weaknesses that they hope Nato can help to plug. But for both the military alliance and the EU there is a clear sense that the Baltics are on the front line against Russia’s revanchism.

#### No shot Russia will invade the Baltics - there's no intent

LRT 22, is the Lithuanian National Radio and Television, a publicly owned media group by the Lithuanian people, February 2022, "No signs of Russia planning attack on Baltics – NATO committee chair," https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1608809/no-signs-of-russia-planning-attack-on-baltics-nato-committee-chair //AShah

NATO has not seen any signs that Russia might be planning to attack the Baltic states, according to Admiral Rob Bauer, chairman of the NATO Military Committee.

He told reporters in Vilnius that, in the military sense, the Russia's ongoing military buildup in Belarus could be viewed as a “combination of capabilities”.

“If you look at the posture of the Russian troops in Belarus, then yes, you have to consider militarily, whether it is a threat to the Baltic states and, more particular, to Lithuania now. But then, of course, you have to look at the intent as well: is there indication that the Russians or Belarus have an intention to hurt the Baltic states, and particularly Lithuania?” he said on Monday. “Up until now, we don't see an intent, we don't expect an attack on NATO soil by Russia – either directly or via Belarus.”

Bauer says some 30,000 Russian troops are now in Belarus.

It ‘would be silly’ to threaten Lithuania.

The NATO representative's view was echoed by Lithuania's Chief of Defence Valdemaras Rupšys.

“[Russia's military buildup] is changing the security situation, and also accordingly the readiness of NATO and our national military capabilities, but there's no direct threat tactically or operationally at this stage,” the army chief said.

“Simply because NATO forces are deployed in Lithuania, it would be irresponsible and I would even say silly to threaten us. That would fundamentally change the situation not in the region, but in the world in general,” Rupšys added.

### IL---AT: Baltics---Presence Bad

#### Increased NATO presence in the Baltics causes Russia war---they’re already wary because of Lithuania’s ban on transit

Holly Ellyatt 22, reporter and journalist on European economics and politics, 6/23/22, “Moscow and NATO could be about to clash over Russia’s European exclave Kaliningrad,” <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/22/russia-and-nato-member-lithuania-are-clashing-over-kaliningrad.html/> //mh

A new front in tensions between Russia and NATO has opened up after one of the Western military alliance’s members, Lithuania, banned the transit of some goods coming from Russia to its exclave Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea.

Russia has vowed to retaliate over what it described as the “hostile actions” of Lithuania, warning of “serious” consequences, while NATO members have reiterated their support for the country.

Here’s a brief guide to what’s going on, and why it matters as the Russia-Ukraine conflict rumbles on in the background.

What’s happened?

Lithuania said last week that it would ban the transit of some EU-sanctioned goods coming from Russia across its territory to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

The government said the blockade would apply to all EU-sanctioned goods coming from the mainland via rail, effectively blocking the transit of metals, coal, construction materials and high-technology products to the Russian sea port.

Kaliningrad

Lithuania said that its decision was taken after consultation with the European Commission, the EU’s executive arm, and that it’s enforcing sanctions on Russia that were imposed following the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Russia responded to Lithuania, a former Soviet republic, by calling the move an “unprecedented” and “hostile” act, with its Foreign Ministry issuing a statement Tuesday in which it said “if in the near future cargo transit between the Kaliningrad region and the rest of the territory of the Russian Federation through Lithuania is not restored in full, then Russia reserves the right to take actions to protect its national interests.”

### IL---AT: Euro Populism

#### There is no universal response to populism---anything but case-by-case response by the EU fails

Philip Manow 21, Professor of Comparative Political Economy at the University of Bremen, 12/15/21, “The political economy of populism in Europe”, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/2021-12-15-political-economy-populism-europe-manow.pdf/mh

Beyond illuminating the driving forces of the populist backlash in Europe, the above typology helps us understand how policymakers could respond to it. During the past five years, centrist policymakers have increasingly focused on how to ‘defeat’ populism, which they have **tended to see in simplistic terms**. But the heterogeneity of populism, as discussed in this paper, means **there is no one solution** that can be applied everywhere – even in Europe. Rather, **in each country’s case** an effective solution will necessarily reflect the type of political economy involved.

This has particular implications for EU-level policymaking. Both trade and migration policy have become highly Europeanized, usually in ways that have removed barriers to the movement of goods, services and people across borders. This trend has often exacerbated the social and economic pressures that inspire different populist forces, while removing the opportunity for national policymakers to deal with these pressures. This means that any solutions will by definition need to involve EU institutions. Yet the heterogeneity of populism means that **any one-size-fits-all policies** emanating from Brussels could **reinforce, rather than solve, the conflicts** discussed in this paper.

A reversal of the openness to trade and movement driving voter discontent is both unlikely (given the entrenchment of economic integration in the EU) and undesirable (given the moral implications of erecting inhumane barriers to migration). Instead, the EU should aim to either (a) put in place sufficiently strong compensatory mechanisms to accommodate voter concerns about issues such as immigration and welfare competition; or (b) ensure that member states are able to do this effectively themselves in their respective domestic contexts. Effective policies could include increasing investment – whether through national governments or EU-level investment facilities – in local services in areas affected by migration; or increasing the space within the EU’s fiscal rules for governments to compensate people or communities affected by the economic impacts of globalization. Whatever these measures look like, they **need to be mindful of local context** and of the **specific political economy of populism** in each member state.

#### European polarization is non-existent---doesn’t spill up to anything larger than harmless rivalries

Simon Kuper 22, journalist for the Financial Times, 1/20/22, “Why America is dangerously polarised — and Europe is not,” https://www.ft.com/content/5655ab7c-1152-414e-bd22-67acd06c5c51/mh

Contrast two leaders. Donald Trump’s approval ratings barely budged during his presidency, and his supporters dismissed every scandal as “fake news”. But when Boris Johnson turned out to have doubled as a party host during lockdown, **his supporters fled**: his net favourability rating went from +29 per cent in April 2020 to -52 per cent last week, according to pollsters YouGov.

Here, in microcosm, is the uniqueness of American polarisation. People often discuss polarisation as a global problem, but in fact, in most western European and even Latin American democracies, rival camps **aren’t deeply entrenched** or always **entirely serious**.

Western polarisation peaked between 2016 and 2018, with the victories of Brexit, Trump and Brazil’s Jair Bolsonaro, the violent clashes over Catalan independence, and the entry of the anti-system Five Star and nativist League into Italy’s government.

Today the US remains dangerously polarised — more like Turkey or India than western Europe. Among Republicans in particular, ethnic, religious and ideological identities are often perfectly aligned. Many believe God supports their party. Egged on by Trump, they fear their tribe is under existential threat. In a survey by George Washington University, most Republicans said, “the traditional American way of life is disappearing so fast we may have to use force to save it”. They have enough firearms.

The US is also handicapped by its constitution, which among other things has made the Supreme Court — arguably the country’s mightiest political institution, given congressional gridlock — a past-winner-takes-all prize. (Poland has a similar problem.) The step back from democracy is short in the US, since southern states impeded many black people from voting until the late 1960s.

But **western Europe is tamer**. Divides are deep, but most of its citizens just aren’t very interested in political issues and cannot stay angry about them for years on end. Europe’s history is about **forgetting past polarisation**, or else Finland would still be brooding over its 1918 civil war and the heads of Protestants would be hanging from the gates of French towns.

Today’s British depolarisation is a case in point. Most Leavers celebrated victory in the Brexit referendum less as a revolution than as a sort of football match: “You lost, get over it!” They don’t believe God wants Brexit. Nor do Leavers lie awake at night afraid that Remainer hordes will slaughter them in their beds. Indeed, these labels are peeling off as Brexit loses salience and drifts into impenetrable negotiations over something called Article 16. Last year, Britons conducted **more Google searches for** Aston Villa **Football** Club **than for Brexit**.

Helpfully too, most elected leaders other than Trump **seek to reduce tension**. Democracy is a conflict-management system that usually tends towards tedium. Chile’s new leader, Gabriel Boric, promises to be “president of all Chileans”. In Spain, prime minister Pedro Sánchez has lowered temperatures over Catalan independence by pardoning nine jailed separatist leaders. In Barcelona recently, I noticed far fewer Catalan flags than before hanging from apartment balconies.

Sánchez had another motive for his pardons. He wanted Catalan parties to back his other policies. The need to build coalitions is a force for unity in many European democracies. In Italy, the League and Five Star now sit in Mario Draghi’s technocratic government. Some polarising parties such as Eric Zemmour’s in France or Vox in Spain still try to identify society’s faultlines and then sit on top of them, but they attract few followers — many of whom understand that there’s no risk of these outfits ever taking power, and just want a bit of excitement. Mathieu Lefevre, director of the anti-polarisation NGO More in Common, warns that there’s more danger of certain societies sliding into apathy than of electing extremists.

One thing holding European societies together is that most people still get their news from **state broadcasters**. In Britain, nearly 100 per cent of adults use the BBC every month. People moan about BBC news, but most of them trust it. When scandals broke around Johnson, hardly anybody said it was all just “fake news”. Even in Brazil, many of Bolsonaro’s supporters see him clearly: his poll ratings collapsed after he mishandled Covid-19. Anti-system politicians outside the US generally pay a price for misrule.

#### Populism is meaningless

Yasmeen Serhan 20, Yasmeen Serhan is a staff writer at The Atlantic. She joined the magazine in 2016 as an editorial fellow in Washington, D.C. In 2017, Yasmeen moved to the U.K. to join The Atlantic’s newly established London bureau as a reporter covering British and European politics. She currently writes about populism and nationalism for The Atlantic, March 2020, "Populism Is Meaningless," https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/what-is-populism/607600/ //AShah

This view has led to a number of other misconceptions: One is that any politician who invokes the will of “the people” must necessarily be a populist. If that were the case, every politician could be labeled a populist, because “everybody talks about people in a democracy,” Daphne Halikiopoulou, an associate comparative-politics professor at the University of Reading, told me. Another misconception is that populism and xenophobic nationalism, or [nativism](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/04/what-is-nativist-trump/521355/), are inherently linked. In reality, neither ideology is reliant on the other to exist. “Both prioritize a particular ‘in’ group over an ‘out’ group,” Halikiopoulou said, but populists tend to prioritize “ordinary people,” whereas nativists prioritize those of a certain ethnic background.

A final misconception is that the populist label is appropriate for any politician who deviates from the mainstream—an idea that has been recently applied to noteworthy figures on the left, such as the outgoing British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn and the U.S. presidential candidate Bernie Sanders. Though both men exhibit some populist tendencies—both, for example, criticize those they consider to be part of the economic elite—they fall short of being traditional populists, at least under Fieschi’s definition. For one, neither claims to represent an exclusive and homogenous “people,” but rather the interests of citizens as a whole. And neither has vilified his opponents as inherently illegitimate.

The way populism is often applied suggests that its use is more for effect rather than explanation. Much in the same way that [socialist](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/02/trump-socialism-venezuela-bernie-sanders-ocasio-cortez/583135/) has been bandied around to discredit politicians like Sanders in the U.S. (where the term conjures negative images of the Soviet Union and Chavismo in Venezuela), populist has its own negative baggage. As a result, neither of these terms ends up communicating an understood idea. Instead, they simply obscure.

We will likely never have a foolproof definition of populism—it’s difficult enough to clearly define a political philosophy, let alone a political style.

Still, this doesn’t preclude us from applying it more responsibly. Part of this requires more clearly defining our terms. As someone who frequently writes about populism and nationalism, I’ve had my own fair share of feedback about use of these terms. In my reporting of the recent Irish election, [for example](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/02/ireland-election-sinn-fein-brexit-nationalism/606328/), I referred to Sinn Féin, a left-wing party that advocates for the unification of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, as a “nationalist party,” much in the same way one might use the term to describe the Scottish Nationalist Party or the Catalan independence movement. Still, some readers presumed that by calling Sinn Féin “nationalist,” I was likening them to other far-right, nativist elements in Europe—a comparison that is wholly unrepresentative of the party.

But it also means not overusing these terms to the point of confusion. “For example, are you speaking about Trump denigrating Mexicans? Well, that’s [racism,](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/trump-racism-comments/588067/)” Moffitt said. “Don’t call that ‘populist rhetoric’ and soften the blow. It just muddies the waters.”

Worse yet, it risks making the term entirely meaningless.

“If everyone is a populist in one way or another, then nobody is not a populist,” Halikiopoulou said. “It explains absolutely everything, and therefore it explains nothing.”

### IL---AT: Ukraine

#### Ukraine is winning the info war now

Michael Butler 22, member of the Governing Council of the International Studies Association-Northeast as well as a Senior Fellow at the Canadian Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (CCR2P) at the University of Toronto, 5/12/22, “Ukraine’s information war is winning hearts and minds in the West,” <https://theconversation.com/ukraines-information-war-is-winning-hearts-and-minds-in-the-west-181892> //mh

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has dominated headlines since late February 2022. The war struck a nerve among Western audiences, evoking a **high degree of support for Ukraine**.

The reasons for the prominence of the war in the West are many and varied.

A ground war in Europe launched by a major military power evokes the ghosts of World War II. This is especially true when the attacking country has designs on territory it considers integral to its nation, and is led by a personalist authoritarian regime where all power is concentrated in a single leader. The deep involvement of the U.S. and European countries, both individually and collectively through NATO and the European Union, also inspires Cold War comparisons.

The resulting humanitarian crisis, including the mass exodus of over 5 million refugees, underscores the ethical and moral implications of the war.

These historical analogies and simplifying ideas help explain why the West’s imagination has been captured by this war.

But there’s more to the West’s captivation with the war than is immediately apparent. As a scholar of armed conflict and security, I also find a compelling explanation for why the West is so focused on Ukraine in the Ukrainian government’s ability to provide information about the war in a way that appeals to Western sensibilities.

The wreckage of buildings destroyed by shelling.

‘A ground war in Europe launched by a major military power evokes the ghosts of World War II,’ writes the author. Here, buildings destroyed by intensive shelling by Russian troops in Kharkiv, Ukraine. Eugene Zinchenko/Global Images Ukraine via Getty Images

Weaponizing information

Russia’s use of propaganda and symbols during the conflict, most recently in the “Victory Day” celebrations attempting to draw its own distorted parallels to World War II, has gotten a lot of attention. In the process, Ukraine’s skillful use of information warfare should not be overlooked.

Information warfare entails one party denying, exploiting or corrupting the delivery and function of an enemy’s information. It is used both to protect oneself against the enemy’s information and to create a favorable environment for one’s own information.

With the charismatic President Volodymyr Zelenskyy leading the way, Ukraine’s savvy use of traditional and social media as well as direct appeals to the U.S. Congress, European Parliament and the court of world opinion have provided a clear and compelling framing of the war.

That frame is structured around five affecting themes: the inherently just cause of Ukrainian self-defense; the tenacity of Ukrainian resistance; the barbarity of Russian conduct; Russia’s flawed military strategy and general ineptitude; and Ukraine’s desperate need for more, and more sophisticated, military hardware.

Ukraine’s successful strategy in the battle over information demonstrates the connection between armed conflict and information warfare. Ukraine has forged a stalemate with Russia by stressing these themes of a just war for national liberation using not only traditional tools of warfare – bullets, missiles, tanks – but also by shaping the Western public’s perceptions of the war.

Learning from the enemy

The information front in the Russia-Ukraine war is nothing new. It was opened by Russia in 2014 during its annexation of Crimea and incursion in the Donbas region. Russia took the offensive to cover up its territorial aims, saying instead that it was there to protect civilians and resist the further spread of Western imperialism.

At the time, Ukrainians and Russians alike were buffeted with this disinformation through Russia’s state-controlled international English-language service RT and viral videos on YouTube and various social media outlets.

Since then, Ukraine’s security and defense establishment has focused on improving its ability to counter such disinformation tactics. Zelenskyy’s surprise landslide victory in the 2019 presidential election gave Ukraine what has proved to be its biggest asset. A skilled communicator and performer, Zelenskyy regularly and effectively uses available information to present Ukraine’s version of the war and debunk Russia’s. His initial selfie videos from the streets of Kyiv underscored Ukrainian bravery and unity in a war of self-defense – “the citizens are here, and we are here.”

## Solvency

### No Solvency---Baltics/Eastern Europe

#### Aff can’t solve—personal connections means disinformation doesn’t sway

Joanna **Szostek, 2017**, PhD in Politics from the University of Oxford and lecturer in Political Communication at the University of Glasgow, November 20, 2017, “Nothing Is True? The Credibility of News and Conflicting Narratives during “Information War” in Ukraine”// SK

The Ukrainian case similarly disrupts the assumption that audiences support a foreign state’s strategic narrative because they are “vulnerable” to its influence activities. To describe an audience as vulnerable implies that it is excessively credulous, lacks critical thinking skills, or perhaps lacks access to good quality journalism. In the present study, the participants who sympathized with Russia’s strategic narrative were no more credulous nor deprived of good journalism than their West-leaning and non-aligned counterparts. One cannot, therefore, attribute their attitudes solely to interaction between misleading Russian media content and their naivety. In fact, the Russia-leaning participants did not particularly trust Russian sources, and their views were shaped through exposure not only to the Russian narrative, but also to the fiercely anti-Russian Ukrainian narrative, which infuriated them. Their infuriation at the Ukrainian narrative can be traced to their personal, social connections to Russia, which they valued and perceived as threatened by Ukrainian politicians who had given them nothing in return. The present study, thus, supports the idea that social and communication “linkage” to a foreign state (Levitsky and Way 2010) at the individual level can play a role in strategic narrative reception. Linkage generates practical and emotional reasons for some Ukrainians to value friendly relations with Russia (Szostek 2017b), setting them at loggerheads with their government, which presents ties to Russia as thoroughly undesirable.

The present study has exposed complexities in what credibility means when it is applied to narratives in the news. Within International Relations, credibility has previously been described as “an important source of soft power” (Nye 2004: 106), but it has usually been presented as the straightforward product of honesty and good reputation. Studying how the Odesa diarists responded to news has shown that credibility also depends on whether sources and narratives address the issues of most concern to the audience, with skepticism elicited by what gets ignored, as well as what gets said. It should not be surprising that people negotiate the meanings of news with reference to their values and experiences. Decades of work on “interpretive communities” have shown personal experience playing a central part in how people negotiate the meanings of other genres, including soap operas and literature (Schrøder 1994).

At present, Russia, the United States, and other western countries are all keen for Ukrainians to use their media and support their narrative of political events. Politicians and some journalists tend to fight the opponent’s narrative by vociferously criticizing the opponent’s misconduct. The resulting repetitive and one-sided attributions of blame risk alienating the unconverted among the general population, who may perceive elites as dodging responsibility and avoiding more important issues. A lot of effort is currently directed into exposing and debunking “fake news” in the Russian media. Yet, the credibility of the Russian narrative among the Russia-leaning section of Ukrainian society is not based solely on their confidence in particular facts, but also on their priorities, which cannot be debunked. The “persuasive power” of the Russian narrative among a minority of Ukrainians comes not from propagandistic news alone, but also from people’s memories of their grandparents, and this is what makes it difficult for competing messengers to overcome.

# ADV---Information Ecosystem

## AT: Info Ecosystem ILs

### 1NC---Squo Solves

#### Squo solves

Ondrej **Filipec 2019**, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor at the Department of Politics and Social Sciences, Faculty of Law, Palacký University in Olomouc, “Towards a Disinformation Resilient Society? The Experience of the Czech Republic” vol. 11 no. 11 pg 16//SK

On the other hand, the gap is slowly being filled by NGOs and individuals who provide textbooks (often on a commercial basis), and materials and information on how to teach media education. Lecturers and universities provide assistance or volunteers (initiative Zvolsi.info) and the NGO People in Need organizes the Week of Media Education. Some webs contribute to the field with the fact checking of political speeches (Demagog.cz), and are aimed at debunking political disinformation (Manipulatori.cz) or hoaxes (Hoax.cz). In recent years, there have also been valuable books written by experts on disinformation and propaganda, which are not fully academic but have a popular style in order to reach a larger audience. In this way, the role of civil society and active individuals play an important role in the fight against disinformation and propaganda as they help to reveal and debunk the disinformation and contribute to media literacy at least within the selected segments. Moreover, approximat crely since 2018 there are ‘Czech Elves’ present on the social networks who fight ‘Russian Trolls’. As pointed out by Elven anonymous speakers: ‘we know that they are dividing our society and that support of extremes is intentional, backed by foreign interests. Activities are made by variously motivated enemies of our values ... we are not indifferent to the division of our society, that is why we want to defend our state and fight against Russian propaganda’ (Aktulne.cz 2018). However, the Czech environment is different from that of the Baltic States where people are more aware of Russian influence. For example while Elves in Latvia have approximately a five year long tradition and Elves are counted in hundreds, in the Czech Republic society is divided and there are just dozens of Elves (Aktualne.cz 2018). It is too early to evaluate the presence of Czech Elves on the internet as the real effects remain hidden. The presence has been notified also by its critics who consider Elves as the agents on the side of the censors as they help to fight disinformation.

### 1NC---AT: Info Ecosystem IL

#### Threats are exaggerated. Misinformation is a drop in the bucket.

Gabrielle Lim 20, researcher at Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center and a fellow with Citizen Lab. “The Risks of Exaggerating Foreign Influence Operations and Disinformation,” Centre for International Governance Innovation (CGI), <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/risks-exaggerating-foreign-influence-operations-and-disinformation/> //chico

In recent years, concerns over foreign interference from “bad actors” have increased, and in the wake of the 2016 US presidential election, governments around the world, social media companies and civil society alike have been on the lookout for such attempts to degrade the integrity of our elections or, more vaguely, to “sow discord.” From pseudonymous trolls and botnets to outrage-inducing, hyper-partisan content, it seems that week after week, there is news that online accounts are pushing narratives in the interest of Russia, Iran or China. The Global Engagement Center (GEC), a division of the US State Department, for example, has alleged that Russia is operating an “ecosystem” of humans and bots to amplify conspiracy theories related to COVID-19 in a bid to “sow discord and undermine U.S. institutions and alliances.” Senator Elizabeth Warren even released a detailed plan to fight disinformation as part of her presidential campaign, citing “foreign actors” as the main threat. Scholars and journalists are also on the hunt. Indeed, plenty of ink has been spilled on the ills of “weaponized social media” and the next generation of “active measures.”

However, despite all the fears of mass-targeted influence operations from foreign adversaries, it remains unclear whether they have much impact at all.

Evidence and analysis of activity from the Russian-based Internet Research Agency (IRA) continue to be debated. Although some suggest that it was plausible the IRA influenced public opinion, there is very little evidence of direct impact on the US 2016 presidential election. The bulk of their activity was engaged in audience building, and when compared to the massive volumes of media consumed by the average American across mainstream, independent and social media, Russian-sponsored activities would have been but a drop in an otherwise chaotic and constantly churning sea of information. Attempts by China to influence the Taiwanese election were likewise ineffective, as incumbent and pro-democracy leader Tsai Ing-wen won a second term by a wide margin. Reporting on such influence operations, however, is often couched in wording that implies attribution and effect without actual verification or convincing evidence.

And, in an ironic twist, our fears and concerns that foreign actors are somehow interfering with democracy and deliberative discourse are, counterintuitively, allowing for the further erosion of democracy and deliberative discourse.

Of course, the threat of influence operations should not be taken lightly and warrants investigation and thoughtful study. Yet, the knee-jerk reactions to foreign influence campaigns from some policy makers and parts of civil society have exaggerated the impact, and therefore the threat, of foreign-targeted influence operations. And, in an ironic twist, our fears and concerns that foreign actors are somehow interfering with democracy and deliberative discourse are, counterintuitively, allowing for the further erosion of democracy and deliberative discourse.

### 2NC---AT: Info Ecosystem IL

#### Data flows neg---it’s hype. AND fake news is declining now.

Mathew Ingram 19, CJR’s chief digital writer. “Researchers say fears about ‘fake news’ are exaggerated,” Columbia Journalism Review (CJR), <https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/researchers-fake-news-exaggerated.php> //chico

IT’S SO WIDELY ACCEPTED that it’s verging on conventional wisdom: misinformation, or “fake news,” spread primarily by Facebook to hundreds of millions of people (and created by Russian agents), helped distort the political landscape before and during the 2016 US presidential election, and this resulted in Donald Trump becoming president. But is it really that cut and dried? Not according to Brendan Nyhan, a political scientist and professor of public policy at the University of Michigan. He and several colleagues have been researching this question since the election, and have come to a very different conclusion. Fears about the spread and influence of fake news have been over-hyped, Nyhan says, and many of the initial conclusions about the scope of the problem and its effect on US politics were exaggerated or just plain wrong.

Nyhan says his data shows so-called “fake news” reached only a tiny proportion of the population before and during the 2016 election. In most cases, misinformation from a range of fake news sites made up just 2 percent or less of the average person’s online news consumption, and even among the group of older conservatives who were most likely to consume fake news, it only made up about 8 percent. Not only that, but the University of Michigan researcher says a new paper he and his colleagues recently published shows the reach of fake news actually fell significantly between the 2016 election and the midterm elections last year, which suggests Facebook has cracked down on the problem. Nyhan also says “no credible evidence exists that exposure to fake news changed the outcome of the 2016 election.”

#### Disinformation is a confirmation bias—research proves the amount of fake news is incredible tiny

Matthew **Ingram 2019**, He is CJR’s chief digital writer. Previously, he was a senior writer with Fortune magazine. He has written about the intersection between media and technology since the earliest days of the commercial internet. His writing has been published in the Washington Post and the Financial Times as well as by Reuters and Bloomberg., Febuary 2019, “Researchers say fears about ‘fake news’ are exaggerated”, [https://www.cjr.org/the\_media\_today/researchers-fake-news-exaggerated.php //](https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/researchers-fake-news-exaggerated.php%20//) SK

IT’S SO WIDELY ACCEPTED that it’s verging on conventional wisdom: misinformation, or “fake news,” spread primarily by Facebook to hundreds of millions of people (and created by Russian agents), helped distort the political landscape before and during the 2016 US presidential election, and this resulted in Donald Trump becoming president. But is it really that cut and dried? Not according to Brendan Nyhan, a political scientist and professor of public policy at the University of Michigan. He and several colleagues have been researching this question since the election, and have come to a very different conclusion. Fears about the spread and influence of fake news have been over-hyped, Nyhan says, and many of the initial conclusions about the scope of the problem and its effect on US politics were exaggerated or just plain wrong.

Nyhan says his data shows so-called “fake news” reached only a tiny proportion of the population before and during the 2016 election. In most cases, misinformation from a range of fake news sites made up just 2 percent or less of the average person’s online news consumption, and even among the group of older conservatives who were most likely to consume fake news, it only made up about 8 percent. Not only that, but the University of Michigan researcher says a new paper he and his colleagues recently published shows the reach of fake news actually fell significantly between the 2016 election and the midterm elections last year, which suggests Facebook has cracked down on the problem. Nyhan also says “no credible evidence exists that exposure to fake news changed the outcome of the 2016 election.”

This might come as a surprise to Kathleen Hall Jamieson. She’s a veteran public policy researcher who published a book last year entitled Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President. Jamieson, whose colleagues call her “the Drill Sergeant” for her no-nonsense attitude, has more 40 years of studying human behavior under her belt. In the book, she says the evidence suggests misinformation propagated by Russian trolls likely influenced the outcome of the election, in part because of the number of “swing” or undecided voters who were susceptible to those kinds of tactics. Jamieson also notes that the traditional news media played a key role in spreading this fake news and propaganda, by writing innumerable articles about Hillary Clinton’s emails. And she argues fake news wouldn’t have had to make much of an impact to influence the election, since a fairly small number of votes gave Trump the electoral college wins he needed.

Nyhan and his fellow researchers, however, including Princeton political scientist Andrew Guess, say their study looked at the actual behavior of a large sample of users who consented to have their online activity tracked and recorded in real time, and then followed up with interviews about their perceptions of the content. Not only was the amount of actual fake news they encountered incredibly tiny, Guess told CJR this past fall, but the idea that this would influence their behavior is also a bit of a stretch (something Nyhan wrote about for The New York Times last year). “It’s predominantly people who are inclined to believe the conclusions that are being made in this content, not so much swaying them to believe something,” Guess said. “In other words, it’s more or less just confirmation bias.”

So why has this myth of fake news swinging the election persisted despite a lack of evidence to support it? Nyhan’s theory is that it’s a little like the myth that Orson Welles’s radio play “War of the Worlds” caused widespread panic among the US population when it was aired in 1938. The play was likely only heard by a tiny number of people, and there’s no actual evidence that it caused any kind of panic, and yet the myth persists—in part because newspapers at the time played up the idea, as a way of discrediting radio (a relatively new competitor) as a source of news. In the same way, Nyhan argues, concerns about fake news being spread by Russian agents on Facebook are fueled by broader concerns about the influence of social networks on society.

#### Combatting is not key—new studies reveal misinformation leads to better recollection of correct information

Bryan **Robinson 2020**, He is a Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, authored 40 nonfiction books, and was featured on 20/20, Good Morning America, ABC’s World News Tonight, NBC Nightly News, NBC Universal, The CBS Early Show, CNBC’s The Big Idea and NPR's Marketplace, October 2020, “A New Study Shows Fake News May Benefit Your Memory”, Forbes, https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrobinson/2020/10/17/a-new-study-shows-fake-news-may--benefit-your-memory/?sh=27d81e9c2687//SK

During the workday, we are flooded with emails, texts, and other social media. And with the advent of photo shopping and political leaders who don’t divulge the truth, it’s often difficult to know what to believe anymore. Hence, the term fake news has caused many people to become skeptical about what they read or see on television news feeds—even the authentic news. But a new study says we shouldn’t throw out the baby with the bathwater. Not all news is fake, and even if a story turns out to be fake news, there’s value in it, according to a study in the journal Psychological Science. Thinking back on a time you encountered false information or “fake news” may prime your brain to better recall truthful memories. People who receive reminders of past misinformation may form new factual memories with greater fidelity. Past research highlights one insidious side of fake news: The more you encounter the same misinformation—for instance, that world governments are covering up the existence of Bigfoot and flying saucers—the more familiar and potentially believable that false information becomes. New research, however, has found that reminders of past misinformation can help protect against remembering misinformation as true while improving recollection of real-world events and information. Researcher Christopher Wahlheim at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and his research team conducted two experiments with 96 participants, who read factual statements and misinformation statements taken from news websites and then read statements that corrected the misinformation. Reminders of past misinformation appeared before some corrections but not others. Study participants then tried to recall facts, indicated their belief in those recalls and indicated whether they remembered corrections and misinformation. The researchers examined whether reminders of misinformation could improve memory for and beliefs in corrections. Study results showed that misinformation reminders increased the participants' recall of facts and belief accuracy. The researchers interpreted the results to indicate that misinformation reminders raise awareness of discrepancies and promote memory updating. These results may be pertinent to individuals who confront misinformation frequently. "Reminding people of previous encounters with fake news can improve memory and beliefs for facts that correct misinformation," said Wahlheim. "This suggests that pointing out conflicting information could improve the comprehension of truth in some situations." These findings demonstrate that misinformation reminders can diminish the negative effects of fake-news exposure in the short term. According to Walheim, "It suggests that there may be benefits to learning how someone was being misleading. This knowledge may inform strategies that people use to counteract high exposure to misinformation spread for political gain.”

#### Sample size data proves. Per-capita consumption is tiny AND confirmation bias means minds aren’t being changed.

Mathew Ingram 19, CJR’s chief digital writer. “Researchers say fears about ‘fake news’ are exaggerated,” Columbia Journalism Review (CJR), <https://www.cjr.org/the_media_today/researchers-fake-news-exaggerated.php> //chico

Nyhan and his fellow researchers, however, including Princeton political scientist Andrew Guess, say their study looked at the actual behavior of a large sample of users who consented to have their online activity tracked and recorded in real time, and then followed up with interviews about their perceptions of the content. Not only was the amount of actual fake news they encountered incredibly tiny, Guess told CJR this past fall, but the idea that this would influence their behavior is also a bit of a stretch (something Nyhan wrote about for The New York Times last year). “It’s predominantly people who are inclined to believe the conclusions that are being made in this content, not so much swaying them to believe something,” Guess said. “In other words, it’s more or less just confirmation bias.”

#### Media hype has overshadowed empirical evidence---research is lacking and the most comprehensive data still concludes NEG.

Joseph Bernstein 21 is a senior reporter at BuzzFeed News and a 2021 Nieman Fellow. “Bad News: Selling the story of disinformation,” Harper’s Magazine, <https://harpers.org/archive/2021/09/bad-news-selling-the-story-of-disinformation/> //chico

The media narrative of sinister digital mind control has obscured a body of research that is skeptical about the effects of political advertising and disinformation. A 2019 examination of thousands of Facebook users by political scientists at Princeton and NYU found that “sharing articles from fake news domains was a rare activity”—more than 90 percent of users had never shared any. A 2017 Stanford and NYU study concluded that if one fake news article were about as persuasive as one TV campaign ad, the fake news in our database would have changed vote shares by an amount on the order of hundredths of a percentage point. This is much smaller than Trump’s margin of victory in the pivotal states on which the outcome depended.

Not that these studies should be taken as definitive proof of anything. Despite its prominence in the media, the study of disinformation is still in the process of answering definitional questions and hasn’t begun to reckon with some basic epistemological issues.

The most comprehensive survey of the field to date, a 2018 scientific literature review titled “Social Media, Political Polarization, and Political Disinformation,” reveals some gobsmacking deficits. The authors fault disinformation research for failing to explain why opinions change; lacking solid data on the prevalence and reach of disinformation; and declining to establish common definitions for the most important terms in the field, including disinformation, misinformation, online propaganda, hyperpartisan news, fake news, clickbait, rumors, and conspiracy theories. The sense prevails that no two people who research disinformation are talking about quite the same thing.

This will ring true to anyone who follows the current media discussion around online propaganda. “Misinformation” and “disinformation” are used casually and interchangeably to refer to an enormous range of content, ranging from well-worn scams to viral news aggregation; from foreign-intelligence operations to trolling; from opposition research to harassment. In their crudest use, the terms are simply jargon for “things I disagree with.” Attempts to define “disinformation” broadly enough as to rinse it of political perspective or ideology leave us in territory so abstract as to be absurd. As the literature review put it:

“Disinformation” is intended to be a broad category describing the types of information that one could encounter online that could possibly lead to misperceptions about the actual state of the world.

That narrows it down!

The term has always been political and belligerent. When dezinformatsiya appeared as an entry in the 1952 Great Soviet Encyclopedia, its meaning was ruthlessly ideological: “Dissemination (in the press, on the radio, etc.) of false reports intended to mislead public opinion. The capitalist press and radio make wide use of dezinformatsiya.” Today, journalists, academics, and politicians still frame the disinformation issue in martial language, as a “war on truth” or “weaponized lies.” In the new context, however, bad information is a weapon wielded in an occasionally violent domestic political conflict rather than a cold war between superpowers.

Because the standards of the new field of study are so murky, the popular understanding of the persuasive effects of bad information has become overly dependent on anecdata about “rabbit holes” that privilege the role of novel technology over social, cultural, economic, and political context. (There are echoes of Cold War brainwashing fears here.) These stories of persuasion are, like the story of online advertising, plagued by the difficulty of disentangling correlation from causation. Is social media creating new types of people, or simply revealing long-obscured types of people to a segment of the public unaccustomed to seeing them? The latter possibility has embarrassing implications for the media and academia alike.

#### Disinformation concerns have not been thoroughly studied—empirical research states that disinformation is overstated

William H. **Dutton 2017**, Professor of Media and Information Policy, Michigan State University, May 2017, “Fake news, echo chambers and filter bubbles: Underresearched and overhyped”, <https://theconversation.com/fake-news-echo-chambers-and-filter-bubbles-underresearched-and-overhyped-76688//> SK

In the early years of the internet, it was revolutionary to have a world of information just a click away from anyone, anywhere, anytime. Many hoped this inherently democratic technology could lead to better-informed citizens more easily participating in debate, elections and public discourse.

Today, though, many observers are concerned that search algorithms and social media are undermining the quality of online information people see. They worry that bad information may be weakening democracy in the digital age.

The problems include online services conveying fake news, splitting users into “filter bubbles” of like-minded people and enabling users to unwittingly lock themselves up in virtual echo chambers that reinforce their own biases.

These concerns are much discussed, but have not yet been thoroughly studied. What research does exist has typically been limited to a single platform, such Twitter or Facebook. Our study of search and politics in seven nations – which surveyed the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain in January 2017 – found these concerns to be overstated, if not wrong. In fact, many internet users trust search to help them find the best information, check other sources and discover new information in ways that can burst filter bubbles and open echo chambers.

Surveying internet users

We sought to learn directly from people about how they used search engines, social media and other sources of information about politics. Through funding from Google, we conducted an online survey of more than 14,000 internet users in seven nations.

We found that the fears surrounding search algorithms and social media are not irrelevant – there are problems for some users some of the time. However, they are exaggerated, creating unwarranted fears that could lead to inappropriate responses by users, regulators and policymakers.

The importance of searching

The survey findings demonstrate the importance of search results over other ways to get information. When people are looking for information, they very often search the internet. Nearly two-thirds of users across our seven nations said they use a search engine to look for news online at least once a day. They view search results as equally accurate and reliable as other key sources, like television news.

In line with that general finding, a search engine is the first place internet users go online for information about politics. Moreover, those internet users who are very interested in politics, and who participate in political activities online, are the most likely to use a search engine like Bing or Google to find information online about politics.

But crucially, those same users engaged in search are also very likely to get information about politics on other media, exposing themselves to diverse sources of information, which makes them more likely to encounter diverse viewpoints. Further, we found that people who are interested and involved in politics online are more likely to double-check questionable information they find on the internet and social media, including by searching online for additional sources in ways that will pop filter bubbles and break out of echo chambers.

Internet-savvy or not?

It’s not just politically interested people who have these helpful search habits: People who use the internet more often and have more practice searching online do so as well.

That leaves the least politically interested people and the least skilled internet users as most susceptible to fake news, filter bubbles and echo chambers online. These individuals could benefit from support and training in digital literacy.

However, for most people, internet searches are critical for checking the reliability and validity of information they come across, whether online, on social media, on traditional media or in everyday conversation. Our research shows that these internet users find search engines useful for checking facts, discovering new information, understanding others’ views on issues, exploring their own views and deciding how to vote.

International variations

We found that people in different countries do vary in how much they trust and rely on the internet and searches for information. For example, internet users in Germany, and to a lesser extent those in France and the United Kingdom, are more trusting in TV and radio news, and more skeptical of searches and online information. Internet users in Germany rate the reliability of search engines lower than those in all the other nations, with 44 percent saying search engines are reliable, compared with 50 to 57 percent across the other six countries.

In Poland, Italy and Spain, people trust traditional broadcast media less and are more reliant on, and trusting of, internet and searching. Americans are in the middle; there were greater differences within European countries than between Europe as a whole and the U.S. American internet users were so much more likely to consult multiple sources of information that we called them “media omnivores.”

Internet users generally rely on a diverse array of sources for political information. And they display a healthy skepticism, leading them to question information and check facts. Regulating the internet, as some have proposed, could undermine existing trust and introduce new questions about accuracy and bias in search results.

But panic over fake news, echo chambers and filter bubbles is exaggerated, and not supported by the evidence from users across seven countries.

### AT: Climate IL

#### The Heartland Institute and other conservative think tanks are the engines of climate denialism---foreign ops not key

Heather W. Cann et. al 22, H.C. has a PhD in political science from Purdue University, Leigh Raymond is a Professor of Political Science at Purdue University, “Does climate denialism still matter? The prevalence of alternative frames in opposition to climate policy,” Environmental Politics, 27:3, pg. 433-454, DOI: 10.1080/09644016.2018.1439353 //chico

Think tanks and climate change policy opposition

We focus our analysis on the framing efforts of a leading think tank with global reach opposed to climate change action, the Heartland Institute, for several reasons. Conservative think tanks play a central role in opposition to climate policy, as well as other environmental policy issues (McCright and Dunlap 2003). Traditionally understood as producing and disseminating policy research with the aim of informing public policy debates (Medvetz 2012), think tanks opposing climate change policies sow doubt as to the seriousness and reality of anthropogenic climate change in order to stall and oppose policy action (Jacques et al. 2008, Oreskes and Conway 2010, Dunlap and Jacques 2013). Prior work has documented the financial ties between conservative think tanks and fossil fuel industries (Brulle 2013), and conservative think tanks like Heartland have been described as the ‘engines’ of the climate change ‘denial machine’ (Elsasser and Dunlap 2012, Dunlap and Jacques 2013, Boussalis and Coan 2016). Such organizations, by way of the scientific legitimacy of their ‘in-house’ experts (McCright and Dunlap 2003), achieve considerable global influence in both the public and political sphere: through books, op-eds, articles, policy documents, online posts, other forms of written media, interviews, and government hearings. This is especially true given the ease with which skeptic materials are circulated online (Holliman 2011, Lewandowsky et al. 2013, Sharman 2014).

Think tanks also experience privileged status as ‘alternate academia’ – a perception that such organizations produce legitimate scientific work (Medvetz 2012, Dunlap and Jacques 2013). Indeed, in the US, conservative think tank representatives often achieve direct access to policy elites when invited to testify at congressional hearings or provide briefings to decision makers, as well as access to classrooms via the distribution of learning materials.

The Heartland Institute is especially influential at shaping climate change discourse on a global scale. Internationally, Heartland is recognized as a think tank with some of the strongest networking capabilities (McGann 2017), and one of the highest-impact public policy think tanks in the US (McGann 2015). As noted by The Economist (and reported on Heartland’s own website), the organization is renowned as ‘the world’s most prominent think-tank supporting skepticism about man-made climate change’ (2012), a finding consistent with prior work in this area (McCright and Dunlap 2003, Pooley 2010).

### AT: CDC/Public Health IL

#### C.D.C is functionally broken---lack of funding, authority, and internal conflicts all swamp credibility.

Jeneen Interlandi 21, staff writer at the New York Times, “Covid Proved the C.D.C. Is Broken. Can It Be Fixed?,” The New York Times Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/16/magazine/cdc-covid-response.html> //chico

For most of the last seven decades, the C.D.C. has stood as the world’s premier public-health institution — so much so that counterpart agencies in other countries are often called C.D.C.s, even when the abbreviation means nothing in their native languages. The agency invented disease surveillance as we know it, helped lead the (successful) quest to eradicate smallpox, initiated the (ongoing) fight against H.I.V. and beat back Ebola — more than once. Its heroics have been the stuff of novels and movies and harrowing nonfiction best sellers. Americans took for granted that the C.D.C. would be engaged and quick in a crisis; that it was well funded and equipped with modern technology; that it had, or could quickly get, comprehensive data on diseases of concern; and that it knew how to translate that data into sound guidance in a crisis. Wasn’t that, at least partly, how bird flu, swine flu and a thousand other nameless plagues were prevented from decimating the American masses?

The agency may be just one cog in the nation’s public-health apparatus, but it is a crucial one. In an ideal world, its edicts would hold sway not only over schools but also nursing homes, prisons and meatpacking plants. It would guide elected officials and private institutions alike through not just global pandemics but all manner of public-health threats: food-borne pathogen outbreaks, the opioid crisis, gun violence. In an ideal world, its efforts would succeed, more often than not, at keeping people safe and helping them stay healthy. This is the C.D.C. we need. But as the last year has made clear, it is not the C.D.C. we have.

The C.D.C. we have is hardly a monolith: Some of its many pockets are bursting with innovation; others are plagued by inertia. But scientists and administrators who have spent decades working with and for the agency say that three problems in particular affect the whole institution: a lack of funding, a lack of authority and a culture that has been warped by both. Some of these problems come down to politics, but most are a result of flaws in the agency’s very foundation.

From its inception in 1946, the agency’s existence hinged on its officers’ ability to sell its services to state leaders who were leery of federal interference, and to lawmakers who often struggled to appreciate the point of epidemiology. They did this by taking on the jobs that no other agency wanted, quickly developing a reputation for being the first to arrive at any given emergency, the last to leave and the one with the most cutting-edge technology. But with each success, a pattern emerged. The agency received an infusion of funding in times of crises, and praise and more responsibility when it saved the day. But it was often starved of resources the rest of the time and rived by internal conflicts over how to apportion the money it did receive. “Everybody was trying to establish his own thing,” the historian Elizabeth Etheridge writes in “Sentinel for Health,” her biography of the agency. Each branch had strong leadership, but none of those strong leaders were great at working together.

Today the C.D.C. is both sprawling in its reach and extremely constrained in what it can do. It consists of more than a dozen centers, institutes and offices and employs more than 11,000 people in all, in a gargantuan roster of public-health initiatives — not just infectious-disease control but also chronic-disease prevention, workplace safety, health equity and more. A majority of that work is concentrated in the agency’s Atlanta headquarters, but there are also C.D.C. labs and programs across the United States and C.D.C. operations around the world. Despite that scope, the agency has little authority. Its officers can’t compel individual states to participate in its initiatives, for example, nor to include C.D.C. scientists in local outbreak investigations, nor to share much data with the agency — even in the middle of a pandemic. It can’t force people to wear masks, or local leaders to close (or open) schools or other establishments. The agency did try to halt evictions during the height of the pandemic, but that edict faced such a barrage of court challenges that its fate remains uncertain even now. Aside from a few quarantine powers, the most the C.D.C. can do is issue guidance, which is unenforceable and — as the past year has repeatedly shown — just as likely to be weaponized as meaningfully employed.

Insiders say three problems affect the institution: a lack of funding, a lack of authority and a culture that has been warped by both.

The C.D.C.’s multibillion-dollar annual budget is both too small — it has barely kept pace with inflation in the last two decades — and subject to too many restrictions. Around half of the agency’s domestic budget is funneled to the states, but only after passing through a bureaucratic thicket. There are nearly 200 separate line items in the C.D.C.’s budget. Neither the agency’s director nor any state official has the power to consolidate those line items or shift funds among them. “It ends up being extremely fragmented and beholden to different centers and advocacy groups,” says Tom Frieden, who led the C.D.C. during the Obama administration. That lack of flexibility makes it extremely difficult to adapt to the needs of individual states.

This funding system also hobbles emergency-response efforts, because there is no real budget for the unexpected. When something like swine flu or Zika or Covid-19 emerges, the agency must rely on Congress for additional resources — almost always a large, one-time infusion that can’t be used for longer-term planning — and then deploy those resources, quickly, in the middle of the crisis. Public-health experts like to call this “building the plane while flying the plane.” In the past, they say, it made the C.D.C. scrappy and fostered an esprit de corps among its officers that helped the broader operation thrive. But in recent decades, these privations appear to have done the opposite. “I’d go into a meeting and say, ‘What needs to be done?’” William Darrow, a former chief of the agency’s Behavioral and Prevention Research branch, told me. “And they’d give me a five-point chart. And then I’d ask, ‘Well why aren’t we doing those things?’ And it was all hemming and hawing about whether we could convince the states, or get top leadership to support it, or if it would be controversial.”

The C.D.C. is resistant to change, slow to act and reluctant to innovate, according to critics. The agency’s officers are overly reliant on published studies, which take time to produce; and are incapable of making necessary judgment calls. Agency departments are also deeply siloed. “We are really good at drilling down,” Darrow says. “But terrible at looking up and reaching across.” Ongoing tensions between the C.D.C. and its parent agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, have exacerbated these tendencies, insiders say, and the agency is constantly fending off H.H.S.’s efforts to usurp some of its portfolio. “There are a lot of very good people there,” Bill Hanage, a scientist who studies the evolution of infectious diseases at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, says. “But when your resources are constantly constrained like that — when you’re constantly told no — that forces you into a defensive crouch.”

#### Moderna decked vaccine diplomacy.

Mario H. Lopez 21, Opinion Contributor for THE HILL, “Moderna’s missteps undermine US vaccine diplomacy,” THE HILL, <https://thehill.com/opinion/healthcare/583662-modernas-missteps-undermine-us-vaccine-diplomacy/> //chico

This isn’t just problematic for the company. It hurts America’s standing on the world’s stage at a time when we need to project strength and stability. Instead of riding high on the historic wave of innovation unleashed by the U.S. pharmaceutical industry, the Biden administration is publicly admonishing Moderna for failing to increase its global vaccine supply.

Consider the events that have unfolded since December 2020 when Moderna became the second company to obtain FDA authorization for its vaccine. Despite receiving $2.5 billion from American taxpayers, Moderna has opted not to follow the lead of other COVID vaccine manufacturers who have offered their product at a reduced rate. The company’s president flatly stated, “We will not sell it at cost.”

### AT: Polarization IL

#### No impact to disinformation---empirics.

Che-Yuan Liang 12 and Mattias Nordin, C.L has a Ph.D. Economics, Uppsala University, M.N is a researcher and senior lecturer at the Department of statistics at Uppsala University. “The Internet, News Consumption, and Political Attitudes,” Uppsala Center for Fiscal Studies Working Paper Series, <https://econpapers.repec.org/paper/hhsuufswp/2012_5f010.htm> //chico

6. Concluding Discussion

We investigate the effects of the rise of the Internet as an additional mass medium on news consumption patterns and political attitudes. We use Swedish survey data from 2002 to 2007, a period during which online news media emerged. Specifically, we estimate the effect of the introduction of high-speed Internet (broadband) and find that broadband access is highly associated with online media consumption that crowds out a portion of offline media consumption. Overall, broadband access at home increases the share of individuals who read newspapers (especially tabloids) while decreasing the time people spends watching television or listening to radio. Furthermore, more people consume newspapers, online or offline, on any given day. The average time spent per reader is, however, lower. This may indicate a new way of reading news that focuses on shorter articles. The changes in media consumption patterns do, however, result in little to no change in citizens’ political attitudes. We find no effects on political interest, ideological polarization, and opinion formation, and we find a small right-wing ideological shift. This result might not be surprising for several reasons. The main effect that we find is a shift from offline to online media. However, the main online actors are basically the main offline actors that have simply created online editions with similar content. Media penetration was also high in Sweden prior to the emergence of the Internet. The political effects of one additional source in a sea of sources of information might be marginal. We have focused on the largest mainstream, online mass media. Today, the Internet increasingly offers new non-traditional types of interactive communication, such as blogs and social networks, which are often tailored toward specific groups. In many aspects, these media differ more from traditional media than the media we discuss in this paper. A study of the political effects of these media would be a fruitful area of research. Furthermore, we have investigated the effects on the general population; however, it is possible that the effects are more pronounced among some groups, such as young people, who may be more inclined to make use of new technologies.

#### Even if polarization is increasing there’s no causal link

Levi Boxell 17, L.B Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Matthew Gentzkow Department of Economics Stanford University, Jesse M. Shapiro Economics Department @ Brown University, “IS THE INTERNET CAUSING POLITICAL POLARIZATION? EVIDENCE FROM DEMOGRAPHICS,” NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES, <https://www-nber-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/system/files/working_papers/w23258/w23258.pdf> //chico

Our findings are difficult to square with a straightforward account linking the recent rise of polarization to the internet. This is especially true for accounts in which social media plays a central role. Unless cross-group spillovers are very large or the effects of digital media vary greatly across groups, some other forces must explain the large increase in polarization among the groups least likely to use the internet. None of this is to say that the rise of digital technologies is not important. They may well account for some recent polarization, and whatever role they may have played in the past is likely to grow in coming years.

### AT: Truth Decay/Public Trust IL

#### Info is not the root cause. Foreign adversaries are scapegoats for declining public trust

Gabrielle Lim 20, researcher at Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center and a fellow with Citizen Lab. “The Risks of Exaggerating Foreign Influence Operations and Disinformation,” Centre for International Governance Innovation (CGI), <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/risks-exaggerating-foreign-influence-operations-and-disinformation/> //chico

As a first step, the US Foreign Agents Registration Act, which risks being abused for political reasons, should be reformed, as Nick Robinson argues in Foreign Policy. Second, increasing transparency around campaign funding and online ad spending would also be helpful, specifically around “dark money” — where the identities of the donors are concealed. And lastly, states need to do the hard work of governance. In many ways the prevalence of false and misleading content is symptomatic of deeper issues. As Johan Farkas and Jannick Schou demonstrate in their book, Post-Truth, Fake News and Democracy, the decline in democracy has been ongoing for decades and is not because of social media: “There is a series of deep-seated problems facing liberal democracies, but the rise of fake news and alternative facts is not the biggest of our problems.” Instead of looking overseas for scapegoats, we should be looking at why trust in our own institutions and authorities has fallen, why civil discourse has devolved and how to better address the many social divisions that drive our receptivity for dubious content.

#### Education system is a massive alt-cause. Students lack media literacy. dissemination becomes inevitable.

Jennifer Kavanagh 18, J.K senior fellow, American Statecraft Program, M.R is a Chief Executive Officer of the RAND Corporation, “Truth Decay: An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life,” RAND Corporation, pg. 133 <https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2314.html> //chico

Competing Demands on the Educational System

As the information system changes and evolves, the U.S. educational system faces increasing demands from a number of sources, including the responsibility to prepare students to confront a more complicated and challenging information system, to evaluate information and sources, and to distinguish between opinion and fact. This responsibility is added to a growing list of new and preexisting demands: standardized tests, extracurricular activities, before- and after-school care, and other services. At the same time, schools are facing budget constraints. The fiscal constraints and demands placed on the educational system and the resulting gap between the rapidly evolving challenges of the new information system and the curricula offered to students in most public schools constitute the third key driver of Truth Decay. This gap drives and perpetuates Truth Decay by contributing centrally to the development of a citizenry that is susceptible to consuming and disseminating disinformation, misinformation, and information that blur the line between fact and opinion. Specifically, without the training that they need to carefully evaluate sources, to identify and check their own biases, and to separate opinion and fact, students matriculating out of schools that teach kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12)—which is the focus in this report—or universities may be highly vulnerable to false and misleading information and easy targets for intentional disinformation campaigns and propaganda. Furthermore, once consuming this information themselves, these users are more likely to pass the information along to others, perpetuating the challenges that Truth Decay poses and contributing to a context in which Truth Decay flourishes.

## AT: Democracy IL

### 1NC---AT: Democracy Internal

#### Russian disinformation can’t collapse democracy BUT the 1AC’s divisiveness and blame shifting can.

Kevin Riehle 21, Associate Professor at the University of Mississippi Center for Intelligence and Security Studies, January 2021, “Winners and losers in Russia’s information war,” *Intelligence & National Security*, Vol. 36, Issue 7, pp. 1057-1064, https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2021.1877405, RMax

It might be soothing to claim that Russia is the root of our problems, and Russia certainly has no desire to help us solve those problems. Jankowicz even seems to imply that maintaining vigilance against Russian influence activities will help in ‘repairing the cracks that allowed them in the first place.’40 However, such sentiments hide the true origin of Russia’s influence: our internal divisiveness. The success of Russian influence activities can only serve as an indicator of how far we have to go to heal our own societies. Nevertheless, Russia’s actions have placed it back on the table as an adversary, just as its Soviet predecessor was, which is not in Russia’s best interests. That is evidenced by the very existence of these two books: without Russia’s actions, Kent and Jankowicz would never have written them. However, Russia’s strategy of division and deception is a losing one. Russia is not capable of destroying a democratic society; the society can only do that to itself. Democratic societies survived the Soviet-era information onslaught and will survive the current one if they can reduce internal anger and divisiveness, while Russia offers nothing constructive to the world. In her claim to be describing How to Lose the Information War, Jankowicz is in fact showing how Russia is doing just that.

### 1NC---AT: Democracy Internal---Squo Solves

#### The United States' current response to disinformation solves democracy - we respond by declassifying intelligence which increases trust between allies

Chris Zappone 22, an inaugural member of the National Security College’s Futures Hub in 2017. His focus has been on hybrid warfare, propaganda, cyber competition. He is Digital Foreign Editor at The Age and Sydney Morning Herald, where he was among the first in the media to report on the Kremlin’s efforts to interfere in the 2016 US election. He has presented on related subjects at SXSW in the US and testified to Parliament on the political risk of social media manipulation, March 2022, "‘It’s a clear pattern’: Why declassifying secrets is good for democracy," The Sydney Morning Herald, https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/it-s-a-clear-pattern-why-declassifying-secrets-is-good-for-democracy-20220304-p5a1nw.html //AShah

The Biden administration’s decision on Thursday to tell the public that Vladimir Putin was likely to use chemical weapons in Ukraine shows the extent to which the US strategy to battle Russia’s disinformation has evolved.

Once upon a time, such intelligence would have only been shared with the top echelons of allied countries. But in the evolving East-West confrontation, declassifying secrets is proving good for democracy.

In the new warning, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the US had noticed an uptick in false claims from Russia about “US biological weapons labs and chemical weapons development in Ukraine”, and those false claims could foreshadow Russia’s real use of the banned weapons against the country.

“Now that Russia has made these false claims, and China has seemingly endorsed this propaganda, we should all be on the lookout for Russia to possibly use chemical or biological weapons in Ukraine, or to create a false flag operation using them,” Psaki tweeted. “It’s a clear pattern.”

After years of being outwitted by Russia on the world stage of public opinion, the US has found a surprisingly effective new counter-tactic: strategically declassifying and sharing intelligence.

For example, the US declassified and shared information warning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in the months leading up to it. The US and the UK revealed that Russia had already positioned operatives to stage a fake attack and to install a pro-Russian leadership in Kiev. The US also repeatedly warned of “false-flag” operations to be staged by Russia as a pretext for invasion.

In contrast to the Kremlin’s famed use of internet trolls and bots to sow doubts in other countries, the US’s new strategy of sharing factual information has – at least for now – helped built trust between the US, its allies and war-hit Ukraine.

For more than a decade, democracies have struggled to convince their own citizens that they were operating in good faith.

In some case, the cynicism has understandable roots: the cooked intelligence seized on by the US to justify the 2003 Iraq War or genuine cynicism for Western power in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Putin and his partisans in the media have seized on those events and helped shape them – highlighting, and even exacerbating, the disorders through the dissemination of fake news, conspiracy theories and official statements.

But in preempting Putin’s invasion, the US has drawn attention to Ukraine, ensuring journalists flooded the country in the weeks before the attack.

This has allowed the nation of 44 million, itself apt in strategic communication, to establish narrative control of the event through the journalists’ work or through genuine video footage by citizens.

The US also appears to have extended a similar strategy to China, with US officials revealing Beijing shared information with Moscow about meetings Chinese diplomats had with their US counterparts before the Ukrainian invasion began.

On Thursday, Psaki also called out Chinese officials for echoing Russia’s conspiracy theories.

The success of this “pre-bunking” tactic relies on sharing credible information to forewarn allies and the broader public of lies told by the Moscow regime.

Whether Australia will embrace this tactic remains to be seen.

“It’s uncharted territory,” said John Blaxland who is professor of International Security & Intelligence Studies at the Australian National University. “But now that the US has done it, the prospect becomes more feasible.”

Forewarning the public about bad information to come has “been discussed at the individual level for years,” said Joshua Tucker, professor of Politics and Co-Director, Centre for Social Media and Politics at New York University. “Now we’re seeing this play out at a macro scale.”

“This is what the US is doing,” Tucker said. “It’s worked particularly well.”

The US government, even before it faltered in its ability to shape global narratives, relied on spin if not outright deception, in its involvement in the Iraq War, or in Vietnam, El Salvador and Cambodia.

But it was perhaps the Kremlin’s embrace of deception to interfere in the US 2016 presidential election (and in others around the world) that explains why the sizable disinformation research community in the West was surprised by the new tactic of declassifying intel for strategic advantage.

Many in that community have struggled to explain why Ukraine’s narratives have succeeded where Russia’s have so far failed - at least, outside Russia.

“We’ve gotten so hyper-focused on disinformation,” Tucker said, that we’ve missed the potential truth has to shape perceptions.

### AT: LIO IL

#### LIO is terminally unsustainable---poisons relations, causes internal polarization, and economic globalization causes instability and multipolarity.

John J. Mearsheimer 19, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. “Bound to Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order,” International Security (2019) 43 (4): 7–50. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1162/isec_a_00342> //chico

By 2019, it was clear that the liberal international order was in deep trouble. The tectonic plates that underpin it are shifting, and little can be done to repair and rescue it. Indeed, that order was destined to fail from the start, as it contained the seeds of its own destruction.

The fall of the liberal international order horrifies the Western elites who built it and who have benefited from it in many ways.1 These elites fervently believe that this order was and remains an important force for promoting peace and prosperity around the globe. Many of them blame President Donald Trump for its demise. After all, he expressed contempt for the liberal order when campaigning for president in 2016; and since taking office, he has pursued policies that seem designed to tear it down.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the liberal international order is in trouble solely because of Trump's rhetoric or policies. In fact, more fundamental problems are at play, which account for why Trump has been able to successfully challenge an order that enjoys almost universal support among the foreign policy elites in the West. The aim of this article is to determine why the liberal world order is in big trouble and to identify the kind of international order that will replace it.

I offer three main sets of arguments. First, because states in the modern world are deeply interconnected in a variety of ways, orders are essential for facilitating efficient and timely interactions. There are different kinds of international orders, and which type emerges depends primarily on the global distribution of power. But when the system is unipolar, the political ideology of the sole pole also matters. Liberal international orders can arise only in unipolar systems where the leading state is a liberal democracy.

Second, the United States has led two different orders since World War II. The Cold War order, which is sometimes mistakenly referred to as a “liberal international order,” was neither liberal nor international. It was a bounded order that was limited mainly to the West and was realist in all its key dimensions. It had certain features that were also consistent with a liberal order, but those attributes were based on realist logic. The U.S.-led post–Cold War order, on the other hand, is liberal and international, and thus differs in fundamental ways from the bounded order the United States dominated during the Cold War.

Third, the post–Cold War liberal international order was doomed to collapse, because the key policies on which it rested are deeply flawed. Spreading liberal democracy around the globe, which is of paramount importance for building such an order, not only is extremely difficult, but often poisons relations with other countries and sometimes leads to disastrous wars. Nationalism within the target state is the main obstacle to the promotion of democracy, but balance of power politics also function as an important blocking force.

Furthermore, the liberal order's tendency to privilege international institutions over domestic considerations, as well as its deep commitment to porous, if not open borders, has had toxic political effects inside the leading liberal states themselves, including the U.S. unipole. Those policies clash with nationalism over key issues such as sovereignty and national identity. Because nationalism is the most powerful political ideology on the planet, it invariably trumps liberalism whenever the two clash, thus undermining the order at its core.

In addition, hyperglobalization, which sought to minimize barriers to global trade and investment, resulted in lost jobs, declining wages, and rising income inequality throughout the liberal world. It also made the international financial system less stable, leading to recurring financial crises. Those troubles then morphed into political problems, further eroding support for the liberal order.

A hyperglobalized economy undermines the order in yet another way: it helps countries other than the unipole grow more powerful, which can undermine unipolarity and bring the liberal order to an end. This is what is happening with the rise of China, which, along with the revival of Russian power, has brought the unipolar era to a close. The emerging multipolar world will consist of a realist-based international order, which will play an important role in managing the world economy, dealing with arms control, and handling problems of the global commons such as climate change. In addition to this new international order, the United States and China will lead bounded orders that will compete with each other in both the economic and military realms.2

## AT: Polarization IL

### 1NC---AT: Polarization IL

#### Polarization in democracies is inevitable and good– more polarization creates stronger democracies

Markus Pausch 21, political scientist and professor at the University of Salzburg, 10/10/21, “The future of polarisation in Europe: relative cosmopolitanism and democracy,” <https://eujournalfuturesresearch.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40309-021-00183-2/> mh

The political polarisation that we observe in recent years, is **linked to various factors of political equality** [11], including representation, participation, transparency, but is also a dialectical relationship between contradictory needs for freedom and belonging, to which cosmopolitanism and communitarianism correspond at the political level. A balance between these needs requires a non-dogmatic relative cosmopolitanism that is based on real life experiences and competences of democracy, dialogue and citizenship education.

Basis characteristics of polarisation

In a complex world where there are no simple explanations, the **risk of polarisation increases**. Unequal power relations, socio-economic inequality, structural marginalisation, discrimination or exclusion of certain groups can drive its pernicious forms. The polarisation we encounter today thus has an existential basis, the contradiction between the need for freedom and that for belonging.

Four features characterise polarisation processes [49].

\* **Discrepancy of opinions**: Two clearly identifiable and profiled opinions oppose each other. These opinions are not compatible and configure themselves in an either/or relationship. The communitarians aim at a narrower concept of belonging, the cosmopolitans at a broad understanding in which individual freedom and solidarity are thought globally and universally.

**\* Group formation**: The two opinions are held by two different groups whose members are aware of the discrepancy and feel they belong to one of the two groups. The world is divided into “Us versus Them” [9]. Political opponents are increasingly becoming antagonists [36] or even enemies. Carl Schmitt’s friend-enemy scheme has recently received greater attention again [40, 56]. In political science, the term “affective polarisation” refers to the mutual dislike of the groups (cf. [33]). What is necessary is the awareness that one’s own opinion is one pole in a spectrum that can contain many opinions and that one’s position is represented by a group that is visible in some way. Often these groups give themselves a name, or names are attributed to them. With regard to positioning on the EU, we know the attributions as pro- and anti-Europeans or Eurosceptics. With regard to positioning on democracy, it is mainly a distinction between representative and direct democratic elements.

\* **Purism**: Relative positions are not considered by the two groups. A conciliatory position is rejected. The groups that form the poles in a polarisation process cannot take a middle position because their opinions are too far apart. A drastic example can illustrate this: opponents of the death penalty cannot negotiate about the death penalty. Their position is non-negotiable. The same is true for human rights activists. The historical fighters for democracy could not negotiate their goal with those who wanted to preserve their authoritarian power. Someone fighting for women’s rights cannot soften or weaken the goal of equality. Conversely, authoritarian forces that oppose emancipation do not give an inch. The positions at the poles are therefore fundamentally non-negotiable for the representatives of these poles. This is also true in the case of the polarisation around Europe. Those who advocate a European republic will not discuss the possibility of renationalisation. The reverse is also true.

\* **Political struggle**: The fourth characteristic to be mentioned is that a political struggle for positions must be waged in order to speak of polarisation. The mere existence of major differences of opinion is not per se politically relevant, because it would also be conceivable that one of the groups or even both simply exist in silence without engaging in a political struggle. Only when there is a dispute in public can we talk about polarisation.

However, polarisation processes are **not to be regarded as dangerous or endangering democracy** per se. To a certain extent, they are **part of pluralistic societies**. Historically, polarisation processes have even often been a **precondition for social change** towards more democracy. Polarisation often starts from below and develops bottom-up. When social movements recognise a lack of justice or opportunities for themselves or other groups and fight against it, a hardening of positions is to be expected at first, as the dominant or privileged groups feel threatened and may reject the demands. Only when the pressure of the social movement becomes so strong that it **leads to a concession** **can polarisation develop towards democratisation**. For this to happen, the polarisation process must be turned around positively through dialogue and inclusion (cf. [39], 234).

## Alt Causes

### Alt Cause---Domestic Disinfo

#### Domestic information warfare is an alt cause

Samia Benaissa **Pedriza 2021**, She has a PhD in Journalism at the Complutense University of Madrid and Is a researcher on communication and international law, “Sources, Channels and Strategies of Disinformation in the 2020 US Election: Social Networks, Traditional Media and Political Candidates”, Vol. 2 Iss. 4//SK

In relation to the sources of disinformation, it is usual that the amount of fake news grow exponentially during electoral seasons (Waisbord 2018). As Shin et al. (2016) recall, during the 2012 US election, false information was widely disseminated via Twitter, especially among politically polarized voters. The 2016 US election was also another clear example of misinformation derived from social media, but in that case, it was also largely orchestrated by foreign powers that managed to unwantedly influence the electoral campaign (Hall Jamieson 2018). However, in the 2020 election, the sources of disinformation that most attracted the attention of fact-checkers were those represented by users of social networks, the candidates themselves and traditional media. Therefore, in this case, no foreign power following a planned and sustained over time disinformation strategy was involved, according to the concept of “organized disinformation” used in international relations (Volkoff 1986). In the 2020 election, the only messages analyzed by international fact-checkers that came from an institutional source were those issued by the White House itself.

#### Non-state actors and extremist groups are an alt cause—erodes trust in democratic institutions

Ritu **Gill et al. 2022**, Ritu Gill is Ritu Gill is an Intelligence Analyst with 13 years of experience working with Canadian law enforcement, 12 of those years were with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Dr. Rebecca Goolsby currently serves as a program officer for the Office of Naval Research and the lead on NATO Research Technology Group, HFM-293 “Digital and Social Media Assessment For Effective Communication And Cyber Diplomacy”, “COVID-19 Disinformation: A Multi-National, Whole of Society Perspective”, pg.48//SK

Social media is characterized as a powerful online interaction and information exchange medium. However, it has given rise to new forms of deviant behav- iors such as spreading fake news, rumors, misinformation, disinformation, and conducting propaganda and influence campaigns. Due to afforded anonymity and perceived diminished personal risk of connecting and acting online, deviant groups are becoming increasingly common. Online deviant groups have grown in parallel with online social networks, whether it is black hat hackers using Twitter to recruit and arm attackers, announce operational details, coordinate cyber-attacks (Calabresi, 2017), and post instructional or recruitment videos on YouTube targeting certain demographics; or state/non-state actors’ and extremist groups’ (such as ISIS) savvy use of social communication platforms to conduct phishing operations, such as viral retweeting of messages containing harmful URLs leading to malware (Al-khateeb et al., 2016). These campaigns use a variety of tactics, techniques, and strategies to further their agenda. Some of these campaigns exploit deep-rooted biases along racial, ethnic and political lines (leveraging pandemic disparity), to erode trust in scientific and democratic institutions (invoking vaccination fears), to stoke anger, anxiety, and chaos, and ultimately polarize an already divided society. People increasingly obtain their news from social media rather than from mainstream media (Barthel & Mitchell, 2017), and with the world adjusting to the current pandemic and officials struggling with the misinfodemic, it is important now, more than ever, to closely monitor social media platforms to identify misinformation and disinformation campaigns and stem their impact on society.

### Alt Cause---Global Disinfo

#### Alt causes. China’s information warfare o/w- global ambitions, broad range, and transform LIO

David L. **Sloss 2022**, He is a professor at Santa Clara University School of Law, received his JD from Stanford University, MPP from Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, and BA from Hampshire College. He worked as a litigation associate at Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati in Palo Alto and clerked for Senior Judge Joseph T. Sneed, U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, San Francisco. He also worked for the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency for nine years before he attended law school., “Tyrants on Twitter”, pg 76// SK

We saw in the last two chapters that Russia is actively using social media to interfere with democratic elections in the United States and western Europe. China’s approach to information operations differs from Russia’s in several respects. First, China’s ambitions are global: it aims to reshape the global information environment to align with its authoritarian values. Second, social media is a fairly small element of China’s global information strategy: China is utilizing a broad range of communication tools to achieve its goals. Third, whereas Russia’s agenda is primarily negative— to undermine Western democracies— China has a much more positive agenda. Ultimately, China seeks to transform the liberal international order created by the United States and its allies after World War II so that international norms and institutions align more closely with China’s authoritarian governance model. The Chinese term huayuquan is translated as “discourse power.” Discourse power is the “national capability to infl uence global values, governance, and even day- to- day discussions on the world stage.”1 One commentator notes: “The Chinese Communist Party’s quest to dominate thought and narrative has always been central to its pursuit of power. To this end, every supreme party leader since Mao has reaffirmed the strategic and national security importance of the party’s control of media, culture, and narrative.

### Alt Cause---Algorithms

#### Big tech algorithms makes polarization inevitable.

Paul Barret et. al 21 P.B Deputy Director and Senior Research Scholar - NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights, J.H Associate Research Scientist and Adjunct Instructor - NYU Tandon School of Engineering Founder and Editor - Tech Policy Press, G.S Grant Sims Research Fellow - NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights, “How tech platforms fuel U.S. political polarization and what government can do about it,” BROOKINGS, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2021/09/27/how-tech-platforms-fuel-u-s-political-polarization-and-what-government-can-do-about-it/> //chico

As both members of Congress and federal law enforcement agencies investigate the origins and execution of the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the role social media played in the mayhem is emerging as a crucial issue.

The House Select Committee probing the mob attack has asked a wide range of social media and telecommunications companies to preserve records related to several hundred people, including members of Congress, who could be relevant to the investigation. Beyond these specific requests, the Committee has signaled a broader interest in how false claims about the 2020 election spread on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, including how algorithms might contribute to the promotion of disinformation and extremism. Meanwhile, federal prosecutors pursuing more than 600 criminal cases are relying on evidence gathered from social media accounts used to organize the attempt by Trump supporters to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden’s victory.

A report we recently published through the Center for Business and Human Rights at New York University’s Stern School of Business sheds light on the relationship between tech platforms and the kind of extreme polarization that can lead to the erosion of democratic values and partisan violence. While Facebook, the largest social media platform, has gone out of its way to deny that it contributes to extreme divisiveness, a growing body of social science research, as well as Facebook’s own actions and leaked documents, indicate that an important relationship exists.

Our central conclusion, based on a review of more than 50 social science studies and interviews with more than 40 academics, policy experts, activists, and current and former industry people, is that platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter likely are not the root causes of political polarization, but they do exacerbate it. Clarifying this point is important for two reasons. First, Facebook’s disavowals, in congressional testimony and other public statements, may have clouded the issue in the minds of lawmakers and the public. Second, as the country simultaneously tries to make sense of what happened on January 6 and turns its attention to elections in 2022, 2024, and beyond, understanding the harmful role popular tech platforms can play in U.S. politics should be an urgent priority.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTES TO PARTISAN ANIMOSITY

Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg has on multiple occasions dismissed suggestions that his company stokes divisiveness. “Some people say that the problem is that social networks are polarizing us, but that’s not at all clear from the evidence or research,” he testified before a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee in March 2021, instead pointing to “a political and media environment that drives Americans apart.” A few days later, Nick Clegg, Facebook’s vice president for global affairs and communication, argued that “what evidence there is simply does not support the idea that social media, or the filter bubbles it supposedly creates, are the unambiguous driver of polarization that many assert.”

Contrary to Facebook’s contentions, however, a range of experts have concluded that the use of social media contributes to partisan animosity in the U.S. In an article published in October 2020 in the journal Science, a group of 15 researchers summarized the scholarly consensus this way: “In recent years, social media companies like Facebook and Twitter have played an influential role in political discourse, intensifying political sectarianism.” In August 2021, a separate quintet of researchers summed up their review of the empirical evidence in an article in the journal Trends in Cognitive Sciences: “Although social media is unlikely to be the main driver of polarization, they concluded, “we posit that it is often a key facilitator.”

PARTISANSHIP IS COMPLICATED, BUT PLATFORMS DO NOT FULLY ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY

Polarization is a complicated phenomenon. Some divisiveness is natural in a democracy. In the U.S., struggles for social and racial justice have led to backlash and partisan animosity. But the extreme polarization we are now witnessing, especially on the political right, has consequences that threaten to undermine democracy itself. These include declining trust in institutions; scorn for facts; legislative dysfunction; erosion of democratic norms; and, in the worst case, real-world violence.

All of this cannot be attributed to the rise of Silicon Valley, of course. Polarization began growing in the U.S. decades before Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube appeared. Other factors—including the realignment of political party membership, the rise of hyper-partisan radio and cable TV outlets, and increased racial animus during Donald Trump’s uniquely divisive presidency—have contributed to the problem.

But that doesn’t exonerate the tech platforms, as Facebook would have us believe. One study published in March 2020 described an experiment in which subjects stopped using Facebook for a month and then were surveyed on their views. Staying off the platform “significantly reduced polarization of views on policy issues,” researchers found, although it didn’t diminish divisiveness based strictly on party identity. “That’s consistent with the view that people are seeing political content on social media that does tend to make them more upset, more angry at the other side [and more likely] to have stronger views on specific issues,” Matthew Gentzkow, a Stanford economist and co-author of the study, told us in an interview.

Facebook and others have pointed to other research to raise questions about the relationship between social media and polarization. A 2017 study found that from 1996 to 2016, polarization rose most sharply among Americans aged 65 and older—the demographic least likely to use social media. A 2020 paper compared rising polarization levels in the U.S. over four decades to those in eight other developed democracies. The other countries experienced smaller increases in divisiveness or saw polarization decrease. These variations by country suggest that, over the long term, factors other than social media have driven polarization in America

But notice that both the age-group and inter-country comparisons spanned decades, including extended stretches of time before the emergence of social media. More recent snapshots of the U.S. are thus more relevant. A paper published in March, based on a study of more than 17,000 Americans, found that Facebook’s content-ranking algorithm may limit users’ exposure to news outlets offering viewpoints contrary to their own—and thereby increase polarization.

MAXIMIZING ONLINE ENGAGEMENT LEADS TO INCREASED POLARIZATION

The fundamental design of platform algorithms helps explain why they amplify divisive content. “Social media technology employs popularity-based algorithms that tailor content to maximize user engagement,” the co-authors of the Science paper wrote. Maximizing engagement increases polarization, especially within networks of like-minded users. This is “in part because of the contagious power of content that elicits sectarian fear or indignation,” the researchers said.

As we wrote in our report, “social media companies do not seek to boost user engagement because they want to intensify polarization. They do so because the amount of time users spend on a platform liking, sharing, and retweeting is also the amount of time they spend looking at the paid advertising that makes the major platforms so lucrative.”

### Alt Cause---Social Media

#### Tech corporations like Facebook exacerbate partisan divisions and threaten democracy—it’s an alt cause

Paul **Barrett et al 2021**, Paul M. Barrett is an assistant managing editor and senior writer at Bloomberg Businessweek.; Justin Hendrix is CEO and Editor of Tech Policy Press, a new nonprofit media venture concerned with the intersection of technology and democracy. Previously, he was Executive Director of NYC Media Lab; Grant Sims; Septemer 2021, “How tech platforms fuel U.S. political polarization and what government can do about it”, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/techtank/2021/09/27/how-tech-platforms-fuel-u-s-political-polarization-and-what-government-can-do-about-it/> //SK

As both members of Congress and federal law enforcement agencies investigate the origins and execution of the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the role social media played in the mayhem is emerging as a crucial issue.

The House Select Committee probing the mob attack has asked a wide range of social media and telecommunications companies to preserve records related to several hundred people, including members of Congress, who could be relevant to the investigation. Beyond these specific requests, the Committee has signaled a broader interest in how false claims about the 2020 election spread on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, including how algorithms might contribute to the promotion of disinformation and extremism. Meanwhile, federal prosecutors pursuing more than 600 criminal cases are relying on evidence gathered from social media accounts used to organize the attempt by Trump supporters to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden’s victory.

A report we recently published through the Center for Business and Human Rights at New York University’s Stern School of Business sheds light on the relationship between tech platforms and the kind of extreme polarization that can lead to the erosion of democratic values and partisan violence. While Facebook, the largest social media platform, has gone out of its way to deny that it contributes to extreme divisiveness, a growing body of social science research, as well as Facebook’s own actions and leaked documents, indicate that an important relationship exists.

Our central conclusion, based on a review of more than 50 social science studies and interviews with more than 40 academics, policy experts, activists, and current and former industry people, is that platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter likely are not the root causes of political polarization, but they do exacerbate it. Clarifying this point is important for two reasons. First, Facebook’s disavowals, in congressional testimony and other public statements, may have clouded the issue in the minds of lawmakers and the public. Second, as the country simultaneously tries to make sense of what happened on January 6 and turns its attention to elections in 2022, 2024, and beyond, understanding the harmful role popular tech platforms can play in U.S. politics should be an urgent priority.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTES TO PARTISAN ANIMOSITY

Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg has on multiple occasions dismissed suggestions that his company stokes divisiveness. “Some people say that the problem is that social networks are polarizing us, but that’s not at all clear from the evidence or research,” he testified before a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee in March 2021, instead pointing to “a political and media environment that drives Americans apart.” A few days later, Nick Clegg, Facebook’s vice president for global affairs and communication, argued that “what evidence there is simply does not support the idea that social media, or the filter bubbles it supposedly creates, are the unambiguous driver of polarization that many assert.”

Contrary to Facebook’s contentions, however, a range of experts have concluded that the use of social media contributes to partisan animosity in the U.S. In an article published in October 2020 in the journal Science, a group of 15 researchers summarized the scholarly consensus this way: “In recent years, social media companies like Facebook and Twitter have played an influential role in political discourse, intensifying political sectarianism.” In August 2021, a separate quintet of researchers summed up their review of the empirical evidence in an article in the journal Trends in Cognitive Sciences: “Although social media is unlikely to be the main driver of polarization, they concluded, “we posit that it is often a key facilitator.”

PARTISANSHIP IS COMPLICATED, BUT PLATFORMS DO NOT FULLY ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY

Polarization is a complicated phenomenon. Some divisiveness is natural in a democracy. In the U.S., struggles for social and racial justice have led to backlash and partisan animosity. But the extreme polarization we are now witnessing, especially on the political right, has consequences that threaten to undermine democracy itself. These include declining trust in institutions; scorn for facts; legislative dysfunction; erosion of democratic norms; and, in the worst case, real-world violence.

All of this cannot be attributed to the rise of Silicon Valley, of course. Polarization began growing in the U.S. decades before Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube appeared. Other factors—including the realignment of political party membership, the rise of hyper-partisan radio and cable TV outlets, and increased racial animus during Donald Trump’s uniquely divisive presidency—have contributed to the problem.

But that doesn’t exonerate the tech platforms, as Facebook would have us believe. One study published in March 2020 described an experiment in which subjects stopped using Facebook for a month and then were surveyed on their views. Staying off the platform “significantly reduced polarization of views on policy issues,” researchers found, although it didn’t diminish divisiveness based strictly on party identity. “That’s consistent with the view that people are seeing political content on social media that does tend to make them more upset, more angry at the other side [and more likely] to have stronger views on specific issues,” Matthew Gentzkow, a Stanford economist and co-author of the study, told us in an interview.

#### Social media inevitably collapses the info ecosystem

Serena Giusti 21, Head of the Programme on Eastern Europe and Russia at Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa) and Senior Associate Research Fellow at the Institute for International Studies. (ISPI) “Multilateralism, Global Governance and the Challenges of Disinformation,” Cyber Insights Magazine, October 1 2021, <https://www.cyber-insights.org/multilateralism-global-governance-and-the-challenges-of-disinformation>

**Social media** (including messaging platforms) are becoming more and more relevant for contemporary societies: they **constitute** the **main sources of information** for an increasing number of citizens. They have also become **vital communication tools** for governments, diplomatic personnel, international organisations (IOs) and all actors, formal and informal, taking part **in the international system.**

Social media can be used by states as **tools to project power**, by spreading manipulated information or fake news or to libel individuals or institutions working in crucial sectors. Both **authoritarian** and democratic leaders tend to deploy them quite often in order to reach a wide range of political goals: inter alia, to delegitimise disruptive journalists and media, to **discredit political opponents or leaders of foreign states**, to orient electoral choices in other states or even to contribute to the justification of especially grave decisions, such as **foreign interventions** motivated by alleged violations of international law by third countries’ governments. In particular, the use of disinformation by state and non-state actors to **interfere in** domestic **affairs of other countries** (e.g., before and/or during political elections or referenda) is **endangering** not only **the very concept of sovereignty**, but also the **independence and security of states** and the functioning of democratic processes, with **serious implications** **for** relations among states and **multilateralism a**s a consequence. Whereas cases of weaponization of disinformation regard especially autocratic regimes, **democracies are not exempted**, as the attempts by some American Alt-Right groups to influence the 2017 French President elections prove.

The **frequent use** of disinformation **challenges the reciprocal trust among** actors who participate in the **multilateral governance of the international system** and it **makes enduring and effective cooperation** on global challenges **much more difficult to achieve.**

**Effective communication is key to multilateral governance**, and it is especially useful to **envisage and implement actions** which r**equire** the **constructive cooperatio**n of governments and third parties, involving not only governments but also civil society actors – such as in the case of actions needed to realise the goals defined in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the actions defined in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the measures to contrast the Covid-19 pandemic (in primis realising far-reaching vaccination campaigns and guaranteeing people’s safe mobility). As underlined by Mark Zuckerberg, social media are a sort of a “town square”: if you want to be part of the conversation, you have no choice but to be there; otherwise, you are a digital outcast. However, the **use of social media can cause** a **polarisation of opinions and sectarianism** and harbour conflictual relationships **among i**ndividuals, groups, **political parties, and states**. Moreover, since our activities happen mostly in-between the digital and the physical worlds, as effectively expressed by Luciano Floridi’s well-known concept of “onlife”, spill-over effects are more and more frequent and conflicts can move offline from social media and have an impact on violent conflicts. Therefore, the **spread of malicious fake news** and disinformation **can** be a tool of hybrid war, **bring**ing about **long-lasting negative implications for multilateralism.**

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how the spread of disinformation on sensitive issues – a phenomenon known as “infodemic”, conceptualised by the WHO in 2020 – can powerfully influence people’s behaviour and affect the impact of countermeasures deployed by governments. Disinformation can even speed up the epidemic by influencing and fragmenting the social response to the disease; moreover, people might find it difficult to discern which information sources are trustworthy, especially if the scientific community does not reach a unanimous position and scientists provide different explanations and solutions for a given problem. Also, while the production of accurate and detailed information can be expensive and time-consuming, fake news can cheaply and quickly fill the gap and satisfy the public’s demand for information, at least for a broad target. The “infodemic” highlights the need for evidence-based policymaking with a high quality scientific advisory system. Without knowledge, research, reliable and accessible data, and effective and well-timed coordination among the key actors responsible for managing health emergency, leaders run the risk of enacting very fragmented and even controversial political responses, by relying on a rooted policy style that is overly influenced by the rules and structures of civil service and the political systems they operate in. In order to face this kind of threats, multilateral cooperation is paramount, and it constitutes a precious resource to bypass and fix the rigidity and inefficiency of national systems. As a matter of fact, achieving multilateral cooperation requires smooth, open and continuous communication. To obtain that, governments and international organisations need to tackle disinformation, detecting and contrasting the attempts at hampering multilateralism, focusing on those conducted via social media, which are especially pervasive and produce long-lasting effects.

The challenges mentioned above show the urgency of dealing with regulating social media, assigning the responsibility of content control to social media companies or to ad hoc nominated expert panels, engaging states and regional organisations such as the EU in the creation of an international regulation, policing with algorithms and artificial intelligence (AI), and investing in specific digital education programmes. Moreover, permanent roundtable discussions with social media corporations ought to be established, in order to contribute to the adoption of standardised rules concerning the detection and contrast to fake news and disinformation for all social media platforms. It would also help to construct a collaborative relationship with social media for the diffusion of agreed and reliable information concerning critical issues, such as transnational health emergencies, and propose viable measures for sanctioning the creators and diffusers of harmful fake news.

Finally, in order to contribute to the fight against malicious disinformation, formal and informal institutions **working on i**nternational **multilat**eßral governance **need to improve their communication strategies**, working towards **increasing the clarity and accurac**y of the information they produce, **improving their reputation** as authoritative sources of information and **reducing the public’s exposure to rumours on fundamental issu**e**s,** which tend to circulate in order to fill information voids, **especially amidst a crisis.**

### Alt Cause---Politicians

#### Elected officials are an alt cause—spread highly partisan claims on mainstream media— Trump proves

Brendan **Nyhan 2019**, Professor of Public Policy, University of Michigan, February 2019, “Why Fears of Fake News Are Overhyped”, <https://gen.medium.com/why-fears-of-fake-news-are-overhyped-2ed9ca0a52c9//> SK

We must also recognize that fake news entrepreneurs aren’t the only people trying to meet the demand for this kind of content. The most worrisome misinformation in U.S. politics remains the old-fashioned kind: false and misleading statements made by elected officials who dominate news coverage and wield the powers of government. As 2016 illustrated, the costs of making unsupported claims are low in highly partisan contexts, which limits the incentive for politicians to avoid them. Reading a fact-check of Trump’s convention speech, for instance, reduced false beliefs that crime was increasing in the long term but did not affect his support.

Trump has gone on to make more than 8,000 false claims during his first two years in office, many of which are amplified in cable news chyrons or in credulous online news headlines. As a result, a sizable minority of Americans still believes some of his most frequently repeated false claims. These beliefs persist despite unprecedented fact-checking efforts, which struggle to overcome unprecedented levels of polarization in media trust. Even more corrosively, Trump’s supporters are increasingly rationalizing those falsehoods. Belief in the importance of presidential candidates being honest has declined from 71 percent among Republicans in 2007 to just 49 percent today, threatening the previously uncontested norm that the president should be expected to say things that are true, or at least not obviously false.

Ultimately, fake news helped alert us to the threat, but it is Trump who has most effectively weaponized partisan misinformation in our politics. Understanding how to prevent our leaders from exploiting this vulnerability further must therefore be a top democratic priority.

## Offense

### IL---Credibility Turn

#### Forewarnings of disinformation reduces the credibility of true information

Melanie **Freeze et al. 2020**, PhD from Duke University, Visiting Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, Carleton College; Mary Baumgartner, Peter Bruno, Jacob R. Gunderson, Joshua Olin, Morgan Quinn Ross, and Justine Szafran all have BAs from Carleton College; February 2020, “Fake Claims of Fake News: Political Misinformation, Warnings, and the Tainted Truth Effect”, <https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s11109-020-09597-3?author_access_token=jlne4X9bmNXeiro8bIL5v_e4RwlQNchNByi7wbcMAY5VsgsSHPhSfVqOPQBCG7ca18LkrBHJQMR182ZUZZWCaOC9jKU2ihU0BF4UKzY1UjdbtLCSymJYBmvsywO67tUufYcsWoBQ8Kw_LIb3ZAnEJw%3D%3D> //SK

A subset of research on the misinformation effect explores whether the negative effects of misinformation on memory can be reversed, or at least minimized (e.g., Blank and Launay 2014; Chambers and Zaragoza 2001; Christiaansen and Ochalek 1983; Eakin et al. 2003; Echterhoff et al. 2005; Ecker et al. 2010; Wright 1993). For example, one of the earliest studies on the effects of misinformation warnings conducted by Dodd and Bradshaw (1980) found identifying the source of the misinformation as biased dramatically reduced the effect of misleading information on eyewitness memory. In the field of political science, a related body of literature also scrutinizes the causes, implications, and difficulty of countering political misinformation for topics, including the 2010 health care reform (Berinsky 2015; Nyhan 2010); climate change (van der Linden et al. 2017); campaign advertisements and political candidates (Amazeen et al. 2018; Cappella and Jamieson 1994; Pfau and Louden 1994; Thorson 2016; Wintersieck et al. 2018); political news (Clayton et al. 2019); and governmental policies, actions, and politically relevant data (Pennycook et al. 2018; Weeks 2015).Footnote7 Under some conditions, warnings of misinformation can help individuals counter the effects of misinformation on attitudes and memory, but the corrections are often only partial, with long-lasting negative effects on trust (Cook and Lewandowsky 2011; Huang 2015; Lewandowsky et al. 2012; Nyhan and Reifler 2012). Warnings may even produce a boomerang or backfire effect and lead to misinformation becoming more deeply entrenched in memory when corrections conflict with personal worldview or ideology (Nyhan and Reifler 2010). In a meta-analysis of 25 studies on retrospective warnings and post-event misinformation, Blank and Launay (2014) found retrospective warnings were only somewhat effective, on average reducing the post-event misinformation effect by half.

In addition to imperfectly counteracting misperceptions, misinformation warnings can produce other, often unintended, consequences. Although few in number, some studies outside of political science have investigated how misinformation warnings can extend beyond the intended target of misinformation and negatively influence surrounding information and memories. For example, Greene et al. (1982) discovered participants who were warned that post-event information came from an untrustworthy source were less likely to recognize events that were correctly described in the post-event description, compared to a no warning condition. Similarly, Meade and Roediger (2002) found warnings of an unreliable co-witness reduced recall of correct items reported by the co-witness.

Green et al. (1982) and Meade and Roediger (2002) noted the negative effects of warnings on memory, but these findings were not the primary focus of their research. Drawing on the research of Greene et al. (1982) and Meade and Roediger (2002), Echterhoff et al. (2007) deliberately began to study misinformation warnings’ potentially adverse influence on correct memories, which they defined as the tainted truth effect. They found that when warned about misinformation, participants were less likely to recognize events that were accurately described in a post-event description, especially when the items were somewhat peripheral or difficult to remember.

In their investigation of the tainted truth effect, Echterhoff et al. (2007) considered various proposed mechanisms that could drive the misinformation and tainted truth effects.Footnote8 Echterhoff et al. argued that under certain circumstances, misinformation warnings will reduce the ability to remember original events because warned individuals are more likely to monitor information from a source that has been discredited by a warning. Increased skepticism leads any information that is associated with the untrustworthy source to be tainted and rejected in retrospect, regardless of whether it is true or false. We also propose that retrospective warnings fundamentally alter how people reconstruct memory. In the absence of misinformation warnings, individuals should naturally rely more on post-event descriptions of an event as they are more recent and accessible (Wyler and Oswald 2016; Zaller 1992). However, when these post-event descriptions become tainted by misinformation warnings, individuals will feel more uncertainty and engage in a memory reconstruction process that discounts and rejects more recent data that comes from the post-event description, including both misinformation and accurate information.

Only a few studies on the tainted truth effect emerged after the initial formal consideration of the phenomenon by Echterhoff et al. (2007). In a series of related experiments, Szpitalak and Polczyk (2010, 2011, 2012) drew on Polish high school and university student subject pools to replicate and test the misinformation and the tainted truth effects in the contexts of a radio debate on education reform and a historical lecture on Christopher Columbus. Clayton et al. (2019) also recently identified the need for further research on the tainted truth effect in the area of political misinformation warnings. While the tainted truth effect was not the central hypothesis motivating their research, Clayton et al. (2019) found general warnings shown to participants before they read a set of headlines reduced the credibility of both truthful and untruthful headlines.

### IL---Cooption Turn

#### Greenlights authoritarian crackdowns---even if their concerns are true their rhetoric gets coopted

Gabrielle Lim 20, researcher at Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center and a fellow with Citizen Lab. “The Risks of Exaggerating Foreign Influence Operations and Disinformation,” Centre for International Governance Innovation (CGI), <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/risks-exaggerating-foreign-influence-operations-and-disinformation/> //chico

First, the widespread use of the term “fake news” combined with concerns over national security (although often sincere and well-meaning) have given illiberal and authoritarian-leaning governments around the world top cover to enact a range of censorship-enabling measures that are then used to crack down on dissent, target political opponents and instill a culture of self-censorship. In the Philippines — where President Rodrigo Duterte continues to prosecute a “war on drugs” that has led to the deaths of thousands — penalties for spreading false and alarming information were included in a special measures bill to combat COVID-19. Critics of the bill warn that it will be selectively used to punish political opponents and deter dissent. Last year, Singapore — which has continually ranked poorly for press freedom — also passed a law targeting “fake news” and false information. Citing examples of foreign interference in the United States and the United Kingdom, Singapore justified the bill on the grounds of national security. Borrowing a common refrain from the West, the government stated that falsehoods “weaponised, to attack the infrastructure of fact, destroy trust and attack societies.” Now Nigeria, again in the name of national security, is mulling its own bill targeting false information, which has widely been mocked as a copy-paste of Singapore’s law

### IL---free press turn

#### Its New Age McCarthyism---enforcement is inconsistent. Cracks down on free press AND increases xenophobia---turns case.

Gabrielle Lim 20, researcher at Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center and a fellow with Citizen Lab. “The Risks of Exaggerating Foreign Influence Operations and Disinformation,” Centre for International Governance Innovation (CGI), <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/risks-exaggerating-foreign-influence-operations-and-disinformation/> //chico

Second, the fear of foreign speech could exacerbate ongoing tensions between states in a way that will likely hurt civil society and press freedom. Although influence operations have little (if any) actual impact on a state’s national security, governments may use the fear of foreign speech to expel, control and surveil foreign journalists and civil society. Take China and the United States, for example. Both accuse one another of interfering in each other’s domestic affairs, citing influence operations and collusion that may be detrimental (although rarely articulated in specifics or evidence). As such, retaliatory measures have been carried out by both states through the expulsion of journalists and by forcing media workers to register personal information with government officials. Hua Chunying, a spokeswoman for the Chinese foreign ministry, defended the expulsion of journalists from The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post, tweeting: “We reject ideological bias against China, reject fake news made in the name of press freedom, reject breaches of ethics in journalism.” And as Harvard Law School’s Evelyn Douek shows in her chapter for the forthcoming book, “Combating Election Interference: When Foreign Powers Target Democracies,“ the way social media companies and governments are moderating foreign content amounts to a “free speech blind spot,” due to their seemingly ad hoc and inconsistent enforcement. The ongoing rhetoric of fear surrounding foreign influence operations and espionage is now expanding to include foreign students and businesses. In addition to curtailing the flow of information and intellectual collaboration, such actions may also contribute to increasing xenophobia.

### IL---trade off turn

#### Emphasis on “bad actors” trades off with addressing the material conditions that cause people to be susceptible to disinfo in the first place. The AFF turns into never-ending “whack-a-mole.”

Gabrielle Lim 20, researcher at Harvard Kennedy School’s Shorenstein Center and a fellow with Citizen Lab. “The Risks of Exaggerating Foreign Influence Operations and Disinformation,” Centre for International Governance Innovation (CGI), <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/risks-exaggerating-foreign-influence-operations-and-disinformation/> //chico

Third, an overemphasis on “bad actors” and their supply of disinformation diverts our attention from the material problems that drive our demand for and receptivity to dubious content of suspicious origin. In a commentary for the Harvard Kennedy School’s Misinformation Review, Alexei Abrahams and I argue that thus far the focus of the West’s countermeasures in the fight against misinformation and disinformation has relied on repressive strategies — root out the networks, shut down the accounts and remove the content. However, this strategy is, as many have pointed out already, a never-ending “game of whack-a-mole” that (at best) provides short-term tactical gains. These palliative measures must be coupled with long-term solutions that take aim at the reasons why people flock to fringe websites and dubious accounts for their news. It is not that we want to be lied to, but rather that our trust in the institutions and authorities to which we delegate our well-being and future has eroded. As such, redressive strategies should also be explored to regain and restore trust and legitimacy in our institutions, politicians and governing bodies. And, where possible, domestic policy should be directed at making democratic participation easier. “Bad actors” will always be around and try to mess with information systems, but we can choose to make voting easier, prevent gerrymandering, and amend or repeal laws that lead to voter suppression.

“Bad actors” will always be around and try to mess with information systems, but we can choose to make voting easier, prevent gerrymandering, and amend or repeal laws that lead to voter suppression.

Mass-targeted covert influence operations and disinformation campaigns are real. Analysis from studies show that they promote narratives that aim to provoke outrage, capitalize on social cleavages and, in some cases, push narratives in the interest of certain countries. However, evidence of activity is not evidence of impact. To be sure, we should be aware of such operations, bringing them to light and, when appropriate, removing them. However, if the free flow of ideas, freedom of expression and a better quality of democratic participation are the ultimate goals, relying on detection and deletion is not enough, and, as outlined above, the exaggeration of the threat of foreign influence operations may do more harm than good. Instead, we should invest in solutions that shore up trust and increase political participation, civil discourse and pluralism.

# Add-Ons

## DOD Innovation

### AT: DoD Innovation Add-On---2NC

#### Structural issues prevent DoD innovation

Brad Williams 21, reporter for Breaking Defense covering cyber, networks, and emerging tech, 7/29/2021, "To Transform Tech, DoD Must Stop Being An ‘Innovation Tourist:’ Report," Breaking Defense, https://breakingdefense.com/2021/07/to-transform-tech-dod-should-stop-being-an-innovation-tourist-report/

WASHINGTON: A new report urges the Pentagon to stop acting like an “innovation tourist… visiting new shops, spending some money, and moving on to the next destination” if it wants to truly achieve “a bona fide strategy for bringing emerging technologies into the department.”

The report, Ending Innovation Tourism: Rethinking the U.S. Military’s Approach to Emerging Technology Adoption, is authored by Melissa Flagg and Jack Corrigan of Georgetown University’s Center for Security and Emerging Technology.

Noting it’s “unlikely that any significant progress toward overhauling the DoD acquisition process will be made in the near future,” the report lays out several recommendations DoD could take today to accelerate the types of innovations needed to remain competitive against near-peer adversaries.

The authors note that the challenges around DoD innovation — or lack thereof — are many and multifaceted, but the crux of the matter is “under the DoD’s current organizational structure, defense innovation is disconnected from defense procurement.”

The report then provides a brief history, spanning from the end of World War II to present, of how DoD’s acquisition bureaucracy came into being, and how an acquisition structure that consistently produced innovations such as the internet and global position systems has, for decades, become more of a hindrance than a help.

The report notes that DoD has made some positive strides to adapt to an environment in which the private tech sector has displaced it as the driver of innovation. For instance, DoD has created innovation offices, such as those run by the Defense Innovation Unit — the Pentagon’s office originally established for outreach to Silicon Valley companies — as well as AFWERX, NavalX, and the Army Applications Lab. While these offices have produced some “one-off tools” and “bolt-ons” to existing military tech, they have “impacted only small slivers” of “the major platforms and systems that account for the vast majority of military warfighting capabilities,” the report observes.

Why? Well, just like everything defense acquisition related, the answer is complex, with factors ranging from Pentagon procurement requirements to business models. But a primary reason among many, the authors note, is that DoD’s innovation efforts are tied to the research & development part of the budget and not to specific procurement programs — especially so-called “programs of record” for the largest DoD projects.

#### No tech innovation impact---China’s too far behind

Gilli & Gilli 19 Andrea Gilli, Senior Researcher in Military Affairs at the NATO Defense College in Rome, works at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, PhD in Political Science from the European University Institute, MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics, & Mauro Gilli, a Senior Researcher in Military Technology and International Security, PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University, MA in International Studies from Johns Hopkins University. [Why China Has Not Caught Up Yet: Military-Technological Superiority and the Limits of Imitation, Reverse Engineering, and Cyber Espionage, 43(3), 141–189]

Can adversaries of the United States easily imitate its most advanced weapon systems and thus erode its military-technological superiority? Do reverse engineering, industrial espionage, and, in particular, cyber espionage facilitate and accelerate this process? China's decades-long economic boom, military modernization program, massive reliance on cyber espionage, and assertive foreign policy have made these questions increasingly salient. Yet, almost everything known about this topic draws from the past. As we explain in this article, the conclusions that the existing literature has reached by studying prior eras have no applicability to the current day. Scholarship in international relations theory generally assumes that rising states benefit from the "advantage of backwardness," as described by [End Page 141] Alexander Gerschenkron.1 By free riding on the research and technology of the most advanced countries, less developed states can allegedly close the military-technological gap with their rivals relatively easily and quickly.2 More recent works maintain that globalization, the emergence of dual-use components, and advances in communications (including the opportunity for cyber espionage) have facilitated this process.3 This literature is built on shaky theoretical foundations, and its claims lack empirical support. The international relations literature largely ignores one of the most important changes to have occurred in the realm of weapons development since the second industrial revolution (1870–1914): the exponential increase in the complexity of military technology. We argue that this increase in complexity has promoted a change in the system of production that has made the imitation and replication of the performance of state-of-the-art weapon systems harder—so much so as to offset the diffusing effects of globalization and advances in communications. On the one hand, the increase in complexity has significantly raised the entry barriers for the production of advanced weapon systems: countries must now possess an extremely advanced industrial, scientific, and technological base in weapons production before they can copy foreign military technology. On the other hand, the knowledge to design, develop, and produce advanced weapon systems is less likely to diffuse, given its increasingly tacit and organizational nature. As a result, the advantage of backwardness has shrunk significantly, and know-how and experience in the production of advanced weapon systems have become an important source of power for those who master them. We employ two case studies to test this argument: Imperial Germany's rapid success in closing the technological gap with the British Dreadnought battleship, despite significant inhibiting factors; and China's struggle to imitate the U.S. F-22/A Raptor jet fighter, despite several facilitating conditions. Our research contributes to key theoretical and policy debates. First, the [End Page 142] ability to imitate state-of-the-art military hardware plays a central role in theories that seek to explain patterns of internal balancing and the rise and fall of great powers. Yet, the mainstream international relations literature has not investigated this process.4 Because imitating military technology was relatively easy in the past, scholars and policymakers assume that it also is today, as frequent analogies between Wilhelmine Germany and contemporary China epitomize.5 In this article, we investigate the conditions under which the imitation of state-of-the-art weapon systems such as attack submarines and combat aircraft is more or less likely to succeed. Second, we develop the first systematic theoretical explanation of why U.S. superiority in military technology remains largely unrivaled almost thirty years after the end of the Cold War, despite globalization and the information and communication technology revolution. Some scholars have argued that developing modern weapon systems has become dramatically more demanding, which in turn has made internal balancing against the United States more difficult.6 This literature, however, cannot explain why in the age of globalization and instant communications—with cyber espionage permitting the theft of massive amount of digital data—U.S. know-how in advanced weapon systems has not already diffused to other states. Other contributors to the debate on unipolarity have either pointed to the relative inferiority of Chinese military technology without providing a theoretical explanation, or they have argued that developing the military capabilities to challenge the status quo is, in the long run, a function of political will—an argument that cannot account for the failure of the Soviet Union to cope with U.S. military technology from the late 1970s onward.7 We argue that in the transition from the second industrial [End Page 143] revolution to the information age, the imitation of state-of-the-art military technology has become more difficult, so much so that today rising powers or even peer competitors cannot easily copy foreign weapon systems.8 Our findings address existing concerns that China's use of cyber espionage and the increasing globalization of arms production will allow Beijing to rapidly close the military-technological gap with the United States.9

# Solvency

## Broad

### 1NC---Solvency

#### The AFF fails and cohesion is impossible---NATO is uncoordinated and says no, the research center empirically isn’t enough, and any military strategies are pipe dreams.

Rod Thornton 15, Senior Lecturer in the Defence Studies Department of King's College London. He previously taught at the University of Kurdistan Hewler in Erbil, Iraq and in the University of Nottingham's department of Politics and International Relations. “The Changing Nature of Modern Warfare”, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03071847.2015.1079047> //lenox

Russia has shown it can occupy whole slices of another state’s territory using no more than information warfare, deniability and a few highly disciplined special forces. The Russian military, supported by a substantial information warfare infrastructure, has employed the tenets of hybrid warfare remarkably skillfully. Such activities have, of course, to be countered by NATO and the EU to ensure Moscow cannot use these tactics so easily in future. As NATO STRATCOM COE puts it, ‘analysis of the Ukraine conflict suggests that NATO and the EU must adapt to the new reality where information superiority, as opposed to military power, is becoming increasingly important’. 70 If today ‘the main battlespace is in the mind’, it must be considered how Western powers and institutions engage in this arena. The first option, censorship of the Russian media message, is widely dismissed across the EU and in the US. As John Whittingdale, the UK’s current secretary of state for culture, media and sport, stressed in 2014: ‘There is nothing Russia would like more than to be able to say the West is censoring [it]’. 71 The second alternative would be for Western powers, through NATO, to employ their own counter-information warfare campaigns to match those of Russia. However, this would be futile, not least because NATO’s members are, for the most part, liberal democracies whose governments are expected to remain wedded to the truth in the information they provide to both domestic and international audiences. Moreover, they have a free media acting as the fourth estate to ensure that the truth is told. When it comes to conducting information-warfare campaigns, this predilection for the truth can be something of a handicap, allowing for the projection of only one narrative amid the welter of counter-narratives produced by Russian outlets. Furthermore, Western efforts to promote this singular message have been underwhelming. As the UK parliamentary Defence Committee was recently told, ‘although the BBC Russian Service was available, it was only online and was in no way a counterweight to the propaganda channelled through Russian Television’. 72 One outlet tucked away on a website is no answer to a Russian information-warfare ‘blitzkrieg’. There is similar reluctance, for instance, in Washington, to use the Voice of America radio station in an ‘overtly propagandistic role’. Meanwhile, in the Baltic States the attempts to counter Moscow’s ‘information war’ are seen as ‘uncoordinated and weak’. 73 The basic problem across the board is that liberal democracies have an inherent distaste for producing anything at the strategic level that resembles propaganda or could be classed as psychological warfare.74 In fact, one of the reasons that the Russians concentrate so much on their information-warfare output is that they know it cannot be countered effectively; indeed, they have shown a ‘readiness to stoop to methods the West cannot emulate without sullying itself’.75 As Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss point out, the Russians are thinking asymmetrically: ‘Feeling itself relatively weak, the Kremlin has systematically learnt to use the principles of liberal democracies against them’.76 This asymmetry in willingness and abilities does not, however, mean that no action has been taken by Western powers. In January 2014, NATO set up a Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga as a direct consequence of the Russian information-warfare campaign in an attempt to counter Russia’s significant advantage in this realm. Yet even this body recognises that it is difficult for the West with its free media ‘to compete with the forceful, synchronised messaging of the Russian government’. 77 For its part, the EU is discussing sponsoring its own Russian-language channel as ‘The truth is the best weapon the EU has’. 78 However, doubts remain as to how much impact a single channel can have; indeed, this channel ‘needs to find a way to counter Moscow’s grip on the Russian-language airwaves or its target audience will never hear [the truth]’. 79 Furthermore, it will always be difficult for any collective of states – whether NATO or the EU – to agree on the nature and content of information campaigns, not least due to disagreement over what exactly the ‘truth’ is and how best to present it. As one Estonian military officer concerned with NATO’s information operations put it, ‘if we want to counter Russian propaganda…we have to unite our lines and speak with the same voice’.80 However, there is no such unity in these international organisations and thus the idea of NATO producing its own ‘synchronised messaging’ remains a pipe-dream. Therefore what collectives such as NATO will always lack is what makes Moscow’s information assault so effective: a truly integrated approach. The major threat to Western interests anywhere in the world is not terrorism, it is the threat posed by information warfare such as that recently conducted by Russia. It has achieved clear results and this success can be repeated. As NATO finds it almost impossible to react effectively in a symmetrical fashion to this threat, it has felt the need to resort to more traditional means. Yet the responses seen so far are redolent of ‘Maginot Line thinking’–in other words, these are responses that are better suited to the ‘last war’. Unlike the Russian military, NATO is still putting the use of military force ahead of information warfare because – as an institution–it knows no other way of reacting. The US and the UK have, for instance, decided to send a small number of (non-combat) troops to Ukraine.81 This, though, is a naive move that does no more than play into the Kremlin’s hands. The message that Moscow can now send out to those who would support its actions is that while Russia is not sending any of its own troops over the border into Ukraine (officially, at least), the US and UK are doing so – and from thousands of miles away. Under such circumstances, it raises questions as to who the aggressor really is. It is an easy sell for the information-warfare-savvy Russians. There is talk, too, of NATO responding both by beefing up the rapid reaction forces currently on standby to be sent to the Baltic States and by holding more exercises there.82 This, though, raisesthe question of to what exactly they are supposed to ‘react’. Russian troops, while they might one day mass near the Baltics to apply psychological pressure, are unlikely to cross any borders, at least not overtly. Indeed, Russia’s ‘new generation of warfare’ is specifically designed to achieve results without the need for any such crass action that might, in turn, provide an excuse for NATO (or others) to interfere–thereby paralysing both the target country and those that might come to its defence. Moreover, one aim of the Russian information warfare campaign has always been to ‘sow discord’ within NATO. 83 ‘Russia’, as the former head of Polish special forces, Roman Polko, says, ‘is mercilessly using NATO’s weaknesses in order to play its own game’. 84 Of prime importance to Russia is to prevent the invocation of Article V by avoiding the trigger for ‘an armed attack’ on any one NATO state.85 This weakness of Article V has been recognised – with the UK parliamentary Defence Committee one voice among many calling for the word ‘armed’ to be removed:86 NATO must resolve the contradiction between the specification in Article 5 that a response should be to an ‘armed attack’ and the likelihood on the other hand of an ‘unarmed attack’ (such as a cyber attack or another form of ambiguous warfare). NATO must consider whether the adjective ‘armed’ should be removed from the definition of an Article 5 attack. Most NATO states are, however, unlikely to agree to this – again showing the weakness of a multinational body. They will not want to engage militarily with Russia just because one of their number might be subject to a (plausibly deniable) ‘form of ambiguous warfare’, however disruptive. Thus, such debate over rapid reaction forces and Article V merely facilitates Moscow’s information-warfare campaign. It should be remembered that NATO’s offer of military assistance to the Baltic States is also an offer to fight a war–a very destructive one – on their territory. Such an offer may well have the effect of stoking fear among both Balts and compatriot Russians, once again providing potential grist to Moscow’s information-warfare mill.

### 2NC---Solvency

#### Say no and coordinated responses fail---liberal democracies are incapable of countering disinformation.

Dr. Rod Thornton 15, Senior Lecturer in the Defence Studies Department of King’s College London, Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham, September 2015, “The Changing Nature of Modern Warfare: Responding to Russian Information Warfare,” *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 160, No. 4, pp. 40-48, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2015.1079047, RMax

The first option, censorship of the Russian media message, is widely dismissed across the EU and in the US. As John Whittingdale, the UK’s current secretary of state for culture, media and sport, stressed in 2014: ‘There is nothing Russia would like more than to be able to say the West is censoring [it]’. 71 The second alternative would be for Western powers, through NATO, to employ their own counter-information warfare campaigns to match those of Russia. However, this would be futile, not least because NATO’s members are, for the most part, liberal democracies whose governments are expected to remain wedded to the truth in the information they provide to both domestic and international audiences. Moreover, they have a free media acting as the fourth estate to ensure that the truth is told. When it comes to conducting information-warfare campaigns, this predilection for the truth can be something of a handicap [barrier], allowing for the projection of only one narrative amid the welter of counter-narratives produced by Russian outlets. Furthermore, Western efforts to promote this singular message have been underwhelming. As the UK parliamentary Defence Committee was recently told, ‘although the BBC Russian Service was available, it was only online and was in no way a counterweight to the propaganda channelled through Russian Television’. 72 One outlet tucked away on a website is no answer to a Russian information-warfare ‘blitzkrieg’. There is similar reluctance, for instance, in Washington, to use the Voice of America radio station in an ‘overtly propagandistic role’. Meanwhile, in the Baltic States the attempts to counter Moscow’s ‘information war’ are seen as ‘uncoordinated and weak’. 73 The basic problem across the board is that liberal democracies have an inherent distaste for producing anything at the strategic level that resembles propaganda or could be classed as psychological warfare.74 In fact, one of the reasons that the Russians concentrate so much on their information-warfare output is that they know it cannot be countered effectively; indeed, they have shown a ‘readiness to stoop to methods the West cannot emulate without sullying itself’.

75 As Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss point out, the Russians are thinking asymmetrically: ‘Feeling itself relatively weak, the Kremlin has systematically learnt to use the principles of liberal democracies against them’.76

This asymmetry in willingness and abilities does not, however, mean that no action has been taken by Western powers. In January 2014, NATO set upaStrategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga asadirect consequence of the Russian information-warfare campaign in an attempt to counter Russia’s significant advantage in this realm. Yet even this body recognises that it is difficult for the West with itsfree media ‘to compete with the forceful, synchronised messaging of the Russian government’. 77

For its part, the EU is discussing sponsoring its own Russian-language channel as ‘The truth is the best weapon the EU has’. 78 However, doubts remain as to how much impact a single channel can have; indeed, this channel ‘needs to find a way to counter Moscow’s grip on the Russian-language airwaves or its target audience will never hear [the truth]’. 79

Furthermore, it will always be difficult for any collective of states – whether NATO or the EU – to agree on the nature and content of information campaigns, not least due to disagreement over what exactly the ‘truth’ is and how best to present it. As one Estonian military officer concerned with NATO’s information operations put it, ‘if we want to counter Russian propaganda…we have to unite our lines and speak with the same voice’.80 However, there is no such unity in these international organisations and thus the idea of NATO producing its own ‘synchronised messaging’ remains a pipe-dream. Therefore what collectives such as NATO will always lack is what makes Moscow’s information assault so effective: a truly integrated approach.

#### A silver bullet is impossible.

Terry Thompson 20, lecturer in cyber policy at Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland, 2020, “No Silver Bullet: Fighting Russian Disinformation Requires Multiple Actions,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 182-194, https://doi.org/ 10.1353/gia.2020.0033, RMax

There is no single solution—no silver bullet—that will effectively address the organized, well-funded, and efficient Russian deception and disinformation operations or their broader campaign of active measures directed against US and European elections. Expanding efforts by governments, think tanks, social media companies, and the growing social media analysis industry will help to detect, publicize, and respond to disinformation. The authorities granted by the 2020 NDAA will go a long way toward addressing the problem of information warfare directed against the United States. But a much harder challenge will be overcoming political and cultural polarization and Americans’ love of social media. Absent a comprehensive national effort involving all elements of government and society, the United States will continue to struggle with foreign interference. The 2020 election will demonstrate whether US actions to date are enough to thwart Russian disinformation in the election process.

### 1NC---Countering Fails

#### Identifying disinformation fails. People don’t care, it induces them to hit share. BUT it enables big tech to obscure its role in polarization

Joseph Bernstein 21 is a senior reporter at BuzzFeed News and a 2021 Nieman Fellow. “Bad News: Selling the story of disinformation,” Harper’s Magazine, <https://harpers.org/archive/2021/09/bad-news-selling-the-story-of-disinformation/> //chico

And to what effect? Last year, Facebook started putting warning labels on Trump’s misinformative and disinformative posts. BuzzFeed News reported in November that the labels reduced sharing by only 8 percent. It was almost as if the vast majority of people who spread what Trump posted didn’t care whether a third party had rated his speech unreliable. (In fact, one wonders if, to a certain type of person, such a warning might even be an inducement to share.) Facebook could say that it had listened to critics, and what’s more, it could point to numbers indicating that it had cleaned up the information ecosystem by 8 percent. Its critics, having been listened to, could stand there with their hands in their pockets.

### 2NC---Countering Fails

#### Information Operations are insulated because of uncertainty and lack of kinetic proof

Tonya Riley 21 (Tonya, Technology and cybersecurity policy researcher, 4-30-2021, "Analysis," Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/04/30/cybersecurity-202-defense-department-isnt-armed-combat-growing-threat-information-warfare-experts-warn/, DOA: 6-22-2022//Smarx Ahsan)

Experts will say the United States can learn from how cyberthreats have evolved in addressing growing online information operations.

Gerstell, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, will warn that foreign intelligence agencies are taking a page from cyber criminals' playbook by operating just far enough under the radar to avoid repercussions.

“The same factors that shield those foes in hacks and attacks — the uncertainty of provable attribution, the absence of directly caused actual injury or physical damage and other factors — also will insulate them as they inevitably step up their disinformation campaigns,” he says in his written testimony.

The hearing comes just weeks after the Biden administration sanctioned Russian companies and actors for interfering in the U.S. elections as well as a massive cyberattack that infiltrated nine federal agencies.

The Biden administration has responded to the SolarWinds breach by committing to enhancing the federal cybersecurity workforce. Jankowicz will suggest a similar approach of creating a workforce “of skilled people with a nuanced understanding of the threat who are capable of applying the full range of tools and techniques for monitoring, detecting and responding to information operations.”

#### Democracy fails. Autocratic regimes are more effective in information ops.

Jakub Kalenský 22, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, “COVID-19 Disinformation: A Multi-National, Whole of Society Perspective,” *Advanced Science and Technology for Security Applications*, ISBN 978-3-030-94824-5, Springer Cham, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94825-2>, p. 169 (under ch. titled, “Chapter 7: How to Defend Against Covid Related Disinformation,”) //chico

7.2 What to Avoid When Countering Disinformation

There are several potential weaknesses when it comes to countering disinformation. Most of these weaknesses, ironically, are related to some of the inherent strengths characteristic of democratic societies—like the division of power, or the tendency not to abuse state power—and might sometimes lead towards a reluctance to act. It might be useful to take note of these weakness as lessons learned to strengthen subsequent efforts.

First, we are dealing with a problem that spans across multiple traditional domains. This problem is hybrid not only in that disinformation campaigns lie somewhere in the grey area between war and peace, but also in that it pertains equally to foreign policy as it does to internal security, external security, and digital space. However, our institutions frequently do not reflect this new reality. As such, we need to avoid the mindset that puts new threats, like disinformation and other hybrid threats, into just one box, and makes such threats the responsibility of just one ministry or institution.2

Second, the tendency to look for silver bullet, or catch-all, solutions might detract from more targeted, effective measures that solve smaller parts of the problem. There are no magic solutions. Information aggressors use many different weapons, channels, rhetoric, and approaches for different audiences (EUvsDisinfo, 2018a). Aggressors have adopted this strategy because they know that each given channel and approach will reach and resonate with only a segment of the population, and that other parts will need something different. We need to copy this approach when countering disinformation. We need to adopt a mindset that accepts that many coun- termeasures can solve no more than, for example, one to five per cent of a given problem, and that we need many different countermeasures applied simultaneously, ideally in a coordinated manner, in order to succeed.

Third, democratic states may often be significantly more hesitant to act and defend their interests than their autocratic opponents,3 which is also demonstrated in their response to disinformation. The Kremlin’s disinformation campaigns constantly evolve and adapt to new conditions and also, therefore, to some of our uncoordi- nated countermeasures (Newman, 2020; Snegovaya & Watanabe, 2021). Informa- tion aggressors will even experiment with rudimentary measures that show them the potential “dead ends”, which provides them with the knowledge of how not to conduct their operations.4 They collect data about the reactions of our populations to given information and material, up to the point where they may even know our audiences better than we know them ourselves (Kalenský, 2019a). By contrast, the countermeasures employed by Western societies are significantly more conservative and risk-averse. Far too often, we go for the easiest, least controversial measures that have the highest chance of being accepted without issue, but also tend to have the lowest chance of actually solving the problem at hand. Countermeasures like “media literacy programs” or “positive narratives” have been frequently utilized in policy debates, even dating back to 2014–2015. Despite all this time spent, solutions either have yet to show very persuasive results or, at best, they have shown that these measures are not enough.

#### Private sector won’t comply Facebook proves.

Terry L. Thompson 20, lecturer in cyber policy at the Johns Hopkins University and University of Maryland, Baltimore County, “No Silver Bullet: Fighting Russian Disinformation Requires Multiple Actions,” Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, vol 21, no 1, pp. 182, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/766401> //chico

A third reason that US and EU countermeasures against disinformation have been only partly successful is the reluctance of social media companies to identify and block or delete deceptive posts. Concerned employees at Facebook were "prevented from making any changes for fear of violating Facebook's 'objectivity,' as well as alienating conservative users and legislators." (35) In an apparent about-face, Facebook announced in October 2019 measures designed to prevent foreign interference in the 2020 elections. (36) These measures will take time, and their effectiveness is uncertain. Other social media companies are also taking action, but not quickly enough, and experts point out that dealing with disinformation requires a political response as well. (37) Meanwhile, Russian disinformation in social media continues to be a concern. As recently as February 2020, FBI Director Christopher Wray warned the House Judiciary Committee about Russia's ongoing "information warfare" against the United States. (38)

### 1NC---Circumvention

#### Cyber troops circumvent the plan.

David Sloss 22, Professor of Law at the Santa Clara University, internationally renowned scholar who has published three books, 2022, “A Proposal for Transnational Regulation,” *Tyrants on Twitter: Protecting Democracies from Information Warfare*, Chapter Six, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503631151, RMax, shoutout to sk for the book

LIKELY CIRCUMVENTION STRATEGIES

Russian and Chinese cyber troops have exploited U.S. social media platforms to pursue various foreign policy objectives. If Alliance member states enact statutes and regulations to prohibit Chinese and Russian agents from creating or operating accounts on regulated social media platforms, those foreign agents will undoubtedly attempt to evade that prohibition. This section describes seven distinct circumvention strategies that Chinese and Russian agents might pursue in an effort to evade the ban.

First, Chinese and Russian cyber troops might attempt to create fictitious user accounts. A fictitious user account is a social media account created in the name of a nonexistent person who pretends to be a citizen or national of an Alliance member state. Russian agents made extensive use of fictitious user accounts during the 2016 presidential election campaign in the United States.1 Indeed, fictitious user accounts were one of the most potent weapons that Russia deployed in that information warfare operation. The registration system described later in this chapter is designed to prevent Chinese and Russian cyber troops from creating or operating fictitious user accounts. If that system is implemented effectively by Alliance member states, it would become practically impossible for foreign agents to operate fictitious user accounts.

Second, Chinese and Russian cyber troops might attempt to create impostor accounts. An impostor account is a social media account operated by a Chinese or Russian agent who misappropriates the identity of a real person without that person’s knowledge or consent. There are three main ways to establish an impostor account. First, Chinese agents have hacked into existing accounts created by real people and taken control of those accounts (“hacked accounts”).2 Second, Chinese agents have purchased “stolen accounts” that are available for sale on the black market.3 A stolen account is a hacked account that has been sold to a third party. Third, cyber troops could create an impostor account from scratch by obtaining the identifying information of a real person and using that information to create a new account. The registration system described later in this chapter, if implemented effectively, would make it much more difficult and costly (but not impossible) for Chinese and Russian cyber troops to create new impostor accounts from scratch. However, the proposed registration system would not address the problem of hacked or stolen accounts. The best way to prevent cyber troops from obtaining hacked or stolen accounts is to educate ordinary social media users and induce them to adopt better cyber security practices.

Third, Chinese and Russian cyber troops might attempt to create rental accounts. A rental account is a specific type of impostor account in which a foreign agent pays a bribe to a national of an Alliance member state, so that the foreign agent can appropriate the identity of the payee for the purpose of operating a social media account. In fact, U.S. citizens have accepted bribes from Russian agents to enable those agents to operate rental accounts.4 Rental accounts differ from stolen and hacked accounts in that the owner of a stolen or hacked account is an unwitting victim, whereas the initial owner of a rental account is a willing participant in the fraud. The proposed regulatory system would impose criminal penalties on citizens or nationals of Alliance member states who accept money or any other thing of value from foreign agents to facilitate creation of rental accounts.

Fourth, Chinese and Russian cyber troops might register as Chinese or Russian nationals, while attempting to conceal the fact that they are state agents. The proposed regulatory system creates a rebuttable presumption to address this particular circumvention strategy. Specifically, the law would establish a rebuttable presumption that any person who registers as a Chinese or Russian national is presumed to be acting as a state agent, unless that person is a legal resident of an Alliance member state. Any person who registers as a Chinese or Russian national would have an opportunity to rebut that presumption by presenting evidence to show that he or she is not in fact a state agent. Chinese and Russian nationals who are not state agents would be subject to the disclaimer requirement, but they would not be banned from U.S. social media platforms.

Fifth, Chinese and Russian cyber troops might attempt to create fake foreign national accounts. A fake foreign national account is an account created by a Chinese or Russian agent who claims to be a citizen or national of some state other than China or Russia that is not an Alliance member state. Under the registration system, if a person claims to be a citizen of Venezuela, for example, his/her declaration of citizenship would not be subject to verification by the Venezuelan government, assuming that Venezuela is not an Alliance member state. Accounts registered to persons who claim to be nationals of nonmember states would be subject to disclaimer requirements, but would not be banned. Therefore, once the registration system is established, Russian and Chinese cyber troops would likely try to evade the ban by creating fake foreign national accounts that are not subject to the verification system operated by governments of Alliance member states. Social media companies and Alliance member states could develop technical measures (discussed later in this chapter) to detect fake foreign national accounts. However, Chinese and Russian cyber troops would likely be able to create and operate some fake foreign national accounts because they have the technical skills to evade even very sophisticated technical measures. Therefore, under the proposed regulatory system, this strategy would likely become a viable strategy for Chinese and Russian agents to circumvent the ban. To reiterate, though, fake foreign national accounts would still be subject to disclaimer requirements.

Sixth, Chinese and Russian agents might attempt to create bots or cyborg accounts. A “bot” is “a software tool that performs specific actions on computers connected in a network without the intervention of human users.”5 A “cyborg account” is an account that is either operated by a human being with assistance from a bot, or operated by a bot with assistance from a human being. Companies use a variety of “good bots” for legitimate business purposes. However, cyber troops can use bots or cyborg accounts to help spread disinformation on social media to large numbers of recipients. Russian cyber troops have made extensive use of bots to conduct information warfare.6 The transnational regulatory system described later in this chapter includes specific provisions designed to prevent Chinese and Russian cyber troops from creating bots or cyborg accounts. It also includes special disclaimers to warn users when they receive messages generated by bots or cyborg accounts.

Finally, if the transnational regulatory regime applied only to U.S. social media platforms, Chinese and Russian cyber troops could exploit TikTok or some other non-U.S. platform to engage in foreign influence operations. TikTok is an app that reportedly has about 800 million monthly active users, including about 344 million outside of China.7 TikTok’s large global user base and the Chinese government’s control over the platform makes it a potentially attractive tool for Chinese agents engaged in information warfare. The proposed regulatory system addresses this issue by specifying that the rules apply to all social media platforms with more than 50 million monthly active users outside of Russia and China (see the appendix). Under this approach, TikTok would qualify as a regulated social media platform.

There is one other circumvention strategy that the proposed transnational regulatory system does not address: useful idiots. As discussed in the preface, the category of “useful idiots” includes people like Donald Trump who— in pursuing their own, individual political agendas— also happen to advance Russian (or Chinese) foreign policy goals, such as Russia’s goal of undermining faith in American democracy. Technically, exploitation of useful idiots is not really a circumvention “strategy” because it does not require any strategic planning by Russia or China. From the perspective of Russia, it is simply a lucky accident that some U.S. citizens happen to advance Russia’s foreign policy goals by pursuing their own political agendas. Thus, useful idiots who spread disinformation on social media are properly viewed as a species of domestic OSM rather than a tactic of information warfare. Of course, Donald Trump— who is the most notorious useful idiot— arguably poses a greater threat to American democracy than either Chinese or Russian information warfare. Even so, the regulatory proposal presented in this chapter does not address the threat posed by useful idiots because the proposal is designed to counter the threat posed by information warfare, not domestic OSM. The remainder of this chapter describes and explains the key elements of a transnational regulatory system designed to mitigate the threat posed by Chinese and Russian cyber troops who exploit social media to conduct a proposal for transnational regulation 151 information warfare. Some elements of that transnational regulatory system could be incorporated into domestic laws and/or regulations in virtually identical terms in all Alliance member states. Other elements would require differential treatment in different states to accomplish the same broad objectives.

## Say No

### 1NC---Say No

#### Diverging opinions on countering Russia disinformation means NATO says no.

Jean-Baptiste Vilmer 18, director of the Institute for Strategic Research of the Ministry for the Armed Forces, August 2018, “Information Manipulation: A Challenge for Our Democracies,” https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/information\_manipulation\_rvb\_cle838736.pdf, RMax

The French position, which holds that NATO’s role in this field should remain confined to the detection and analysis of and response to hostile operations targeting its activities (rather than all disinformation and malicious interference operations) is widely shared within the Alliance. Fault lines nevertheless arise between allies on the question of what sort of response is most appropriate. They also disagree over whether or not to try to “beat Russia at its own game,” including within Russian-speaking communities, by spreading doubt about Moscow’s activities and goals or by offering a revised version of some chapters of history. Such an approach is highly contentious within NATO, where there are diverging views on the severity of the threat that partly reflect different perspectives on Russia’s role and the adequate NATO response to Moscow.

### 2NC---Say No

#### NATO can’t solve—wide disagreements, contradictions, and slow regulations

Lisa **Schirch 21**, Lisa Schirch is Senior Research Fellow for the Toda Peace Institute and Sr. Professor of the Practice of Peace Studies at University of Notre Dame, “Social Media Impacts on Conflict and Democracy : The Techtonic Shift” pg. 216, April 2021 // SK

There are no quick fixes to threats stemming from social media use. There are wide disagreements and conceptual contradictions on how to define disinformation, dangerous speech, privacy and addiction. Most conversations about fixing social media focus on government regulation, or changes to tech companies’ platforms and moderation. The research documented in this book suggests the challenges related to social media are too big and too complex for any one actor. At present, tech companies do not have sufficient incentives to change. Government regulations are complex and slow to develop. There is an urgent need for civil society to form digital social movements to address digital threats to democracy and social cohesion.