

## Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy “Seen on the Web” (#54)

February 26, 2017

Seen on the Web 1305-1334

This is a compilation of news, articles, essays, and reports on strategic communications, Public Diplomacy, public affairs, U.S. government international broadcasting, and information operations. The editorial intent is to:

- share with busy practitioners the academic and policy ferment in Public Diplomacy and related fields
- from long speeches, testimonies, and articles, flag the portions that bear on Public Diplomacy
- provide a window on armed forces thinking on the fields that neighbor Public Diplomacy such as military public affairs, information operations, inform-influence-engage, and cultural learning, and
- introduce the long history of Public Diplomacy by citing some of the older books, articles, reports, and documents that are not available on the internet.

Public Diplomacy professionals always need a 360-degree view of how ideas are expressed, flow, and gain influence. Many points of view cited here are contentious and/or biased; inclusion does not imply endorsement.

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### Professional Topics

#### 1. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

- As the military and diplomatic objectives are formulated [by the administration], the second priority is "public diplomacy," stressing what made/makes America what it has been and should be – a beacon of hope for people around the world. . . . This should not be confused with "democracy promotion" – a failed concept. \* \* \* The U.S. must develop strategy to discredit and defeat Islamic triumphalism that includes clarifying the expansionist-totalitarian nature of jihadism.

[Making Policy in the New Administration](#)

Shoshana Bryen, American Thinker blog, February 15, 2017

- Those who believe in the power of public diplomacy often argue that if only the United States spent a fraction of the Pentagon's budget — say, the cost of an F-16 fighter — on outreach to the publics of other countries, the need for defense spending would be greatly reduced. . . . The rise of violent Islamist extremism has unfortunately shown that the underlying premise is not necessarily true. \* \* \* The fact is: Without a properly funded and functioning military, in many parts of the world, public diplomacy is all but impossible.

[Swords or words: Which is mightier?](#)

Helle C. Dale, The Washington Times, February 14, 2017

#### 2. BROADCASTING

- Russia Today is hiring extra staff for its French-language website ahead of the country's presidential election, as well as preparing to launch a French-language TV station by the end of the year, in another sign of the Kremlin-backed channel's increasingly global influence.

[Russia Today Is Expanding In France And Preparing To Launch A French TV Channel](#)

Jim Waterson and David Perrotin, BuzzFeed, February 10, 2017

- Both RFE/RL and VOA have long had Russian-language programming targeting viewers in specific countries, but Current Time marks a new attempt to market broadly to Russian speakers wherever they live. In much of Europe — including former Soviet states with large Russian-speaking populations — Current Time has negotiated contracts with local cable providers that allow viewers to tune in from their home TVs. In Russia, distribution is more difficult, forcing perspective viewers to watch via satellite, web-TV apps or a livefeed on the network's website.

[US-funded news channel in Russian offers Kremlin alternative](#)

Josh Lederman, Associated Press, February 8, 2017

- . . . as questions swirl about the extent of President Trump's relationship to Russia, it's actually never been easier to take the pulse of Moscow. Americans have access to it on television and

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online 24 hours a day. \* \* \* RT, however, . . . it is fully the mouthpiece of the Russian government. Formerly just Russia Today, its outlets and subsidiaries around the world regularly spew 21st century agitprop with the express aim of advancing Russia's strategic interests.

[RT Is Literally Russian Propaganda — Why Does Anybody Take it Seriously?](#)

Jon Levine, meadiaite.com, February 18, 2017

### 3. SOCIAL MEDIA • INTERNET

- President Trump is not a novice to social media. In 2009, he joined Twitter as the @realDonaldTrump with a following that has grown from 3 million to nearly 25 million supporters at last count. Trump's popular Twitter account has generated nearly the same number of tweets as @WhiteHouse under Obama (nearly 34,000).

[How the president's Twitter account affects civil society](#)

Nicole Turner-Lee, Brookings, February 16, 2017

- We've all heard anecdotes about trolling on Wikipedia and other social platforms, but rarely has anyone been able to quantify levels and origins of online abuse. That's about to change. Researchers with Alphabet tech incubator Jigsaw worked with Wikimedia Foundation to analyze 100,000 comments left on English-language Wikipedia. They found predictable patterns behind who will launch personal attacks and when.

[Handful of "highly toxic" Wikipedia editors cause 9% of abuse on the site](#)

Annalee Newitz, Arstechnica, February 10, 2017

- The biggest mistake that politicians make on Twitter is that they want to use it as "a one-way communication and forget the word 'social,'" [Scott] Goodstein said. The medium is not meant to be used as a public relations device to send out old-fashioned press releases, he said. [Theodore] Glasser said Twitter has a place in the political landscape but cautioned that it's dangerous to use in matters of diplomacy. For example, he said, "it's not a useful tool for announcing policy. One hundred forty characters doesn't provide enough room for context, nuance and sophistication that public diplomacy requires."

[Immediacy Twitter Provides Overrated, Some Experts Say](#)

Mariama Diallo, Voice of America, February 9, 2017

- Emojis are a joy. They enhance mobile conversation, and they're incredibly fun. But there's a dark side too, and that is the extent to which emojis represent a crude derivative of authentic intersubjective communication, a reification of human emotion itself. Emojis are a determinate toolbox of static, preset emotional states, ones that have been pre-screened for scalability and sold to us by corporate culture. The rapid entrenchment of emojis reflects a disturbing trend in the standardization and conditioning of human experience, which is precisely the mindset most amiable to fascism.

[The Discursive Limits of Emojis and Memes](#)

Tom Syverson, Paste magazine, February 6, 2017

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### 4. DISINFORMATION ▪ FAKE NEWS

- NATO accused Russia of escalating a disinformation campaign since the Kremlin's 2014 seizure of Ukraine's Crimea region, saying Russian websites such as Sputnik and RT had posted false stories, the alliance's spokeswoman said on Saturday.

[NATO says it sees sharp rise in Russian disinformation since Crimea seizure](#)

Foo Yun Chee, Reuters, February 11, 2017

- "Outlets like Sputnik are part of a Kremlin propaganda machine which are trying to use information for political and military needs," Nato spokesperson Oana Lungescu told BBC Trending. "It is a way, not to convince people, but to confuse them, not to provide an alternative viewpoint, but to divide public opinions and to ultimately undermine our ability to understand what is going on and therefore take decisions if decisions need to be made."

[Nato says viral news outlet is part of "Kremlin misinformation machine"](#)

Mike Wendling and Will Yates, BBC News, February 11, 2017

- There is increasing concern among senior NATO and European Union officials over Russia's ability to use television and the Internet to spread what they say is fake news. The defense alliance . . . says it has recorded more than a score of Russian myths in the last two years which it has attempted to knock down with factsheets, interviews, rebuttals and videos.

[NATO says it sees sharp rise in Russian disinformation since Crimea seizure](#)

Foo Yun Chee, Reuters, February 11, 2017

- In the long history of misinformation, the current outbreak of fake news has already secured a special place, with the president's personal adviser, Kellyanne Conway, going so far as to invent a Kentucky massacre in order to defend a ban on travelers from seven Muslim countries. But the concoction of alternative facts is hardly rare, and the equivalent of today's poisonous, bite-size texts and tweets can be found in most periods of history, going back to the ancients.

[The True History of Fake News](#)

Robert Darnton, New York Review of Books, February 13, 2017

- When chased off the public forum, lies—racist superstitions, classist myths, sexist stereotypes, bunk data, vile rumors, junk science—don't disappear. Rather they're forced underground to circulate and fester, taking on the rebellious virtue of official censure. When lies are suppressed from public view, representatives of truth are denied the ability to disprove them.

[Fake News and Free Speech](#)

Tom Syverson, SpliceToday, 15 December, 2016

### 5. INFORMATION WARFARE

- In a previous piece, we established that We Are In A War Of Ideas. How do we fight a “War of Ideas”? \*\* First, we need a “National Information Strategy”. Making a great strategy takes

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time, so that effort must start immediately. Any and all maneuvering in the information space must fit within the limits stated there.

[How Do We Fight A War Of Ideas?](#)

Joel Harding, To Inform is to Influence, February 10, 2017

- Influence operations are a central tool for Russia in striving for its interests, and besides public propaganda, influence also encompasses a broad arsenal of concealed measures. It should be stressed that this is not just the domain of Russian special services; the entire state apparatus is involved.

[International Security and Estonia, 2017](#)

Estonian Information Board (EIB), teabeamet.ee, December 31, 2016

### 6. HYBRID WARFARE

- Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimea Peninsula, its ongoing aggressions in Ukraine, its military buildup on its Western borders and in the Baltic region, and its interference with elections in Europe and the United States . . . are examples of Russian hybrid warfare. Russia's hybrid warfare toolbox also includes the rapid dissemination of misinformation and propaganda, conventional warfare, nuclear armament, cyberattacks, espionage, and the ever-increasing use of proxies, including Syria and even the Afghani Taliban . . .

[Nationalism: Russian Hybrid Warfare](#)

Cynthia Lardner, International Policy Digest, February 18, 2017

### 7. CYBER

- While much about Russia's cyberwarfare program is shrouded in secrecy, details of the government's effort to recruit programmers in recent years — whether professionals like Mr. Vyarya, college students, or even criminals — are shedding some light on the Kremlin's plan to create elite teams of computer hackers.

[How Russia Recruited Elite Hackers for Its Cyberwar](#)

Andrew E. Kramer, The New York Times, December 29, 2016

### 8. COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- First, they should work to keep lone wolves isolated. . . . Second, governments should build strong relationships between Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies. . . . Third, governments should direct security services to monitor and infiltrate jihadist social media accounts, and encourage private companies to shut them down, to identify individual terrorists and disrupt their communications. Finally, and most important, governments should try to discredit the ideology embraced by lone wolves.

[How to hunt a lone wolf: Countering terrorists who act on their own](#)

Daniel L. Byman, Brookings, February 14, 2017

## 9. CONSPIRACY THEORIES

- The disinformation campaign loves conspiracies. They strengthen the feeling that governments plot against their citizens and that the truth lies in other places, rather than in credible media or official statements (especially in "alternative" and "independent" outlets which mainly specialise in copying and pasting Russian sources). Formally speaking, we can see two prevalent types of conspiracy. The first says that something that has happened, hasn't. \* \* \* The second type says the opposite: that something that hasn't happened, has.

### [Two Types of Conspiracies](#)

EU East Stratcom Task Force, Disinformation Review, February 16, 2017

## 10. THE FOUR FREEDOMS

- . . .when, early in 1943, the Saturday Evening Post...published reproductions of the paintings in four consecutive issues, the nation's response was so emotional and so overwhelming that the government did an about-face, asked permission to put the originals on tour, and used them to sell more than \$132 million in war bonds.

### [Norman Rockwell's Ode to Civil Discourse](#)

Bob Greene, The Wall Street Journal, February 10, 2017

## Countries and Regions

### 11. RUSSIA

- Tensions have risen further over allegations the Kremlin backed cyber attacks attempting to influence the US and German elections, as well as controversy over "fake news" spread by state-funded outlets including Russia Today and Sputnik. The Russian government has denied involvement in hacking attempts and accused Nato and Western media in turn of conducting a "propaganda war" against it.

### [Russia's foreign minister calls for 'post-West world order' in speech to global leaders](#)

Lizzie Dearden, The Independent, February 18, 2017

- [Putin] had expected to be dealing with a weakened, tamed Clinton as the American president. Instead, he got Trump. So what does a smart KGB officer from the Brezhnev era do? He turns to the tools of his trade: disinformation, misinformation, propaganda, and more. He pivots, and claims that he installed President Trump and controls him - and he leverages his propaganda machine in Russia and Europe to promote the claim.

### [Vladimir Putin's 'puppet strings' on Trump are an illusion](#)

Bart Marcois, TheHill, February 17, 2017

- The amount of hate-speech on Russian state TV debates has significantly risen. Almost every mention of Ukraine we see (and there were a lot of them in the last days) is accompanied by the adjective "nazi" or the noun "coup" - once again ignoring the reality that the Revolution of Dignity was no coup, and that Ukraine does not have nazi parties in the Parliament.

### [Kremlin TV versus Ukraine: Open calls for violence](#)

EU East Stratcom Task Force, Disinformation Review, February 16, 2017

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- Russia is waging a war against the West using information as a weapon. Every day Russian propaganda infiltrates the news we read. Fake news sites continue poisoning our perception of the news we read, it is far too easy to spread. Manufactured disinformation spreads like wildfire, unchecked, through our social media. Russian trolls attack us constantly in comment sections on a myriad of news and social sites. Russian leadership turns reality on its head, turning Russian atrocities into American tragedies. Even NGOs are used as information conduits against the West by the Russians. Our news media perpetuates this unethical, immoral, and sometimes illegal abuse by continuing to use Russian propaganda, catering to Russian interests. Pro-Russian journalists continue skewing the news to a Russian-favorable perspective.

[We Are In A War Of Ideas](#)

Joel Harding, To Inform is to Influence, February 10, 2017

### 12. CHINA

- The will to autocracy means that both figures share (with elected or self-appointed strong men historically and worldwide) some disturbing parallels: Quotations Vs. Tweets \* \* \* Progadanda Vs. the Lying Media \* \* \* Climate Change Vs. Human Will \* \* \* The Smartest Men in the Room \* \* \* Divide to Rule Vs. Scapegoating \* \* \* Gangs of Four \* \* \* Business as Usual \* \* \*

[The Chairmen, Trump and Mao](#)

Geremie R. Barme, China File, January 23, 2017

- Instead of pre-conditioning the Chinese with his blustery tweets, Trump put them in the impossible position of not being able to come to the table, even to talk on the telephone, without appearing weak. This broke all communication at the highest levels and put all other cooperation on stand-by. I cannot see a case in which the United States wins diplomatically by not talking to its counterparts. The basis of diplomacy is communication, and if countries are not communicating they are hardly advancing their agendas and objectives.

[‘The Chinese Learned that Trump Blinks’](#)

David Wertime, M. Taylor Fravel, Isaac Stone Fish, Susan Shirk, Richard McGregor, and Jorge Guajardo, Foreign Policy, February 10, 2017

### 13. NORTH KOREA

- What the West regards as the over-the-top propaganda that regularly spews out of Pyongyang’s official mouthpiece, the Korean Central News Agency, is actually the intellectual daily bread of every North Korean citizen. In fact, the more virulent, racist aspects of North Korean doctrine are saved for its elementary school lesson plans, rather than for general consumption on the regime’s various Internet outlets which are made available to the world.

[Understanding North Korea: Pyongyang’s propaganda playbook](#)

Edward Oh, Asia Times, February 18, 2017

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### Toolkit

#### **14. POSTERS**

- Soon after the outset of World War I, the poster, previously the successful medium of commercial advertising, was recognized as a means of spreading national propaganda with unlimited possibilities. Its value as an educational or stimulating influence was more and more appreciated. The poster could impress an idea quickly, vividly, and lastingly.

[Posters as Munitions, 1917: Feb. 21, 2017 – Feb. 18, 2018, Memory Hall](#)

National WWI Museum and Memorial

#### **15. EXCHANGES**

- Seventy years ago, the world was in a period of tremendous uncertainty as it recovered from the horrors and destruction of the Second World War. Two great Americans, George C. Marshall ...and J. William Fulbright ... understood that new responses were needed for old problems. They saw the power of outreach, of networks, of grace to heal and bind the world's wounds. The Marshall Plan remains the standard for enlightened response to massive need, and the Fulbright Program is the unquestionable flagship of international educational exchange programs. Sponsored by the U.S. government, Fulbright now operates in more than 160 countries worldwide and has provided approximately 370,000 participants with the opportunity to study, teach, or conduct research and exchange ideas across borders.

[Remarks at Swearing In Ceremony for Members of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board](#)

Bruce Wharton, Acting Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, February 9, 2017