

Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy “Seen on the Web” (#57)

March 11, 2017
Seen on the Web, 1394-1460

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Precepts

1. ON CAPITOL HILL

Moscow's strategic objective is to break apart the NATO alliance; to boost Russian geopolitical influence in Western Europe. The stakes are high: if Kremlin-backed politicians take power in France, it could potentially spell the end of the European Union. Even for those who might approve of that development, I think we can all agree the future of the EU should be left to the Europeans – not manipulators in Moscow.

[Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Royce \(R-CA\), Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing: "Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation Aims"](#)

March 9, 2017

If an authoritarian government undermines your elections, you can hardly undermine theirs if they do not have democratic elections, especially since the authoritarian government is ultimately the one to count the vote. Hacking e-mails of the rulers and publishing the more embarrassing finds does little if the media in the ruler's country are under state control and if republishing them on the web lands you in jail or worse. In this regard liberal democracies are weaker against attacks even from relatively small cyber powers such as Iran. It is the asymmetry of such attacks that places democracies in danger.

[Prepared Testimony and Statement for the Record](#)

Toomas Hendrik Ilves (President of Estonia 2006-2016), House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 9, 2017

I do not advocate propaganda or deception, nor should the American response complicate the life of ordinary Russians. Our weapon in this strategic contest is the truth. Recall that in 1982, the Soviet Defense Ministry published a propagandistic monograph called "Whence The Threat To Peace." The following year, the Pentagon Released a monograph called "Soviet Military Power", detailing with declassified information the buildup of destabilizing Soviet forces. The United States had the more credible reputation, and its international leadership was, if anything, strengthened by the contest of narratives.

[March 9, 2017 hearing on "Undermining Democratic Institutions and Splintering NATO: Russian Disinformation"](#)

Ambassador Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr. (Chairman Emeritus, Stimson Center), House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 9, 2017

Russia's problem is this: it is no match against a united Atlantic alliance. Against individual states in Europe, however, Russia is comparatively strong. Russian leaders know this. It is why they must fracture allied solidarity, stoke public distrust for democratic institutions, and discredit the alliance structures that defend Europe. If we are divided and distracted, Russia can challenge the U.S. led security order in Europe. This is Russia's ultimate aim. Propaganda is a means.

[Written Testimony](#)

Peter B. Doran (Center for European Policy Analysis Executive Vice President), House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 9, 2017

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. . . indeed, Members of Congress watching their own twitter feeds may be unaware that the responses they are seeing to their posts may be coming from the same bots or network of Russian collaborators that spread propaganda, rather than from constituents.

* * * * *

Like most nationalists, Putin is no patriot. He manipulates public institutions and public sentiments for personal gain. This distinction between Russia as a whole and the Kremlin is important for at least two reasons. One, so that we focus our attention where it belongs And two, because we should be clear that we seek friendship with the Russian people They deserve a government better than the one they have, and the government they have is a threat to their futures just as it is a threat to so many beyond Russia’s borders. We should never leave a doubt that the international system we seek is one in which a free and democratic Russia that truly represents the interests of its citizens plays a constructive role.

[Written testimony for the record](#)

Daniel B. Baer (Former U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), House Foreign Affairs Committee, March 9, 2017

Global Engagement Center – The best way to defeat an idea is to present a better, more appealing idea to vulnerable and undecided audiences. The State Department’s Global Engagement Center (GEC) effectively coordinates, integrates, and synchronizes messaging to foreign audiences designed to undermine the disinformation espoused by violent extremist groups, including ISIS and al Qaeda, while offering positive alternatives. The Center is focused on empowering and enabling partners, governmental and non-governmental, who are able to speak out against these groups and provide an alternative to ISIS’s nihilist vision. To that end, the Center offers services ranging from planning thematic social media campaigns to providing factual information that counters disinformation to building capacity for third parties to effectively utilize social media to research and evaluation.

[Statement on the Posture of U.S. Central Command](#)

General Joseph L. Votel, Commander, U.S. Central Command, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 9, 2017

To protect and promote U.S. national security interests in Africa, diplomacy and development are key efforts, and our partnership with the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is key to achieve enduring success. Together, we work to address the root causes of violent extremism, lack of accountable government systems, poor education opportunities, and social and economic deficiencies to achieve long-term, sustainable impact in Africa.

[United States Africa Command 2017 Posture Statement](#)

General Thomas B. Waldhauser, Commander, U.S. Africa Command, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 9, 2017

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Professional Topics

2. PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

● We also offer . . . six “lessons learned.” Lesson One: Don’t be fooled by the word “radio.” * * * Lesson Two: Get to know your amazing employees. * * * Lesson Three: Remember the three missions. * * * Mission #1: To report the news—local, regional, and global. * * * Mission #2: To convey a “full and fair picture of American life.” * * * Mission #3: To provide a forum for the articulation and responsible discussion of U.S. foreign policy. * * * Lesson Four: Don’t do propaganda. * * * Lesson Five: Put your job into perspective. * * * Lesson Six: Stick with the basics.

[Protecting America’s Voice Abroad](#)

Martha Bayles, and Jeffrey Gedmin, The American Interest, March 2, 2017

● Clearly, the rigid, vertical 19th Century structure of the foreign policy bureaucracy is ill-suited to modern American diplomacy, which requires a foreign service capable of rapid, resounding policy responses. * * * The President and Secretary Tillerson well know it won’t be easy discarding decades of stale group-think; and reinventing antiquated management practices and structures, including communication platforms to ensure their clarity and effectiveness. . .

[President Trump’s 21st Century State Department](#)

Thaddeus Mccotter And Dave Sanders, Daily Caller, February 28, 2017

● [President Trump] promised meaningful engagement with the world — but focused narrowly on “vital security interests” and transactional relationships. He gave a brief nod to universal values by stating the obvious fact that “free nations” are the “best vehicle for expressing the will of the people” — but gave no indication that America would give voice to that will. And, non-controversially, he endorsed peace, harmony, and stability in the world — but has proposed to weaken the tools of diplomacy and development that advance these goals.

[Donald Trump Is Tarnishing America’s Brand](#)

Brian P. McKeon and Mark P. Lagon, Foreign Policy, March 1, 2017

3. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

● Global perceptions arising from the allegations of impropriety surrounding the election arguably has advanced global perceptions that U.S. politics are no less corrupt and chaotic than their own. . . . Such possible dynamics make imperative immediate and effective strategic communication by the new Trump administration, both to heal the scars left by the electoral campaign, but to reinforce the positive image to the world regarding what the U.S. stands for.

[America’s strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Dr. R. Evan Ellis, Air and Space Power Journal, January 2, 2017

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4. SOFT POWER

- Military leaders have underscored the essential contribution that investments in soft power make to US security. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates’s close working relationship with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was well-known. And current Defense Secretary James Mattis told members of Congress in 2013, when he was commander of US Central Command, “If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.”

[Trump signals a US shift from 'soft power' to military might](#)

Howard LaFanchi, The Christian Science Monitor, February 28, 2017

5. BROADCASTING

- When Congress approved the [Voice of America's] Charter, they didn’t tell VOA that it would be nice if their stories were balanced, or that, if it wasn’t too much trouble, they hoped that VOA would try to report on U.S. policies. Instead, they used the word “will.” Repeatedly. The guidelines were not meant to be an option.

[What’s In VOA’s Charter—And What Isn’t](#)

David S. Jackson, CPD Blog, February 21, 2017

- The contentious issues of [U.S. international broadcasting]governance addressed by the [National Defense Authorization Act]are unique to the United States and arise because the U.S., alone among advanced democracies, supports with public funds multiple international media/broadcasting networks, some of them part of the federal government bureaucracy and others publicly-funded non-governmental organizations.

[Optimizing Governance of US International Media in Historical and International Context](#)

A. Ross Johnson, Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, February 10, 2017

- . . . RT (formerly known as "Russia Today"). The Russian state-run network is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to modern tools of authoritarian influence in the realm of ideas. In contrast to inward-leaning democracies . . . today's autocrats are vibrant internationalists in the ideas sphere . . . a diverse constellation of efforts to shape perceptions and project their preferred worldview, while contesting the ideas they find anathema.

[How Anti-Democratic Propaganda Is Taking Over the World](#)

Christopher Walker, Politico, March 3, 2017

- India has a booming electronic media industry with nearly 400 round-the-clock television news channels . . . including a dozen in English. But there has never been one dedicated to world news and analysis. Now a new initiative called Republic TV, bankrolled by the nationalistic Indian politician and media baron Rajeev Chandrasekhar, stands the best chance to break the inertia and enter the big league in the world news business.

[India aims for global soft-power clout via Republic TV](#)

Sreeram Chaulia, Today [Singapore], February 23, 2017

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6. PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- [Retired Navy Admiral William McRaven, now Chancellor of the University of Texas System:] The news media have not always been kind to me. However, I can tell you – as someone who has been to 90 countries and spoken to the press in almost all of them – the United States has the finest press corps in the world, bar none. There is nothing more important to a democracy than an active and engaged press. Is it perfect? Far from it. Does the media make mistakes? Far too often. But flaws and all, I believe the free press is our country’s most important institution

[Journalism: Essential to Democracy](#)

William H. McRaven, Quantum Leaps, University of Texas, February 23, 2017

- This week my wife and I are working for the Red Cross in support of the San Jose (CA) Coyote Creek Floods. My role is that of Lead Public Affairs Officer. Government and community organizations needed to get information out to the affected people and the general public...here’s what I’ve learned so far this week.

[Communicating in An Urban Disaster](#)

Lawrence Dietz, PSYOP regimental blog, February 23, 2017

7. SOCIAL MEDIA • INTERNET

- On February 20, Russia’s ambassador to the United Nations . . . died unexpectedly in New York. One minute after the news broke on the website of Kremlin broadcaster RT, and a minute before RT managed to tweet the news, a slew of Twitter accounts posted the newflash with an identical “breaking news” caption. Most of the accounts had a number of features in common: they were all highly active. They were all vocal supporters of US President Donald Trump. They had avatar pictures of attractive women in revealing outfits. And they were all fake, set up to steer Twitter users to a money-making ad site.

[Portrait of a botnet: Uncovering a network of fake Trump supporters set up to make money from clicks](#)

Joel Harding, To Inform is to Influence, February 25, 2017

8. PROPAGANDA

- . . . propaganda is back. I don’t mean the unfragrant mob of internet miscreants — hacking is to propaganda what stalking is to romance. I mean the impulse to choose a side and press its case with wily elegance. Those of us who grew up in the Cold War have rather missed it — the persistent, well-designed, all-encompassing salesmanship of Life’s Correct Path, backed up with textbooks, posters and unspeakable stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

[The Joys of Propaganda](#)

Andrew O’Hagan, The New York Times, February 22, 2017

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9. DISINFORMATION ▪ FAKE NEWS

- Western monitoring groups have offered compelling evidence of the use of chemical weapons, barrel bombs, and deliberate and repeated Russian air strikes on hospitals and schools during the fall 2016 military offensive against Aleppo. In conjunction with military operations, the Syrian and Russian governments conducted a separate information campaign aimed at “distracting attention from events on the ground by focusing on discrediting, and silencing, the ones who were reporting them.”

[Disinformation campaigns target tech-enabled citizen journalists](#)

Steven Livingston, Brookings, March 2, 2017

- . . . identifying such disinformation and carefully sifting the lies it contains that are surrounded by facts is a far more important but also far more difficult task than simply unmasking lies. The latter may make those who do it feel better; but only the former can protect us against those who deploy disinformation skillfully.

[Moscow Deploys the Most Dangerous Kind of Disinformation Against Ukraine](#)

Paul Goble, Window on Eurasia – New Series, February 28, 2017

- From [pizza-parlor pedophilia rings](#) to [Sharia law in Florida](#), viral fake news stories often seem propelled by their own preposterousness. It’s a different matter for professionally produced disinformation. That, I learned from a former pro, requires a core of logic and verifiable fact.

[A Fake-News Warning From a Former Propagandist](#)

Faye Flam, Bloomberg, February 27, 2017

- The easiest sell of President Trump’s life is that a “corrupt” media produces “fake news.” After all, fewer than 2 in 10 Americans have “a lot” of [trust in news organizations](#), the Pew Research Center has found, and we live in a “Matrix”-infused “[conspiracy culture](#),” according to social scientists, where one is thought to be impossibly simple to not understand that the world is ruled by collusion and machination. * * * For some, the problem is that journalists have allowed too much of their personalities to creep into their work. * * *

[Americans have lost faith in institutions. That’s not because of Trump or ‘fake news.’](#)

Bill Bishop, The Washington Post, March 3, 2017

10. COUNTER-TERRORISM

- American and Arab lead youth counter-terrorism organization, Defeating Islamic Radicalization and Extremism (DIRE) today announces ‘PeacePals: BFFs Beyond Borders’ (PPBBB), its newest solution based, ‘soft power’ long-term strategic youth program aimed at sowing seeds to create cross-cultural unity and ultimately combat ideological based extremism.

[Arab & American Youth Anti-Terrorism Org. Launches “PeacePals: BFFs Beyond Borders”](#)

Digital Journal, February 21, 2017

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11. COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- Areas such as countering terrorist ideology...require continued discussion with U.S. partners...most Gulf governments have alliances with ultraconservative groups...that complicate such broader counterterrorism campaigns. Abu Dhabi stands out as a particularly effective partner to work with on counterterrorism matters because of its comparatively strong emphasis on religious tolerance and its more limited ties to ultraconservatives. Already-robust counterterrorism cooperation should thus be deepened and expanded with the UAE.

[Rebuilding Alliances And Countering Threats In The Gulf](#)

Lori Plotkin Boghardt and Simon Henderson, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2017

- [Pardis] Parker's current project is *Mideast Minute*, a weekly short that satirizes the U.S. government's long-running propaganda efforts in the Middle East. The show is available to Canadians via Comedy Central's Snapchat Discover channel, with new episodes forthcoming. Past episodes can be seen at eachvideo.com.

[Mideast Minute: Pardis Parker lampoons U.S. propaganda efforts in Middle East](#)

Brad Wheeler, The Globe and Mail, February 22, 2017

12. INFORMATION WARFARE

- [Marine Brigadier General Dennis] Crall included deception as one of six categories – Assured C2, awareness, attack and exploit, influence, deceive, control – he described as mission areas that help define “information warfare.” When it comes to influence, “simply understanding the cognitive domain isn’t enough – you’ve got to do something about it. The ability to influence our adversaries – and, again, in a way of our time and choosing – is critical.”

[Marines’ CIO: Don’t Fear Deception in the Information Warfare Mission](#)

Gidget Fuentes, USNI News, February 27, 2017

- [Moscow] has used cyberwarfare against neighboring states. It has engaged in extensive information warfare on a global scale. More recently, the Russian government has deployed a weapon...the ability to interfere directly in Western electoral processes, both to influence their outcomes and more generally to discredit the democratic system.... This past year, Russia for the first time employed this powerful weapon against the United States, heavily interfering in the American electoral process.

[Backing Into World War III](#)

Robert Kagan, Foreign Policy, February 6, 2017

13. CYBER

- Three years ago, President Barack Obama ordered Pentagon officials to step up their cyber and electronic strikes against North Korea’s missile program in hopes of sabotaging test launches in their opening seconds.

[Trump inherits a Secret Cyberwar Against North Korean Missiles](#)

David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, The New York Times, March 4, 2017

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- Among the challenges the U.S. faces in the 21st century — from geopolitical challenges such as Brexit to regional challenges such as Russia and Iran to violent extremism — cyber tops the list of threats for the former supreme allied commander at NATO.

[Cyber poses greatest challenge, says former supreme allied commander](#)

Mark Pomerleau, C4ISRNET, February 21, 2017

14. INFORMATION OPERATIONS

- Stationed first at Four Corps headquarters in Can Tho in the Delta and then in Two Corps Headquarters in Nha Tran on the central coast, I worked in the Chieu Hoi Program that urged defections from the Viet Cong. I prepared reports and traveled in the provinces to troubleshoot problems. Not long after I arrived in Can Tho, I accompanied an Armed Propaganda Team consisting of a dozen VC defectors on a mission to "rally" their former cohorts in Vinh Long Province. After several hours of patrolling, we discovered an abandoned VC information booth...

[Reflecting on Vietnam: A Young Diplomat goes to War](#)

Allen Keiswetter, American Diplomacy, January/February 2017

15. NARRATIVE

- Alongside the Islamist struggle to reshape society in the Sahel through violent means is a second, relatively unnoticed but equally deadly conflict with the dangerous potential of merging with jihadi efforts. At a time when resources such as land and water are diminishing in the Sahel, semi-nomadic Muslim herders of the widespread Fulani ethnic group are increasingly turning to violence against settled Christian communities to preserve their herds and their way of life. [From the abstract]

[The Fulani Crisis: Communal Violence And Radicalization In The Sahel](#)

Andrew McGregor, Combating Terrorism Center, February 22, 2017

16. HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

- From an early age, North Koreans are taught that Kim Il Sung...commanded anti-Japanese guerrillas from a secret camp in Mount Baekdu.... They are also taught that Kim Jong Il, the previous Great Leader, was born there (in reality, he was born in Russia) after receiving its holy energy. The average North Korean is thus steeped in the myths of three generations of Great Leaders. Every citizen studies the lives of the Kims, watches television programs and reads newspaper articles solely about them, wears badges displaying their faces, and celebrates the birthdays of the two dead men, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, as the Day of the Sun and the Day of the Shining Star....Fealty to these Great Leaders, the carriers of the Baekdu hyultong [bloodline] is, in most respects, a tightly controlled, fundamentalist religion.

[The Meaning of Kim Jong Nam's Murder](#)

Suki Kim, The Atlantic, February 24, 2017

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- The upstart Alternative for Germany, known as the AfD, began as a party opposed to the euro and moved on to fighting Germany's refugee influx. Now it is increasingly emphasizing a broader, substantially more provocative goal: changing how Germans see their past.

[The German Right Believes It's Time to Discard the Country's Historical Guilt](#)

Anton Troianovski, The Wall Street Journal, March 2, 2017

- . . . the accusation of Nazism is one of the favourite techniques of pro-Kremlin outlets. The current Russian leadership describes the USSR as the only winner over Nazi Germany, and it is even [illegal to recall](#) that Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin were allies at the beginning of World War II. The most "targeted" country in this respect is definitely **Ukraine**. Again and again, pro-Kremlin media accuse Ukrainians and their government of being Nazis . . .

[Nazi east, Nazi west, Nazi over the cuckoo's nest](#)

Euvsdisinfo, February 27, 2017

- Many of the problems Russians now face are rooted in their firmly-held misconceptions about the nature of Russia and Russian national identity. To help them out . . . a columnist for "Komsomolskaya pravda," identifies seven things . . . Russians must recognize about Russia and themselves. . . . "Russia is a small country. It only seems large on a map." * * * "Russians are a small people." * * * "Russians live worse than all others on Earth," * * * "Russia is not the Russian Federation." * * * "Russians are a stateless people," * * * "The main drama of Russian history is the gap between the individual and the state." * * * "The main Russian problem is the absence of a nation."

[Seven things Russians need to understand about their country and themselves now](#)

Euromaidan Press, February 15, 2017

- In Russia, the number of people sympathetic to the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin broke the 16-year historical maximum, according to a survey by Levada Center, RBC reports. It is noted that 46% of respondents say they "worship", "respect" and "sympathize" Stalin, according to RBC.

[Almost half of Russians praise Stalin - poll](#)

Unian Information Agency, February 15, 2017

17. ANTI-SEMITISM

The 1975 United Nations General Assembly resolution that infamously gave the world "Zionism is Racism" was revoked in 1991 with 111 nations voting in favor of its repeal. Twenty-five countries voted against the repeal, including the shining beacons of democracy and equality of Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

[Zionism is Not Racism](#)

Daniella J. Greenbaum, Commentary, February 23, 2017

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18. MEDIA SAVVY ▪ EDUCATION ▪ JUDGMENT

- . . . unlike its neighbours, Helsinki reckons it has the tools to effectively resist any information attack from its eastern neighbour. Finnish officials believe their country’s strong public education system, long history of balancing Russia, and a comprehensive government strategy allow it to deflect co-ordinated propaganda and disinformation.

[Why is Finland better at fending off Russian-linked fake news?](#)

Reid Standish, The Star, March 1, 2017

19. IDEAS, CONCEPTS, DOCTRINE

- Marxian thinking is back in the form of an aggressive China. Both Russia and China are trying to harvest the benefits of the Enlightenment order, but they also want to break the rules when they feel like it. They incorporate deep strains of anti-Enlightenment thinking and undermine the post-Enlightenment world order.

[The Enlightenment Project](#)

David Brooks, The New York Times, February 28, 2017

- As for the failings of liberal democracy itself . . . the lesson is that the democratic project is not a machine that can run by itself. The hardware of democracy cannot be run by any software. Rather, democracy depends on a moral-cultural foundation that has been seriously eroded by the Culture of Me. So if the democratic project is not to decay into either chaos or a dictatorship of relativism, a great work of moral and cultural renewal must be undertaken throughout the West .

[A Modest Defense of The “Liberal World Order”](#)

George Weigel, First Things, February 22, 2017

- President [Trump](#) is lashing out against “fake news” in what is quite possibly the greatest civics-journalism course ever publicly taught in America. At the end of the day, [Mr. Trump](#) is still not done. So he turns to Twitter to unleash yet more unfiltered news awesomeness onto the American media landscape. Welcome to the Age of Raw Journalism. Truly, a new dawn in American media. . . . It is the confluence of instant information, manic technologies and a political figure who has the strength, fearlessness and stamina to keep it going around the clock.

[Trump’s war on ‘fake news’ offers a great civics lesson](#)

Charles Hurt, The Washington Times, February 21, 2017

20. IDEAS OF AMERICA

- . . . we’ve forgotten that what made America great was that we, Americans, were the world’s refugees, we were the earth’s oddballs that came together and created the best system of governance, invented the world’s advancements, worked harder than the rest, earned our place in the world, promoted and fought for the ideals of freedom and liberty at home and abroad, and worked to give everyone, American or not, an opportunity to make the best life for themselves, their loved ones and their communities.

[Yesterday was not a good day in American history](#)

Clint Watts, Foreign Policy Research Institute, January 26, 2017

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Countries and Regions

21. RUSSIA

- Russia's military has admitted for the first time the scale of its information warfare effort, saying it was significantly expanded post-Cold War. Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said that Russian "information troops" were involved in "intelligent, effective propaganda", but he did not reveal details about the team or its targets

[Russian military admits significant cyber-war effort](#)

BBC News, February 23, 2017

- The next stage is to integrate a set of symmetrical and asymmetrical responses to counter the threats posed. Among others, this will require further measures to reinforce nuclear and conventional forces, as well as diversifying energy sources, building proper cyber security defences and sensitising Western societies to the dangers of Russian disinformation.

[Handling Russia Should Not Be So Difficult for the West](#)

Joseph Lough, Chatham House, February 21, 2017

22. UKRAINE

- Ukraine banned some Russian television broadcasts, a practice that raised free speech objections, and yet the fake news still circulates online. "StopFake News" has chosen public debunking, not banning, as the best defense — and has shown it can become its own form of appealing entertainment.

[To Battle Fake News, Ukrainian Show Features Nothing but Lies](#)

Andrew E. Kramer, The New York Times, February 26, 2017

23. ISLAMIC STATE

- We must start at the heart of the issue, the third concern: ideology. Because here, Daesh is just one symptom of a broader problem: the rot in political Islam (that which manipulates Muslims in service of political violence). Until this rot is excised, Salafi-Jihadist terrorist groups will continue to thrive. America must do more to support Muslims who would like better governance in Muslim-majority nations.

[What Mattis's Plan to Defeat ISIS Should Look Like](#)

Tom Rogan, National Review, February 28, 2017

- This Research Paper explores [ISIL's] use of suicide tactics... from 1 December 2015 to 30 November 2016. It uses an exhaustive sample of the group's suicide operation reports as a window into the tactical and strategic underpinnings of its martyrdom industry.

[War by Suicide: A Statistical Analysis of the Islamic State's Martyrdom Industry](#)

Charlie Winter, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague, February 27, 2017

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- Since September 2014, the Islamic State has been successful in persuading teenagers and pre-teens in the West to carry out attacks there. . . . In the majority of cases, the plotters were in direct contact with the Islamic State. The data also suggests that this problem is worsening; on average, there were two plots per month in 2016. Moreover, the Islamic State’s ideology, Manichean world view, use of social media, and online propaganda has a particular appeal to young people.

[The Islamic State’s Western Teenage Plotters](#)

Robin Simcox, Combating Terrorism Center, February 22, 2017

- The Berlin truck attack last December by Anis Amri, a Tunisian extremist suspected of communicating with Islamic State operatives in Libya, was not just the first fatal Islamic State-linked attack on German soil. It also exposed the danger posed by a radical network . . . led by Iraqi preacher Abu Walaa, . . . What investigators are learning about the network could have severe implications for European security.

[The Berlin Attack And The “Abu Walaa” Islamic State Recruitment Network](#)

Georg Heil, Combating Terrorism Center, February 22, 2017

- ISIL displays attributes of all four hybrid modalities. . . . the traditional modality through its fielded military and militia forces. . . . the irregular modality through its use of shadow governments, highly visible terrorist operations, killings of Sunni and Shia “apostates,” and Internet-based recruiting. . . . the disruptive/criminal modality through its vast network of illicit oil trafficking and sales, illegal bulk cash transfers through charities and individuals, stolen foreign aid, kidnapping operations, taxes, and illegal checkpoints. . . . Fourth a catastrophic terrorism modality. . . . ISIL’s extensive information operations (IO) contribute to all four modalities

[Hybrid Threat Center of Gravity Analysis: Taking a Fresh Look at ISIL](#)

Michael D. Reily, Joint Force Quarterly, January 26, 2017

24. AFGHANISTAN

- We find external actors like the Russians promoting a narrative, a false narrative, that the Afghan government is not effective against ISIS-K, therefore the Russians are legitimizing the Taliban as being the most effective against ISIS-K. They use this as an opportunity to undermine the U.S. and NATO. Iran is supporting the Taliban, particularly in the western part of Afghanistan, and the Quds Force, IRGC, is working with the Taliban.

[A View From The Ct Foxhole: General John W. Nicholson, Commander, Resolute Support And U.S. Forces-Afghanistan](#)

Brian Dodwell & Don Ressler, Combating Terrorism Center, February 22, 2017

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25. IRAN

- “Hollywood has created many films against Iran; There are many computer games in which U.S. soldiers conquer our country,” Azima told Reuters. “We made this film as an answer to that propaganda.”

[New Animated Film Depicts Iran Defeating US Navy](#)

Hope Hodge Seck, Defense Tech, February 22, 2017

26. ISLAMISM

- By cataloguing and excluding the “lawful” or “non-violent” extremists now in America, and the role they play in the radicalization of American Muslims, the government can work with genuinely moderate Muslim organizations to identify and prevent Islamists from, for example, operating schools and chaplaincy programs, obtaining taxpayer funds under the guise of community work, or using charitable endeavors to fund Islamist terrorism overseas.

[Countering Islamist Extremism the Right Way](#)

Sam Westrop, National Review, February 22, 2017

- [Dr. Hasan’s] discourse consisted of highlighting the need for dialogue and humanisation to combat radical Islam and far right nationalism. However, he also observed an even more concerning division: that between the far left and right, particularly noting the potential threat the extreme left pose to the Prevent Strategy, a government initiative to monitor younger individuals who are vulnerable to becoming radicalized.

[Reflections on Dr. Hasan’s address to the Durham University Politics and International Relations Society](#)

Josh Moss, Quilliam International, February 21, 2017

- The first thing we have to do is to dissect the radicalization process. Every person’s journey is unique. Each individual goes through a different timeline, but there are some commonalities. The first part is that there are some genuine partial or perceived grievances that every individual faces in their day-to-day life. Then there are people – charismatic recruiters – that will create a worldview or world lens, if you like. We call it Islamism, as opposed to Islam, the faith.

[Countering Extremism: A Problem for Civil Society](#)

Haras Rafiq, Quilliam International, February 17, 2017

- Many Muslims domestically and abroad would view this move unfavorably, potentially perceiving it as a declaration of war against non-violent political Islamists, and by extension Islam itself. This would further tarnish the U.S. image abroad, taint America’s message to the public, and prove harmful to countering violent extremism efforts.

[Designating the Muslim Brotherhood](#)

Mohammad Alhassani, American Security Project, February 15, 2017

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27. CHINA

- . . . China has blocked videos of South Korean music and television dramas from streaming services. The move came as part of [continued economic](#) backlash by the Chinese government in response to South Korea deploying the United States' Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system near Seoul.

[China Blocks Korean Entertainment on Streaming Platforms Over THAAD Row](#)

Tamar Herman, Billboard, February 28, 2017

- Open your eyes and see for yourself. Unclog your ears and hear. Discard your preconceptions, of all those propaganda refrains that are accompanying the myriad of brainwashing tunes that are being spread by the Western indoctrination media. For decades, smearing Beijing, while negating its greatness, has been one of the most effective weapons used by the US and Europe in their cultural anti-revolutionary war against all those great independent nations of the planet, especially China.

[Beijing: Emerging from the Smog of Western Hostile Propaganda and Humiliation](#)

Vanessa Beeley, 21st Century Wire, February 22, 2017

- . . . a new set of regulations . . . came into effect in January and have given the government stricter control over China's wildly popular live-streaming apps. For one, the rules require online broadcasts to "be beneficial to the promotion of socialist core values." The 10th article specifies that platforms should not allow hosts from outside of China to open channels without first applying to the country's Ministry of Culture.

[Foreigners Barred from Live-Streaming on Chinese Apps](#)

Yijun Yin, ChinaFilmInsider, February 15, 2017

- Speaking at a conference on ideology and politics in China's colleges, [Xi Jinping] [stressed](#) that schools must uphold the Chinese Communist Party's leadership and "guide the broad masses of teachers and students to be strong believers" in Marxist theories and socialist core values. . . . China's education minister explained it in [an article](#) the following day. "Schools," he wrote, "are the prime targets for the infiltration of hostile forces."

[Why's Beijing So Worried About Western Values Infecting China's Youth?](#)

Eric Fish, ChinaFile, February 4, 2017

28. NORTH KOREA

- South Korea has resumed loudspeaker broadcasts across the demilitarized zone to inform North Koreans of the assassination of [Kim Jong Nam](#). The transmissions are restarting as North Korea state media has begun to address the incident.

[South Korea resumes loudspeaker operations after Kim Jong Nam assassination](#)

Elizabeth Shim, UPI, February 22, 2017

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March 11, 2017

29. SOUTHEAST ASIA

- In addition to attacks carried out by jihadi organizations, there is now the danger of lone actors who have become radicalized by engaging with material online.

[The Islamic State Looks East: The Growing Threat In Southeast Asia](#)

Shashi Jayakumar, Combating Terrorism Center, February 22, 2017

Toolkit

30. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- The sprawling 10-campus California system produces roughly 7 percent of U.S. doctorates, according to a recent estimate by Ms. Napolitano, and a significant chunk of those are international students. Enforcement of Mr. Trump's travel ban has been suspended while litigation against it proceeds, but Ms. Napolitano said she worries about the long-term damage the president's isolationist rhetoric has done to the desire of international students to study in the United States.

[U. of California Leader Advises Patience as the Trump Era Dawns](#)

Vimal Patel, The Chronicle of Higher Education, March 2, 2017

31. EXCHANGES

- I am concerned that our sources of information are so often unreliable or colored against the enemy. I feel that the world would be safer if 1) there was more direct contact between peoples of the world through exchanges and personal knowledge, and 2) if we had a process to formally discuss the issue of misunderstanding between and weaponization of the media, which all sides complain about. The road away from the U.S.-Russian crisis in the early 1980s included this kind of media-focused negotiation: the so-called "information talks." We need a cyber arms control process too.

[A Letter To A Reader In Russia](#)

Nicholas J. Cull, USC Center on Public Diplomacy, February 9, 2017

Precepts

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

Strategic Communications and Public Diplomacy “Seen on the Web” (#57)

March 11, 2017

- 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.

Edited by

Donald M. Bishop, Bren Chair of Strategic Communications, Marine Corps University

Jeffery W. Taylor, University of Mary Washington, Assistant

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