

Memorandum of Understanding between
the Department of State of the United States of America
and
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia
On Countering Foreign State Information Manipulation

The Department of State of the United States of America and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia (together, "the Participants") have reached the following understandings:

Preamble

Foreign state information manipulation, in forms that include propaganda, and disinformation, can create or exploit divisions within and among countries, imperil election integrity, and undermine public trust in government. While foreign state information manipulation operations characteristically target particular audiences concentrated within specific countries and tailor messaging to those audiences, these operations are designed to advance wider geopolitical objectives. Because of its unpredictable and potentially destabilizing consequences, foreign state information manipulation presents a threat to national security. Both state and non-state actors may engage in foreign information manipulation. While many government measures for addressing foreign state disinformation can be applied to propaganda, this framework principally concerns countering foreign state information manipulation in the form of disinformation.

Section 1: Purpose

As exemplified in the counterterrorism context, transnational security threats are most effectively responded to through coordinated, multilateral solutions. Multinational approaches are strongest, most effective, and most rapidly

deployed when there is consensus on how the problem is understood – in other words, when decisionmakers have a shared understanding about the seriousness of a threat and the most effective tools for addressing it. This includes having a shared understanding of how foreign governments use disinformation as an instrument of statecraft to surreptitiously change minds, values, and attitudes in other countries. Having a common operational picture of the foreign state information manipulation problem enables timely information sharing as well as coordinated strategic action among international partners.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is designed to help international leaders and decisionmakers develop the fullest possible common operational picture of the foreign state information manipulation threat and identify and implement effective ways to counter it. This MOU sets forth a shared understanding of lines of action in five key areas: 1) national strategies and policies; 2) governance structures and institutions; 3) capacity; 4) civil society, independent media, and academia; and 5) multilateral engagement.

The actions set forth in this MOU are expected to advance the goal of coordinated government effort by the Participants to counter the threat of foreign state information manipulation while respecting freedom of expression online and offline. This MOU reflects the political commitments of the Participants and is expected to be used to build a shared understanding of approaches amongst the Participants to countering foreign state information manipulation.

The Participants endorse the following framework for countering foreign state information manipulation:

Section 2: Key Action Areas

1. National Strategies and Policies

Effectively addressing foreign state information manipulation requires countries to go beyond “monitor-and-report” approaches, to include developing and implementing strategies to counter this threat.

2. Governance Structures and Institutions

Marshalling and administering a national-level approach to countering foreign state information manipulation requires designated governance structures and institutions.

3. Capacity

Effectively countering foreign state information manipulation requires technical means and human capacity to maintain threat awareness.

4. Civil Society, Independent Media, and Academia

Civil society, independent media, and academia can play essential roles in informing and supporting government-led initiatives to counter foreign state information manipulation.

5. Multilateral Engagement

Multilateral organizations that are leveraging international cooperation to counter and build resilience against foreign state information manipulation are indispensable to alleviating information and capability shortfalls across partner nations.

Section 3: Scope

To deepen the Participants' partnership on these challenges, the Participants intend to establish a bilateral consultation on countering foreign information manipulation, to set the direction for future activity. The U.S. Department of State's Global Engagement Center, on behalf of the Department of State, and the the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia are expected to jointly lead this consultation. The activities expected to be carried out through this consultation are intended to be outlined in a mutually decided implementation plan to this MOU.

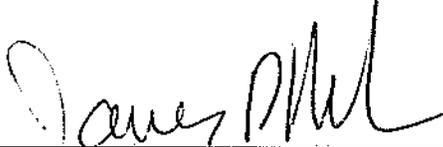
Section 4: Implementation, Status, and Discontinuation

This MOU becomes operative upon signature by both Participants. It may be revised by mutual decision of both Participants in writing. Either Participant may discontinue this MOU through notification in writing to the other Participant. This MOU does not give rise to any rights or obligations under international or domestic law. Any cooperation hereunder is subject to the availability of funds for such purposes.

The Participants intend to exchange information under this MOU in accordance with their respective laws, regulations, and policies. The Participants intend that any information exchanged under this MOU would be provided with an expectation of confidentiality and should not be disclosed outside of the receiving Participant's government, save where disclosure is otherwise required by the receiving Participant's domestic law.

Signed at Washington on March 14, 2024.

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF STATES OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



James P. Rubin
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Center

FOR THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
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