



Matt Taibbi @mtaibbi
Mar 2 · 48 tweets · [mtaibbi/status/1631338650901389322](#)

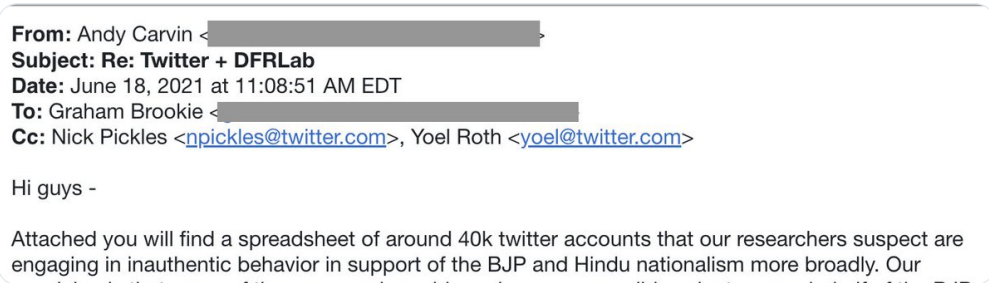
1. TWITTER FILES #17

New Knowledge, the Global Engagement Center, and State-Sponsored Blacklists



2. On June 8, 2021, an analyst at the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab wrote to Twitter:

“Hi guys. Attached you will find... around 40k twitter accounts that our researchers suspect are engaging in inauthentic behavior... and Hindu nationalism more broadly.”



3. DFRLab said it suspected 40,000 accounts of being “paid employees or possibly volunteers” of India’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

But the list was full of ordinary Americans, many with no connection to India and no clue about Indian politics. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vTU3_csFVozD9DKuIc7Hcb_nyUrtiOd2p1NU_r6ZcWh9dVlYQ7KknxjJKfe6k7fhrIqQcLDWpOqwDY/pubhtml

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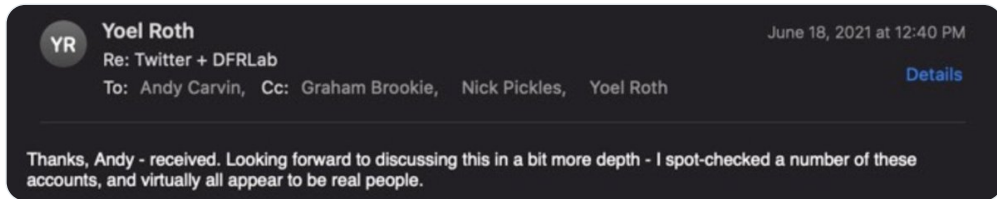
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Ajay Mishra	ajaymi20	ID 832138804700241920		Thu Feb 16 0	96	933	425	4308		Disabled	Not verified	Not protecte	https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/1403222161586675713/fgUo7UVg_normal.jpg
%T%_A%_gll	Wg9vHVF5Ch	ID 70777885	Tajpei City, T Ai*		Thu Mar 10 0	316	4261	1405	736	Disabled	Not verified	Protected	https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/752421456403771392/UHm3P_normal.jpg

4. “I have no connection to any Hindu folks... Just a Reagan Republican here in CT,” replied “Bobby Hailstone.”

“A Hindu nationalist? I’ve never even been out of this country. Let alone the state of NJ,” said “Lady_DI816.”

“These people are insane!” said “Krista Woods.”

5. Twitter agreed, one reason many of the accounts remain active. “Thanks, Andy,” replied Trust and Safety chief Yoel Roth. “I spot-checked a number of these accounts, and virtually all appear to be real people.”



6. Here’s the list. Are you on it?

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vTU4E-tjEJmU4YB7SYOjYudAWIsesvXNCmdRXp68mag3C2zZqKLQlKlb5UX62CHJQ/pubhtml>

7. DFRLab is funded by the U.S. Government, specifically the Global Engagement Center (GEC).

Director Graham Brookie denies DFRLab it uses tax money to track Americans, saying its GEC grants have "an exclusively international focus.”

8. But Americans on DFR’s list, like Marysel Urbanik, are unconvinced its focus is “exclusively international.”

“This is un-American,” says Urbanik, who immigrated from Castro’s Cuba. “They do this in places that don’t believe in free speech.”

← **JerseyGirl** 🇺🇸 ❤️ ✝️ **Conservative**
144.7K Tweets




⋮ ✉️ **Follow**

JerseyGirl 🇺🇸 ❤️ ✝️ **Conservative**
@UrbanikMarysel Follows you

Love the Lord, my Family and America, Christian Conservative, DJT Supporter, believes in MAGA, no amnesty, build the wall, improve healthcare. #MAGA

9. The Global Engagement Center is usually listed as a State Department entity. It's not.

Created in Obama's last year, GEC is an interagency group "within" State, whose initial partners included FBI, DHS, NSA, CIA, DARPA, Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and others.



GEC
Global Engagement Center

GEC: Interagency Partnership

10. GEC's mandate: "To recognize, understand, expose, and counter foreign... disinformation."

On the surface, it's the same mission the United States Information Agency (USIA) fulfilled for decades, with a catch. USIA focused on foreign "disinfo."

GEC's focus is wider.

Section 1. Establishment of the Global Engagement Center. The Secretary of State (Secretary) shall establish the Global Engagement Center (Center) which shall lead the coordination, integration, and synchronization of Government-wide communications activities directed at foreign audiences abroad in order to counter the messaging and diminish the influence of international terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al Qa'ida, and other violent extremists abroad, with specific responsibilities as set forth in section 3 of this order. The executive director of the Center shall be the Special Envoy and Coordinator for Global Engagement Communications (Coordinator), who shall report to the Secretary through the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy.


11. "It's an incubator for the domestic disinformation complex," says a former intelligence source. "All the shit we pulled in other countries since the Cold War, some morons decided to bring home."


12. GEC could have avoided controversy by focusing on exposing/answering "disinformation" with research and a more public approach, as USIA did. Instead, it funded a secret list of subcontractors and helped pioneer an insidious – and idiotic – new form of blacklisting.

13. [Here](#) GEC asks Twitter to review 499 accounts as "foreign" disinformation, for reasons that include using Signal to communicate and tweeting the hashtag,

[#IraniansDebateWithBiden.](#)

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX->

 Yoel Roth
As in @CNN?

 Patrick Conlon New
The account @jenniCNN, which is the work account for a digital features editor for CNN. Also @IkaFerrerGotic, a correspondent for CNN and Serbian TV News. Oh and @Sophia_Yan, a CNN China correspondent. Not necessarily Anderson's besties, but CNN assets if you will.

 Yoel Roth New
omg

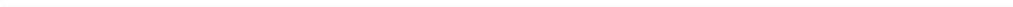
 Yoel Roth New
Really really important to highlight this - what a total crock

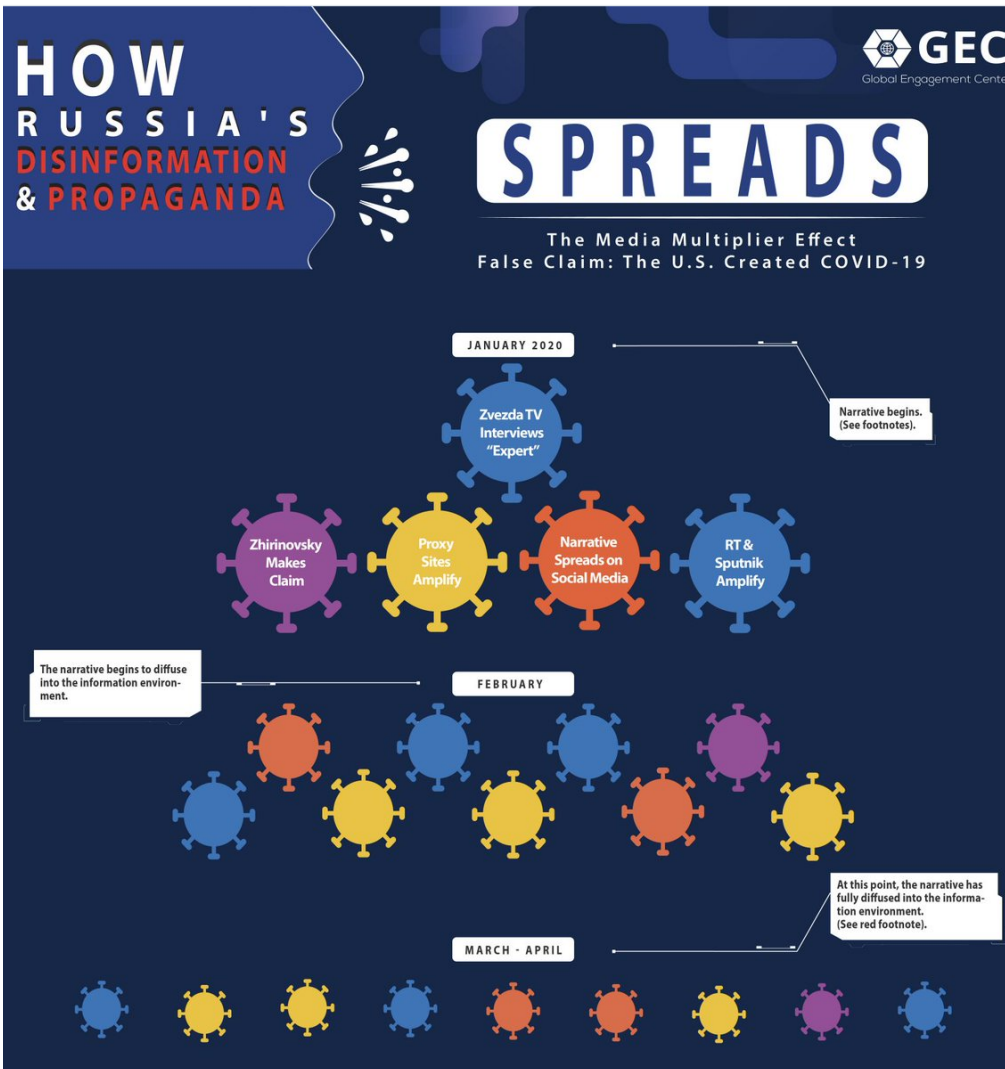
16. GEC passed some good information to Twitter, but mostly not. The root problem was exemplified by a much-circulated 2020 report, “Russian Pillars of Disinformation and Propaganda.”



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

GEC Special Report:
**Pillars of Russia's Disinformation and
Propaganda Ecosystem**

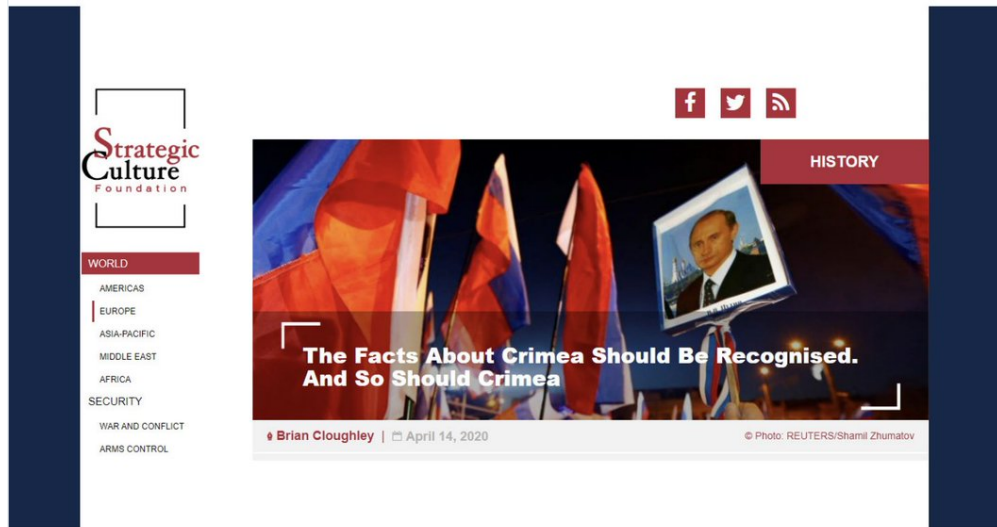




17. This GEC report was contradictory. On one hand, it offered reasoned evidence that a specific outlet like the "Strategic Culture Foundation" was partnered with the Russian Foreign Ministry, which would make it a true "proxy site."

Proxy Site Profiles

The Strategic Culture Foundation



An article on Strategic Culture Foundation's website promoting Russia's version of history.

Summary

The *Strategic Culture Foundation* is an online journal registered in Russia, directed by Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), and closely affiliated with the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The outlet plays a central role among a group of linked websites that proliferate Russian disinformation and propaganda.² One of its core tactics is to attract authors who are Western fringe thinkers and conspiracy theorists, giving them a broader platform and obscuring the Russian origins of the journal. This tactic helps the site appear to be an organic voice within its target audience of Westerners.

18. The same report advanced a far lazier idea.

Along with state actors, groups that “generate their own momentum” should also be seen as parts of a propaganda “ecosystem.”

Independence, GEC said, should not “confuse those trying to discern the truth.”

Introduction

Understanding the Russian Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem

As the U.S. government's dedicated center for countering disinformation and propaganda, the Global Engagement Center (GEC) at the U.S. Department of State has a mandate to expose and counter threats from malign actors that utilize these tactics. In this field, Russia continues to be a leading threat. The Department works with interagency and global partners to meet this challenge, with the GEC playing a key role in coordinating efforts and helping lead a global response. A central part of this effort is exposing Russian tactics so that partner and allied governments, civil society organizations, academia, the press, and the international public can conduct further analysis of their own and thereby increase collective resilience to disinformation and propaganda.

In line with that goal, this report draws on publicly available reporting to provide an overview of the Russian disinformation and propaganda ecosystem. The Russian disinformation and propaganda ecosystem is the collection of official, proxy, and unattributed communication channels and platforms that Russia uses to create and amplify false narratives. This report also focuses specific attention on the Russian tactic of leveraging proxy voices that proliferate pro-Kremlin disinformation and propaganda. It includes profiles on a cross section of outlets playing this role within the broader ecosystem, and it explains how they serve as critical connective tissue to the other elements within the broader ecosystem.

The GEC has developed the "ecosystem" concept as a way to contextualize the threat posed by Russia in this field. A common understanding is a necessary prerequisite to developing analytical tools to monitor the various threat vectors and develop the policies and procedures that allow for countermeasures. While this effort continues, the issuance of this report aims to heighten awareness of the threat posed by disinformation and is aimed at furthering the international dialogue among the nations, organizations, and individuals who are committed to countering these malign efforts.

The disinformation and propaganda ecosystem that Russia continues to cultivate does not stand unopposed. A thriving counter-disinformation community comprised of governments, civil society, academia, the press, the private sector, and citizens around the world who refuse to tolerate these tactics is pushing back. This report is offered by Department of State as a contribution to these joint efforts.

This ecosystem approach is also well-suited to reinforce Russia's general aims of questioning the value of democratic institutions, and of weakening the international credibility and international cohesion of the United States and its allies and partners. Because some elements of this ecosystem generate their own momentum, as opposed to waiting for specific orders from the Kremlin on every occasion, they can be responsive to distinct policy goals or developing situations, and then pivot back to their status quo of generally pouring scorn on Russia's perceived adversaries.



19. The “ecosystem” is not a new concept. It’s been with us since Salem: guilt by association.

As one Twitter exec put it: “If you retweet a news source linked to Russia, you become Russia-linked,’ does not exactly resonate as a sound research approach.”

As always, any info share is appreciated. Their methodology ‘if you retweet a news source linked to Russia, you become Russia-linked’, does not exactly resonate as a sound research approach.

20. GEC sent Twitter a series of reports on a series of topics, often employing the “ecosystem” concept.

Its report on France “attributes membership in the yellow vest movement as being Russia-aligned,” is how Twitter’s Aaron Rodericks put it.

French Protests Social Media Content Analysis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report presents an analysis of cross-platform conversations on social media related to protests in France that took place in December 2019. Most posts were in French, suggesting the domestic audience was the focus of this campaign which coincided with the one-year anniversary of the protests in Paris, France in November and December 2018. By amplifying the anti-Macron narrative, the Kremlin continues to sow distrust in an attempt to discredit the French government and deepen divides in French society. The English-language content depicted the situation in France as unstable, with a hint of distrust in current institutions.

REPORT:

Trusted partner analysis looked at 10,183 posts from 528 Russia-linked accounts referring to the protests in France for 30 days starting November 18, 2019. These accounts used the hashtags #GiletsJaunes, "greve," "#acte_," and "retraites." Of those 528 accounts, only 36 posted more than once per day, on average producing 80% of the posts observed.

Most posts were in French, but also included English and Italian. The French-language content generally encouraged action and included sentiment opposing Macron's government. The non-French content was generally aimed at convincing non-French Westerners to oppose Macron, the French police, and the French government more broadly.

Additional analysis of the top influential accounts identified that most content was produced in French. This indicates that this influence-campaign primarily was focused on domestic (French) audiences. The content of top influencers was anti-Macron in nature and contained reposted content by Sputnik, the Kremlin-affiliated media, and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Top Accounts	Posts	% Total	# of Tweets	# of Followers	Country	Language
DanielPilotte	1577	19.4	1.52M	18.3K	France	French
buscatier84	1301	16.0	288k	1350	Unkown	French
HeellLeClech	979	12.0	1.12M	3157	France	French
ThierryRouby	854	10.5	222k	2149	France	French
PhilippeCombaut	454	5.6	205k	1834	France	French
buddendorf	359	4.4	211k	3002	Unkown	English and Dutch
loindevant	339	4.2	135k	1596	Unkown	French
sputnik_fr	218	2.7	162K	74.5K	Unkown	French
Ian56789	168	2.1	197k	46.1K	UK	English
rentonMaqaUK	164	2.0	518k	61.7k	Unkown	English

Content for Domestic Consumption

The content of the tweets included anti-Macron sentiments, encouraging readers to join the anti-government protests. A similar tactic was used by the Kremlin in December 2018, calling for people to join anti-Macron protests using the hashtag #giletsjaunes – the French name for the

COVID-19 REPORTING:**Russia-Linked Twitter Accounts Continue to Sow Discord in France**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Russia-linked accounts continue to amplify content targeting audiences in France, capitalizing on the COVID-19 pandemic to erode their trust in the French government. For example, from 26 to 29 March, these accounts criticized the French government for not authorizing testing of the drug chloroquine. We have witnessed similar behavior in the past where Russia-linked Twitter handles leverage contentious issues to reinforce messaging meant to undermine the public's trust in their government. Furthermore, there appears to be a consistent effort to praise Chinese and Russian efforts, while discrediting the European Union.

REPORT

We analyzed 10 Twitter accounts featured in our "French Protests Social Media Content Analysis" report, published on 26 December 2019.¹ The table below lists the Twitter accounts included in our current analysis, which focused on messaging related to COVID-19 posted between 1 and 29 March 2020.

Account	Tweets	Followers	Followers Dec 2019	COVID-19 Posts	Tweets 1-29 Mar	Tweets per day	Country	Language
Buscatier84	322K	1K	1,350	3,557	14,931	533	Unknown	French
HeellLeClech	1M	3K	3,157	3,552	13,510	465	France	French
ThierryRouby	234K	2K	2,149	1,185	5,626	194	France	French
PhilippeCombaut	236K	2K	1,834	2,481	12,420	428	France	French
Buddendorf	231K	3K	3,002	1,597	8,435	290	Unknown	English
Loindevant	140K	2K	1,596	535	1,570	112	Unknown	French
Sputnik_fr	171K	81K	74K	1,085	2,810	93	Unknown	French
lan56789	201K	48K	46K	145	741	26	UK	English
DanielPilotte*	1.5M	N/A	18K	N/A	N/A	N/A	France	French
RentonMagaUK	582K	66K	61.7K	3,162	22,795	786	Unknown	English

*account likely suspended

Source: Crimson Hexagon, 30 March 2020

@DanielPilotte

This was the top publisher by volume of posts in our previous report. However, this account appears to have been suspended or deleted.

Russia linked france

Did a few spam suspensions - none of these were suspicious.

So we aren't going to remove Sputnik France.

High volumes of tweets does not equal bots to us, and being a 'bot' is not a TOS violation.

French protests

Pretty much same accounts as the previous report, except this one now attributes membership in the yellow vest movement as being Russia-aligned.

Russia linked Italy

Same as france, did a few spam mentions - this one had more violations in the accounts they flagged, comparatively to the first report.

Russia linked China-Italy

More entertainment value than anything. It equates anything pro-China, but also anything against China in Italy, as part of Russia's strategy.

21. GEC's report on China was "more entertainment value than anything," said Rodericks. "It equates anything pro-China, but also anything against China in Italy, as part of Russia's strategy."

ONLINE MEDIA ANALYSIS:

Russia-Linked Amplifiers Promote Pro-Chinese Narratives Across Italy's Twitter Landscape

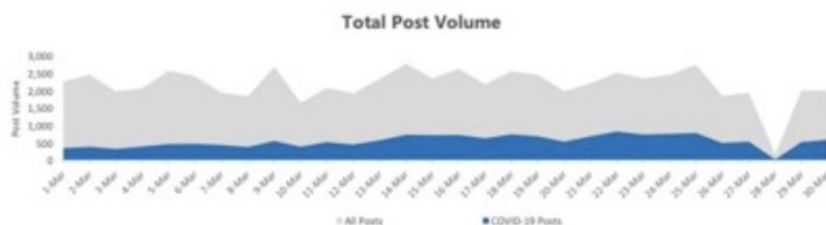
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Russia-linked accounts amplify content promoting pro-Chinese narratives, including retweets from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Chinese government media outlet the *Global Times*, to Italian audiences. However, coverage of China was not singularly positive; criticism was present as well. This is consistent with Russia's approach to propaganda and disinformation: propagate various and contradicting narratives in order to spread confusion and promote distrust in the government and media. Additionally, conversations also focused on disparaging US, EU, and NATO efforts in combating COVID-19.

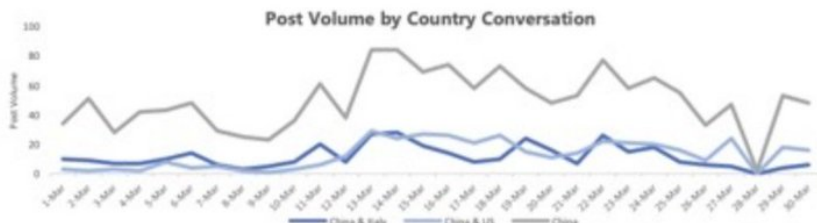
REPORT:

Social Media Analysis

Tweets originating from 18 Twitter accounts identified as Russia state-operated and Russian-linked amplifiers were analyzed within Italy's Twitter conversations. Between 1 March and 30 March 2020, total volume of posts from these accounts was 65,600, with approximately 25% (16,600 posts) related to COVID-19.



Within the COVID-19 tweets, we analyzed the posts mentioning China and Italy (2.1%), China and the United States (2.3%), and China more broadly (9%).



Russia linked france

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So we aren't going to remove Sputnik France.
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French protests

Pretty much same accounts as the previous report, except this one now attributes membership in the yellow vest movement as being Russia-aligned.

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Russia linked China-Italy

More entertainment value than anything. It equates anything pro-China, but also anything against China in Italy, as part of Russia's strategy.

22. Twitter staffers had professionalism. They tended to look at least once before declaring a thing foreign disinformation. This made them a tough crowd for GEC.

Fortunately, there's an easier mark: the news media.

23. GEC's game: create an alarmist report, send it to the slower animals in journalism's herd, and wait as reporters bang on Twitter's door, demanding to know why this or that "ecosystem" isn't obliterated.

Twitter emails ooze frustration at such queries. UGGG! reads one.

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Seitz, Amanda <[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, May 18, 2020 at 11:52 AM
Subject: GEC accounts
<[REDACTED]>

Katie -

Hope you had a nice weekend!

I wanted to follow up with you about those GEC Twitter accounts, to see if you were able to determine if any accounts were taken down at all?

Thanks so much,

Amanda

Amanda Seitz
Fact check/Misinformation Reporter
The Associated Press

From: Ian Plunkett <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>
Subject: Re: privileged and confidential - wapo report
Date: March 1, 2020 at 12:40:18 PM CST
To: Katie Rosborough <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>
Cc: Yoel Roth <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>, Stacia Cardile <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>, Carlos Morje <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>, Kevin Kane <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>, Ilick Pickles <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>, Trenton Kennedy <[REDACTED]@twitter.com>

Hi folks,

Checking in here to see if we have more info from state?

We've CNN onto us this evening. With renewed focus over the weekend, expecting a round of media on this tomorrow.

Thanks,

Ian



subject: Re: privileged and confidential - wapo report
date: February 29, 2020 at 12:47:30 PM CST
to: Carlos Monje [redacted]
cc: Ian Plunkett [redacted] Kevin Kane [redacted] Nick Pickles [redacted] Stacia Cardile [redacted] Trenton Kennedy [redacted] Yoel Roth [redacted]

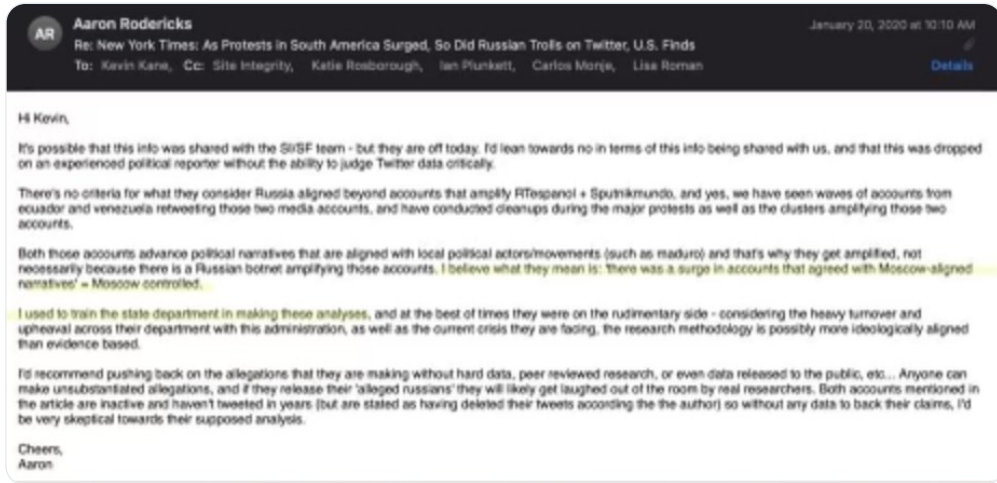
Nick for vis because Tony also reached out to him.

In Sat, Feb 29, 2020 at 12:58 PM Katie Rosborough <[redacted]> wrote:
Ugggggh! Thanks, Yoel. Appreciate you ignoring if you are comfortable. I already pointed him to your comments in CNN.

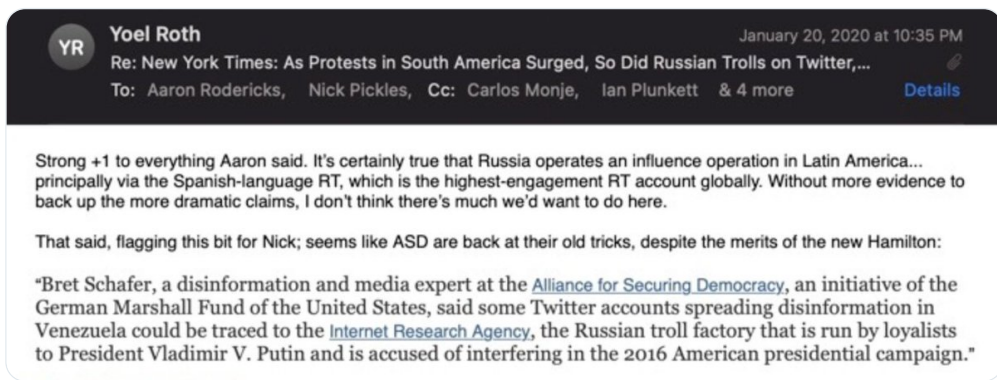
On Sat, Feb 29, 2020 at 12:36 PM Carlos Monje [redacted] wrote:
Sneaky.

25. Twitter disagreed with GEC's alert about Russian "disinfo" in South America, which appeared to confused cause and effect.

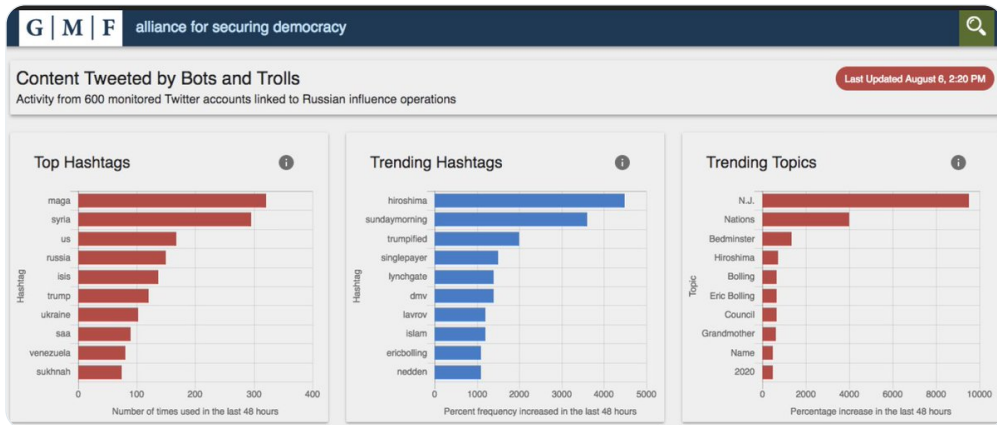
As Rodericks put it, "I believe what they mean is: 'there was a surge in accounts that agreed with Moscow-aligned narratives' = Moscow controlled."



26. Roth noted Bret Schafer of the Alliance for Securing Democracy was quoted in Frenkel's story and said: "Seems like ASD are back at their old tricks."



27. Roth was referring to the fact that the ASD created Hamilton 68, another guilt-by-association scheme detailed in Twitter Files #15. The Hamilton "dashboard" claimed to track accounts linked to "Russian influence activities," but the list was largely made up of Americans.



28. The Hamilton 68 dashboard creator, J.M. Berger, was on the GEC payroll until June of 2017, just before the dashboard's launch. Hamilton claimed the list was "the fruit of more than three years of observation."

Berger "unequivocally" denies working on Hamilton for GEC.

J.M. Berger
 Re: From Twitter Files reporter Matt Taibbi
 To: Matthew Taibbi

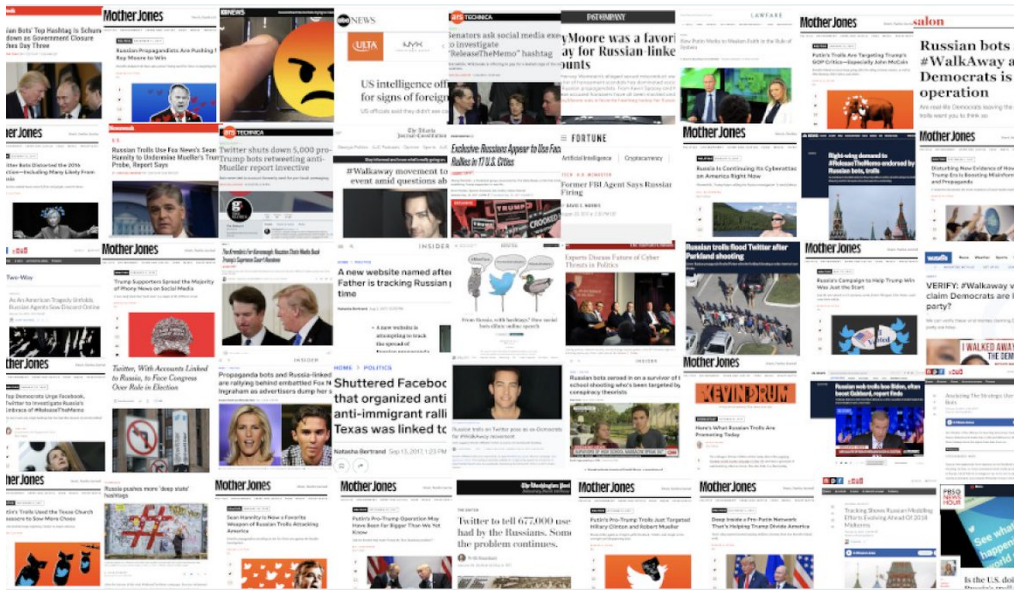
February 9, 2023 at 9:58 PM

I checked my records to verify my recollections, and I need to correct the timeline. I worked for GEC as a contractor through June 2017, not January.

I emphasize again that I unequivocally deny that my work on the Hamilton dashboard was directed by GEC, nor was it coordinated with GEC in any way. At no point in this project did GEC have any input or involvement whatsoever.

30. The Hamilton 68 dashboard employed digital alchemy to create streams of headlines tying Americans to “foreign” disinformation.

The “ecosystem” reports GEC and many “disinformation” laboratories feed reporters are often just subtler versions of the same thing.



31. In a crucial in-house Q&A in mid-2017, Roth was asked if it was possible to detect “Russian fingerprints” using Twitter’s public data. Though “you can make inferences,” he said, “in short, no.”

-Is it technologically possible to accurately identify potential Russian fingerprints on Twitter accounts through our public-facing API?
In short, no. Although you can make inferences based on public data about whether you believe an account is Russian. Google's access from the Firehose is broader than most, including any academics, but it's not deeper in terms of the actual data they'd have available. The most likely way they could have identified something on Twitter that pointed to something on their end was using link data from Tweets (and then seeing if those were promoted through Doubleclick, or affected Google News, or something like that).

32. Twitter therefore knew from the first days of the “foreign interference” mania that the media zone was flooded with bad actors playing up cyber-threats for political or financial reasons, GEC included.

33. “GEC has doubled their budget by aggressively overstating threats through unverified accusations that can't be replicated either by external academics or by Twitter,” wrote Rodericks.

The GEC has doubled their budget by aggressively overstating threats through unverified accusations that can't be replicated either by external academics or by Twitter - so they aren't operating with the greatest of credibility when they make pronouncements about accounts/widespread disinfo. Considering their track record of providing \$1.5 million to a group that attacked any journalist opposed to war against Iran as pawns of the regime. <https://talkingpointsmemo.com/muckraker/state-department-support-iran-war-social-media-attack> points to their accuracy when their counter Iran campaign deliberately targeted US journalists that disagreed with the policy of the US government.

34. The same is true of New Knowledge, the scandal-plagued company staffed by former NSA officials that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) hired to do “expert” assessments of the initial batches of “suspect” Facebook and Twitter accounts.

IRA Background
The IRA began its operations in mid-2013 in St. Petersburg, Russia. Run like a sophisticated marketing agency in a centralized office environment, the IRA employed and trained over a thousand people to engage in round-the-clock influence operations, first targeting Ukrainian and Russian citizens, and then, well before the 2016 US election, Americans. The scale of their operation was unprecedented—they reached 126 million people on Facebook, at least 20 million users on Instagram, 1.4 million users on Twitter, and uploaded over 1,000 videos to

NEW KNOWLEDGE
The Tactics & Tropes of the Internet Research Agency

Russian Influence Reached 126 Million Through Facebook Alone

35. When Twitter saw New Knowledge and its reporter-worshipped “disinformation” gurus like Jonathon Morgan and Renee DiResta were making analytical leaps they felt were impossible, they knew something was off.

36. After Politico cited a New Knowledge report to the SSCI as evidence for what it called a “sweeping effort to sow divisions,” Twitter dug in. NK pointed to five supposedly Russian accounts it said were “relatively easy to find with the Twitter public API.”

Roth scoffed.

Panasonic

DRIVING THE FUTURE OF
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION SEE HOW >>



ELECTION CYBERSECURITY

Reports show Russia mounted sweeping effort to sow divisions, support Trump



spam content. Bots from the same botnets appear to still be active and are relatively easy to find with the Twitter public API. These accounts, for example, have similar patterns to bots that are in the provided data:

- https://twitter.com/Elsa_Aben - dormant
- https://twitter.com/Florrie_Schamel - dormant
- https://twitter.com/fitness_craving - active
- <https://twitter.com/besttattooing> - active
- <https://twitter.com/becca51178> - active

Although these bots are not doing anything malicious now, they are available to be repurposed for future malicious use.

37. Roth said two of the five accounts were a “small Indonesian content farm... just commercial spam. (Would suspend but don’t want to throw fire on the NK report by making anyone think they’re correct.) Becca account is an American and not at all suspicious.”

On Mon, Dec 17, 2018 at 7:38 AM, Yoel Roth <yoel@twitter.com> wrote:

Nothing to see here. Inactive accounts may be spam, but nothing insidious. The fitness and tattoo accounts are a small Indonesian content farm that's just commercial spam. (Would suspend but don't want to throw fire on the NK report by making anyone think they're correct.) Becca account is an American and not at all suspicious.

38. Twitter's Nick Pickles: "New Knowledge's pitch... pick accounts that they have deemed to be IRA controlled, and then spin up bigger macro analysis... stories about '2000 Russian accounts tweeting about Kavanagh/Walkway/Caravan' [were] often based on media activity from NK."

NP Nick Pickles December 17, 2018 at 10:43 AM

Re: SSCI Advisory Group Report Leaked [Details](#)

To: Yoel Roth, Cc: Carlos Monje, Colin Crowell, Del Harvey, Ian Plunkett & 5 more

Thanks Yoel for fast turnaround on that.

For everyone's wider awareness, this goes to the heart of new knowledge's pitch - they pick accounts that they have deemed to be IRA controlled, and then spin up bigger macro analysis of their activity. So when we saw stories about "2000 Russian accounts tweeting about kavanagh/walkway/caravan" it was often based on media activity from NK.

39. Just like Hamilton 68, GEC and New Knowledge littered the media landscape with flawed or flat-out wrong news stories. Exacerbating matters, Americans in both cases paid taxes to become the subject of these manipulative operations.

Russian bots are using #WalkAway to try to wound Dems in midterms

By David A. Love
Published 12:50 PM EDT, Tue July 17, 2018



Rosenstein: 12 Russians charged with hacking

Video Ad Feedback

05:41 - Source: CNN

Editor's Note: David A. Love is a writer and commentator based in Philadelphia. He contributes to a number of publications, including Atlanta Black Star, theGrio.com, WHYY and Al Jazeera. Follow him on Twitter: @DavidALove. The opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author. View more [opinion](#) articles on CNN.

(CNN) — The recent announcement that 12 Russian nationals have been indicted by Robert Mueller for hacking the Democratic National Committee during the 2016 election is another reminder of how vulnerable our democracy is to such breaches.



09-28-18

Support for Brett Kavanaugh seems especially high among Russian propagandists

Multiple sources point to the controversial judge's nomination as a hot topic for Russian social media campaigns.

From: Neema Guliani <nguliani@twitter.com>
Subject: Fwd: Content from GEC Iran Team
Date: October 21, 2021 at 1:46:40 PM EDT
To: Nick Pickles <npickles@twitter.com>, Site Integrity <integrity@twitter.com>

Hi team -

I wanted to flag the additional information provided by the State Dept GEC related to the Khamenei's accounts. Some of the info they flagged seems to be tweets that have been removed already. I imagine you are already aware of these tweets/issues, but passing this additional information along from the State Dept in case it is of help.



Hi Stacia,

In our ongoing effort to share information, please find attached a data file with GEC identified Twitter accounts.

We are providing these 5,500 accounts that display inorganic behavior and follow two or more of the 36 Chinese diplomatic twitter accounts that we have identified in the report. Due to the fact that these accounts follow two or more of these diplomatic accounts, and a good portion of them are newly created, we believe that they are suspicious.

This is shared for your situational awareness and no action is requested.

Per our call, we stand by for any communications you'd like to pass related for our Special Envoy and also are ready should you request an additional call to discuss the report or data.

Please also kindly confirm receipt

All best,

Sam

Samaruddin Stewart
Senior Technical Advisor | Global Engagement Center

43. The Washington Examiner and [@gekaminsky](#) just profiled a GEC-funded NGO in the UK that algorithmically scores media outlets by "risk."

How does downranking the Daily Wire to help the New York Times get more ad revenue counter "foreign" disinformation?

Disinformation Inc: Meet the groups hauling in cash to secretly blacklist conservative news

By Gabe Kaminsky, Investigative Reporter | February 09, 2023 06:00 AM

[Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)



[44.An](#) IG report shows GEC was initially obligated \$98.7 million, of which roughly \$80 million came from the Pentagon. It reportedly gave to at least 39 different organizations, whose names were redacted.

Why is this list secret?



Office of Inspector General
United States Department of State

AUD-MERO-20-26

Office of Audits

April 2020

**(U) Audit of Global Engagement Center
Federal Assistance Award Management
and Monitoring**

(U) Table 3. GEC FY 2018 Award Purpose and Objective Alignment

(SBU) Recipient and Award Number	(U) PURPOSE 1	(U) PURPOSE 2	(U) PURPOSE 3	(U) PURPOSE 4
1			✓	✓
2	✓			✓
3				✓
4			✓	✓
5			✓	✓
6				✓
7				✓
8				✓
9	CNA Corporation (SGECPD18CA0027)		✓	
10	(b) (4), (b) (7)(E)	✓		✓
11	Democracy Council of California (SGECPD18CA0030)			✓
12	(b) (4), (b) (7)(E)	✓		✓
13				
14	✓			✓
15	✓			✓
16	✓		✓	
17				✓
18	✓			✓
19			✓	
20	✓			✓
21				✓
22	✓			✓
23		✓		
24			✓	✓
25			✓	✓
26			✓	✓
27			✓	✓
28	Park Capital Investment Group (SGECPD18CA0024)		✓	✓
29	(b) (4), (b) (7)(E)		✓	✓
30			✓	✓
31	✓		✓	
32	✓		✓	
33			✓	
34				✓
35			✓	
36			✓	✓
37			✓	✓
38	✓			
39	✓			✓

45. Twitter comms official Ian Plunkett wrote years ago that “misinformation, like [countering violent extremism, or CVE] before it, is becoming a cottage industry.”

Disinformation is the counterterrorism mission, rebranded for domestic targets.

IP Ian Plunkett
Re: Press Request from New York Times
To: Emily Horne, Cc: Nick Pickles, Carlos Monje, Lauren Culbertson

Like CVE before it, misinformation research is becoming a cottage industry.
Pointing to our own leadership on our own issues sounds most appropriate.

46. Reauthorization for GEC's funding is up for a vote this year. Can we at least stop paying to blacklist ourselves?

47. The [#TwitterFiles](#) were prepared by a third party, so material may have been left out. Thanks to [@ShellenbergerMD](#) and the team at [Racket.News](#), who'll have more on this all month.

48. NOTE: Just before publication, Graham Brookie of DFRLab wrote to clarify about the 40,000 India names: "We didn't publish this from a former researcher because we lacked confidence in its findings."

G Graham Brookie <
To: Matthew Taibbi Tue, Feb 28 at 9:19 AM

Hi Matt,

In the course of our work as an independent research organization, we thoroughly vet initial or incomplete findings. We didn't publish this from a former researcher because we lacked confidence in its findings. Sharing the initial set with a top expert at the platform helped us, in part, to confirm our concerns with the findings.

Thanks,
Graham

49. I asked Brookie if he'd made this lack of confidence clear to the Reuters reporter whose story based on that research is still live and uncorrected online:



Facebook deletes accounts linked to India's Congress party, Pakistan ...

Facebook has deleted 712 accounts and 390 pages in India and Pakistan for "inauthentic behaviour", it said on Monday, many linked to India's opposition Congress party days before a national election,...

<https://www.reuters.com/article/facebook-accounts-india-idINKCN1RD1R2>

He hasn't replied.

Graham,

If I'm understanding correctly: you sent a list of 40,000 names to Twitter, but privately, because you lacked confidence in your findings, and were relieved when they didn't take action?

Did you ever tell this to the Reuters reporter who did a story based on this list?
<https://www.reuters.com/article/facebook-accounts-india-idINKCN1RD1R2>

Matt

50. For more on these and other [#TwitterFiles](#) topics, [@ShellenbergerMD](#) and I will be testifying in the House on Thursday, March 9, at 10 a.m. We're humbled and grateful to [@Jim_Jordan](#) and [@JudiciaryGOP](#) for the invitation.

• • •