



# FOREIGN INTERFERENCE TAXONOMY

## FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Malign actions taken by foreign governments or foreign actors designed to sow discord, manipulate public discourse, discredit the electoral system, bias the development of policy, or disrupt markets for the purpose of undermining the interests of the United States and its allies.

### INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

Activities undertaken to shape public opinion or undermine trust in the authenticity of information. Use of new and traditional media to amplify divides and foment unrest in the homeland, sometimes coordinated with illicit cyber activities.

#### NEW MEDIA ABUSE

Manipulating content service providers (CSPs) to create and amplify false and distorted content for targeted individuals or groups.

New media abuse allows influencers to reach a large audience cheaply and quickly, allowing adversaries to commandeer and control narratives.

#### CYBER ACTIVITIES

Hacking may benefit information activities. They assist in surveillance or reconnaissance and provide opportunities for destructive attacks. Hijacking accounts and defacing public facing sites can be used to influence public opinion. Compromised government systems (e.g., voting systems, data repositories) can lead to citizens to question the security of the information provided to the government.

#### TRADITIONAL MEDIA ABUSE

Using traditional media outlets to report false or distorted information, strategically leak stolen information, or repeat preferred narratives in order to manipulate a general public.

Purposefully causing traditional media sources to report false or misleading information increases the spread of foreign pushed narratives and undermines the credibility of the press.

Trade/  
Strategic Investment

Coercion/  
Corruption

Migration  
Exploitation

International Org.  
Manipulation

### WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION IS USED?

Malign foreign actors, often hiding behind fake or automated accounts, use demonstrably false information, innuendo, and rumors to push or amplify their narratives. While many posts boil down to unconfirmable opinions, much of the information content falls into a few broad categories.

Innocent reporting errors (**misinformation**) or satire and parody content can be re-purposed and distributed maliciously with the intent to deceive. Often, "fake" content is created with the specific intent to dupe or incite audiences (**disinformation**).

Facts are also used maliciously, and out of context, to improperly influence audiences (**malinformation**). This sort of content is sometimes the result of illicit cyber activity like spying or hacking and leaked through third parties.

Key Stakeholders: DOJ/FBI; State; Intelligence Community; State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Governments; Foreign Partners; Social Media Companies; Traditional Media Companies; Academia/Research; Think Tanks; and Philanthropy.