

For Public Release

Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) Work Plan

Mandate

- Support the G7 RRM, as the coordinating unit, to identify and respond to threats to democracies
- Support Canada's whole of government effort to identify and respond to foreign threats to Canada's democracy (e.g., via the Security and Intelligence Threats to Elections Task Force or SITE)
- Support Global Affairs Canada with open source data analytics pertaining to potential foreign interference on foreign policy priorities (e.g., COVID-19, PS752, White Helmets, Skripal).

Work Methods

- **Capacity:** unique open source data analytics capacity – tools and know-how – create comparative advantage and credibility at home and internationally
- **Research and analysis:** both in-house and contracted
- **Information-sharing within Canada and globally:**
 - In Canada via RRM Canada interdepartmental table, SITE, Hostile Activities by State Actors (HASA) and hybrid tables;
 - Among G7+ via the G7 RRM platform (linked to the EU Rapid Alert System), monthly G7 RRM Focal Point meetings, weekly data analytics meetings, monthly Wire product, ad hoc report sharing
- **Coordinated response:** collaborating with active G7+ countries on analysis and potentially development of norms framework and capacity building
- **Outreach and engagement:** with international organisations, civil society and academia (e.g., EU Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence, Atlantic Council Digital Forensic Research Lab, National Endowment for Democracy, Australian Strategic Policy Institute)
- **Innovative tools and methods:** collaboration with partners to develop in house data tools, databases, etc.

Accomplishments in 2020

- Led G7 proposal *Protecting Our Shared Values* to counter COVID-19 related state-sponsored disinformation, with the UK, under the auspices of the US G7 Presidency
- Boosted information sharing among G7 partners through monthly Focal Point meetings (now including Australia New Zealand and the Netherlands), weekly analyst meetings, regular exchanges of reporting, and formal agreement to share information with the EU Rapid Alert System platform

[APG]

For Public Release

- Joined the [redacted] and, with communications colleagues, participated in the Victory in Europe 75th Anniversary campaign
- Produced 10+ analytics reports on the digital information environment pertaining to COVID-19 and the downing of Ukrainian Airlines Flight PS752
- Identified a network of inauthentic coordinated accounts amplifying Chinese diplomatic accounts and produced a joint analytics report with the US interagency Global Engagement Centre (GEC): *Pro-CCP Network Likely Leveraging Automation, New Tactics to Spread COVID-19 Messaging and Disinformation Online*
- Produced a monthly *Wire* to share new developments and initiatives in defence of democracy
- Supported the ongoing work of SITE and PCO Democratic Institutions on evaluating efforts to safeguard the 2019 Canadian Federal Election and commence planning for future elections
- Supported PCO Democratic Institutions in their co-lead, with Microsoft and the German Marshall Fund, of one of the nine Paris Call Communities of Action: Countering Election Interference

Work Plan for the Remainder of 2020

- ***Continue to grow G7 RRM information sharing and identify opportunities for coordinated response***
 - Chair monthly Focal Point meetings and biweekly analyst meetings
 - Finalise new secure, online information sharing portal
 - Monitor online information environment with respect to issues of G7 shared concern, e.g., elections, protests
 - Explore shared norms framework (e.g., what constitutes foreign interference)
 - Explore joined-up capacity building for third countries
 - Support G7 leaders process if required and prepare for UK G7 presidency focus on foreign interference
- ***Continue to identify FI threats to Canada***
 - Continue to monitor online information environment and produce ad hoc analytics reporting when required
 - Finalise contracted research with Atlantic Council Digital Forensic Research Lab on possible instances of foreign interference in Canada's 2019 Federal Election
 - Develop response protocol for instances of possible foreign state sponsored information manipulation
 - Continue to support ongoing work of SITE
 - Continue to support ongoing HASA strategy development

[APG]

For Public Release

- ***Continue to analyse tactics and trends in foreign state sponsored information manipulation***
 - Produce analysis on how foreign states leverage web sites to amplify content and manipulate information
 - Produce analysis on how foreign states manipulate and exploit scientific information on COVID-19
- ***Provide leadership on open source data analytics:***
 - Finalise contracted research with Institute for Strategic Dialogue on best practices in data analytics
 - Conduct workshop on data analytics with EU Centre of Excellence
- ***Develop Privacy Impact Assessment***
- s. 39 - Cabinet Confidence

Challenges

- Lack of consistent direction under current G7 presidency
- Uneven commitment and capacity to counter threats to democracy among G7 members
- Increasingly limited off-the-shelf tools and data access for open source data analytics work
- State-based foreign interference activities in the digital space are increasingly difficult to attribute through publically available open source analytics tools and methods (i.e., it is near impossible to determine who is responsible (state vs. non-state, domestic vs. foreign) and for what motive (deliberate/hostile vs. unwitting/benign)), expanding the gray area in our understanding of influence and interference
- Absence of response protocol and communications approach

Prepared on July 27, 2020

[APG]