



COVID-19 and the Disinformation Pandemic

James V. Lawler, MD, MPH, FIDSA



#CHINA - #disease in Wuhan City of 8.5 million people

NB Wuhan has 5,000+ #5G base stations now and 50,000 by 2021 - is it a disease, or is it 5G ? read more on.rt.com/a9cd

5G status : en.hubei.gov.cn/news/newslis...

Head of Pfizer Research: Covid Vaccine is Female Sterilization

Health & Money News / December 2, 2020 / News

The vaccine contains a **spike protein (see image) called syncytin-1**, vital for the formation of human placenta in women. If the vaccine works so that we form an immune response AGAINST the spike protein, we are also **training the female body to attack syncytin-1**, which could lead to infer...



yvonne @Pink_sta

Barack Obama is asking Africans not to accept the vaccines that will come from America and Europe...

Barack Obama: I'll be an accomplice if I don't denounce this evil act white people want to do to Africans, first of all I was born in America but I'm African blood, [#NotoVaccine](#)

6:10 PM · Jan 8, 2021 · Twitter for Android

Raheem Kassam @RaheemKassam · Apr 16
Twitter has suspended @CortesSteve for citing a Stanford NIH study about masks.

Steve Cortes @CortesSteve

Face masks are dirty, dehumanizing, and ineffective. Stanford Univ study: "The data suggest that both medical and non-medical facemasks are ineffective to block human-to-human transmission of viral and infectious diseases such as SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19." <https://t.co/IXv...zefnD>

88 7.7K 11.2K

Sizwe sikaMusi @SizweLo

Bill Gates is launching implantable chips which will be used to show whether a person has been tested and vaccinated for Corona. These microchips will dissolve under the skin, leaving identification 'quantum dots'. These implants and can also be used as a form of ID.



5:00 AM · Mar 25, 2020

1.4K See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

DEBUNKED

Home > Media News > Study Makes Clai...

Videos by OutKick



MEDIA NEWS DKTC

STUDY MAKES CLAIM THAT MASKS ARE 'INEFFECTIVE', HAVE 'DEVASTATING HEALTH CONSEQUENCES'

by MEGAN TURNER 5 days ago updated 3 days ago 37

Baruch Vainshelboim, a clinical exercise physiologist, published a study in November that

OutKick Your Coverage? Make sure you're ready. Get generic Viagra® or Cialis® Delivered. Only \$2 per.

Definitions

Misinformation - any false information, regardless of intent, including honest mistakes or misunderstandings of the facts.

Disinformation - misinformation created and spread intentionally as a way to confuse or mislead.

-David Keppler, Associated Press

- **“Troll”** – An individual who posts false accusations or inflammatory remarks on social media to promote a cause or to harass someone



- **“Bot”** (Internet robot) – software that runs automated scripts on the internet, often used to generate or repeat/amplify social media posts or emails



- **“Cyborg”** – a human that uses a bot network (botnet) to widely disseminate information, often misinformation (trolling); *very difficult to identify*



“...they know so much that isn’t so.”

- According to research false claims spread more easily than accurate ones¹
 - They are generally more sensational
- MIT analysis of 126,000 stories (millions of tweets) in 2006 – 2016: misleading or incorrect stories traveled 6x faster, reaching more people
 - “We found that falsehood diffuses significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth, in all categories of information, and in many cases by an order of magnitude.”²
- U of So Cal study of election-related tweets in Sep-Oct 2016: 1 in 5 tweets sent by a bot¹
- Pew Research Center 2018 study: 2/3 of all tweets linking to popular websites posted by bots³

¹<https://apnews.com/article/us-news-ap-top-news-elections-social-media-technology-4086949d878336f8ea6daa4dee725d94>

²<https://news.mit.edu/2018/study-twitter-false-news-travels-faster-true-stories-0308>

³<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/04/09/bots-in-the-tweetsphere/>

AVIRUS

- J&J VACCINE Q&A
- HOW LONG DO THE VACCINES PROTECT YOU?
- LATEST UPDATES**
- BLOOD CLOT Q&A
- VACCINE DISTRIBUTION
- STATE-BY-STATE VACCINE GUIDE

WSJ NEWS EXCLUSIVE | NATIONAL SECURITY

Russian Disinformation Campaign Aims to Undermine Confidence in Pfizer, Other Covid-19 Vaccines, U.S. Officials Say

Websites linked to Russian intelligence services publish false information questioning vaccines' safety, efficacy

The New York Times

Russian Intelligence Agencies Push Disinformation on Pandemic

Declassified U.S. intelligence accuses Moscow of pushing propaganda through alternative websites as Russia refines techniques used in 2016.

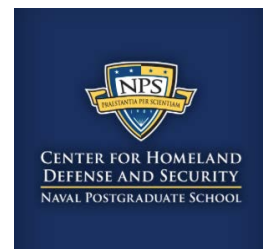


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Influenza: How Russia, China, and Iran Have Shaped and Manipulated Coronavirus Vaccine Narratives

March 6, 2021



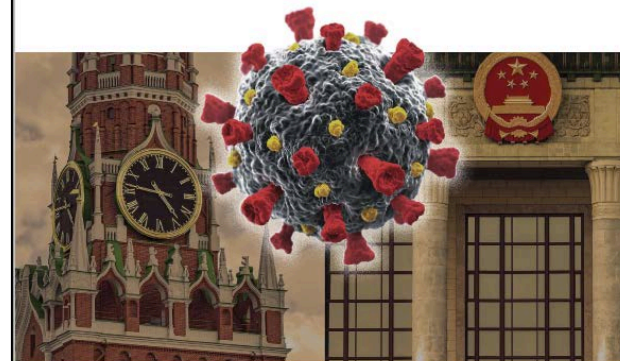
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The Journal of the NPS Center for Homeland Defense and Security

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SUPERSPREADERS OF MALIGN AND SUBVERSIVE INFORMATION ON COVID-19

Russian and Chinese Efforts Targeting the United States

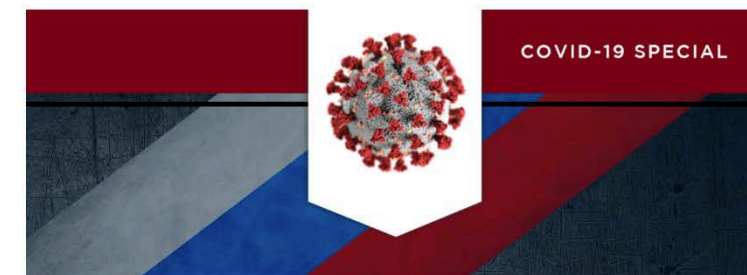


MIRIAM MATTHEWS | KATYA MIGACHEVA | RYAN ANDREW BROWN



COVID-19 Effects and Russian Disinformation Campaigns

Posted on December 2020



By Wesley R. Moy and Kacper Gradon

Dezinformatsiya...

HARVARD KENNEDY SCHOOL
Misinformation
Review

EXPLORE
the review

SUBMIT
an essay

REVIEW
for Misinfo

ABOUT
the journal

JANUARY 14, 2020

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PEER REVIEWED

Russian Twitter disinformation campaigns reach across the American political spectrum

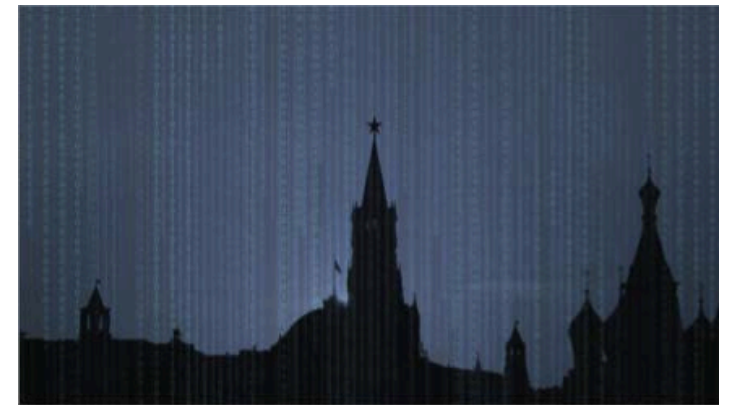
Evidence from an analysis of Twitter data reveals that Russian social media trolls exploited racial and political identities to infiltrate distinct groups of authentic users, playing on their group identities. The groups affected spanned the ideological spectrum, suggesting the importance of coordinated counter-responses from diverse coalitions of users.

BY DEEN FREELON

Hussman School of Journalism and Media,
University of North Carolina at Chapel
Hill, USA

TETYANA LOKOT

School of Communications, Dublin City
University, Ireland



Russian Social Media Influence

Understanding Russian Propaganda
in Eastern Europe

Todd C. Helmus, Elizabeth Bodine-Baron, Andrew Radin,
Madeline Magnuson, Joshua Mendelsohn, William Marcellino,
Andriy Bega, Zev Winkelman



“...effective disinformation campaigns are often built around a true or plausible core. They exploit existing biases, divisions and inconsistencies in a targeted group or society. And they often employ ‘unwitting agents’ to spread their content and advance their objectives.”

- Lawrence Martin-Bittman, former Soviet intelligence officer

An Open and Covert Campaign

- Internet Research Agency (IRA) -- private company headquartered in St. Petersburg linked to Russian oligarchs and the Russian government
 - US Intelligence Community identifies IRA as Russian influence agency
 - Uses false identities to distribute Kremlin- friendly disinformation on social media
 - “Trolls from Olgino”
 - US House of Representatives Intelligence Committee identified 3,814 confirmed IRA accounts
- RT Network – Russian state media
 - Accused of delivering propaganda for Kremlin



Telegraph UK



AJPH OPEN-THEMED RESEARCH

Weaponized Health Communication: Twitter Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify the Vaccine Debate

David A. Broniatowski, PhD, Amelia M. Jamison, MAA, MPH, SiHua Qi, SM, Luluah AlKulaib, SM, Tao Chen, PhD, Adrian Benton, MS, Sandra C. Quinn, PhD, and Mark Dredze, PhD

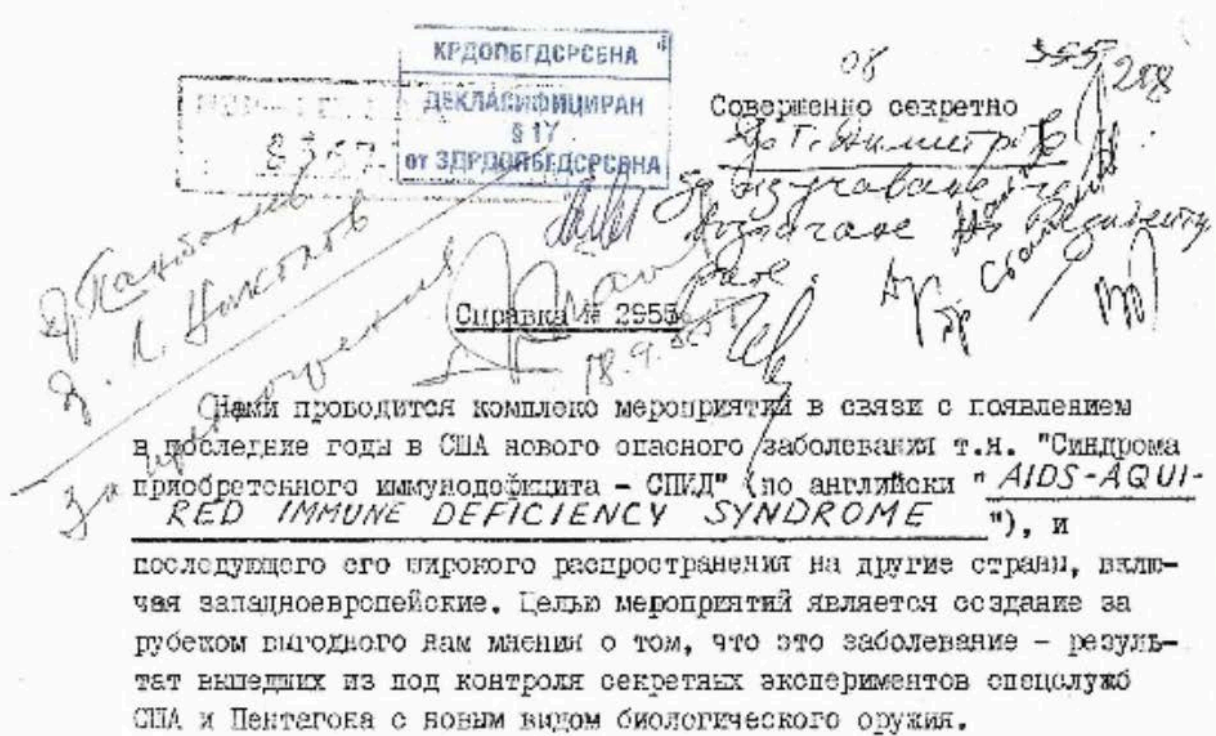
We examined whether Twitter bots and trolls tweet about vaccines more frequently than do average Twitter users. In a second analysis, we examined the relative rates with which each type of account tweeted provaccine, antivaccine, and neutral messages. Finally, in a third analysis, we identified a hashtag uniquely used by Russian trolls and used qualitative methods to describe its content

From Broniatowski et al...

- “Russian trolls and sophisticated Twitter bots post content about vaccination at significantly higher rates than does the average user. Content from these sources gives equal attention to pro- and antivaccination arguments. **This is consistent with a strategy of promoting discord across a range of controversial topics—a known tactic employed by Russian troll accounts.**”
- “Proportionally more antivaccine tweets may be generated by accounts using a somewhat sophisticated semiautomated approach to avoid detection. This creates the false impression of grassroots debate regarding vaccine efficacy—a technique known as ‘astroturfing’”

Whereas bots that spread malware and unsolicited content disseminated antivaccine messages, Russian trolls promoted discord. Accounts masquerading as legitimate users create false equivalency, eroding public consensus on vaccination.

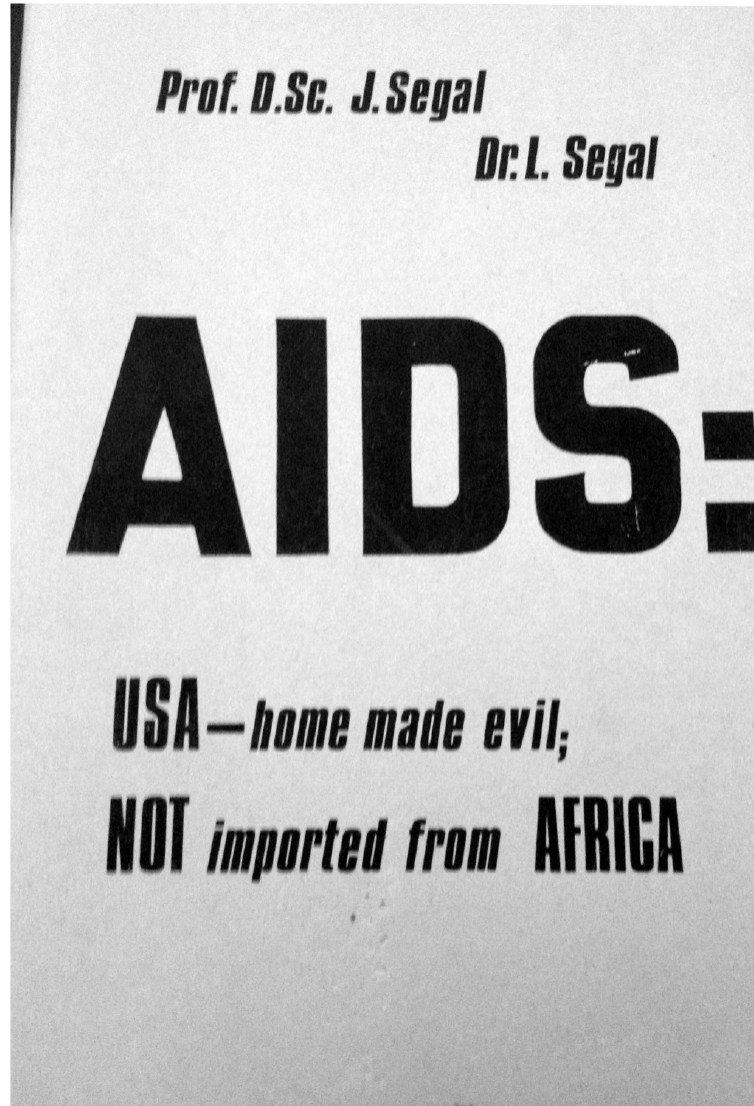
Operation Infektion



“During the campaign, the KGB, assisted by the USSR’s Novosti Press Agency and the allied intelligence services of the Soviet bloc, sought to **spread the thesis internationally that the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was genetically engineered or otherwise concocted by the Pentagon** as part of its alleged research in biological weapons at the U.S. Army’s Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) at Fort Detrick, Maryland.”

Operation Infektion (AKA Operation Denver)

The Harare Brochure



<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/operation-denver-kgb-and-stasi-disinformation-regarding-aids>

“A cycle of misinformation* ...”

- State-sponsored disinformation agents have demonstrated success in infiltrating distinct online communities.
- The Russian influence effort is part of the overall strategy of *active measures*, which seeks to use all of the tools available to undermine the United States while creating societal tensions and weakening democratic legitimacy.

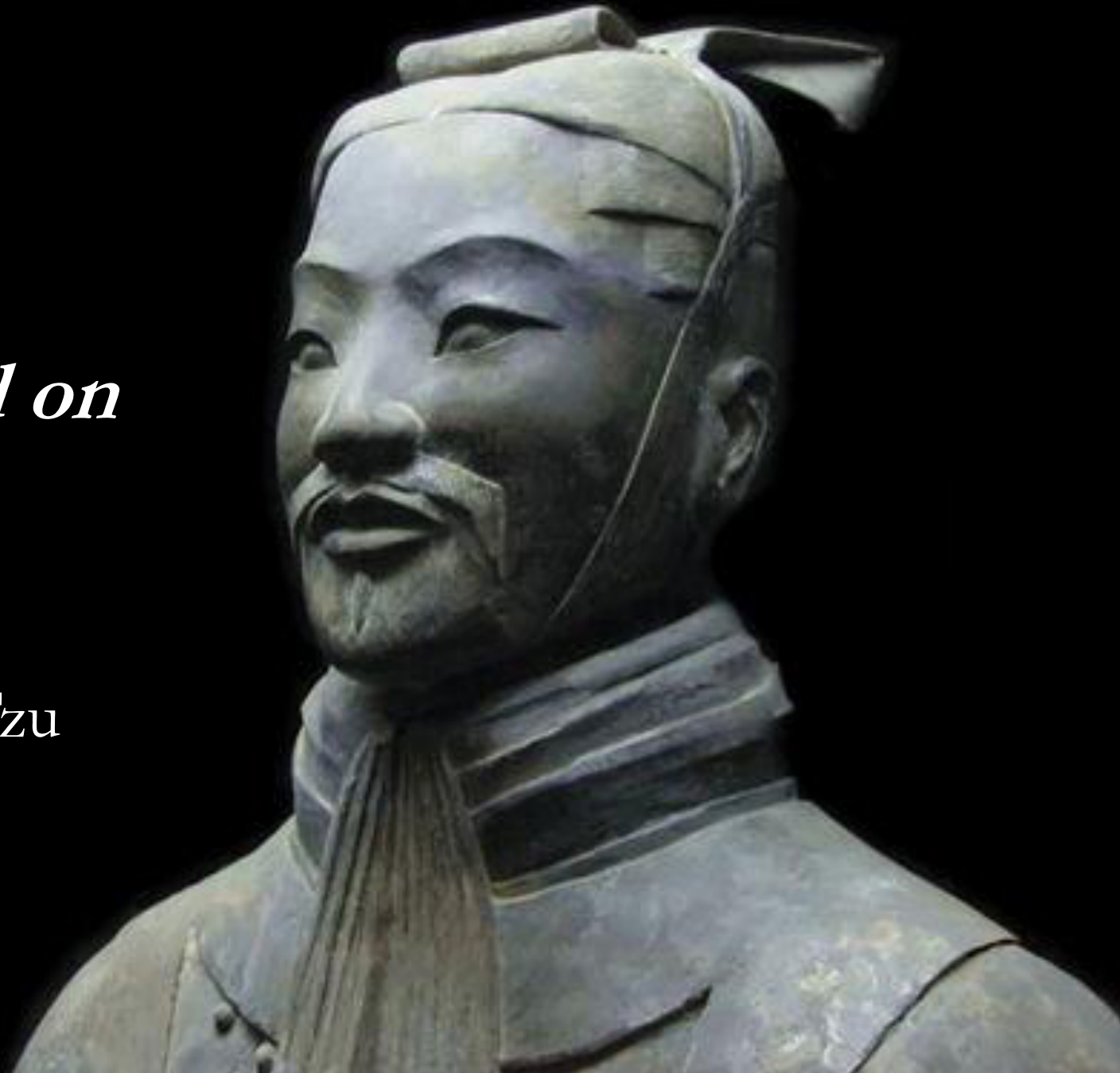
- Freelon and Lokot

Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review

*Historian Douglas Selvage on Operation Infektion

*All warfare is based on
deception.*

-Sun Tzu



Appropriate Uses for Social Media

