Homeland Security

(U//FOUO) COLLECTION SUPPORT PRIMER – Foreign Malign Influence Threats

(U//FOUO) The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) Collection Management Division, the Cyber Mission Center, and the Homeland Influence Task Force prepared this Collection Support Primer to assist DHS Intelligence Enterprise and federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners in identifying and reporting potential Foreign Malign Influence (FMI) threats intended to manipulate public opinion, exploit current and emerging events, influence federal and SLTT officials and policy, threaten democratic processes, and apply artificial pressures to shape federal or SLTT policy. Nation-state and non-state adversaries seek to weaponize information to influence policy and political processes, including elections, to sow discord inside the Homeland. If you have information that you believe may meet any of the collection criteria below, please contact your local I&A field intelligence officer located at your state or major urban area fusion center.

(U) Crisis Exploitation/Promoting Discord

(U//FOUO) Crisis exploitation and promoting discord can involve FMI actor efforts to exacerbate or capitalize on national emergencies, civil unrest, racial inequities, domestic terrorism, or socio-political controversies to sow public unrest, incite violence, or antagonize further confrontation.

(U//FOUO) Federal and SLTT partners may be well positioned to identify efforts by foreign threat actors to foment public unrest, incite violence, or undermine public trust in US institutions.

(U//FOUO) DHS is interested in FMI threat actors who attempt to radicalize or mobilize potential domestic terrorists to violence or who seek to sow discord and contribute to incitement of violence in the United States.

(U//FOUO) FMI threat actor efforts to coopt otherwise peaceful civil dissent movements or incite protestors to commit acts of violence are of interest to DHS.

(U//FOUO) FMI threat actors have made efforts to undermine public trust in federal and state institutions, along with policies, by mischaracterizing governmental responses to the following crises:

- (U) Natural disasters
- (U) Pandemics
- (U) High-profile police activities
- (U) High-priority public initiatives such as census participation
- (U) Border activities and travel security

(U//FOUO) DHS seeks information on FMI threat actor efforts to marginalize public trust in the federal and SLTT COVID-19 response, the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, and to incite acts that unlawfully inhibit the government's pandemic response.

(U//FOUO) DHS is interested in FMI threat actor efforts to incite diaspora communities in the United States to apply pressure on federal and SLTT entities concerning policies regarding international events or crises.

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(U) Election Influence

(U//FOUO) Election Influence is the use of covert and overt influence activities intended to affect elections and influence candidates, political parties, voters, and the political processes, regardless of whether these activities had a material impact on an election.

(U//FOUO) Federal and SLTT partners may be well positioned to identify overt and covert efforts by FMI actors intended to directly or indirectly affect an election.

(U//FOUO) Foreign governments and their proxies, along with non-state actors, undertake efforts to suppress or motivate voters, shape voter preference for candidates and political parties, and undermine confidence in the results of US political processes.

(U//FOUO) DHS is interested in suspected or confirmed instances of foreign state or proxy-directed financed malign influence operations targeting the US and allied public, specific segments of society, and the reputations or credibility of US political parties, candidates for public office, and elections systems. Any new tactics, techniques, or procedures (TTPs) suspected foreign adversaries are employing to disrupt US elections are of concern.

(U//FOUO) FMI threat actors obscure attribution of these activities by engaging in Astroturfing or Information Laundering. Astroturfing masks the sponsors of a message or organization to make it appear as though it originates from grassroots participants or has their support. Information Laundering is the process or mechanism by which an actor obfuscates the true origin of information, false or otherwise, through multiple sources to reach mainstream audiences.

(U) Economic Influence

(U//FOUO) Economic Influence is the intentional use by a foreign actor or proxy to use overt or covert influence activity to affect audiences or policy for economic benefit.

(U//FOUO) Federal and SLTT partners may be well positioned to identify efforts by foreign threat actors to influence, persuade, threaten, employ influence operations, or coerce SLTT officials to convince broader economic audiences into supporting trade or policy positions that benefit the foreign actor and undermine US economic interests.

(U//FOUO) Foreign Malign Economic Influence actors include foreign benevolent and cooperative societies, professional and academic organizations, diplomats, foreign business and trade entities, and prominent foreign citizens. Examples include:

- (U) Sister City organizations
- (U) "Confucius" and other nation-state affiliated cultural outreach initiatives
- (U) Scholastic exchange societies
- (U) Professional associations
- (U) Foreign manufacturing and research corporations
- (U) Foreign delegations
- (U) Foreign celebrities
- (U) Industry leaders

(U//FOUO) DHS is interested in foreign officials or businesses who lobby federal and SLTT officials to gain access to sensitive data or intellectual property with the intent to steal or wrongfully appropriate it. These FMI threat actors may influence officials with the fear of lost economic opportunity should SLTT partners not support the influence actors' agenda.

(U//FOUO) FMI threat actors may use the threat of lost economic opportunity to coerce corporations to occupy positions contrary to their corporate values or US policy.

(U//FOUO) Foreign Cultural outreach and exchange organizations that attempt to covertly influence local businesses and leaders into activities or positions that disproportionately benefit the foreign influence actors are of interest to DHS.

(U//FOUO) FMI actors may seek to influence diaspora communities to influence US policy or intimidate and coerce US-based persons. DHS is interested in the FMI actors' exploitation of diaspora populations to influence US policy and coerce US based persons.

(U) Foreign Influence Threats

(U//FOUO) Foreign Influence includes foreign state and proxy efforts, both overt and covert, to spread misinformation, disinformation, or malign information to influence federal and SLTT policy and undermine US societal cohesion or government effectiveness.

(U//FOUO) Federal and SLTT partners may be well positioned to identify FMI and disinformation efforts and the threat actors carrying out Influence operations.

(U//FOUO) Foreign Influence is undertaken by, at the direction of, on behalf of, or with the support of a foreign government, political party, or nonofficial entity to affect attitudes, perceptions, or behaviors to advance that entity's interests.

(U//FOUO) FMI is subversive, undeclared, coercive, or criminal activity by foreign governments, non-state actors, or their proxies to sow division, undermine democratic processes and institutions, or to steer policy and regulatory decisions in favor of the foreign actor. Threat actors include, but are not limited to, foreign diplomats, intelligence officers, media platforms, social media personas, outreach and exchange societies, business entities, or influential private citizens. Potential targets include voters, socio-political movement supporters, diasporas, and federal and SLTT officials.

(U//FOUO) Covert Influence is an activity in which a foreign government hides its involvement, including the use of agents of influence, covert media relationships, cyber influence activities, front organizations, organized crime groups, or clandestine funds for political action. Overt Influence is an activity that a foreign government conducts openly or has clear ties to, including the use of strategic communications, public diplomacy, financial support, and some forms of propaganda.

(U//FOUO) Disinformation is an adversary's use of false or misleading information that is created or spread intentionally with the purpose of altering a specific target audience's attitudes or behavior to benefit the information's creator. Misinformation is an adversary's use of false or misleading information. An adversary's intent can change misinformation to disinformation. Malign information is an adversary's deliberate use of otherwise verifiable information with malicious intent, such as by amplifying the information selectively or out of context, or to the detriment of specific persons.

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OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE & ANALYSIS

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(U) Customer Feedback Form–Collection Primer

(U) All survey responses are anonymous. Additionally, your responses are combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity.

Serial Number:

Please select partner type below:

Intelligence Community   Federal Partner   Local   Territorial

DHS Component   State   Tribal   Private Sector

In what role do you best fit?

How did you receive/locate the product?   *If other, please specify:*

Please rate your satisfaction with this product by selecting an option for each category below:

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Disatisfied	N/A
Overall usefulness						
Relevance to your mission						
Timeliness						
Responsiveness to your collection needs						

Have you written IIRs based on/using information from this of product?   Yes   No

Has this product improved your understanding of this topic/collection requirements?   Yes   No

Have you shared/do you intend to share information with constituents based on material from this product?   Yes   No

Other than HSIN Intel, is there any other place you would like this product to be posted for ease of access?

Do you have any requests for future topic areas? *(Please note that we may not be able to address all requests at this time)*

Do you have any suggestions for improving this product?

Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your feedback?   Yes   No

To help us understand more about your organization, please provide:

Name: **Position:**

Organization: **State:**

Contact Number: **E-mail:**

Privacy Act Statement

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