THE WAR ON AMERICA'S MIND REPORT

TOP TAKEAWAYS

Foreign adversaries are using our open systems of communication, in particular digital media platforms, to influence what and how Americans, especially young women, think and see the world. Adversaries like Russia and China have always waged influence campaigns, but new technologies have made them exponentially more effective. The rise in mental illness and anti-American sympathies are at least in part attributable to these efforts. This report details what's happening today and makes recommendations for how we can fight back.

Mind Your Mind Campaign: A National Inoculation Campaign to Promote Cognitive Public Health

- This campaign should teach citizens how recommendation systems exploit attention, how outrage and fear are rewarded, how bots and coordinated networks manufacture consensus, how real images can be stripped of context, and how generative AI can fabricate people, evidence, and apparent popularity.
- The campaign should rely on prebunking and psychological inoculation, exposing people to recognizable manipulation techniques before they encounter them in the wild.
- Short, memorable content delivered through TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, schools, parent networks, military communities, and other trusted institutions could teach a handful of durable reflexes:
    - Pause before sharing emotionally provocative content
    - Identify the source
    - Search outside the feed
    - Distinguish skepticism from cynicism
    - Ask who benefits from the reaction being provoked

Provenance and Transparency

- Congress should modernize the Foreign Agents Registration Act for the influencer economy, requiring disclosure when creators receive direct or laundered foreign state funding, with penalties that make the Tenet Media model unprofitable.
- Platforms should label state-affiliated media and disclose the provenance of political advertising.
- Nonprofits engaged in political advocacy should face meaningful foreign-funding disclosure.
- AI-generated media should carry cryptographic content credentials as a condition of distribution at scale, so that provenance travels with the artifact.

Authentication: Defend the Reality of Consensus

- Platforms should be required to detect, label, and disclose automated and synthetic accounts, and to publish the scale and character of the coordinated inauthentic networks they remove.

- Coordinated inauthentic behavior conducted on behalf of foreign states should carry statutory penalties, and the manufacture of synthetic consensus, bot networks built to simulate grassroots opinion, should be recognized in law as the fraud it is.

Algorithmic Accountability and the Formative Years

- Recommendation systems that shape the psychological development of millions of minors should not be beyond public inspection, and platforms answerable to foreign intelligence law must be brought fully under American jurisdiction, with the TikTok divestiture enforced to the letter, including genuine severance of the recommendation algorithm.
- Design features that exploit developmental vulnerability, infinite scroll, variable-reward notifications, and engagement optimization aimed at minors are legitimate objects of regulation exactly as advertising to children already is.
- Our schools and universities should roll back technologies that serve no clear educational purpose and restore phone-free classrooms as the default.
- Devices should be introduced deliberately, at developmentally appropriate ages, and only when they demonstrably improve instruction.
- Teachers do not need to wait for a principal, school board, or state mandate to restore meaningful learning. They can assign the handwritten essay, conduct paper-based exams, require students to annotate physical texts, and ask them to defend their reasoning aloud.
- Schools should prohibit AI-generated grading for substantive assignments and require teachers to personally evaluate the work that matters most.

Intelligence, Attribution, and Cost

- The Treasury should sanction the builders of influence operations, including commercial cutouts and knowing AI service providers.
- The intelligence community should be resourced to attribute operations publicly and fast.
- Strategic communication should be funded as the instrument of national defense it has become, on the free-expression model Secretary Rubio's State Department has articulated rather than the content-suppression model that discredited earlier efforts.
- And influence warfare should be priced into every bilateral file with Moscow, Beijing, and Tehran.

Restoring the Referee

- Institutions should sharply separate counterintelligence claims, which concern foreign manipulation and require evidence, from content judgments, which concern truth and taste and belong to citizens.
- They should restore "we do not know yet" as a respectable public category, and use it.

- They should publish their errors as prominently as their warnings, because an institution that has visibly corrected itself is far harder for an adversary to discredit than one that never admits error.
- And officials should stop lending the authority of the intelligence community to claims the intelligence does not support.

Education: A Parent's Role

- Parents should delay smartphones and social media as long as feasible and say why.
- Children should understand, in age-appropriate ways, how recommendation systems decide what they see; how outrage, fear, grievance, and belonging keep people engaged; how influence operations manufacture the appearance of consensus; how bots and inauthentic accounts behave; and how platforms, influencers, political movements, and foreign adversaries can all benefit from capturing attention and directing emotion.
- They should learn to recognize what manipulation feels like from the inside, especially the moment when repetition and popularity begin to feel like truth and proof.
- But digital literacy alone is not enough. Parents should insist that children know the inheritance they are being asked to evaluate—its achievements, its failures, its principles, and the long human struggle that produced it.
- Families should deliberately preserve the basic capabilities technology increasingly offers to perform for us. Read. Reason. Write. Calculate. Navigate. Remember. Find the primary source. Compare competing accounts. Sit with uncertainty. Build an argument. Change your mind when the evidence demands it.

Family, Community, and the Woman Herself

- Ask every piece of content who benefits from your believing it.
- Notice when a feed is escalating your emotion, and treat the escalation itself as data.
- Remember that your compassion can be exploited and your outrage engineered. When something makes you certain within ten seconds, slow down.
- Keep friendships that cross political lines, because they are the living refutation of the enemy's central claim.
- Anchor identity in things no algorithm can adjudicate: family, faith, competence, service, and the affections of real life.