

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7938

To improve and coordinate United States information statecraft strategy and capabilities for an era of strategic competition, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 4, 2020

Mr. McCAUL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To improve and coordinate United States information statecraft strategy and capabilities for an era of strategic competition, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “United States Informa-
5 tion Abroad for Strategic Competition Act” or the “USIA
6 for Strategic Competition Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds the following:

9 (1) Beginning in 1983, the Soviet Union waged
10 a disinformation campaign against the United States

1 which came to be known as “Operation
2 INFEKTION”, falsely accusing the Department of
3 Defense of engineering and spreading the AIDS
4 virus.

5 (2) In 1987, the Soviet Union publicly dis-
6 avowed its AIDS disinformation following the efforts
7 of the United States Active Measures Working
8 Group to refute these lies and discredit the Soviet
9 Union.

10 (3) Shortly thereafter, the Working Group en-
11 tered a period of institutional decline because its
12 work was perceived to contravene Department of
13 State efforts to engage with the Soviet Union, and
14 effectively ceased to exist following the fall of the
15 Soviet Union.

16 (4) The final report issued by members of the
17 Working Group, published by the United States In-
18 formation Agency in 1992 at the request of the
19 House of Representatives, warned that “[a]s long as
20 states and groups interested in manipulating world
21 opinion, limiting U.S. Government actions, or gener-
22 ating opposition to U.S. policies and interests con-
23 tinue to use these techniques, there will be a need
24 for the United States Information Agency to system-
25 atically monitor, analyze, and counter them.”.

1 (5) In 2020, the Communist Party of China
2 (CCP) began a disinformation campaign against the
3 United States, falsely accusing the United States of
4 being the source of the SARS-CoV-2 novel
5 coronavirus and the United States Army of bringing
6 the virus to China.

7 **SEC. 3. INFORMATION STATECRAFT.**

8 (a) FINDING.—The 2017 National Security Strategy
9 establishes that it is a priority of United States Informa-
10 tion Statecraft to “improve our understanding of how ad-
11 versaries gain informational and psychological advantages
12 across all policies” and “empower a true public diplomacy
13 capability to compete effectively in this arena”.

14 (b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States to
15 advance United States foreign policy and national security
16 interests through a holistic approach to public diplomacy,
17 which shall include the following:

18 (1) Championing and promoting United States
19 values, including democratic governance, individual
20 liberty, and internationally recognized human rights.

21 (2) Supporting the international dissemination
22 of unbiased and fact-based information, and pro-
23 tecting the free flow of information globally.

24 (3) Refuting and countering foreign state and
25 nonstate propaganda, disinformation, and narratives

1 that undermine United States values, such as the
2 promotion of authoritarian governance, the denigra-
3 tion of individual liberty, and the disregard of inter-
4 nationally recognized human rights.

5 (4) Discrediting foreign state and nonstate ac-
6 tors responsible for such propaganda,
7 disinformation, and narratives, and seeking to re-
8 duce the ability of such actors to influence global
9 discourse.

10 (5) Coordinating and integrating such efforts
11 with the efforts of United States allies and partners
12 that share United States values.

13 (6) Providing for robust exchange, analytic, and
14 coordination mechanisms to accomplish such objec-
15 tives.

16 (c) GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER.—Paragraph (3)
17 of section 1287(b) of the National Defense Authorization
18 Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (22 U.S.C. 2656 note; Public
19 Law 114–328) is amended to read as follows:

20 “(3) As needed, support the development and
21 dissemination of fact-based narratives and analysis
22 to—

23 “(A) refute and counter propaganda and
24 disinformation directed at the United States
25 and United States allies and partner nations;

1 “(B) discredit the actors responsible for
2 such propaganda and disinformation; and

3 “(C) reduce the ability of such actors to
4 influence global discourse.”.

5 **SEC. 4. ACTIVE MEASURES WORKING GROUP FOR THE CHI-**
6 **NESE COMMUNIST PARTY.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The “Communiqué on the Current State of
9 the Ideological Sphere”, an April 22, 2013, notice
10 from the Communist Party of China’s (CCP) Cen-
11 tral Committee more commonly known as “Docu-
12 ment 9”, establishes that under the leadership of
13 General Secretary Xi Jinping, the CCP considers
14 constitutional democracy, internationally recognized
15 human rights, liberal economics, independent jour-
16 nalism, and internal dissent to be security threats.

17 (2) In his remarks before the 19th Communist
18 Party Congress in 2017, which were titled in part
19 “Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chi-
20 nese Characteristics for a New Era”, General Sec-
21 retary Xi Jinping said, “the banner of socialism with
22 Chinese characteristics is now flying high and proud
23 for all to see. It means that the path, the theory, the
24 system, and the culture of socialism with Chinese
25 characteristics have kept developing, blazing a new

1 trail for other developing countries to achieve mod-
2 ernization. It offers a new option for other countries
3 and nations.”.

4 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
5 gress that the CCP is hostile to United States values and
6 seeks to advance an alternate set of authoritarian values,
7 and therefore that the CCP and its ability to influence
8 global discourse is a national security threat to the United
9 States.

10 (c) RECONSTITUTION.—The Secretary of State shall
11 reconstitute the Active Measures Working Group (in this
12 section referred to as the “Working Group”) for a period
13 of five years.

14 (d) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Working Group
15 shall be to create a regularly updated information
16 statecraft strategy for the whole of the United States Gov-
17 ernment to reduce the ability of the CCP to influence glob-
18 al discourse.

19 (e) MEMBERSHIP.—The Working Group shall include
20 the following officials:

21 (1) The Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy
22 of the Department of State.

23 (2) The Assistant Secretary of East Asian and
24 Pacific Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of South

1 and Central Asian Affairs of the Department of
2 State.

3 (3) The Special Envoy and Coordinator of the
4 Global Engagement Center.

5 (4) The Assistant Administrator of the Bureau
6 for Asia of the United States Agency for Inter-
7 national Development.

8 (5) The Assistant Secretary for Asian and Pa-
9 cific Security Affairs of the Department of Defense.

10 (6) The Commander of the United States Indo-
11 Pacific Command.

12 (7) Other officials the Secretary of State and
13 the President determine appropriate.

14 (f) CHAIR.—The Secretary of State shall designate
15 a member of the Working Group as the Chairperson.

16 (g) COOPERATION.—The President shall ensure that
17 the various agencies and departments of the United States
18 cooperate with the Working Group, adopt and effectuate
19 the information statecraft strategy required under sub-
20 section (h), and share information appropriately to ad-
21 vance the strategy.

22 (h) INFORMATION STATECRAFT STRATEGY.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
24 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Working
25 Group shall submit to the appropriate congressional

1 committees and distribute to each Federal depart-
2 ment and agency an information statecraft strategy.

3 (2) CONTENTS.—The information statecraft
4 strategy and biannual updates thereto required
5 under this subsection shall include the following:

6 (A) An identification of the specific CCP
7 narratives that most contribute to the CCP’s
8 ability to influence global discourse, and the en-
9 tities primarily responsible for advancing these
10 narratives and contributing to the CCP’s ability
11 to influence global discourse.

12 (B) An identification of counternarratives
13 most effective and most likely to reduce the
14 ability of the CCP to influence global discourse
15 and discredit the entities that contribute to the
16 CCP’s ability to influence global discourse.

17 (C) A detailed plan, including instructions
18 for public diplomacy officers at each United
19 States diplomatic or consular post, to imple-
20 ment such counternarratives.

21 (D) An identification of specific quan-
22 titative objectives for advancing such counter-
23 narratives, and an identification of the United
24 States officials responsible for accomplishing
25 such objectives.

1 (E) A quantitative analysis of United
2 States efforts to accomplish such objectives in
3 the preceding six months, informed by the data
4 and analytical capabilities of the Under Sec-
5 retary for Public Diplomacy of the Department
6 of State and the Global Engagement Center.

7 (3) BIENNIAL UPDATES.—Not later than 180
8 days after the submission of the information
9 statecraft strategy under paragraph (1) and every
10 180 days thereafter for a period of five years, the
11 Working Group shall submit to the appropriate con-
12 gressional committees an updated information
13 statecraft strategy.

14 (4) FORM.—The information statecraft strategy
15 and biannual updates thereto required under this
16 subsection may be in classified form.

17 (5) CHIEF OF MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES.—
18 The Secretary of State should ensure that each
19 United States chief of mission—

20 (A) advances through both programming
21 and communications the objectives of the infor-
22 mation statecraft strategy and biannual updates
23 thereto;

24 (B) assigns at least one Foreign Service
25 officer to be primarily responsible for coordi-

1 nating such efforts at the United States diplo-
2 matic or consular post at which such chief of
3 mission is assigned; and

4 (C) provides quantitative data to the
5 Working Group about the efforts of such chief
6 of mission to accomplish the objectives of the
7 strategy, including updates thereto.

8 **SEC. 5. SPECIAL FAST-TRACK PROCEDURES.**

9 The Secretary of State shall establish procedures for
10 use in special circumstances, as determined by the Sec-
11 retary, to provide for rapid, synchronized releases of infor-
12 mation content globally, regionally, or across subsets of
13 United States diplomatic and consular posts.

14 **SEC. 6. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.**

15 (a) RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES.—The
16 Secretary of State, acting through the Director of Re-
17 search and Evaluation appointed pursuant to subsection
18 (b), shall—

19 (1) conduct regular research and evaluation of
20 public diplomacy programs and activities of the De-
21 partment of State, including through the routine use
22 of audience research, digital analytics, and impact
23 evaluations, to plan and execute such programs and
24 activities; and

1 (2) make available to Congress the findings of
2 such research and evaluations.

3 (b) DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—

4 (1) APPOINTMENT.—Not later than 90 days
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
6 retary of State shall appoint a Director of Research
7 and Evaluation (referred to in this subsection as the
8 “Director”) in the Office of Policy, Planning, and
9 Resources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs
10 of the Department of State.

11 (2) LIMITATION ON APPOINTMENT.—The ap-
12 pointment of the Director pursuant to paragraph (1)
13 shall not result in an increase in the overall full-time
14 equivalent positions within the Department of State.

15 (3) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Director shall—

16 (A) report to the Director of Policy Plan-
17 ning of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Re-
18 sources for Public Diplomacy and Public Af-
19 fairs of the Department of State;

20 (B) coordinate and oversee the research
21 and evaluation of public diplomacy programs
22 and activities of the Department to—

23 (i) improve public diplomacy strate-
24 gies and tactics; and

1 (ii) ensure that such programs and
2 activities are increasing the knowledge, un-
3 derstanding, and trust of the United
4 States by relevant target audiences;

5 (C) routinely organize and oversee audi-
6 ence research, digital analytics, and impact
7 evaluations across all public diplomacy bureaus
8 and offices of the Department;

9 (D) support the public affairs sections of
10 United States diplomatic and consular posts;

11 (E) share appropriate public diplomacy re-
12 search and evaluation information within the
13 Department and with other appropriate Federal
14 departments and agencies;

15 (F) regularly design and coordinate stand-
16 ardized research questions, methodologies, and
17 procedures to ensure that public diplomacy pro-
18 grams and activities across all public diplomacy
19 bureaus and offices of the Department are de-
20 signed to meet appropriate foreign policy objec-
21 tives; and

22 (G) report biannually to the United States
23 Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy of
24 the Department of State, through the Sub-
25 committee on Research and Evaluation estab-

1 lished pursuant to subsection (f), regarding the
2 research and evaluation of all public diplomacy
3 bureaus and offices of the Department.

4 (4) GUIDANCE AND TRAINING.—Not later than
5 one year after the appointment of the Director pur-
6 suant to paragraph (1), the Director shall develop
7 guidance and training, including curriculum for use
8 by the Foreign Service Institute, for all public diplo-
9 macy officers of the Department of State regarding
10 the reading and interpretation of public diplomacy
11 program and activity evaluation findings to ensure
12 that such findings and related lessons learned are
13 implemented in the planning and evaluation of all
14 public diplomacy programs and activities of the De-
15 partment.

16 (c) PRIORITIZING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of Policy Plan-
18 ning of the Office of Policy, Planning, and Re-
19 sources for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs of
20 the Department of State shall ensure that research
21 and evaluation of public diplomacy programs and ac-
22 tivities of the Department, as coordinated and over-
23 seen by the Director pursuant to subsection (b), sup-
24 port strategic planning and resource allocation

1 across all public diplomacy bureaus and offices of
2 the Department.

3 (2) ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.—Amounts al-
4 located for the purpose of research and evaluation of
5 public diplomacy programs and activities of the De-
6 partment of State pursuant to subsection (b) shall
7 be made available to be disbursed at the direction of
8 the Director referred to in paragraph (1) among the
9 research and evaluation staff across all public diplo-
10 macy bureaus and offices of the Department.

11 (3) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
12 Congress that the Department of State should
13 gradually increase to a percentage of program funds
14 that is commensurate with Federal Government best
15 practices its allocation of funds made available under
16 the headings “Educational and Cultural Exchange
17 Programs” and “Diplomatic Programs” for research
18 and evaluation of public diplomacy programs and ac-
19 tivities of the Department pursuant to subsection
20 (b).

21 (d) LIMITED EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE PAPER-
22 WORK REDUCTION ACT.—Subchapter I of chapter 35 of
23 title 44, United States Code (commonly known as the “Pa-
24 perwork Reduction Act”) shall not apply to the collection
25 of information directed at any individuals conducted by,

1 or on behalf of, the Department of State for the purpose
2 of audience research, monitoring, and evaluations, and in
3 connection with the Department's activities, including
4 interagency activities, conducted pursuant to this Act or
5 to any of the following:

6 (1) The United States Information and Edu-
7 cational Exchange Act of 1948 (22 U.S.C. 1431 et
8 seq.).

9 (2) The Mutual Educational and Cultural Ex-
10 change Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2451 et seq.).

11 (3) Section 1287 of the National Defense Au-
12 thorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law
13 114–328; 22 U.S.C. 2656 note).

14 (4) The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22
15 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.).

16 (e) LIMITED EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE PRI-
17 VACY ACT.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Department of State
19 shall maintain, collect, use, and disseminate records
20 (as such term is defined in section 552a(a)(4) of
21 title 5, United States Code) for audience research,
22 digital analytics, and impact evaluations of commu-
23 nications related to public diplomacy programs and
24 activities of the Department, including interagency
25 efforts, intended for foreign audiences.

1 (2) CONDITIONS.—Audience research, digital
2 analytics, and impact evaluations under paragraph
3 (1) shall be—

4 (A) reasonably tailored to meet the pur-
5 poses of the public diplomacy programs and ac-
6 tivities of the Department of State, including
7 related interagency activities; and

8 (B) carried out with due regard for privacy
9 and civil liberties guidance and oversight.

10 (f) UNITED STATES ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUB-
11 LIC DIPLOMACY.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1334 of the Foreign
13 Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (22
14 U.S.C. 6553) is amended—

15 (A) in the section heading, by striking
16 “**SUNSET**” and inserting “**CONTINUATION**”;
17 and

18 (B) by striking “until October 1, 2020”.

19 (2) EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT.—Subpara-
20 graph (B) of section 604(d)(1) of the United States
21 Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948
22 (22 U.S.C. 1469(d)(1)) is amended to read as fol-
23 lows:

24 “(B) EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT.—In
25 evaluating the public diplomacy and inter-

1 national broadcasting activities described in
2 subparagraph (A), the Commission shall con-
3 duct an assessment that considers the relation
4 to the United States national interest, the pub-
5 lic diplomacy target impact, the achieved im-
6 pact, and the cost of public diplomacy activities
7 and international broadcasting. The assessment
8 shall include, if practicable, an appropriate met-
9 ric such as ‘cost-per-audience’ or ‘cost-per-stu-
10 dent’ for each such activity. Upon the comple-
11 tion of the assessment, the Commission shall
12 assign a rating of—

13 “(i) ‘effective’ for activities that—

14 “(I) set appropriate goals and
15 achieve all or most of the desired re-
16 sults;

17 “(II) are well-managed;

18 “(III) are cost efficient; and

19 “(IV) quantifiably advance the
20 priorities of the most recent National
21 Security Strategy and related national
22 strategies for defense and foreign pol-
23 icy;

24 “(ii) ‘moderately effective’ for activi-
25 ties that—

1 “(I) set appropriate goals and
2 achieve some desired results;

3 “(II) are generally well-managed;

4 “(III) may need to improve their
5 cost efficiency, including reducing
6 overhead; and

7 “(IV) have a substantive ration-
8 ale for advancing the priorities of the
9 most recent National Security Strat-
10 egy and related national strategies for
11 defense and foreign policy, but have
12 not demonstrated quantifiable results;

13 “(iii) ‘ineffective’ for activities that—

14 “(I) lack appropriate goals or fail
15 to achieve stated goals or desired re-
16 sults;

17 “(II) are not well-managed;

18 “(III) are not cost efficient, such
19 as through insufficient use of avail-
20 able resources to achieve stated goals
21 or desired results, or have excessive
22 overhead; or

23 “(IV) do not have a substantive
24 rationale for advancing the priorities
25 of the most recent National Security

1 Strategy and related national strate-
2 gies for defense and foreign policy; or
3 “(iv) ‘results not demonstrated’ for
4 activities that—

5 “(I) do not have acceptable per-
6 formance public diplomacy metrics for
7 measuring results; or

8 “(II) are unable or failed to col-
9 lect data to determine if such activi-
10 ties are effective.”.

11 (3) SUBCOMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH AND EVAL-
12 UATION.—The United States Advisory Commission
13 on Public Diplomacy shall establish a Subcommittee
14 on Research and Evaluation to monitor and advise
15 regarding audience research, digital analytics, and
16 impact evaluations carried out by the Department of
17 State and the United States Agency for Global
18 Media.

19 (4) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Subcommittee on
20 Research and Evaluation established pursuant to
21 paragraph (3) shall submit to the appropriate con-
22 gressional committees an annual report, in conjunc-
23 tion with the United States Advisory Commission on
24 Public Diplomacy’s Comprehensive Annual Report
25 on the performance of the Department of State and

1 the United States Agency for Global Media, describ-
2 ing all actions taken by the Subcommittee pursuant
3 to such paragraph and any findings made as a result
4 of such actions.

5 **SEC. 7. FOREIGN MISSION LANGUAGE SUPPORT.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall en-
7 sure that each United States chief of mission has available
8 appropriate personnel and resources to provide translation
9 services for such chief of mission and the ability to trans-
10 late content into local languages.

11 (b) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 90 days after the
12 date of the enactment of this Act and annually thereafter
13 for a period of five years, the Secretary of State shall no-
14 tify the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of
15 Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations
16 of the Senate of any United States diplomatic or consular
17 posts that do not have permanent capabilities to provide
18 translation services to the chief of mission of such a post
19 or translate content into local languages.

20 **SEC. 8. LATERAL ENTRY FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY PER-**
21 **SONNEL.**

22 The Secretary of State shall make full use of avail-
23 able authorities, including section 404 of the Department
24 of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017 (Public Law
25 114–323), to recruit not fewer than ten individuals with

1 extensive experience in strategic communications, includ-
2 ing in foreign languages, graphic design, market research,
3 social media engagement, audio and video content cre-
4 ation, and related capabilities for lateral entry into the
5 Foreign Service at a grade level higher than FS-4. Such
6 individuals shall be assigned to United States diplomatic
7 or consular posts which the Secretary determines are in
8 need of personnel to engage in public diplomacy efforts
9 consistent with this Act.

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