

From: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>;
Michael Crowley (b)(6)@nytimes.com>;
Lara Jakes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up
Date: Sun, 7 Mar 2021 10:40:25 -0500

(b)(6)

I see the Journal story on the state report has (at last) been published
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/russian-disinformation-campaign-aims-to-undermine-confidence-in-pfizer-other-covid-19-vaccines-u-s-officials-say-11615129200>

Can you provide us a copy of the report?

Julian

Julian E. Barnes
Intelligence, National Security reporter
The New York Times
(b)(6) Mobile/WhatsApp/Signal

On Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 6:13 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Thanks! Do you still plan to run the story tomorrow?

Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 6:09 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Got this and forwarding to lead writer.

On Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 6:05 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi Julian,

My apologies again for this delay! Busy times at the State Department today. Please let me know if there is still time to make it in the story.

The following comments are provided on background, attributable to a State Department Spokesperson.

- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic we've seen Russia's disinformation ecosystem develop false narratives around the virus and pandemic response, including vaccines.
- On vaccines specifically, Russia has pushed two common disinformation and propaganda narratives to the global community, primarily focused on promoting their own vaccines, and seeking to sow distrust in U.S.- and Western-origin vaccine development programs.
- Towards the end of 2020 as vaccines received regulatory approval, the State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) analyzed COVID-19 vaccine-focused messaging from over 1,000 suspected Russian-aligned Twitter accounts.
- Consistent with past observations of Russian-aligned disinformation efforts on Twitter, Spanish-language accounts showed the greatest engagement during this period.
- These false narratives focus on disproportionately magnifying the risk of potential side effects associated with western vaccines. Additionally, some accounts promoted intentionally misleading narratives falsely alleging that mRNA vaccines are untested and thus risky.
- Scientists and manufacturers all over the world are innovating and doing remarkable things to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States continues to focus on the facts and follow the lead of scientists that are working on robust and transparent clinical trials, regulatory processes, and high-quality manufacturing. Russia's efforts to promote disinformation through social media, undermines the collective global effort to end the global pandemic.

Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
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