

FOREWORD

Twenty-first-century communication technologies offer many opportunities for economic growth and social development but present also many challenges and threats to democratic nations like Canada. Among those threats, Internet-powered disinformation is a potent one that is becoming increasingly worrisome. Individual reputations can be ruined rapidly, discord and manipulation among various groups can be easily planted, and institutions like the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the Government of Canada are certainly not immune to the destabilizing effect of lies, exaggerations, and twisted truths conveyed through communication technologies by organized malign actors.

Our troops deployed in support of building a peaceful and democratic world in countries such as Latvia, Ukraine, or Mali have faced various forms of disinformation campaigns. Domestically, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how much we need to be ever vigilant against foreign and internal actors seeking to undermine our democratic foundations. This is indeed a very real challenge.

The CAF has been proactive in developing strategies and action plans to contain and protect Canada against disinformation. Yet, this is a dynamic phenomenon fuelled by ongoing technological and social change, and it requires constant update to our knowledge and approaches to remain effective in dealing with such threats. It is in this context that this timely book introduces an in-depth discussion on whether dissuasion would be an effective policy to fight back. This book brings together many experts from Canada and abroad to provide answers to central questions useful for future policy formulations and implementation, military doctrines, and procedures.

A range of important questions are addressed here, such as whether the fight against disinformation should follow the more classical approach of using both deterrence by denial and punishment; how lessons from nuclear deterrence can be distilled and applied to today's challenges; how well is Canada prepared in dealing with the new disinformation strategies emerging

from anti-democratic adversaries; what can be learned from other democracies; what kind of existing and emerging approaches show promises; and many more.

Disinformation presents a complex and dynamic challenge that will be with us for quite some time. Well-informed policies and military doctrines regarding the information environment are needed more than ever. The ideas, knowledge, and recommendations found in this book represent a strong step in the right direction. Hence, I recommend to anyone interested in combating disinformation, either in uniform or not, to read this book and push ever further our collective efforts to defeat disinformation.

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