

Moving Beyond Fears of the ‘Russian Playbook’ | Lawfare

By Camille François

September 16, 2020

...the idea of a single “Russian playbook” appears again and again in discussions of social media manipulations. Politicians, news outlets and commentators have used the phrase over and over for the past three years. It has mutated into an amorphous concept that can accompany almost any news cycle: Black Lives Matter protests should be wary of being infiltrated by Russians, per the Russian playbook! Chinese diplomats are now more vocal on American social media platforms, adopting the Russian playbook! Trump is spreading disinformation on social media and following the Russian playbook! Iran also runs information operations—one more for the Russian playbook!

This is not a good habit as the United States heads toward the November 2020 election.

For the past five years or so, I have been analyzing and exposing various foreign information operations on social media—spending months at a time in social media data scrutinizing posts, interviewing targets and former trolls alike, and working with social media platforms to analyze technical signals that betray manipulative actors impersonating activists, journalists and politically engaged citizens.

Over the years, I have come to agree with the writer Peter Pomerantsev’s wise observation that the Russian playbook is akin to a Russian salad: not very Russian, and with different ingredients every time.

[...]

Source: [Moving Beyond Fears of the ‘Russian Playbook’ - Lawfare](#)