

# Opinion: France admits it spreads disinformation. Other democracies should also own up. | The Washington Post

By Editorial Board

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“False, manipulated or subverted information is a weapon,” French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly said last month. She’s right that disinformation is a weapon. The question is whether her country and others like it should be able to use it.

Facebook in the winter of 2020 took down two opposing foreign influence operations in the Central African Republic: One by Russia, a usual suspect, and one, to some onlookers’ surprise, by France. Democracies have publicly — and sanctimoniously — bridled at electoral meddling by the authoritarian states most commonly associated with such malfeasance. Yet the reality is that state-sponsored lies have long been a tool in geopolitical sparring for *most* nations, including ours, the United States, especially in times of conflict. The supposed good guys just don’t usually own up to it. France’s admission that it does indeed conduct influence operations, then, is significant — and dialogue among like-minded governments is essential.

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