

# The DHS Disinformation Governance Board and the problem with defining disinformation. | Slate

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“Do you know [who] the greatest propagator of disinformation in the history of the world is? The U.S. government.”

This was Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul’s response to the recent formation of a Department of Homeland Security Disinformation Governance Board, which was intended to oversee and safeguard the U.S. from disinformation threats abroad. The board’s announcement was swiftly followed by public opposition and anger online, with comparisons to George Orwell’s *1984* “Ministry of Truth” trending on Twitter soon after. Nina Jankowicz, who was to lead the board, was the subject of harassment and violent threats.

On Wednesday, three weeks after the board’s announcement, DHS announced it would be put on “pause.”

The board may be on hold, but we’re surrounded by other calls to address disinformation, especially from the powerful. In an April speech, former President Barack Obama claimed disinformation harms democracy by undermining common understandings about reality, and called for increased governmental regulation of information circulation online. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken has argued that disinformation is a geopolitical threat. Journalist Carl Cameron recently suggested on MSNBC that it was even time to consider “putting people in jail” for spreading misinformation.

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