# Government cuts to misinformation research and disinformation offices raise national security concerns



During the first 100 days of President Donald Trump's second administration, the United States has seen the dismantling of key measures aimed at combating disinformation, raising concerns among experts about the potential national security consequences. These developments coincide with heightened geopolitical tensions involving adversaries such as Russia and China.

Significant actions include severe cuts in federal funding for research investigating misinformation and disinformation, coupled with the closure of the State Department's Counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (R/FIMI) hub. The R/FIMI office, formerly known as the Global Engagement Center (GEC), had operated for over eight years with a budget of approximately $60 million and a team dedicated to tracking and countering foreign disinformation campaigns. The hub's shutdown, ordered by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, ended the United States' dedicated government capacity to monitor these activities internally.

In a statement justifying the closure, Rubio said it reflected a commitment to "preserve and protect the freedom for Americans to exercise their free speech." This move aligns with broader restructuring plans at the State Department, including staff cuts and programme closures. Additionally, several officials working on foreign election interference at the FBI have been reassigned, and others at the Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) have been forced out.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has also cancelled hundreds of research grants, including those addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and studies focusing on misinformation and disinformation. Elon Musk’s "Department of Government Efficiency" praised the NSF for cancelling 402 "wasteful" DEI grants, reporting savings of $233 million. Among the terminated projects were scientific endeavours studying the psychology behind false beliefs and corrections, as well as research into health misinformation and artificial intelligence-based deepfake detection technologies.

Lisa Fazio, an associate professor of psychology at Vanderbilt University, confirmed to Inquirer.net that her NSF grant to examine “how false beliefs form (and) how to correct them” had been cancelled. She expressed the continuation of her work at a reduced scale via the platform Bluesky.

Becca Branum, deputy director at the nonprofit Center for Democracy & Technology (CDT), criticised the defunding of such research, saying to Inquirer.net, “Research on how technology impacts society is critical to holding powerful tech platforms accountable. Shielding companies from criticism by defunding research is censorship that should trouble all of us.”

Adding to these concerns, the anti-disinformation firm Alethea revealed a Russian network associated with the influence operation “Portal Kombat,” aiming to undermine trust in US defence and military programmes, including Lockheed Martin and the F-35 fighter jet programme.

Benjamin Shultz, lead researcher at the American Sunlight Project, an anti-disinformation watchdog group based in Washington, commented, “By shutting down the office, Rubio has opened the American information space to the likes of Russia, China, and Iran.” He also reflected on the broader climate, stating, “As we approach 100 days of Trump 2.0, it’s harder than ever to believe that American politics — and society writ large — have reached a place where truth and facts are optional.”

Experts warn that these government shifts, combined with social media platforms scaling back content moderation and Meta's suspension of third-party fact-checking in the United States, may significantly hamper the public's ability to discern accurate information amidst a growing landscape of falsehoods.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pewresearch.org/newsletter/the-briefing/the-briefing-2025-04-17/> - This source discusses the shutdown of the Counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (R/FIMI) Hub, which was involved in tracking and countering foreign disinformation campaigns. It also highlights public opinion on restricting false information online.
2. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/project-2025-what-a-second-trump-term-could-mean-for-media-and-technology-policies/> - This article explores Project 2025's plans for technology and media policies under Trump, including efforts to curb Big Tech and potential impacts on disinformation policies.
3. <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/02/07/trump-guts-cyber-workers-00203087> - This report details the removal of federal employees involved in combating election-related disinformation at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), reflecting broader moves against initiatives targeting disinformation.
4. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-freedom-of-speech-and-ending-federal-censorship/> - This presidential action outlines the goal of restoring freedom of speech and ending federal censorship, aligning with broader administration efforts to limit government intervention in online content moderation.
5. <https://www.ncsl.org/in-dc/2025-administration-actions-key-executive-orders-and-policies> - This resource tracks key executive orders and policies from the Trump administration, including those affecting state-federal relations and potentially impacting disinformation efforts.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com (Note: As 'noahwire.com' is not directly verifiable, this would typically be replaced with another relevant source). However, since it is part of the query, it is acknowledged here.> - This source is mentioned as the original provider of information regarding Trump's second administration and the dismantling of disinformation measures, though it cannot be directly verified or linked without further context.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMipwFBVV95cUxQWUNZRElSaEkzTXdJNEo4MHIxSkJIaXNzRVkxYnhuNnFqNm5kRzVoWmpMOE5uWWNhWHlhemR5V0hpTTVBZ0M1YzI2YUpvTXduN1o5TTRKTzdUbHZtbjQzY1dnLVlrblVnbnl4aVRvXzZaczB0RVpWb0V5eTVIVk1xUFItanQyUDdzMV80bGdpOTlBVGtBMjJOQy1rTUZUcGtZXy04VFlQTdIBrAFBVV95cUxOV3lFUUFVWGs2MktWbzQ5VkhaSVdWR3FLTGEwLUI5blhzQXBhZGh4VlVBWmxSdTdjWWdUaC0xOHczT1J4b2Y0ZkUtRjBMcUlLV2R2MXlfYkcteUNOTzR5eE85a0lQXzFyWERNaWVxZ2VReE9kNV9JVi1kbVl6WHdTSjd1LTlTQUh1ejJvVl9jNEt6eHdMTHd2dC1sel8tbVc4Um95ck5TLWsxR3pH?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data