

Press Releases: State-Defense Cooperation on Global Engagement Center Programs and Creation of the Information Access Fund to Counter State-Sponsored Disinformation

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

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The Department of State is pleased to announce a new partnership with the Department of Defense. We have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to transfer \$40 million from the Department of Defense to the Department of State's Global Engagement Center (GEC) in Fiscal Year 2018 for initiatives to counter propaganda and disinformation from foreign nations.

One of those initiatives is the creation of an Information Access Fund to support public and private partners working to expose and counter propaganda and disinformation from foreign nations. Under the Information Access Fund, civil society groups, media content providers, nongovernmental organizations, federally funded research and development centers, private companies, and academic institutions will be eligible to compete for grants from the GEC to advance their important work to counter propaganda and disinformation.

Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Steve Goldstein said the transfer of funds announced today reiterates the United States' commitment to the fight.

"This funding is critical to ensuring that we continue an aggressive response to malign influence and disinformation and that we can leverage deeper partnerships with our allies, Silicon Valley, and other partners in this fight," said Under Secretary Goldstein. "It is not merely a defensive posture that we should take, we also need to be on the offensive."

The Department of State plans to award an initial \$5 million in grants from the Information Access Fund. In consultation with Congress, this funding will include \$1 million in initial seed money from the Department of State's public diplomacy account in order to kick-start the initiative quickly. The

Fund will be a key part of the GEC's partnerships with local civil society organizations, NGOs, media providers, and content creators to counter propaganda and disinformation. The Fund will also drive the use of innovative messaging and data science techniques.

Separately, the GEC will initiate a series of pilot projects developed with the Department of Defense that are designed to counter propaganda and disinformation. Those projects will be supported by Department of Defense funding.

The Department of State will soon begin reviewing applications for funding from the Information Access Fund. For more information, please follow this link, please email the GEC at GEC-IAF@state.gov.

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