

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7282

To require the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to assess, on an ongoing basis, the potential terrorism implications of malign disinformation operations on domestic preparedness for and collective response to terrorism or other homeland security threats, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 18, 2020

Ms. UNDERWOOD (for herself, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. DEMINGS, and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security

A BILL

To require the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security to assess, on an ongoing basis, the potential terrorism implications of malign disinformation operations on domestic preparedness for and collective response to terrorism or other homeland security threats, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Against
5 Public Safety Disinformation Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. TERRORISM THREAT ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH**
2 **REGARDING MALIGN DISINFORMATION OP-**
3 **ERATIONS.**

4 (a) THREAT ASSESSMENT.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for In-
6 telligence and Analysis of the Department of Home-
7 land Security shall, on an ongoing basis and in con-
8 sultation with appropriate Federal partners, develop
9 and disseminate to State, local, Tribal, and terri-
10 torial officials, including officials from law enforce-
11 ment, public health, fire and emergency medical
12 services, and emergency management agencies, as-
13 sessments of the potential terrorism implications of
14 malign disinformation operations carried out by ter-
15 rorist or foreign malicious actors on domestic pre-
16 paredness for and collective response to terrorism or
17 other homeland security threats.

18 (2) CONTENTS.—The terrorism assessments of
19 malign disinformation operations required under
20 paragraph (1) shall consider the following:

21 (A) Empirical data on malign
22 disinformation operations, including the fol-
23 lowing:

- 24 (i) Topics subject to such operations.
25 (ii) Tactics used in such operations.

1 (iii) Characteristics and duration of
2 such operations.

3 (iv) Information on such terrorist or
4 foreign malicious actors carrying out such
5 operations.

6 (B) Details regarding the potential ter-
7 rorism implications of such operations on do-
8 mestic preparedness for and collective response
9 to terrorism or other homeland security threats.

10 (3) DOCUMENTATION.—The Under Secretary
11 for Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of
12 Homeland Security shall maintain documentation re-
13 flecting the basis for a determination that certain in-
14 formation that was used in a certain manner for a
15 certain purpose that resulted in certain risks or
16 threats satisfies the definition of a malign
17 disinformation operation.

18 (4) FORM.—The Under Secretary for Intel-
19 ligence and Analysis of the Department of Home-
20 land Security shall submit to the appropriate con-
21 gressional committees the terrorism assessments of
22 malign disinformation operations required under
23 paragraph (1). Such assessments may be submitted
24 in classified form, but—

1 (A) shall include unclassified summaries;
2 and

3 (B) may include unclassified annexes, if
4 appropriate.

5 (b) RESEARCH.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary for
7 Science and Technology of the Department of
8 Homeland Security, in consultation with the Under
9 Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, the Privacy
10 Officer, and the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil
11 Liberties of the Department, shall conduct research
12 to aid in the identification of malign disinformation
13 operations carried out by terrorist or foreign mali-
14 cious actors by studying documented malign
15 disinformation operations that widely reached Amer-
16 icans that had implications for the preparedness for
17 and response to terrorism or other homeland secu-
18 rity threats. Such research shall—

19 (A) examine different patterns and tactics
20 of malign disinformation operations to identify
21 unique signatures; and

22 (B) identify the factors that contribute to
23 effective malign disinformation operations.

24 (2) COUNTER-APPROACHES.—Together with the
25 research required under paragraph (1), the Under

1 Secretary for Science and Technology of the Depart-
2 ment of Homeland Security shall develop rec-
3 ommendations for approaches to counter malign
4 disinformation operations described in such para-
5 graph.

6 (3) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary of Home-
7 land Security is authorized to share the research and
8 recommendations for counter approaches conducted
9 and developed pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2),
10 respectively, with State, local, Tribal, and territorial
11 officials, including officials from law enforcement,
12 public health, fire and emergency medical services,
13 and emergency management agencies, as well as
14 with appropriate Federal partners.

15 (4) SUBMISSION.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18
17 months after the date of the enactment of this
18 Act, the Under Secretary for Science and Tech-
19 nology of the Department of Homeland Secu-
20 rity shall submit to the Committee on Home-
21 land Security of the House of Representatives
22 and the Committee on Homeland Security and
23 Governmental Affairs of the Senate the results
24 of the research and recommendations for
25 counter approaches conducted and developed

1 pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2), respec-
2 tively.

3 (B) FORM.—Results of the research con-
4 ducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be sub-
5 mitted in unclassified form, but may include
6 classified annexes, as appropriate. Rec-
7 ommendations developed pursuant to paragraph
8 (2) shall be submitted in unclassified form.

9 (c) MALIGN DISINFORMATION OPERATION DE-
10 FINED.—In this section, the term “malign disinformation
11 operation” means false information deliberately dissemi-
12 nated by terrorists or foreign malicious actors to mis-
13 inform the American public in a way that risks under-
14 mining domestic preparedness for and collective response
15 to terrorism or other homeland security threats.

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