



ARMS CONTROL NEGOTIATION ACADEMY

Building Information Resilience to Reinforce Arms

Control

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Note: *The views presented in this memorandum are those of the authors and do not represent the views of the organizations or institutions with which they are affiliated.*

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Policy Memo

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Introduction

Arms Control, nonproliferation and disarmament regimes face numerous challenges amidst an increasingly complex security environment. Success in negotiating and implementing agreements depends on the strategic conditions in which these activities occur. As Dr. Christopher Ford, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State stated in 2019, “History shows the prospects for disarmament to be inescapably entangled with, and inseparable from, the problems of the security environment.”² The erosion of norms against development and use is evident and due, at least in part, to an information environment deliberately muddled by disinformation campaigns. In the case of chemical weapons attacks carried out by Syrian authorities, Russia and Syria have used not only social media platforms and national media outlets but also multilateral fora, such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, or OPCW, and United Nations, to actively spread disinformation and muddy the waters. During formal meetings and countless side-events organized by these States Parties, we have seen false accusations, fabricated testimonies by false “experts” and “whistleblowers” who supposedly worked at the OPCW, “leaked” documents, fabricated videos and photos that oiled disinformation efforts carried out in social media. Similarly, Russia used all the formal mechanisms of a Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention (BTWC) to pursue its allegations that Ukraine and the United States were developing biological weapons, which has delayed important discussions on strengthening the convention.

The international community’s reluctance to enforce accountability for chemical weapons uses in Syria, despite the existence of OPCW-confirmed evidence, is compounded by the disinformation campaigns that sow doubt and confusion among States Parties. The challenge of countering disinformation is that it is rhizomatic³ in nature. It is impossible to solve the problem by responding to each false claim because the system that makes disinformation so pervasive is highly interconnected and largely hidden from view. The best way to kill a rhizome is to make the environment inhospitable to it. The impact of disinformation as a destabilizing factor in the security environment can be minimized by building information resilience that inhibits its spread.

Resilience is a term used across domains to describe an individual, enterprise, component, or system’s ability to withstand or recover from adverse conditions. In the disinformation context, a community that is well-informed and able to discern fact from fiction will be more resilient because control community depends on the strengths and capacities of individuals, teams, offices,

¹ This memo was written as a requirement of the 2022-2023 Arms Control Negotiation Academy program. Views expressed in the memo are the opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of their employers.

² Statement made during an address at a disarmament side event on the margins of the 3rd Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference in Geneva on May 1, 2019.

³ Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

organizations, and governments to not only root out disinformation but spread compelling, accurate and truthful information so that disinformation cannot take hold.

Issue Overview

Disinformation⁴ campaigns – in particular, those that include false accusations and claims regarding the proliferation and use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons – undermine arms control architectures and norms by sowing distrust, confusion, and discord; establishing plausible deniability; justifying aggressive actions and undermining adversary governments and alliances.^{5,6} Jaclyn Kerr, Senior Research Fellow at the U.S. National Defense University’s Institute for National Strategic Studies eloquently summarizes the problem:

“Information manipulation and covert influence campaigns have long been tools of sub-threshold strategic competition used to try to influence arms race dynamics, arms control decisions, and the enforceability of compliance and verification regimes... Today, not only are there more actors with potential stakes in arms control decisions, but global connectivity and digitization combined with a panoply of new Digital Age tools make it easier to obfuscate, deny, and manipulate the information environment around arms control.”⁷

Disinformation is not new, but rapid changes in the “global reach, unmatched speed, targeting ability, and lower standards of reliability/quality/accountability compared to traditional news media”⁸ enabled by social media platforms make it more virulent today than ever before. The uncertainty it introduces affects the negotiation, implementation, and verification of arms control agreements.^{9,10,11, 12}

Russia’s recent disinformation campaigns related to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and materials readily demonstrate how disinformation campaigns can be used to destabilize the security environment and undermine arms control regimes. Its persistent allegations that Ukraine plans to use chemicals as weapons of war are false flags intended to justify its actions and confuse attribution of wrongdoing. Russia claims that the U.S. has been developing

⁴ For the purposes of this paper, the authors settled on the European Commission’s High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation’s definition of disinformation as “false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit. The risk of harm includes threats to democratic political processes and values.” https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=50271.

⁵ Mueller-Hsia, Kaylana. “Fake News’ and WMDs in the Age of the Internet.” Medium. Medium, October 4, 2018. <https://medium.com/@InstituteSecTech/fake-news-and-wmds-in-the-age-of-the-internet-fc6a2f80e997>.

⁶ Gamberini, Sarah, and Justin Anderson. “Russian and Other (Dis)Information Undermining WMD Arms Control: Considerations for NATO.” *NATO Committee on Proliferation*. Transcript of speech, July 12, 2022. pp. 4, 22-24.

⁷ Kerr, Jaclyn. “Arms Control in Today’s (Dis)Information Environment: Part III.” Inkstick. Inkstick Media, June 24, 2021. <https://inkstickmedia.com/arms-control-in-todays-disinformation-environment-part-iii/>.

⁸ Natasha Bajema and John Gower, “A Handbook for Nuclear Decision-Making and Risk Reduction in an Era of Technological Complexity” (Council on Strategic Risks, December 19, 2022), <https://councilonstrategicrisks.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/NuclearTechnologicalComplexity-Dec22.pdf>. p. 55.

⁹ Waltzman, Rand. *Weaponization of Information. The Need for Cognitive Security*. Rand Corporation, 2017, www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT473.html

¹⁰ Gamberini, Sarah Jacobs. “Arms Control in Today’s (Dis)Information Environment: Part I.” Inkstick. Inkstick Media, May 11, 2021. <https://inkstickmedia.com/arms-control-in-todays-disinformation-environment-part-i/>.

¹¹ Hersman, Rebecca, Eric Brewer, Lindsey Sheppard, and Maxwell Simon. “Influence and Escalation: Implications of Russian and Chinese Influence Operations for Crisis Management.” Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 9, 2021. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/influence-and-escalation-implications-russian-and-chinese-influence-operations-crisis>. p. 29.

¹² Hersman, Rebecca, Heather Williams, and Suzanne Claeys. Rep. *Integrated Arms Control in an Era of Strategic Competition*. CSIS, January 2022. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/integrated-arms-control-era-strategic-competition>.

biological weapons U.S. has been developing biological weapons at Ukrainian public health laboratories. These allegations were unfounded, as both countries have been transparent about their partnership. In 2005, they signed an agreement to "prevent the proliferation of dangerous pathogens and related expertise and to minimize potential biological threats."¹³ These false claims serve to simultaneously distract from and justify Russia's invasion. Similarly, Russia's ill-founded claim that Ukraine is secretly developing nuclear weapons from the technological remnants of the Soviet-era nuclear program remaining in Ukraine served as a pretext for Putin's invasion.¹⁴

The current information ecosystem has shifted from one of the battles between great power spokespeople to one that leverages myriad stakeholders to influence the political processes.^{15,16} A single social media post can initiate a cascade of amplification with the potential to erode the political will to pursue negotiations, ratify an agreement, or express compliance concerns.¹⁷

Proactively nurturing an information ecosystem that is resilient to disinformation will improve decision-making on national and international levels and lead to more balanced strategic decisions, shifting arms control dynamics. It may also have the power to renew trust in existing mechanisms and build the confidence needed to pursue new arms control architectures if a firm information foundation can provide States Parties with the confidence to pursue enforcement and accountability. Currently, the Syrian regime acts with impunity. The OPCW has confirmed its use of chemical weapons but States Parties have struggled to enforce accountability because of the extensive Russian and Syrian disinformation campaigns that stall further action. The availability of accurate and reliable information is necessary to help clear the field of misconceptions and bring greater clarity and legitimacy to arms control processes.

Recommendations

A close look at recent Russian disinformation campaigns involving chemical, biological, and radiological weapons suggests the mere execution of established processes laid out in formal agreements has stabilizing effects. The IAEA's decision to conduct swift inspection activities at nuclear facilities cited by Russia and verify that no undeclared nuclear material or activities were found in Ukraine with regard to its international obligations in safeguarding the stockpiles of radiological materials (uranium, plutonium and thorium) arrested the momentum of Russia's "dirty bomb"-related claims. The IAEA was able to use its standing as the world's premier authority for spearheading cooperation in the nuclear field to shape public discourse. Russia has made numerous false flag allegations against Ukraine via demarches, but neither the frequency nor boldness of these claims has increased despite the lack of traction they have gained at the OPCW or in the public conversation. This suggests the diplomatic process enabled by the OCPW may serve as a kind of pressure release valve. The leadership of all nations interested in minimizing the impact of weapons of mass destruction should support the impartial operation of the multilateral

¹³ U.S. Department of State, *Agreement between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine Concerning Cooperation in the Area of Prevention of Proliferation of Technology, Pathogens and Expertise that could be Used in the Development of Biological Weapons* (August 29, 2005). <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/05-829-Ukraine-Weapons.pdf>.

¹⁴ Budjeryn, Mariana, and Matthew Bunn. "Ukraine Building a Nuclear Bomb? Dangerous Nonsense." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March 9, 2022. <https://thebulletin.org/2022/03/ukraine-building-a-nuclear-bomb-dangerous-nonsense>.

¹⁵ Hersman, Rebecca. "Wormhole Escalation in the New Nuclear Age." *Texas National Security Review*, 2020. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/10220>. p. 96.

¹⁶ Mueller-Hsia, Kaylana. "'Fake News' and WMDs in the Age of the Internet."

¹⁷ Gamberini, S and Anderson, J. "Russian and Other (Dis)Information Undermining WMD Arms Control." P.9

organizations responsible for upholding these agreements.

1. Leverage existing verification architectures to address conflict and minimize misperceptions.

Allowing all States to be heard is a key norm of the United Nations system. Denying any state a platform to raise its concerns may increase the sympathy of other states and embolden isolated actors. Organizations like the IAEA and the OPCW contribute to stabilization by providing a forum for considering claims and grievances¹⁸ – even false ones – and have established mechanisms for investigating potential violations. Another important aspect of the global standing of these organizations is their natural normative authority, which derives both from their formal (mandated) missions and from their decades-long history of professionalism and leadership. States should continue to leverage these arms control mechanisms for raising compliance concerns and sharing information.

It is important to recognize that continued objective implementation of existing procedures may help prevent escalation, but a multi-faceted combination of proactive measures will be necessary to build needed resilience and make the current security environment more favorable to arms control. Depending on their mandates, arms control and related organizations can add to their value:

2. Provide venues for facilitated discussions designed to deconflict misperceptions and identify common interests. While the leadership and staff of multilateral organizations like the OPCW must remain impartial, these organizations could hold working-level facilitated discussions that explore differences in perception and identify common interests, which would aid in identifying creative options for mutual gain.¹⁹

Creating options for mutual gain might be more readily done outside the restrictions of any individual arms control or verification regime. The United Nations is pursuing multiple initiatives aimed at countering disinformation through international cooperation and promoting media and information literacy. In 2022, the Secretary-General released a *Countering Disinformation* report²⁰ for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which was a response to a request from the General Assembly in its resolution of December 2021.²¹ In 2021, Secretary-General launched the *Our Common Agenda* report,²² which is his vision for the future of global cooperation. The report states that "the ability to cause large-scale disinformation and undermine scientifically established facts is an existential risk to humanity" and urges acceleration of common efforts "to produce and disseminate reliable and verified information"²³ with the United Nations playing a key role in these efforts. It includes a variety of steps, including "support

¹⁸ Hersman, et al. "Integrated Arms Control", p. 1.

¹⁹ Researchers at the Harvard Negotiation Project have illuminated the importance of understanding perceptions and focusing on interests rather than positions. Positional bargaining is a common negotiation practice that fails to enable creative development of options for mutual gain. Positions are arbitrary by comparison to interests, which are the fundamental reasons for being at the negotiation table or participating in the arms control process. For more see, Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to Yes*. London, UK: Penguin, 2011.

²⁰ Rep. *Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. UN General Assembly, 77th Session, August 12, 2022. <https://www.un.org/en/countering-disinformation>.

²¹ "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms." United Nations Resolution 76/227. 76th Session of the General Assembly, January 10, 2012. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/416/87/PDF/N2141687.pdf?OpenElement>.

²² Rep. *Our Common Agenda*. United Nations, United Nations Secretary General, 2021. <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 27

for public interest and independent media, regulation of social media, strengthening freedom of information or right to information laws and ensuring a prominent voice for science and expertise, for example through the representation of science commissions in decision-making.”²⁴ The report also mentions “a global code of conduct that promotes integrity in public information”²⁵ that could be explored with relevant actors, facilitated by the United Nations. All these steps, if implemented, would help to strengthen resilience against disinformation to reinforce arms control. A multilateral approach with clear and practical objectives that welcomes the participation of all interested parties – while challenging – may incrementally shift the paradigm in a positive direction:

3. **Establish a multilateral initiative designed to foster information resilience.**^{26,27} This initiative, intended to make space for creative problem solving, could focus on practical steps that can be taken to advance information resilience. An initiating party might consider inviting all interested parties, via a working paper submitted at the next UN Disarmament Conference, into dialogue with the following aims:
 - a) *Prepare to adapt arms control treaties to the current information ecosystem.* Establish a working group to identify specific behaviors of concern, common interests in countering disinformation and developing information resilience, and objective approaches to deconflicting information and anticipating disinformation so steps can be taken to reduce its impact. This information should be used to draft information-related provisions to be included in new or amended arms control agreements when the security environment becomes more favorable.^{28,29}
 - b) *Improve media literacy among arms control professionals.* Establish a working group to identify risks of disinformation for arms control, as well as best practices for detecting and exposing campaigns that have the potential to disrupt arms control activities.^{30,31} As an example, UNICRI recently released its *Handbook to Combat CBRN Disinformation*,³² which is designed to help those working in CBRN risk mitigation develop the competencies needed to prevent and respond to relevant disinformation. A similar effort could be undertaken to develop similar guidance for arms control experts.
 - c) *Minimize the reach of disinformation.* Establish a working group on this topic to engage private sector experts, academia, non-governmental organizations, and regulators in evaluating and

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶ Stewart, Mallory. “Defending Weapons Inspections from the Effects of Disinformation.” AJIL Unbound. Cambridge University Press, American Society of International Law, February 24, 2021. <https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/1782564>. p. 109

²⁷ The concept for this initiative is loosely based *Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament*, which was outlined by former Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation, Christopher Ashley Ford during his remarks at a Disarmament Side Event at the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference on April 30, 2019. <https://geneva.usmission.gov/2019/05/01/arms-control-and-international-security-lessons-from-disarmament-history-for-the-c-end-initiative/>

²⁸ Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. 2006. *Getting to Yes*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam.

²⁹ For example, the BWC Article V consultations included discussions about three U.S.-issued patents for technology that could be used for the weaponization of toxins as well as peaceful purposes. The U.S. claimed other States Parties, including Russia, have issued similar patents and recommended holding “further discussions on best practices for identifying and addressing such applications.”

<https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-10/news/us-ukraine-refute-russian-bioweapons-charges>

³⁰ Kerr, Jaclyn. “Arms Control in Today’s (Dis)Information Environment: Part III.” Inkstick. Inkstick Media, June 24, 2021.

<https://inkstickmedia.com/arms-control-in-todays-disinformation-environment-part-iii/> and Drollette, Dan. “Russia’s Non-Proliferation Disinformation Campaign.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, March 22, 2022.

³¹ Gamberini, S and Anderson, J. “Russian and Other (Dis)Information Undermining WMD Arms Control.” p. 31.

³² “Handbook to Combat CBRN Disinformation.” UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, January 13, 2023. <https://unicri.it/sites/default/files/2023-01/Handbook%20to%20combat%20CBRN%20disinformation.pdf>.

promoting the use of tools, processes, and policies that can minimize the reach of disinformation without undermining free press and free speech principles.^{33,34} Tools like data scraping and analytics, and machine learning could be used to identify, remove, and attribute digital disinformation, and promote information from reliable sources.³⁵ A “defense in depth strategy”³⁶ that leverages all available tools and enables information sharing, as well as consistent practices across all platforms would improve the speed and efficacy of such defenses.

- d) *Leverage new investigative tools for monitoring and verification.* Establish a working group to establish standards of conduct and information reliability for open source investigation and analysis groups based on objective criteria.^{37,38} These organizations have resources and real-time access, especially in times of conflict, that multilateral organizations may not. But arms control and verification organizations can only benefit from the use of new investigative tools and techniques if States Parties can agree on standards.³⁹

The leadership of individual nations can take steps to improve their own as well as collective information resilience. Numerous experts have expounded on the importance of improving what and how governments communicate about the esoteric topic of arms control and related policies and programs:

4. ***Improve strategic communication about arms control-related topics.*** The arms control community should prioritize informing key public about disinformation, as well as arms control and related interests, intentions, and objectives.^{40,41}
- a. Policymakers should seek to improve how their agencies communicate about arms control related topics by providing consistent and accurate information using compelling messaging, visuals, and preferred media.⁴² Most governments cut themselves out of the information wars by failing to design information campaigns that effectively reach, educate, and engage target audiences.^{43,44,45} Disinformation campaigns benefit from savvy communication strategies and information technology acumen. States should apply the same mechanisms to amplify accurate information about arms control and related targets for disinformation, like threat reduction and partner capacity-building projects. Effective use of social media can facilitate this process. Engaging and collaborating with “influencers” or high-impact communicators can increase situational awareness and counteract disinformation campaigns.

³³ Gamberini, Sarah Jacobs. “Social Media Weaponization.” *Joint Force Quarterly* 99 (July 2020): p. 11.

³⁴ Kerr, Jaclyn. “Arms Control in Today’s (Dis)Information Environment: Part III.”

³⁵ Hersman et al. *Influence and Escalation*, p. 31.

³⁶ Jaiman, Ashish. “Disinformation Is a Cybersecurity Threat.” Medium. The Startup, August 2, 2022. <https://medium.com/swlh/disinformation-is-a-cybersecurity-threat-335681b15b48>.

³⁷ Hersman, et al. *Integrated Arms Control*, p.24

³⁸ Gamberini, S and Anderson, J. “Russian and Other (Dis)Information Undermining WMD Arms Control.” P.33

³⁹ “The Bioweapons Disinformation Monitor.” The BioWeapons Disinformation Monitor. Accessed December 23, 2022. <http://www.bioweaponsdisinformationmonitor.com>

⁴⁰ Gamberini, S and Anderson, J. “Russian and Other (Dis)Information Undermining WMD Arms Control.” p. 32

⁴¹ Anderson, Justin. “Arms Control in Today’s (Dis)Information Environment: Part II.” Inkstick. Inkstick Media, June 16, 2021. <https://inkstickmedia.com/arms-control-in-todays-disinformation-environment-part-ii/>.

⁴² Gamberini, Sarah Jacobs. “Social Media Weaponization.” *Joint Force Quarterly* 99 (July 2020): p. 10.

⁴³ Anderson, Justin. “Arms Control in Today’s (Dis)Information Environment: Part II.” 2021.

⁴⁴ Korda, Matt. “Do Young People Care about Nuclear Weapons?” Inkstick. Inkstick Media, February 27, 2020. <https://inkstickmedia.com/do-young-people-care-about-nuclear-weapons/>.

⁴⁵ Khan, Amil. “International Affairs in the Disinformation Age.” The Foreign Policy Centre, November 30, 2019. <https://fpc.org.uk/international-affairs-in-the-disinformation-age/>.

- b. Sponsors of partner capacity-building projects that aid in preventing the proliferation of WMD and promoting treaty compliance should communicate potential disinformation pitfalls to partners and proactively develop strategic communication plans to address them. These discussions should also seek to reveal any disparities in understanding or expectations to facilitate coordination across the life of the project and during a crisis.^{46,47} Strategic communications plans could include working with partners to arrange opportunities for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and the press to see these projects in action by offering site tours, opportunities to attend training alongside partner organizations and interviews with appropriate project spokespeople.⁴⁸ Applying such measures proactively could amplify strategic messaging, improve reporting speed and accuracy, stabilize the foundation for existing and potential program partners, and reduce the number of easy disinformation targets by enhancing transparency. However, even in a reactive mode, informal transparency measures might be leveraged for dispute resolution.

Finally, individual state support is needed to protect sources of information that all nations rely on to demonstrate their own compliance and enable verification:

5. **Provide financial support to protect critical sources of information.** 2018 attempted hacking of the OPCW by Russian military intelligence officers highlights the importance of supporting efforts to improve multilateral organizations' cybersecurity capabilities and protect critical arms control-related information.^{49,50,51} For instance, in its summit declaration in 2016, NATO recognized cyberspace as a new domain of war, next to land, air, sea, and space.⁵² States Parties must protect this space and international organizations need to adapt to address growing cyber challenges as more sophisticated technologies improve. In general, these campaigns take real information that is tailored to achieve a malicious goal. By protecting valuable and critical information, we are reducing the likelihood that it will be used and turned into disinformation.

Disinformation is not going away. To ensure the fight against it and its deleterious effects on geopolitical stability and arms control are sustained over time, States Parties must encourage younger generations to pursue careers in arms control and disarmament. Young people are disaffected by the topic; "they don't see themselves as agents of change,"⁵³ in this arena. And the shroud of disinformation only exacerbates the problem, directly affecting their interest and commitment. If young people do not believe in the importance of arms control or see how they can effect change by applying their extensive digital information acumen to minimize risks to stability caused by disinformation, what does the future hold? Republics across the globe rely on public support to enable ratification of arms control agreements. And governments will continue to need

⁴⁶Fisher, Roger, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. *Getting to Yes*. London, UK: Penguin, 2011. pp. 24-30.

⁴⁷Hersman, et al. "Influence and Escalation," p. 30.

⁴⁸Careful consideration of spokespeople is necessary to ensure messages are delivered and received as intended.

Strategic communications experts should give serious consideration to selecting partner-nation personnel executing the project or receiving training rather than "talking heads" from the sponsor or partner nation capitals.

⁴⁹The hacking attempt occurred amidst the OPCW's attempt to verify British forensic analyses of the Skripal poisoning in Salisbury. The hacking attempt failed, but a successful attempt could have led to tampering. "Minister for Europe Statement: Attempted Hacking of the OPCW by Russian Military Intelligence." GOV.UK. Government of the United Kingdom, October 4, 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/minister-for-europe-statement-attempted-hacking-of-the-opcw-by-russian-military-intelligence>.

⁵⁰Kerr, Jaclyn. "Arms Control in Today's (Dis)Information Environment: Part III."

⁵¹Hersman, et al. *Integrated Arms Control*, p.24-25, 47

⁵²Merle Maignre. *NATO's Role in Global Cyber Security*. The German Marshall Fund, April 2022. <https://www.gmfus.org/news/natos-role-global-cyber-security>

⁵³Korda, Matt. "Do Young People Care about Nuclear Weapons?"

smart, invested professionals to develop creative proposals designed for an information ecosystem they understand better than anyone else. Governments, think tanks and academic institutions must reassure them of their efficacy, involve them in debates, encourage them to pursue careers in this field and engage with this next generation of arms control experts. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs has several initiatives that seek to address this issue, including the “Youth for Biosecurity Initiative,”⁵⁴ “Youth for Disarmament,”⁵⁵ and “UN Disarmament Fellowship,”⁵⁶ which targets young professionals. Similarly, the OPCW is seeking international support to establish a program for young professionals.

Developing resilience to disinformation will not bring adversaries to the table to talk about strategic arms reductions. But a multi-faceted approach to creating a resilient information ecosystem⁵⁷ can shape the environment and promote stability that reinforces effective negotiation and implementation of arms control agreements and initiatives.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ The youth for biosecurity initiative, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/eu-support-to-the-bwc/youth-for-biosecurity-initiative/>.

⁵⁵ The youth for disarmament, <https://www.youth4disarmament.org/>

⁵⁶ UN disarmament fellowship, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/disarmament-fellowship/>

⁵⁷ Gamberini, S and Anderson, J. “Russian and Other (Dis)Information Undermining WMD Arms Control.” p. 31.

⁵⁸ Duncan Allan, Annette Bohr. Rep. Myths and misconceptions in the debate on Russia: How they affect Western policy, and what can be done. London: Chatham House, 2021.

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