Authoritarian Soft Power?

Internet Content, Information Conflict, & the Future of Free Expression

The National Academies
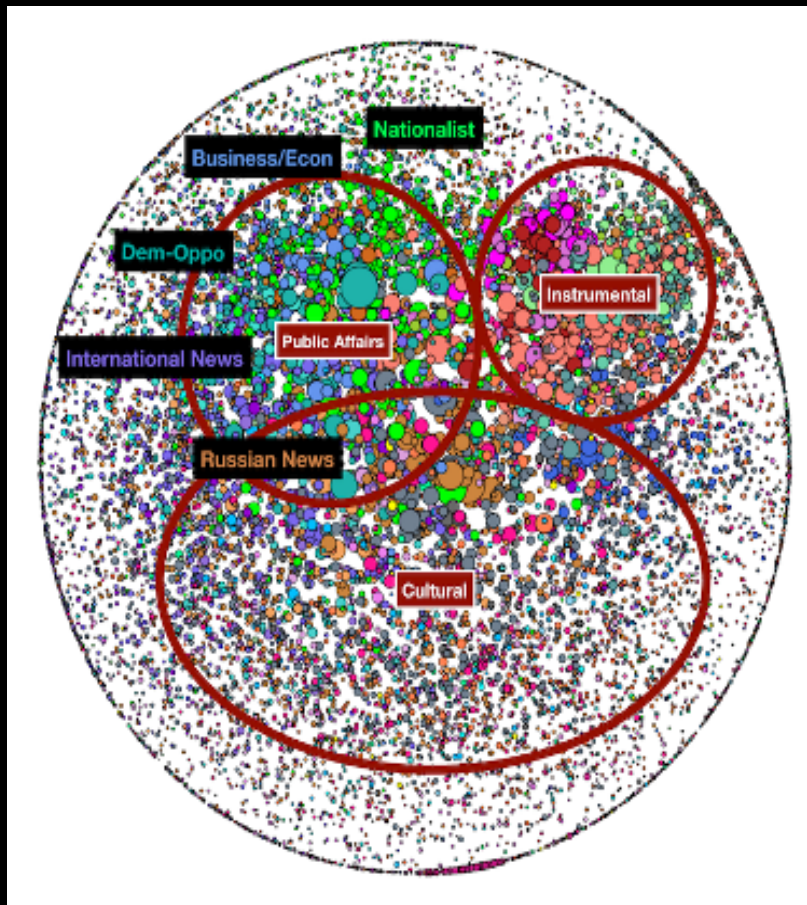Washington, D.C.
October 11th, 2017

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"Liberation Technologies"?

Russian Blogosphere Map
Berkman Center, 2011

Map of Election Violations
GOLOS, March 4, 2012
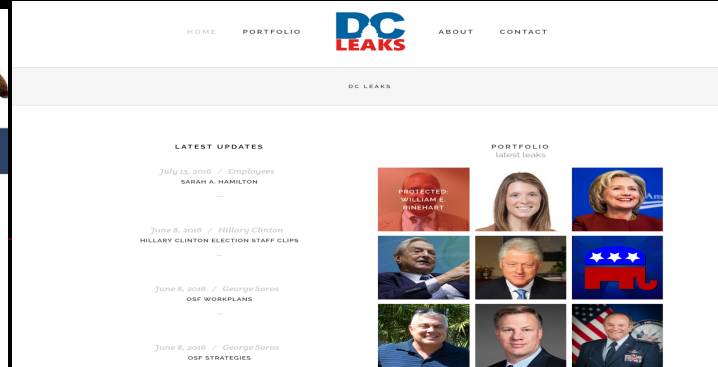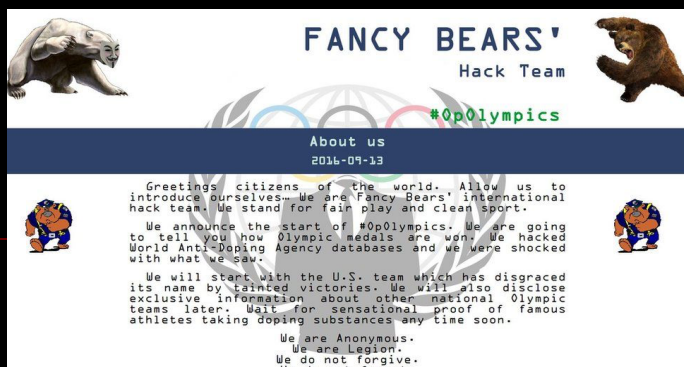
"Internet Freedom"...

Secretary Hillary Clinton
Internet Freedom Speech, 2010

2016 Election Hacking

- DNC / Email Hacks & Leaks

- Propaganda / Fake News

- Bots / Trolls

- Voting Machine Hacking?

- INFORMATION WARFARE?

Fake News & Extremism

- Viral Fake Stories

- Popular Extremist Content

- Social Media Echo Chambers

- Algorithmic Reinforcement

- NEED FLAGGING / TAKE-DOWN?

Internet Controls & Information Conflict

- ☐ **Authoritarian Cyber Adaptation**
- ☐ Information Conflict & Internet Freedom
- ☐ Research Questions & Concerns

The Changing Internet

*"The Net **interprets censorship as damage** and routes around it."*

– Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) co-founder John Gilmore, 1993

*" Where it was once considered impossible for governments to control cyberspace, there are now a wide **variety of technical and nontechnical means** at their disposal to shape and limit the online flow of information."*
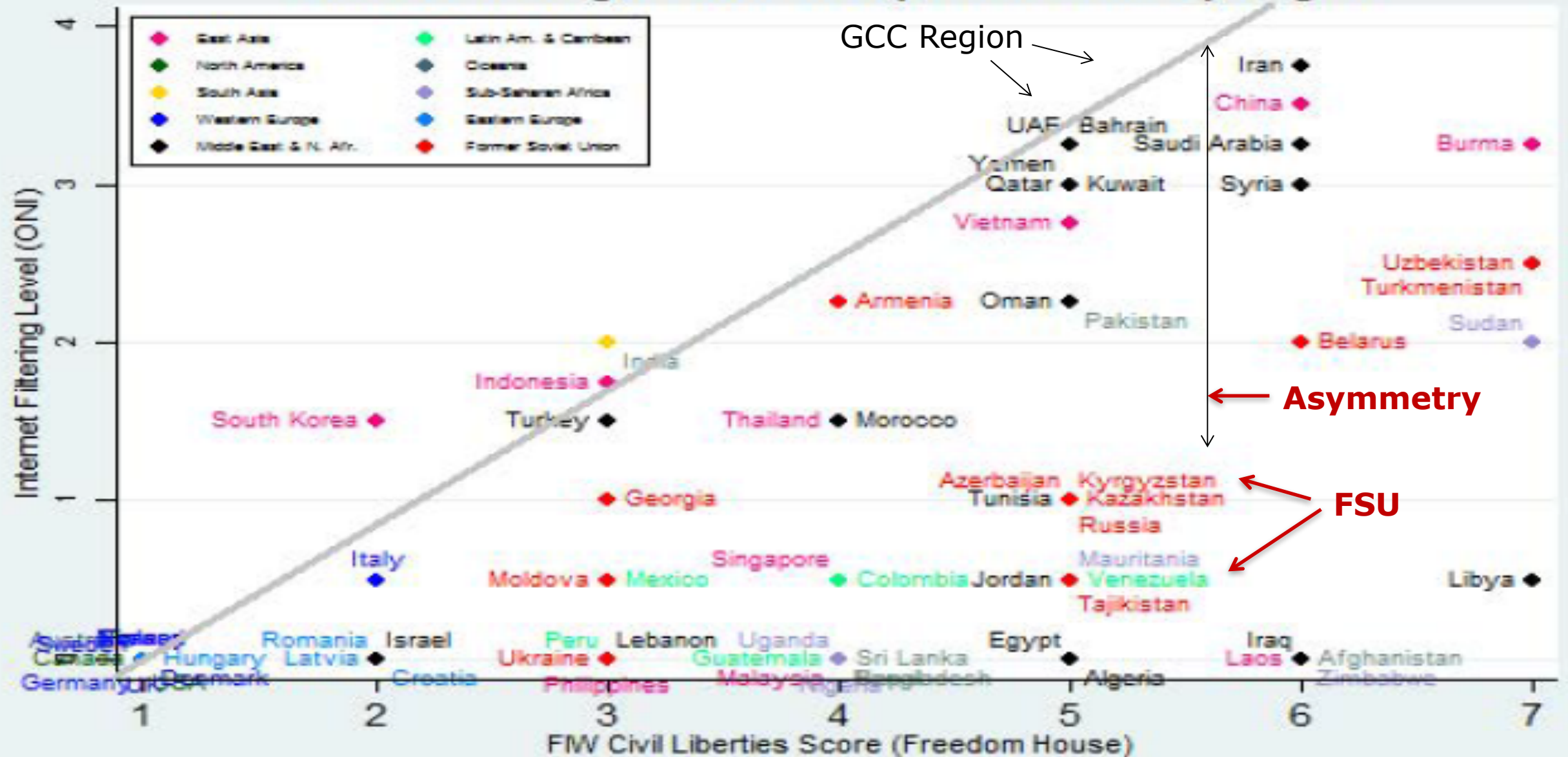
– Ronald Deibert and Rafal Rohozinski, 2010
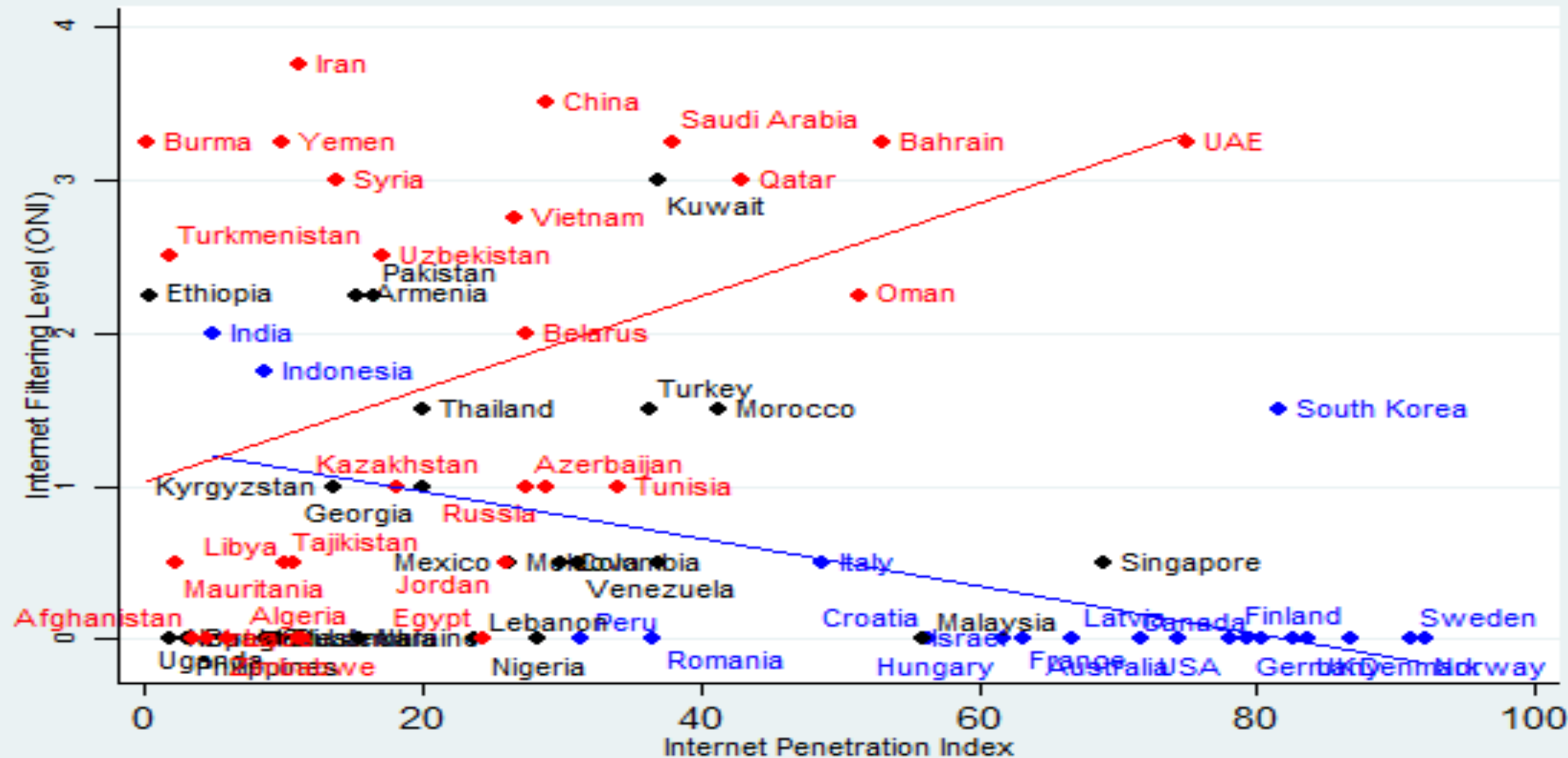
Authoritarian Internet Policy

Qatar Site Blocking

Online versus Offline Freedoms Worldwide
Internet Filtering vs Civil Liberty Restrictions by Region

Online Freedom versus Internet Penetration Worldwide

Internet Filtering vs Internet Penetration for 'Not Free' (Red) 'Partly Free' (Black) and 'Free' (Blue) States

Scatter plot titled "Online Freedom versus Internet Penetration Worldwide". Y-axis: Internet Filtering Level (ONI) from 0 to 4. X-axis: Internet Penetration Index from 0 to 100.

Data points include:
- Iran, China, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Burma, Yemen, Syria, Qatar, Kuwait, Vietnam, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Oman, Ethiopia, Armenia, India, Belarus, Indonesia, Turkey, Morocco, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Georgia, Russia, Libya, Tajikistan, Mexico, Moldova, Colombia, Italy, Singapore, Mauritania, Jordan, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Peru, Croatia, Malaysia, Latvia, Canada, Finland, Sweden, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Romania, Hungary, France, Australia, USA, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Israel

Authoritarian Internet Policy Adaptation

Protester in Moscow in 2012: "No Censorship on the Internet"

Authoritarian Internet Policy Adaptation

➢ "First Generation"

- Site Blocking

- Keyword Filtering

- Manual Content Censorship

- Cellular or Network Shutdowns

- Network Traffic Slowdowns

- "Walled Garden" Intranets

➢ "Next Generation"

- Restrictive Legal Measures

- Informal Take-Down Requests

- Regulation of Private Companies

- Just-In-Time Blocking / DDoS Attacks

- Patriotic Hacking / Trolling / Blogging

- Targeted & Mass Surveillance

- Economic Takeovers

- Trials / Physical Attacks

New Information Controls

- Internet Content Restriction Laws

- Enhanced Surveillance Capability

- ICT Sector Pressure

- Independent Media Crackdown

- Propaganda / Bots / Trolls
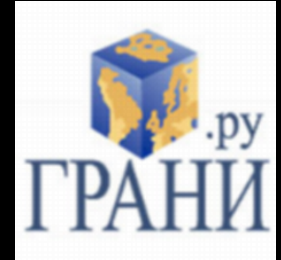
A New Model

➤ Limited Censorship & Less Overt Tools

- ➤ Exemplars / Surveillance / Content Creation
- ➤ Ambiguity / Deniability / Uncertainty
- ➤ Manipulate Emotions / Break Coalitions

➤ Vestiges of Democratic Legitimacy

- ➤ Control the Narrative more than Block Content
- ➤ Legal & Security Justifications

➤ Alternative Concepts & Institutions

- ➤ Information Content as Security Threat
- ➤ Legal Frameworks & Security Doctrines
- ➤ Equipment, Companies, Institutions

→ **Diffusion, Cooperation, Norm Promotion**

Internet Controls & Information Conflict

- ☐ Authoritarian Cyber Adaptation
- ☐ **Information Conflict & Internet Freedom**
- ☐ Research Questions & Concerns

Internet Freedom *AND* Cybersecurity

- ## Global Internet Universalism

  - Internet Freedom as a Right
  - Democratic Free Expression Norms
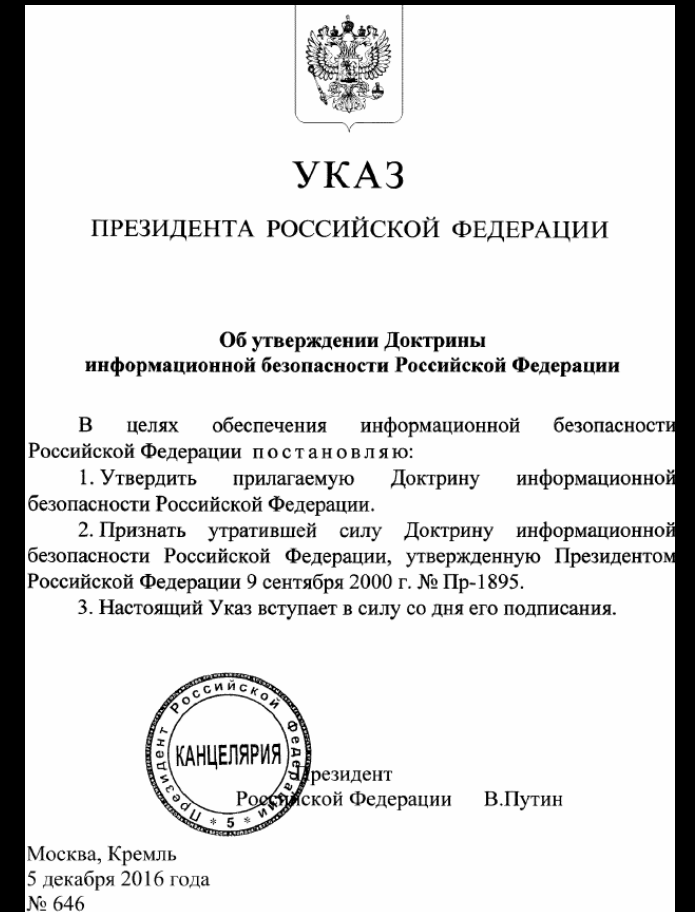 - Global Public Sphere
  - Multistakeholder Processes

- ## National Cybersecurity

  - Increasing "Attacks," Actors & Concerns
  - Military & Intelligence Capabilities & Uses
  - Networks, Data, Technical Systems

Information Security Doctrine

- **Independent & Foreign Media as Threat**
  - Stability = Security
  - Perestroika & Soviet Collapse
  - Arab Spring, Color Revolutions
  - 2011-2012 Russian Protest Movement

- **Preceded Gradual Media Crackdown**
  - Following Kursk Disaster, 2000
  - Updated in 2016
  - Now Explicitly Includes Internet Content

- **Promoting Similar Concept Abroad**
  - UN & ITU Joint Proposals
  - State-Centric Opposition to "Multi-Stakeholder" Model

УКАЗ

ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

**Об утверждении Доктрины
информационной безопасности Российской Федерации**

В целях обеспечения информационной безопасности Российской Федерации п о с т а н о в л я ю:

1. Утвердить прилагаемую Доктрину информационной безопасности Российской Федерации.

2. Признать утратившей силу Доктрину информационной безопасности Российской Федерации, утвержденную Президентом Российской Федерации 9 сентября 2000 г. № Пр-1895.

3. Настоящий Указ вступает в силу со дня его подписания.

Президент
Российской Федерации   В.Путин

Москва, Кремль
5 декабря 2016 года
№ 646

Cyber-Aggression & "Information Warfare"

- ## **Cyber-Attacks & Hacking**

  - DDoS Attacks by Affiliated Groups
  - Site Defacement
  - Secure Network Hacking
  - Data Exfiltration or Alteration
  - Seizing Control of Electric Grid Control Station

- ## **Control & Manipulation of Information**

  - Trolling, Bots, Sock-Puppets, Viral Fake News
  - Targeted Propagandistic Media
  - Leaks & Kompromat
  - Domestic Media & Internet Content Controls

→ **Military Strategy & Applications**

"Authoritarian Soft Power"?
Challenges to Domestic & International Order

- ## Influence on <u>Domestic</u> Politics

  - Elections & Public Opinion

  - Extremism & Irredentism

  - Propaganda & False Stories

  - Sow Disorder & Uncertainty

- ## <u>International</u> Revisionism & Aggression

  - Reassert Control in Near Abroad

  - Challenge to US Influence & Extended Deterrence

  - Efforts to Destabilize EU/NATO & Alliances

  - Make Rapid or Decisive Reaction Difficult

→ **Democratic System Vulnerabilities & Responses?...**

Internet Controls & Information Conflict

☐ Authoritarian Cyber Adaptation

☐ Information Conflict & Internet Freedom

☐ **Research Questions & Concerns**

How it Works?
How to Respond...?

- ## Democratic System Vulnerabilities

  - Digital Discourse, Communication, Records, Voting
  - Little Restriction on Free Expression & Media
  - Legitimacy of Process & Rule of Law Vital

- ## Possible Solutions?

  - Punishment / Threatened Response?
  - Denial / Strengthen Domestic Protections & Resilience?
  - In-House Ad Hoc Solutions?
  - Securitization / Fragmentation?
  - Multistakeholderism & Transnational Collaboration?

→ **Responses that don't violate our VALUES?...**

Democratic Values & Internet Content

- **"Free Expression" for the Digital Age**
  - New Risks & Security Concerns
  - Complex Value Tradeoffs
  - First Principles: Legal & Normative
  - Behavioral Impacts of Alternative Policies & Algorithms
- **Content Governance & Democratic Process**
  - Role of Private Companies Companies / Expert "Solutions"
  - Place of Public Consultation
  - Global Scope & Cultural Variation
  - Transnational / Global Governance Processes

THANK YOU!!

Questions?

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