
ISRAELI-LINKED DISINFORMATION SYSTEMS

Comprehensive Intelligence Assessment

*State Communications, Covert Influence, AI-Assisted Manipulation,
and Comparative Analysis*

OSINT / ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT

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Scope: Israeli state-linked information operations, Hamas comparative systems, Qatari influence infrastructure, Iranian information warfare, and platform-specific amplification dynamics

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Intelligence Assessment: Israel operates a sophisticated and extensive information ecosystem encompassing official government communications, military information operations, diplomatic messaging, political advocacy, diaspora engagement, and documented covert influence operations using deceptive online identities and AI-assisted content generation.

Critical Distinction: The evidence does not support the proposition that every pro-Israel message is disinformation, that every Israeli government statement is false, or that a single centralized organization controls the global information environment. However, it does support a precise and documented conclusion:

Verified Finding: Israel operates a substantial overt strategic-communications apparatus, and at least one Israeli commercial actor—STOIC—has been independently documented by major technology companies as conducting covert influence activity involving deceptive accounts, AI-assisted content generation, and coordinated online activity.

Comparative Context: Hamas, Qatari state media, and Iranian information operations conduct parallel or comparable information warfare campaigns. This assessment therefore examines all systems simultaneously to prevent selective analytical bias.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION

Intelligence analysis requires precise terminology. Four categories must be clearly distinguished:

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY = Openly attributable government communication intended to influence foreign audiences. Not inherently deceptive. Example: An Israeli embassy publishes a statement on social media.

PROPAGANDA = Communication designed to influence attitudes in favor of the sponsoring actor. Can contain true information, selective information, misleading framing, emotional appeals, and omissions. Propaganda does not require falsehood; it requires strategic intent.

DISINFORMATION = False or misleading information deliberately produced or disseminated to deceive. Requires both deception and intentionality.

COVERT INFLUENCE OPERATION = An operation in which the actor's identity, sponsorship, or intentions are concealed while attempting to influence an audience. This is the most intelligence-significant category and the focus of counterintelligence.

Confusing these categories—treating all government communication as propaganda, or all propaganda as disinformation—produces analytically degraded intelligence assessment.

II. KEY JUDGMENTS

KJ-1: Israel maintains a formal state information apparatus.

Very High Confidence

Israeli embassies explicitly operate press and digital-diplomacy departments providing official information to journalists, organizing interviews and briefings, maintaining social-media channels, and conducting digital diplomacy. This is documented on embassy websites and Knesset records.

Intelligence classification: **Overt influence, not inherently disinformation.**

KJ-2: Israeli authorities explicitly conceptualize public diplomacy as strategic information competition.

Very High Confidence

In November 2024, Israel's Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee discussed funding for public diplomacy during the Gaza conflict. Committee discussions explicitly framed the effort as an "information war," establishing that information influence is a recognized strategic domain. The National Public Diplomacy Directorate reported reaching over 7 million views across campaigns, with explicit discussion of creating legitimacy for government actions.

KJ-3: Israel's information system is decentralized rather than one monolithic entity.

High Confidence

The ecosystem includes: Prime Minister's Office, National Public Diplomacy Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embassies and consulates, Israel Defense Forces, political parties, government ministers, military spokespeople, Israeli media, advocacy organizations, diaspora organizations, private communications firms, influencers, and commercial contractors. Available evidence does not establish centralized coordination across all these actors.

KJ-4: A documented Israeli commercial company participated in covert influence activity using AI.

Very High Confidence

In May 2024, OpenAI identified and disrupted activity by STOIC, an Israeli political marketing firm based in Tel Aviv. OpenAI described the activity as a covert influence operation using AI models for generating comments, articles, names, biographies, and other operational tasks. Meta independently removed 510 Facebook accounts and 32 Instagram accounts linked to STOIC.

KJ-5: The documented covert operation attempted to conceal actor identity and intentions.

Very High Confidence

The defining characteristic of covert influence is concealment. OpenAI specifically defines such operations as attempts to manipulate public opinion while hiding the true identity or intentions of the actors behind them. The STOIC operation used fake personas, AI-generated content, and coordinated accounts to obscure its source.

KJ-6: AI changes the economics of disinformation.

High Confidence

AI reduces the cost of producing multilingual content, generating comments, creating biographies, translating material, researching targets, adapting messaging, and producing large volumes of variant content. The result is not necessarily more effective propaganda—it is potentially cheaper and more scalable propaganda. OpenAI documented these uses in STOIC operations.

KJ-7: The documented STOIC operation did not demonstrate overwhelming reach.

Very High Confidence

OpenAI stated that the STOIC operations "did not meaningfully increase audience engagement or reach through its services" and assigned them low Breakout Scale scores. Therefore: the existence of a covert operation demonstrates capability and intent—not necessarily strategic success. This is a critical distinction.

KJ-8: Hamas operates a substantial and institutionalized information infrastructure.

Very High Confidence

Hamas directly owns and operates Al-Aqsa TV, Al-Aqsa Radio (established 2003), multiple websites (al-Risalah, Felesteen, Palinfo), Telegram channels, and maintains formal information departments. These outlets are integrated into Hamas's "battle for hearts and minds" and are subordinate to its government media information office. This is extensively documented in captured organizational records.

KJ-9: Qatar operates a multi-layered influence infrastructure including Al Jazeera and covert proxy media.

High Confidence

Qatar's state-funded Al Jazeera operates globally with editorial patterns reflecting sponsor-state interests. Additionally, covert Qatari proxies such as "Eekad" operate independent-appearing outlets generating content targeting specific audiences. Evidence indicates \$4.7 billion in donations to American universities (2001–2021) and conditional requirements for content modification in partner institutions.

KJ-10: Iran operates systematic information warfare across multiple platforms including state broadcasting, PressTV, and coordinated Telegram campaigns.

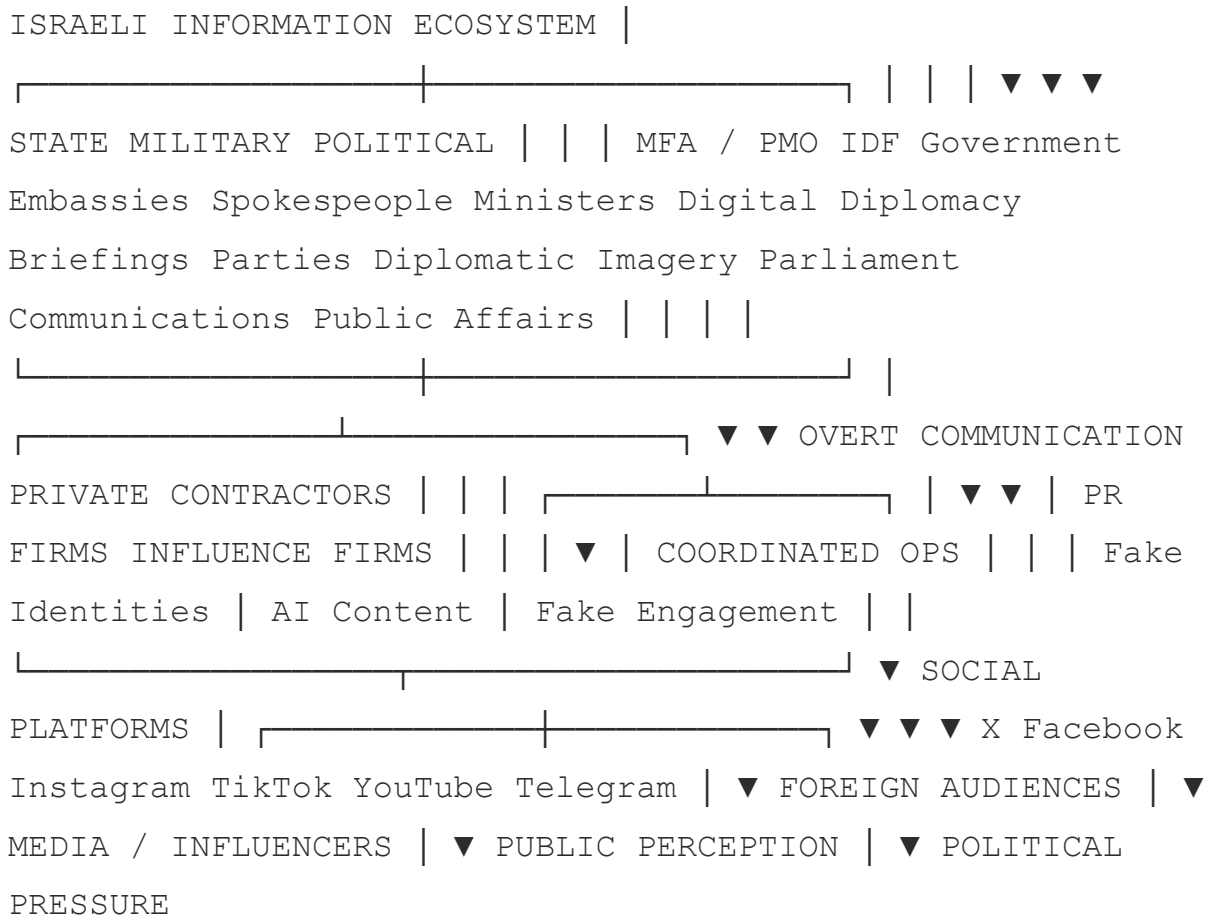
Very High Confidence

The Iranian regime operates the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the English-language PressTV channel, Revolutionary Guards news operations, and Telegram networks targeting both domestic and international audiences. Recent operations include AI-assisted fake video production, coordinated narratives on Western social unrest, and direct targeting of Israeli and Western populations with coercive messaging.

III. ISRAELI INFORMATION

ARCHITECTURE AND OPERATIONS

Organizational Structure and Components



Overt State Communication Systems

Israeli diplomatic missions openly describe digital diplomacy as part of their activities. The Israeli Consulate General in Chicago, for example, publicly states that its Digital Diplomacy Department promotes and shares information about Israel through X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok. These operations include:

- Journalist briefings and organized interviews
- Access to Israeli officials and background material
- Written statements and visual material
- Social-media campaigns and hashtag initiatives
- Multilingual content distribution
- Influencer engagement and media partnerships

Intelligence Classification: Overt influence. Not inherently disinformation. Each statement, briefing, or social-media post requires individual evaluation rather than categorical dismissal.

National Public Diplomacy Directorate: Institutional Formalization

The Israeli government maintains a National Public Diplomacy Directorate whose importance increased substantially after October 7, 2023. Knesset records document:

- Explicit institutional growth and staffing expansion
- Budget allocations for international campaigns (November 2024: NIS 545 million, later reduced to NIS 532 million)
- Messaging strategy and spokesperson network development
- Campaign reach targets and international audience segmentation
- Seven million reported views across various campaigns (November 2024)

Intelligence Significance: This demonstrates institutionalization. Information is not an accidental by-product of military operations; it is recognized as a strategic domain requiring dedicated resources, formal structure, and long-term investment.

However, the directorate has faced operational challenges: the essential position of head was vacant from May 2024 onward, and implementation remains "fragmented" due to lack of centralized authority, according to Foreign Ministry sources.

Military Information Operations

The IDF is an unusually important information source because it controls access to battlefield information. The military can release:

- Drone footage and satellite imagery
- Targeting explanations and operational justifications
- Photographs and video documentation
- Weapons discoveries and tactical reports
- Tunnel footage and infrastructure documentation
- Operational timelines and intelligence claims

The Selection Problem: Even if every released image is authentic, the military controls *which* images become public. Therefore: authenticity $\neq$ completeness. An analyst must distinguish: "Is this footage real?" from "Does this footage represent the entire event?"

During the Gaza conflict, the IDF maintained active social media accounts (@IDFSpokesperson on X, verified channels on other platforms) providing real-time operational updates alongside strategic messaging.

IV. THE STOIC / ZERO ZENO CASE: DOCUMENTED COVERT INFLUENCE

Operation Overview and Discovery

In May 2024, OpenAI published a transparency report documenting a covert influence operation conducted by STOIC, an Israeli political marketing and business intelligence firm based in Tel Aviv. The operation, which OpenAI designated "Zero Zeno," represents the strongest publicly documented example of an Israeli commercial actor using generative AI within a covert influence operation identified by a major technology platform.

Meta (Facebook's parent company) independently reported removing 510 Facebook accounts, 11 pages, and one group, as well as 32 Instagram accounts, linked to the same operation. Meta issued a cease-and-desist letter "demanding that they immediately stop activity that violates Meta's policies."

Operational Scope and Targeting

The STOIC operation targeted multiple audiences and geographies:

- **Geographic Scope:** United States, Canada, Israel, India, Ghana

(preparatory)

- **Content Languages:** English, Hebrew, and languages relevant to target audiences
- **Topic Focus:** Gaza conflict, Indian elections (anti-BJP, pro-Congress content), and other political issues
- **Timing:** Operations began in early May 2024; disrupted by OpenAI "less than 24 hours after commencement" of the India-focused component

AI-Assisted Content Generation Techniques

OpenAI documented that STOIC used its models for:

- Generating social media comments and replies
- Writing articles and opinion pieces
- Creating names and biographical profiles for fake personas
- Translating content into multiple languages
- Proofreading and editing generated text
- Debugging code and technical tasks
- Researching target audiences and refining messaging

The operation produced "fewer language errors than would have been possible for human operators," according to OpenAI's assessment, indicating sophisticated use of language models for authenticity.

What Makes STOIC Analytically Significant

Ordinary propaganda: "We are Israel and we believe X."

STOIC-type covert influence: "I am an apparently independent person, and I believe X."

The second is substantially more deceptive because the source becomes invisible. That is the crucial intelligence distinction.

Strategic Effectiveness and Impact

Critical Caveat: OpenAI found no meaningful audience breakout through its services. The operation demonstrated low Breakout Scale scores and did not significantly increase engagement on OpenAI's platforms. Therefore:

Capability $\neq$ Strategic Success. STOIC possessed the technical capacity and intent to conduct covert influence operations using AI. However, documented reach through OpenAI's tools was limited. This does not establish that the overall operation (which also operated through other platforms) achieved strategic political impact, only that it was attempted and disrupted.

V. COMPARATIVE INFORMATION OPERATIONS: HAMAS, QATAR, IRAN

Hamas Information Infrastructure

Institutional Structure and Media Outlets

Hamas operates "an extensive, interactive media network of overt and covert, formal and informal communication channels targeting diverse audiences," according to analysis of captured organizational documents. Direct ownership includes:

- **Al-Aqsa TV (launched January 2006):** Hamas-owned television station providing news, propaganda, children's shows, and religiously inspired entertainment
- **Al-Aqsa Radio (launched June 2003):** Radio station broadcasting news and religious programming; described as "one of the most influential outlets promulgating Hamas's narrative to residents of Gaza"
- **Websites:** al-Risalah, Felesteen, Palinfo
- **Military-wing outlets:** Website of the Izz al-Din Brigades (Hamas's armed wing)
- **Digital channels:** Telegram channels and social-media accounts

These outlets operate under the Al-Ribat Media and Artistic Production Company, chaired by senior Hamas official Fathi Hammad.

Strategic Messaging Approach

According to operational analysis, Hamas views its media operations as "an additional battlefield, parallel to its physical war efforts." The organization employs highly skilled media professionals, many of whom received education in Western countries. Different outlets target specific audiences:

- **Shehab Agency:** Simpler messages, slogans, songs targeting younger generations
- **Felasteen and Alresalah:** Sophisticated content including in-depth articles, analyses, op-eds targeting educated audiences
- **Al-Aqsa TV:** Entertainment, news, and propaganda to Gaza population and Arab audiences

Operational Security and Tactical Intelligence Use

Hamas strategically uses social media and encrypted messaging for both propaganda and operational coordination. Notably:

- The organization uses Telegram, WhatsApp, Signal, Instagram, and Facebook for messaging, coordination, and public communication
- End-to-end encryption on platforms like Telegram and Signal has provided operational security advantages
- Hamas operatives have conducted "Operation Broken Heart," posing as attractive young women on Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Instagram to target Israeli troops with spyware distribution schemes
- Telegram serves as a primary channel for real-time operational announcements and propaganda coordination

Comparative Assessment

Hamas's information operations parallel Israeli operations in several respects: formal institutional structure, state-level resources, multilingual targeting, emotional appeals, and narrative framing. However, Hamas lacks the diplomatic infrastructure and international media partnerships that Israel possesses. Additionally, Hamas's media outlets operate overtly as Hamas media (not disguised as independent sources), whereas covert Israeli operations (STOIC) specifically involve concealment of sponsorship.

Qatari Information Infrastructure and Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera: State-Sponsored Global Media

Al Jazeera, founded in 1996 and funded by Qatar's state, operates as "the emirate's most visible export for more than two decades." Current status:

- **Reach:** World's third most-watched English-language news network after CNN and BBC
- **Funding:** State-funded but claims editorial independence (disputed by critics and governments)
- **Foreign Agent Registration:** Since 2020, ordered by U.S. Department of Justice to register as a foreign agent; has refused and remains in dispute with DOJ
- **Global Operations:** Multiple language services including English, Arabic, Turkish, and others

Editorial Patterns and Sponsor-State Alignment

Analysis of Al Jazeera's coverage patterns reveals framing choices consistent with Qatari state interests:

- **Israel-Palestine Coverage:** Emphasis on humanitarian advocacy and Palestinian perspectives
- **Regional Politics:** Coverage patterns favor positions aligned with Qatari foreign policy
- **Editorial Restrictions:** Journalists report restrictions on criticism of Hamas; some Al Jazeera Gaza journalists were exposed as Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives
- **Islamist Groups:** Coverage sympathetic to Islamist organizations; editorial space provided for these actors

Covert Infrastructure: The "Eekad" Case

In addition to Al Jazeera's overt operations, researchers identified "Eekad," an apparently independent Arabic-language media outlet producing high-quality multimedia content with characteristics suggesting Qatari state sponsorship:

- **Content Production:** Large volume of high-quality, multilingual content across YouTube, X, and other platforms
- **Financial Capacity:** Production values and frequency suggesting significant funding
- **Narrative Focus:** 62% of sampled posts (late September–early November 2023) focused on Israel-Palestine conflict; content justifies Hamas hostage-taking and minimizes violence incitement
- **Operational Structure:** Appears designed to provide "plausible

deniability" for Qatari government while amplifying controversial narratives unsuitable for Al Jazeera's brand

- **Geographic Reach:** Reaches audiences in countries where Al Jazeera is banned (UAE)

Educational Influence and Soft Power

Beyond media, Qatar conducts influence operations through educational donations:

- **Total donations:** \$4.7 billion to American universities (2001–2021)
- **Major recipients:** Cornell, Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, Texas A&M (\$404 million alone)
- **Conditional requirements:** Some donations required curriculum modifications, content removal, or cooperation with Qatari media outlets
- **Campus activism correlation:** 2020 ISGAP study found direct correlation between Qatari donations and increased pro-Palestinian activism on American campuses
- **Non-disclosure:** Many universities failed to report source of donations as required by law

Assessment: Qatar operates a multi-layered influence system combining state media (Al Jazeera), covert proxy media (Eekad), educational funding with conditional requirements, and strategic positioning as a neutral international actor and mediator.

Iranian Information Warfare and State Media

Institutional Structure

Iran operates systematic information warfare through multiple institutional channels:

- **Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB):** State broadcasting system operating television and radio; supervises all state media operations
- **PressTV:** English-language and Hebrew-language state television channel; identified by UK and Italian authorities as conducting covert influence operations
- **Revolutionary Guards News Operations:** IRGC-affiliated Telegram channels, Tasnim News Agency, and coordinated messaging
- **Telegram Networks:** Official channels managed by Supreme Leader's office, Revolutionary Guards, and various state agencies
- **Film and Cultural Production:** IRGC-affiliated Revayat-e Fath Foundation produces cinematic propaganda content distributed on social media

Geographic and Audience Targeting

Iranian information operations target specific international audiences with differentiated messaging:

- **United Kingdom:** PressTV operations targeting British public; promotion of Scottish independence narratives to "weaken the United Kingdom from within"

- **Italy:** Documented influence operations coordinated through state media apparatus
- **United States:** Attempts to influence 2024 U.S. presidential elections; extensive social-media campaigns depicting domestic unrest and systemic instability
- **Israel:** Direct targeting of Israeli public through Telegram, Hebrew-language PressTV, and SMS-based coercive messaging
- **Arab World:** Arabic-language content emphasizing "axis of resistance" narratives

AI-Assisted Disinformation and Fake Media Production

Recent intelligence assessments identify Iran's incorporation of AI into information warfare:

- **Fake Video Production:** AI-generated deepfakes presented as authentic strike footage; examples include misidentification of military aircraft, use of video game footage (ARMA 3) circulated as real combat video
- **Video Recycling:** Repackaging of old footage (2024, 2025 strike videos) with false 2026 dates and false targeting claims
- **Coordinated Narrative Updates:** Rapid AI-assisted adaptation of messaging following real-time events
- **Deepfake Targeting:** AI-generated fake videos depicting captured U.S. military personnel, civilian deaths, and infrastructure damage
- **IRGC Drone Claims:** State media reporting on AI-enabled Shahed-161 and Arash-2 drones with autonomous targeting and navigation

Operational Relationship with Private Contractors

Similar to the Israeli case, Iran demonstrates plausible distance between government institutions and deceptive activity through private contractors:

- **Explosive Media:** Company producing cinematic propaganda video content; unclear whether directly controlled or contracted by IRGC
- **Revayat-e Fath Foundation:** IRGC-affiliated cultural center producing content; claimed by Explosive News representative to be independent despite watermarks suggesting coordination
- **Tasnim News Agency:** Official news channel affiliated with IRGC; rapidly redistributes video content from private contractors

Verification Challenges

Iranian information operations create particular verification difficulties:

- Fake video production is sophisticated and distributed rapidly across multiple platforms simultaneously
- Military claims (drone strikes, weapon capabilities) cannot be independently verified in real-time
- State media amplifies unverified claims from private contractors, creating apparent institutional credibility
- Rapid narrative adaptation following actual events makes detection and debunking time-sensitive

Comparative Assessment: Israel, Hamas, Qatar, Iran

The four primary actors operating in this information environment use different but overlapping techniques:

Actor	Institutional Structure	Primary Channels	Covert vs. Overt	AI Integration
Israel	Multiple agencies + diplomatic infrastructure	Embassies, IDF statements, private contractors (STOIC)	Primarily overt; one documented covert operator (STOIC)	STOIC case; limited broader integration
Hamas	Formalized state-level media apparatus	Al-Aqsa TV/Radio, websites, Telegram, social media	Primarily overt (though using encrypted channels)	Limited documented use
Qatar	State media (Al Jazeera) + covert proxies + educational funding	Al Jazeera, Eekad, university partnerships	Mixed: Al Jazeera overt, Eekad covert, donations indirect	Sophisticated AI content in Eekad; data-driven targeting
Iran	IRIB oversight + multiple agency networks	PressTV, state television, Telegram, private contractors	Mixed: Some overt state messaging; coordinated private operations	Extensive: Deepfakes, video recycling, autonomous targeting claims

VI. PLATFORM-SPECIFIC ALGORITHMIC AMPLIFICATION DYNAMICS

Why Platform Algorithms Matter for Information Operations

The same content seed produces vastly different amplification outcomes across platforms because platforms use fundamentally different recommendation systems. Understanding these differences is essential for predicting where covert influence operations will achieve the most significant reach, and which platforms require the most intensive monitoring.

TikTok: Discovery-Based Algorithm with Maximum Reach Potential

Core Mechanism

TikTok's algorithm is structurally opposite to follow-graph systems. Instead of prioritizing content from accounts users already follow, TikTok's For You Page (FYP) serves algorithmic recommendations from strangers. This creates maximum reach potential:

- **FYP Distribution:** Over 70% of video views by late 2025 come from algorithmic FYP recommendations, not followed accounts

- **Reach Potential:** A single viral video can reach millions of non-followers
- **Follower Growth:** TikTok brands achieved 200%+ year-over-year follower growth in 2024–2025 (highest among all platforms)
- **Engagement Rates:** Median engagement rates peaked at 35.9% in Q3 2025 (far exceeding other platforms)

Ranking Signals and Operational Implications

TikTok's algorithm prioritizes:

- **Watch Time (First 2 Seconds Critical):** If viewers drop off in first 2 seconds, algorithm deprioritizes content. If viewers remain for 15–60+ seconds, algorithm distributes to more FYPs
- **Completion Rate:** Whether viewers watch entire video or skip
- **Engagement Velocity:** Speed at which likes, shares, comments accumulate
- **Search Relevance:** Algorithm parses captions, hashtags, on-screen text; matches content to active user searches for keywords and trending sounds
- **Micro-Behavior Signals:** Viewing pace, pause points, rewatch frequency

Implications for Information Operations

TikTok's algorithm creates specific vulnerabilities for covert influence:

- **High-Volume Production Required:** The FYP algorithm distributes aggressively, but requires constant content updates and rapid response to trends

- **Viral Potential:** Single videos can achieve millions of views without influencer status or followers
- **Authentic Persona Advantages:** Short-form video format favors individual personalities over institutional messaging
- **Search Vulnerability:** Keywords and trending sounds are transparent targets for coordinated campaigns

Meta Platforms (Facebook/Instagram): Declining Reach, Reels Dominance

Core Mechanism and Reach Collapse

Meta platforms have undergone significant algorithmic changes reducing organic reach:

- **Instagram Organic Reach:** Posts shown to only 5–7.6% of followers; 12% decline from 2024 to 2025
- **Facebook Engagement:** Average engagement rate of 0.15% (far below TikTok's 3.70%)
- **Reach Compression:** Nearly 75% of brands report ongoing organic reach decline
- **Follower Growth:** Instagram mid-single-digit follower growth; Facebook flat

Algorithmic Prioritization (2026)

Meta's RankNet-7 AI model (introduced 2026) prioritizes:

- **Video and Reels:** Reels significantly outperform static images and text (5–10x higher engagement for page Reels)
- **Dwell Time:** Time spent on post, including reading comments, serves as powerful ranking signal
- **Watch Time (Facebook):** Videos exceeding 60 seconds receive disproportionate feed promotion
- **Engagement Type:** Live video generates highest engagement (nearly 4x more than links, 6x more than images)
- **Initial Performance Window:** Early engagement velocity critical for continued distribution

Cost Efficiency and Paid Amplification

- **CPM Levels:** Facebook Feed offers most efficient cost-per-thousand impressions (CPMs) among Meta platforms
- **Scale Predictability:** Facebook paid reach is most predictable for large-scale campaigns
- **Organic-Paid Gap:** High organic reach decline forces increased paid spending for consistent reach

Implications for Information Operations

Meta's algorithmic changes make unpaid influence operations increasingly difficult but paid coordinated campaigns more viable:

- **Paid Requirements:** Sustained reach requires paid amplification; pure organic reach is limited
- **Video Focus:** Reels and video formats dominate, requiring investment in video production
- **Quality Threshold:** Declining reach means only high-engagement content achieves distribution
- **Community Building:** Algorithms favor accounts with existing engagement velocity; new accounts face reach suppression

X (Twitter): Real-Time Conversation, Engagement Decline

Core Mechanism

X (formerly Twitter) has transformed into a partially monetized platform with differentiated algorithmic treatment:

- **Follower Growth:** Flat to slightly negative follower growth across 2024–2025
- **Engagement Rates:** Lowest among major platforms at 0.12% average
- **CPM Pricing:** Lowest CPMs of all measured platforms (lowest-cost platform for paid reach)
- **Algorithmic Distribution:** "For You" feed recommends posts beyond followed accounts; approximately half of tweeted content comes from algorithmic suggestions

Ranking Signals and Verification Status

- **Verified User Preference:** Monetized platform prioritizes content from verified and paying users
- **Engagement Velocity:** Early engagement critical; posts with rapid initial engagement receive wider distribution
- **Conversation Participation:** Real-time conversation engagement weighted heavily
- **Right-Leaning Amplification:** 2024 election study found algorithmic amplification of right-leaning political content (11.8% more for right-seeded accounts, 7.5% more opposing-party content for left-seeded accounts)

Implications for Information Operations

- **Real-Time Tactical Value:** X serves as primary platform for breaking news, real-time coordination, and rapid narrative deployment
- **Low-Cost Paid Reach:** Lowest CPM platform makes paid coordinated campaigns cost-efficient
- **Verified Account Advantage:** Verification status increasingly important for algorithmic reach
- **Engagement Decline:** Declining organic reach means coordinated campaigns require significant paid support or verified account status

YouTube: Recommendation-Driven Discovery with

Long-Form Control

Core Mechanism

- **Recommendation Dominance:** Algorithm responsible for approximately 70% of user viewing
- **Watch Time Economy:** Platform algorithmically optimizes for user watch time, not just clicks
- **Content Clustering:** Algorithm groups related content and recommends within thematic clusters
- **Engagement Types:** All engagement (likes, comments, shares, watch time) contribute to ranking signals

Content Vulnerability

YouTube's recommendation algorithm has been identified as amplifying sensational and extremist content:

- Content prompting strong emotional responses (outrage, fear, tribal identity) receives higher engagement velocity
- Algorithm optimizes for watch time and engagement without content-type filtering
- Long-form format (10+ minutes) receives algorithmic preference over short-form in some recommendation contexts

Implications for Information Operations

- **Long-Form Advantage:** Multi-part video series, documentaries, and extended content receive recommendation preference
- **Emotional Appeal Value:** Content eliciting strong emotional responses (validated by engagement metrics) achieves higher reach
- **Channel Authority:** Established channels with existing subscriber base receive algorithmic advantages for new uploads

LinkedIn: Professional Network with Rapid Decay

Core Mechanism and Reach Collapse

- **Organic Reach Decline:** 34% decline in organic reach from 2024 to 2025 (steepest among major platforms)
- **First-Hour Criticality:** Initial engagement velocity within first hour largely determines overall distribution
- **Engagement Type Hierarchy:** Meaningful engagement (comments with substance, shares with captions) weighted significantly higher than likes

Content Preferences

- Professional and educational content performs better than entertainment or casual content
- Posts sparking professional discussion outperform self-promotional content
- Network strength (connections to engaged users) affects algorithmic distribution

VII. CASUALTY INFORMATION AS INFORMATION BATTLEFIELD

The Fundamental Problem: Competing Methodologies

Casualty figures are a battleground for information warfare because numbers appear precise while their underlying methodology remains opaque to most audiences. The Gaza conflict demonstrates this problem at maximum intensity.

Gaza Ministry of Health: Methodology, Reliability, and Limitations

Current Totals and Timeline

As of August 2026, the Gaza Health Ministry (operated under Hamas control) reports 71,667 Palestinian deaths since October 7, 2023, plus 171,343 wounded. These figures represent only deaths from direct Israeli military fire and exclude deaths from starvation and disease wrought by the war.

Recent Israeli Military Acknowledgment: In October 2025, the IDF acknowledged approximately 70,000 deaths (consistent with Health Ministry figures). IDF stated this figure does not include missing residents potentially buried under rubble.

Methodological Transformation

The Health Ministry's casualty counting has evolved across three distinct methodologies, each with different reliability characteristics:

- **Methodology 1 (October 2023–Early November 2023):** Direct hospital reporting and direct documentation from Gaza hospitals. This methodology was previously verified in real-time by UN agencies and NGOs during earlier conflicts
- **Methodology 2 (November 2023–Present):** Transition to "reliable media sources" as hospital infrastructure was destroyed. OpenAI and others documented that this methodology never received clear definition and became dominant input in areas where hospitals closed
- **Methodology 3 (Parallel):** Reliance on communications equipment and digital infrastructure; this system was disrupted during Israeli ground operations

Critical Limitations and Verification Challenges

Loss of Real-Time Verification: Unlike previous Hamas-Israel conflicts (significantly shorter and smaller in scale), this war lacked real-time independent verification. During 2008–2009 Gaza operations, UN agencies and NGOs independently checked casualty figures and distinguished between civilian and combatant casualties. That system is absent in the current conflict.

Missing-Person Double-Counting Risk: The Health Ministry distinguishes between "identified" and "unidentified" casualties. One report (December 2024) indicated 886 missing people. The category "dead but under the rubble" (without body confirmation) creates possibility for double-counting if bodies are later recovered.

Media Source Methodology Opacity: The "reliable media sources" methodology introduced in November 2023 peaked at 45% of total cumulative reported deaths by late March 2024. This methodology has "never been explained" according to Washington Institute analysis and creates significant verification uncertainty.

Capacity Deterioration: The Lancet journal study (May 2024) noted that "the Palestinian health ministry had maintained reliable electronic death records but its capacity deteriorated under Israel's military campaign, which has included raids on hospitals and other healthcare facilities and disruptions to digital communications."

Independent Verification Attempts: The Lancet Study

Methodology

A May 2024 peer-reviewed study published in The Lancet used capture-recapture statistical analysis to assess death toll accuracy. Researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Yale University, and other institutions examined deaths from October 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Findings

- **Estimated Deaths:** 64,260 deaths due to traumatic injury (41% higher than official Palestinian Health Ministry count for same period)
- **Demographic Breakdown:** 59.1% were women, children, and people over 65
- **Missing Bodies:** Study noted anecdotal reports that significant numbers of dead remain buried under rubble and therefore unrecorded in tallies

- **Limitations:** Study did not provide estimate of Palestinian combatants among the dead; cannot determine combatant/civilian breakdown from the study

Confidence Interval and Uncertainty

The 41% under-count represents a point estimate with confidence intervals. Statistical models suggest the actual death toll likely falls within a range rather than a precise figure, with uncertainty increasing for more recent data due to degraded health infrastructure.

Combatant/Civilian Distinction: The Contested Question

Israeli Claims

The IDF has estimated approximately 17,000 Hamas and affiliated combatants killed by August 2024 (later increased to 20,000 by January 2025). The IDF claims a civilian-to-combatant death ratio of approximately 1:1.

Leaked Intelligence: In August 2025, The Guardian and Israeli magazine +972 Magazine reported leaked IDF intelligence indicating that the number of fighters killed was significantly lower than publicly claimed. According to these leaked data, at least 83% of Gazans killed since October 7 were civilians.

Disparity Analysis: The discrepancy between official IDF claims (50% combatants) and leaked intelligence (17% combatants) represents a fundamental point of contention.

Definitional Problems

The combatant/civilian distinction itself presents analytical challenges:

- **Active Combatant Status:** Who qualifies as an active combatant? Hamas operates no uniforms or traditional military hierarchy
- **Temporal Status:** Does someone become a combatant when carrying a weapon? When trained? When affiliated with a military organization?
- **Retrospective Classification:** Intelligence assessments often classify individuals as combatants based on posthumous analysis, creating verification difficulties
- **Hamas Media Personnel:** Are journalists working for Hamas media considered combatants? Six Al Jazeera Gaza journalists were exposed as Hamas and Islamic Jihad operatives

Media Reporting and Casualty Figure Amplification

Citation Patterns

Analysis of major English-language media outlets (February–May 2024) revealed:

- **Overwhelmingly Single-Source Reliance:** 98% cited fatality figures from Hamas-controlled Gaza Ministry of Health
- **Citation of Israeli Figures:** Only 5% cited figures from Israeli authorities
- **Combatant/Civilian Distinction:** 84% of surveyed publications failed to make distinction between combatant and civilian deaths in total numbers

This pattern creates information asymmetry: audiences see repeated confirmation of Ministry of Health figures from apparently different news sources, but often these are secondary citations of one primary source.

Intelligence Framework: Analyzing Casualty Claims

When evaluating any casualty claim, analysts must establish:

Element	Questions to Answer
Source	Who originally produced these figures? Hospital records? Media reports? Governmental claim? Leaked intelligence?
Methodology	What counting system was used? Direct documentation? Estimates? Media reports? How did methodology change over time?
Definition	How is "civilian" defined? Who counts as "combatant"? Are indirect deaths (starvation, disease) included?
Verification	Were these figures independently verified by neutral parties? What were limitations on verification?
Completeness	Does figure account for missing persons? Bodies under rubble? Displaced populations?
Time Period	What dates are covered? Have figures been revised? When were revisions made?
Geographic Coverage	Do figures cover all of Gaza? All types of Israeli military action? Medical facilities?

Critical Principle: A number can be accurate while accompanying interpretation is false. "71,000 people died" does not establish "71,000 civilians were deliberately killed." The second claim requires additional evidence beyond the first.

VIII. COLLECTION PRIORITIES AND

INDICATORS FOR FUTURE MONITORING

Attribution Indicators: Establishing Operational Source

Digital Infrastructure

- Domain registrations and registrant information
- Server hosting locations and IP address ownership
- Shared hosting infrastructure across accounts and outlets
- SSL/TLS certificate registration and issuer patterns
- Nameserver configurations and DNS records
- Email infrastructure and mail server locations

Corporate and Organizational Attribution

- Corporate ownership and director information
- Contractor relationships and subcontractor networks
- Payment trails and financial flows
- Procurement records and government contracts
- Employment records and personnel movement between entities
- Business registration in jurisdictions with opacity (shell companies, offshore entities)

Personnel and Organizational Network Analysis

- Government officials moving to private sector roles
- Repeated personnel across nominally independent organizations
- Educational and professional network ties
- Shared advisory boards or consulting relationships

Persona Network Indicators: Detecting Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior

Account Creation and Behavior Patterns

- Synchronized account creation dates (indicating batch generation)
- Identical account setup processes or configuration patterns
- Account names following generative patterns
(FirstName_LastName_RandomNumber)
- Identical profile images or slight variations of same image
- Recycled biographies with template structure

Posting and Engagement Patterns

- Synchronized posting times across accounts (indicating coordinated timing)
- Identical or near-identical language and phrasing
- Coordinated replies to same content within seconds of each other

- Cross-platform replication (same message posted on X, Facebook, Instagram within short timeframe)
- Unusual geographic activity (accounts claiming to be in different locations but posting simultaneously)
- Posting frequency inconsistent with authentic user behavior (e.g., 24/7 posting without pause)

Engagement Manipulation Indicators

- Purchased followers (sudden spikes in follower count without corresponding engagement increase)
- Abnormal engagement ratios (e.g., thousands of likes with zero comments)
- Engagement from geographically unrelated accounts
- Engagement from newly created, inactive, or spam accounts
- Coordinated likes and comments appearing simultaneously
- Follower demographics inconsistent with account content

AI-Signature Detection: Identifying Machine-Generated Content

Linguistic Patterns

- Repeated linguistic patterns across different personas (signature phrase choices)
- Machine-generated variations on core narratives (substituting synonyms)

while maintaining sentence structure)

- Unnaturally high language quality in non-native-speaker accounts
- Grammatical perfection inconsistent with authentic social media use (real users make typos)
- Logical flow and coherence atypical of fragmented social-media communication

Production Patterns

- High-volume multilingual output from single account or coordinated group
- Rapid response times to current events (real humans need time to compose; algorithms can respond in seconds)
- Content produced in multiple languages with identical phrasing and structure
- Systematic coverage of narratives across multiple platforms simultaneously

Visual Content Indicators

- Deepfake indicators (facial inconsistencies, unnatural eye movement, impossible physics in video)
- Video game footage circulated as real footage
- Recycled imagery with altered metadata or captions
- AI-generated imagery (unusual background artifacts, anatomical

impossibilities, pattern repetitions)

- Stock photos used with edited captions or false context

Narrative Synchronization Monitoring

Message Consistency Across Actors

- Identical talking points appearing on same day across multiple platforms
- Coordinated hashtag campaigns launching simultaneously
- Synchronized publication of longer-form content (articles, videos) across outlets
- Common source material being reformatted and republished
- Narrative shifts occurring on same timeline across nominally independent sources

Cascade Analysis

- Official government statement → spokesperson repetition → media coverage → social-media amplification
- Identification of original source versus amplification chain
- Timeline of narrative adoption across platforms and actors
- Originating outlet receiving less engagement than downstream amplification

Government/Private Sector Relationship Indicators

- Contracts between government entities and private influence firms
- Government procurement records mentioning media, communications, or public diplomacy
- Consulting agreements between former government officials and private contractors
- Campaign funding sources and dark-money donations to influence organizations
- Revolving-door personnel movement between government and private sector
- Government advisory board positions filled by private sector executives

IX. EARLY-WARNING MODEL AND ESCALATION FRAMEWORK

The Five-Level Escalation Model

A campaign becomes substantially more suspicious and intelligence-significant when multiple indicators converge. This model categorizes based on evidence density and deception intensity:

Level 1: Normal Advocacy

Characteristics: Official account + identifiable organization + transparent sponsorship + clear attribution

Example: Israeli embassy posts statement on X with official branding and attribution

Intelligence Assessment: Low concern. This is standard government communication. Evaluate on factual accuracy and framing, not on inherent deception.

Level 2: Coordinated Influence

Characteristics: Multiple accounts + synchronized messaging + organized amplification + transparent connection to source

Example: Network of government spokesperson accounts posting coordinated talking points with synchronized timing

Intelligence Assessment: Moderate concern. This demonstrates strategic coordination and message discipline. Evaluate framing and omissions rather than assuming inherent deception.

Level 3: Deceptive Influence

Characteristics: Fake identities + concealed coordination + artificial engagement + no transparent connection to source

Example: STOIC operation using AI-generated personas, coordinated accounts, fake engagement, and concealed sponsorship

Intelligence Assessment: High concern. Deception is central to operation. Intelligence priority shifts to attribution (who is behind this?) and effectiveness (did it work?).

Level 4: Industrialized Deception

Characteristics: Fake identities + AI infrastructure + bot automation + paid amplification + concealed sponsorship + cross-platform coordination + at scale

Example: Hypothetical: Network of 10,000 fake accounts with AI-generated content, purchased engagement, bot-coordinated posting, operating across 8+ platforms with \$10M+ budget, concealed financial flows

Intelligence Assessment: Very high concern. Operation has sophisticated technical infrastructure and significant resource commitment. Collection priority: financial flows, technical infrastructure, organizational command structure.

Level 5: Strategic Information Attack

Characteristics: Level 4 + election interference + infrastructure targeting + fabricated evidence + destabilization of democratic institutions + cross-national coordination

Example: Hypothetical: Coordinated operation targeting 2028 U.S. election, generating deepfake evidence of election fraud, targeting voter registration databases, coordinating with foreign actors

Intelligence Assessment: Critical concern. This constitutes information warfare and potentially acts of war. Requires immediate interagency response and potential military/cyber response.

Key Distinction: STOIC's Level Classification

The STOIC/Zero Zeno operation represents **Level 3 (Deceptive Influence)** with some Level 4 characteristics:

- ✓ Fake identities and concealed coordination (Level 3)
- ✓ AI-assisted content generation (Level 3/4)
- ✓ Coordinated cross-platform operation (Level 3/4)
- ✓ Artificial engagement mechanisms (Level 3)
- ✗ Did NOT achieve Level 5 characteristics (no election interference, no infrastructure targeting, limited strategic impact)
- ✗ Did NOT demonstrate overwhelming reach (OpenAI assessment: low Breakout Scale scores)

X. RED-TEAM ANALYSIS: CHALLENGING THE ASSESSMENT

A credible intelligence assessment must challenge its own thesis rather than simply defending it. The following represent legitimate alternative hypotheses that deserve serious consideration:

Alternative Hypothesis 1: Israel Is Simply Conducting Normal Wartime Public Diplomacy

Evidence supporting this hypothesis:

- Governments routinely conduct public diplomacy during wartime (U.S., UK, Russia, China, Iran all do this)
- Israel's overt diplomatic apparatus is not inherently deceptive—it's standard state behavior
- Military operations produce significant information that military spokespeople legitimately should communicate
- Democratic governments are generally expected to defend their policies to international audiences
- Israel's overt information system operates with official branding and transparent attribution (mostly)

Assessment: Substantially Supported. Much of Israel's information activity is indeed normal wartime public diplomacy. The error would be treating "Israel conducts public diplomacy" as synonymous with "Israel conducts disinformation." They are not equivalent claims.

Alternative Hypothesis 2: STOIC Was Merely a Private Company Acting Independently

Evidence supporting this hypothesis:

- STOIC is a private commercial firm, not formally part of Israeli government
- Available public evidence does not establish direct Israeli government

command of STOIC operations

- Private companies frequently conduct influence operations independently, without government instruction
- Company's business model is to sell influence services to clients; clients could include private entities, not just governments
- Company description on its website presents it as commercial service provider, not government contractor

Assessment: Possible but unresolved from publicly available evidence. The documented operation establishes Israeli commercial involvement. It does not automatically establish direct command by the Israeli government. Without access to STOIC's client contracts, financial records, and internal communications, the degree of government involvement remains uncertain. This uncertainty should be explicitly stated rather than hidden.

Alternative Hypothesis 3: The STOIC Operation Existed But Was Strategically Ineffective

Evidence supporting this hypothesis:

- OpenAI explicitly found no meaningful audience breakout through its services
- Low Breakout Scale scores indicate minimal strategic amplification on OpenAI's platform
- Operation was disrupted within 24 hours of launch (India targeting), preventing sustained operation

- Meta removed accounts after discovery, further limiting reach
- No evidence that the operation changed public opinion or influenced policy outcomes

Assessment: Strongly supported. Capability $\neq$ Strategic success. An operation can demonstrate intent and technical ability while failing to achieve strategic objectives. This is an important corrective to the assumption that documented covert operations automatically succeeded in their aims.

Alternative Hypothesis 4: The Entire Israeli Information Ecosystem Is Centrally Coordinated

Evidence supporting this hypothesis:

- Narrative synchronization across different Israeli outlets suggests coordination
- Key government figures appear to communicate similar talking points
- Strategic consistency in framing across military, diplomatic, and political messaging

Evidence contradicting this hypothesis:

- Israel's information system includes too many independent actors to establish centralized control
- Political parties frequently disagree on messaging (Likud vs. opposition parties provide different narratives)
- Israeli media outlets (Ha'aretz, Yedioth Ahronoth, etc.) regularly publish

critical reporting and alternative narratives

- Diaspora organizations operate independently; no evidence of centralized command
- Private contractors like STOIC can act independently from government
- Civil society organizations and advocacy groups operate with autonomy
- Knesset records show fragmented authority with National Public Diplomacy Directorate lacking centralized power

Assessment: Not demonstrated. There is no evidence for a single centralized "Israeli disinformation machine." The ecosystem shows coordination on key narratives, but this is consistent with decentralized actors adopting similar strategic frames rather than central command. The claim of total centralization should not appear in an intelligence-grade report without substantially stronger evidence than currently available.

Alternative Hypothesis 5: Platform Algorithms Are Neutral and Non-Determinative

Evidence supporting this hypothesis:

- The same content can be posted to multiple platforms and achieve different reach
- Individual content quality matters as much as algorithmic ranking
- Authentic audiences can adopt and amplify covert operations without additional manipulation

Evidence contradicting this hypothesis:

- Documented algorithmic differences across platforms significantly affect reach (TikTok FYP vs. Meta follow-graph)
- Algorithm changes directly impact content distribution (Instagram reach decline 12% from 2024–2025)
- Engagement-based ranking provides incentive for inflammatory content
- Video prioritization over text/images structurally advantages short-form visual content
- Recommendation systems (YouTube 70% of views from recommendations) create potential for radicalization cascades

Assessment: Contradicted. Platform algorithms are demonstrably not neutral. They amplify specific content types and engagement patterns. However, this does not mean algorithms are "designed" to promote disinformation—they're designed to maximize engagement and watch time, which can have that effect as secondary outcome.

APPENDIX A. EVIDENCE HIERARCHY AND SOURCE EVALUATION

Tier 1 — Primary Evidence (Highest Credibility)

- Government records and official parliamentary transcripts (e.g., Knesset records documenting public diplomacy discussions)
- Court documents and legal filings (established evidentiary standards)
- Technology platform threat reports from companies with threat intelligence infrastructure (OpenAI, Meta, Microsoft)
- Original videos and photographs with verifiable provenance
- Original social-media account data and metadata
- Corporate disclosures and regulatory filings
- Procurement records and government contracts
- Peer-reviewed academic research with methodology transparency

Tier 2 — High-Quality Independent Investigation

- Major investigative journalism with multi-source verification and transparency about sources/methods
- Academic research from established institutions with rigorous methodology
- Established cybersecurity organizations (CrowdStrike, Mandiant, etc.) with demonstrated expertise
- Independent forensic researchers with published track record
- NGO reports with transparent methodology and source documentation

Tier 3 — Secondary Reporting

- Newspaper and broadcaster reporting citing Tier 1 or 2 sources
- Think tank analysis drawing on primary sources
- Magazine investigative reporting

Tier 4 — Social Media and Citizen Reporting

- Useful for identifying claims and networks for further investigation
- Poor as standalone proof of major conclusions
- Can provide leads for verification through Tier 1–3 sources

Tier 5 — Anonymous Claims and Unverified Allegations

- Useful as leads for investigation
- Never sufficient alone for major intelligence conclusions
- Require verification through other sources before citing

APPENDIX B. CORE SOURCES AND ATTRIBUTION

Primary Documents Reviewed

OpenAI — "Disrupting deceptive uses of AI by covert influence operations," 30 May 2024. OpenAI's primary account of the STOIC/Zero Zeno operation and other covert influence campaigns. Documented AI usage, operational scope, platform targeting, and limited effectiveness.

Meta — Quarterly adversarial threat reports (2024–2026). Documented removal of 510 Facebook accounts and 32 Instagram accounts linked to STOIC; issued cease-and-desist letter.

Israeli Knesset — Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee records, November 2024. Official documentation of government's public-diplomacy strategy, funding allocations, institutional structure, and explicit framing as "information war."

Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs — Digital Diplomacy Department documentation and embassy websites. Official documentation of diplomatic communications strategies, social-media operations, and international audience targeting.

Knesset National Information Directorate Hearings — Records documenting expansion of multilingual spokesperson capabilities, budget discussions, and strategic messaging objectives.

Captured Hamas Organizational Documents — Materials from Gaza detailing media strategy, organizational hierarchy, and information department functions. Analyzed by terrorism research institutes and intelligence organizations.

Qatar Influence Research — Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) analysis on Qatari covert influence operations (Eekad media network). Documented financial capacity, content production, narrative focus, and comparative analysis to Al Jazeera.

Iranian Information Warfare Documentation — ICT (Israel Institute for Counterterrorism) analysis of Iranian PressTV and Telegram operations; academic research on PressTV influence operations in UK and Italy; INSS documentation of IRIB global influence apparatus.

The Lancet Study — Peer-reviewed research on Gaza casualty figures (May 2024). Used capture-recapture statistical methodology to estimate deaths; conducted by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Yale University, and partner institutions.

Washington Institute for Near East Policy — Analysis of Gaza casualty-counting methodologies, comparison of Health Ministry approaches, and examination of media citation patterns.

Henry Jackson Society — "Questionable Counting: Analysing the Death Toll from the Hamas-Run Ministry of Health in Gaza," December 2024. Examined methodology validity, media reporting patterns, and combatant/civilian distinction challenges.

APPENDIX C. WHAT SHOULD NOT BE CALLED DISINFORMATION

To preserve analytical credibility and distinguish genuine disinformation from normal political disagreement, the following should not automatically be classified as disinformation:

- An Israeli government statement (requires evaluation of accuracy, not categorical dismissal)
- An IDF press release (requires source verification, not categorical dismissal)
- A pro-Israel opinion article (propaganda, possibly; disinformation only if demonstrably false)
- Criticism of Hamas or Palestinian political organizations (may be accurate; evaluate on evidence)
- Advocacy for Israeli security (may represent legitimate security interests; not inherently deceptive)
- Zionist political advocacy (political position; not inherently false or deceptive)

- Reporting based on Israeli sources (may be accurate; evaluate sources rather than dismissing categorically)
- An Israeli politician expressing an unpopular opinion (free speech; not disinformation)

Each may be biased, propagandistic, misleading, or false. But those conclusions require evidence rather than categorical assertion.

The Same Standard Must Apply to All Actors: The preceding assessment should simultaneously apply to Hamas, Qatari, Iranian, and Palestinian Authority communications. Otherwise the analyst becomes part of the information war rather than a neutral observer of it.

APPENDIX D. WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN OCTOBER 2023 AND AUGUST 2026: TRAJECTORY ANALYSIS

Institutional Formalization

In October 2023, Israel's Ministry of Information was closed. By August 2026, the National Public Diplomacy Directorate had become an institutionalized government entity with dedicated budgets and personnel. This represents formalization of information operations as strategic function.

Technology Integration

October 2023: Limited documented use of AI in covert operations. August 2026: Documented large-scale AI incorporation across Israeli (STOIC), Iranian (deepfakes, automated content), and Qatari (Eekad) information operations. Trajectory shows acceleration.

Platform Evolution

October 2023: Facebook and Instagram still significant platforms. August 2026: TikTok emerged as dominant platform for organic reach; Meta platforms experienced 12–34% organic reach decline. This shift makes TikTok increasingly attractive for covert operations seeking algorithmic amplification.

Casualty Figure Dynamics

October 2023: Disputed figures from Day 1. August 2026: IDF acceptance of ~70,000 figure (previously contested). This suggests late-stage acceptance of mortality data by parties who previously disputed it.

Geopolitical Expansion

Gaza conflict (October 2023–ongoing) was initially bilateral Israel-Hamas issue. By 2025–2026, information operations expanded to Iran-Israel-U.S. conflict dynamics, creating multi-theater information warfare.

FINAL ASSESSMENT AND

INTELLIGENCE WARNING

What This Assessment Establishes

The available evidence supports the existence of:

- A large, institutionalized Israeli strategic-communications ecosystem
- Formal government diplomacy and military communications operations
- Explicit framing of information as a strategic domain ("information war")
- Multilingual spokesperson networks targeting international audiences
- Private-sector communications contractors
- At least one documented covert influence operation using AI (STOIC/Zero Zeno)

What This Assessment Does NOT Establish

- That every Israeli government statement is false
- That a single centralized entity controls all Israeli information operations
- That the Israeli government directly commanded every STOIC operation
- That Israel's information operations achieved massive strategic success
- That Israeli influence is uniquely significant compared to other actors in this space

The Most Important Intelligence Warning

The most dangerous analytical mistake is to believe that disinformation must look like an obvious lie.

The sophisticated version looks like: 80% true + 10% selective + 5% misleading context + 5% fabricated = a narrative that feels completely verified.

That is why serious counter-disinformation work cannot simply be a fact-checking operation. **It must be a network-analysis operation.**

The target of investigation is not merely the claim. It is the entire supply chain:

```
ACTOR → FUNDING → CONTENT → PERSONA → PLATFORM →  
AMPLIFICATION → AUDIENCE → POLITICAL EFFECT
```

For Intelligence Organizations

The STOIC case demonstrates that modern state-linked influence operations can:

- Outsource deception to private companies
- Combine human operators with generative AI
- Create fake personas at scale with biographical depth
- Coordinate across multiple platforms simultaneously
- Operate with low strategic breakthrough but significant capability

Therefore: conventional propaganda monitoring is no longer sufficient. An intelligence organization must investigate:

- Who created the content?
- Who paid for it?
- Who controls the accounts?
- Is the identity authentic?
- Was AI used?
- Was engagement artificially generated?
- What evidence independently corroborates the claim?
- What information was omitted?
- Who benefits if the audience believes it?
- Can the same claim be traced to multiple supposedly independent sources?

Final Conclusion

Israel possesses a sophisticated, multilayered information ecosystem whose overt components are explicitly designed to influence international perceptions and generate legitimacy for Israeli policy. At least one Israeli commercial actor (STOIC) has been independently documented conducting covert influence activity using deceptive online techniques and AI-assisted content.

However, this must be understood within comparative context: Hamas, Qatar, and Iran operate parallel or comparable information systems with different technical capabilities and strategic objectives. The fundamental intelligence requirement is therefore not to focus exclusively on one actor but to understand the entire information environment simultaneously.

The boundary between public diplomacy, political influence, and covert digital manipulation deserves sustained intelligence scrutiny. But it must be applied consistently across all state and non-state actors.

The strategic threat is not simply Israeli propaganda. It is the emergence of an information environment in which state messaging → private contractors → synthetic identities → AI-generated content → artificial engagement → algorithmic amplification → real human users can become one continuous system.

Intelligence analysis must illuminate this entire supply chain, not focus on any single actor or assume that one nation possesses unique monopoly on sophisticated information operations.

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