

Welcome to JMark Services Quarterly IEAA Journal!

The purpose of this journal is to provide useful information, spark professional discourse and encourage a greater understanding of the information environment in the digital age. We will also use it to provide updates on our available courses.

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IEAA Now Available as a *Pay Per Seat Course!*

Information Environment Advanced Analysis (IEAA) is a two-week, graduate level, educational program certified since 2012 by Joint Staff/J7.

IEAA is the only DoD Joint-certified course focused specifically on the seventh Joint Function: Information.

This course gives analysts, planners, and operators the analytic concepts, affiliated techniques, operational design methodologies, and operational approaches required to succeed in the Information Environment. To learn more about this course, click [here](#).

"What you learn in this course helps you move from 'existing' in the information environment to understanding the approaches, tools and habits of mind for achieving information advantage."

Capt, USAF

Upcoming IEAA Course Dates:

11 - 22 March 2024, Colorado Springs, CO

[-> Register](#)

1 - 12 April 2024, Ft. Belvoir, VA

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29 Apr - 10 May 2024, Colorado Springs, CO

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17 - 28 June 2024, Colorado Springs, CO

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15 - 26 July 2024, Ft. Belvoir, VA

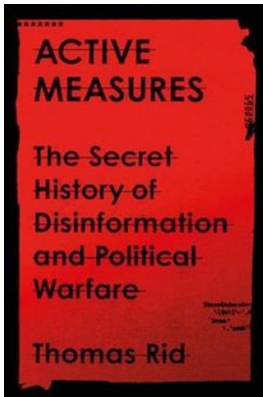
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If you have any questions in relation to the course content or participation, please contact the Senior Mentor, Stuart Purves at: stuart.purves@jmarkservices.com. For questions about registering for a course and course administration please contact the course manager at courses@jmarkservices.com.



Book Review

Thomas Rid, *Active Measures – The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare*



Consider the following Senate testimony by a CIA Director in relation to fake information, and his comparison of it with a magic trick, where our adversaries are the magicians; the CIA investigators are watchful bystanders; and the American public are the audience.

When the bystander spots a minor flaw in the execution of the trick, does he risk inadvertently helping the magician by informing the audience of the magician's error? When their "sleight of hand improved, one of our problems was demonstrating that the act was fake without providing the magician with free tips on how to perfect his performance"[1].

This discussion of the challenging nature of dealing with the proliferation of false and deliberately misleading information, fed by one of America's greatest adversaries to the US public, comes from Thomas Rid's 2020 book *Active Measures*. It sounds like the kind of testimony a CIA Director could give now, in 2024, but was actually delivered by Richard Helms to the Senate Judiciary Committee on 2 June 1961. As much as our social media feeds will tell us that fake news is a relatively recent phenomenon, it is not - the use of disinformation by adversaries to foment internal dissent and exploit societal fractures has been normal business for many security and intelligence agencies for more than a century. Indeed, as the Washington Post columnist David Ignatius points out, the main difference between the Soviets in the Cold War, and the Russians now, is that the internet has given the Russians "new tools for this mischief" and their new "secret weapon" is "an open, divided, angry America." [2]

In his book, Rid takes us back to examples of disinformation in the early 1920s – faked pamphlets, turned agents and forged manifestos; and builds his narrative through to the acts of contemporary digital manipulation, hacking and leaking. It is broken into six chronological parts, that focus on the theme of disinformation of that era. Within each part, chapters hone in on specific topics – for example the development of the *Kampfgruppe* (KgU), a CIA funded front in Berlin that it used to push its messaging into East Germany and undermine the East German government via the interception and forging of official documentation; and a series of chapters on the Soviet manipulation of western peace movements to undermine their nations' nuclear deterrence objectives. It concludes by providing some detailed analysis of election interference, troll farms, and the methodology of hack and leak operatives who target governments, corporations and individuals alike.

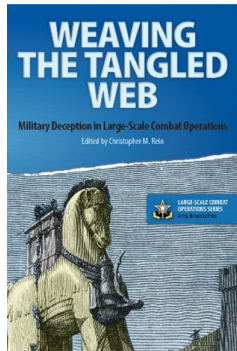
Rid is well placed to author such a book. He is an intelligence security professor at Johns Hopkins University and has testified about disinformation before the US Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. He has also authored books on Cybernetics, and War and Media Operations. *Active Measures* is a well-researched and written book that enables the reader to move beyond our perhaps myopic focus on contemporary disinformation, so as to get a deeper understanding of its origins and why current methods and impacts are just a manifestation of a long-practiced art.

[1] Cited in Rid, Thomas. *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare*, New York: Picador, 2020, p. 103.

[2] Ignatius, David, Book review of *Active Measures: The Secret History of Disinformation and Political Warfare* by Thomas Rid. The Washington Post, 24 April 2020.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/the-russians-manipulated-our-elections-we-helped/2020/04/23/e44e9e76-5742-11ea-9000-f3cffee23036_story.html

Food for Thought



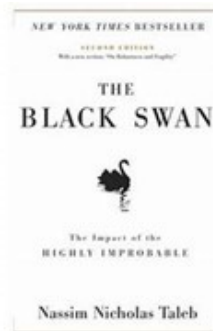
Weaving The Tangled Web

Consider the following:

“Information operations are, at their core, adversary-focused. The 17 years of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations [during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars] gave rise to a population-centric focus for information operations while almost completely subsuming the adversary command and control elements of the doctrine. Only recently – really as a result of adversary successes – has this begun to change. Unified land operations occur in an operational environment dominated by civilians; their presence cannot be ignored or bypassed. However, first, the adversary must be defeated.”^[1]

Reflect on this assessment; do you agree? Does it depend on the operational environment? What are the implications and challenges relating to target audience analysis, of an information and influence campaign, in support of large-scale conventional operations, that is adversary focused?

[1] Vertuli, Colonel Mark V. Introduction to *Perceptions Are Reality. Historical Case Studies of Information Operations in Large Scale Combat Operations*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2018, p. xiv.



Black Swans

You’ve probably heard the phrase before, but what is a Black Swan? Here is the introduction to Nassim Taleb’s epistemological discussion of the phrase from his book *The Black Swan*:

“Before the discovery of Australia, people in the Old World were convinced that *all* swans were white, an unassailable belief as it seemed completely confirmed by empirical evidence. The sighting of the first black swan might have been an interesting surprise for a few ornithologists (and others extremely concerned with the coloring of birds), but that is not where the significance of the story lies. It illustrates a severe limitation to our learning from observations or experience and the fragility of our knowledge. One single observation can invalidate a general statement derived from millennia of confirmatory sightings of millions of white swans. All you need is one single (and, I am told, quite ugly) black bird.”^[2]

You can read the remainder of his Prologue by using the ‘look inside’ or ‘preview’ functions of any of the good online book sellers; below are a couple for convenience:

[The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable \(Incerto\): Taleb, Nassim Nicholas: 9781400063512: Amazon.com: Books](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9781400063512)

[The Black Swan book by Nassim Nicholas Taleb \(thriftbooks.com\)](http://thriftbooks.com)

What is your take on Taleb’s contention that the essence of a Black Swan event is that it must be rare, have extreme impact, and that it must have retrospective (though not prospective) predictability?

Now think about the Information Environment (IE); should we expend time preparing influence campaigns to respond to potential Black Swan events, or is doing so, by definition, impossible? What methodologies or mechanisms should we have in place to react swiftly to Black Swan events, to either exploit or mitigate their impacts on influence campaigns? Perhaps consider putting your thoughts in context by using a Black Swan event that you have been exposed to and how it affected the IE you were operating in.

[2] Taleb, Nassim Nicholas. *The Black Swan, The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. New York: Random House, Second Edition, 2010, p. xxi.



For more professional discussion on topics like these and many more, sign up for the next available Information Environment Advanced Analysis (IEAA) course [here](#).



Professional Reading Lists

The links below take you to our reading lists, which contain books, articles and official publications that we incorporate into IEAA and use to drive professional discourse. We like to keep the lists manageable and relevant, but also encourage feedback.

[Books](#)

[Publications](#)

[Short Readings](#)

GCIAO - New Course!



The Global Competition Information Advantage Operations (GCIAO) course explores Signature Management, Digital Dust, and Operational Security in the Global Information Environment. Students will learn to plan, manage, and mitigate digital signature risks associated with all phases of operations.

Mentor-led small-group activities are at the heart of the GCIAO learning experience.

GCIAO is a five-day (40-hour) course consisting of tailored readings and a programmed syllabus of contemporary lessons, Socratic learning and mentor-guided small-group activities. To learn more about this course, click [here](#).

"GCIAO is structured to train and educate students to gain and exploit information advantage throughout the competition continuum by thinking about, assessing, planning, and designing operational approaches for exploiting opportunities and mitigating risk during fast-moving, contested "Fort to Port to Foxhole" operations. It provides tools and methodologies to seize and hold the initiative at the operational level. GCIAO thus addresses the essence of Sun Tzu's thinking: "Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, where defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win."

Mike Phillips, CEO JMark Services

Are you a previous IEAA student?

We would love to hear from you!

Please give us an update on how you have used what you have learned in the course, and how this has made an impact in your field. Please email to courses@jmarkservices.com. Also, please state if we have your permission to publish your comment in our journal and marketing materials, and if your preference is anonymously or with your name. Thank you!

Please feel free to share this journal with anyone you may feel would be interested.

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