

Technology in the International Sphere



United Nations General Assembly
Emilio Aleman - TUMUN VIII

Letter from the Chair

Hello Delegates!

My name is Emilio L. Aleman, and I am honored to be the President of the General Assembly for this year's TUMUN conference. I am a first-year student at Tufts, majoring in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science while minoring in Engineering Management. This General Assembly committee is modeled after the First Committee of the United Nations: DISEC (Disarmament and International Security). The DISEC committee deals with issues related to the two topics that are presented in this GA for this conference.

Both topics presented for debate in this committee are quite interesting to me. Topic A combines the two vast subjects of warfare and technology/ artificial intelligence. This is intended to spur delegates' efforts at diplomatic resolutions while also taking into account innovation and national sovereignty. Topic B focuses on digital extremism and how the international community can mitigate this issue. Delegates should, once again, have diplomatic resolutions and consider the ethical implications of their resolution. Although the "Weaponization of AI" and "Fighting the Spread of Digital Extremism" are both dense topics with many intricacies, I hope that delegates address their many points and come to a well-drafted resolution. Nevertheless, I am very excited to see the debate in committee!

Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns about anything related to this committee (i.e., topics, committee structure, the conference in general, etc.), please don't hesitate to contact me at emilio.aleman@tufts.edu. I look forward to seeing you all in a few weeks!

Sincerely,
Emilio L. Aleman
President of the General Assembly
TUMUN 2024

Committee Procedure

For this committee, you are only allowed to use technology, like a laptop or tablet, to write Working Papers/ Draft Resolutions, as well as refer to personal notes you may have.


Action Items for Delegates

For this General Assembly committee, you must write a 1-page position paper *for each topic* to be eligible for awards. Each position paper should contain the following sections: Background, Position, and Solutions.

The Background section should discuss the history and background of the topic. The Position section should state your country's position on the issue and any actions it has accomplished in the past. The Solutions section should state potential solutions for the *future* that address the issue.

The due date for **both** papers is **February 2nd at 11:59pm**. You may email me both papers (either as PDFs, Word Documents, or Google Doc links) at emilio.aleman@tufts.edu.

Here is a link to an example Position Paper:

 [TUMUN-GA-2024_Example_Position_Paper.pdf](#)

Overview of the Committee

DISEC (Disarmament and International Security) is the United Nations First Committee, which deals with disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that affect the international community, and searches for solutions to international security challenges.

As stated before, this is a GA-structured committee where debate will proceed as normal.

Moreover, any suggestions of new international bodies or organizations shall take place under the name of the United Nations.

Topic A, which discusses the weaponization of Artificial Intelligence (AI), critically impacts many member states of the DISEC committee. Topic B concerns the fight against digital extremism, which is a continuous issue all nations must address. Between these two topics, this General Assembly will be tasked with deciding on which matter is most pressing, as well as which matter will generate the most debate, throughout the time of this conference.

Topic A: Weaponization of Artificial Intelligence

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence is “a wide-ranging branch of computer science concerned with building smart machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence” [1]. Since this allows machines to make decisions based on data without human intervention, AI has become increasingly used in military strikes where targeting is indiscriminate. However, this advanced technology is vulnerable to bugs, malware, bias, and manipulation [2]. Consider this: can a machine decide to take away a human life? Where does the fault lie if a mistake is made? Despite these issues, one must recognize the potential for technology like this in various forms, including in the fight against terrorism to block the spread of propaganda on social media [3].

In this committee, take the time to consider the many nuanced arguments on the regulation of Artificial Intelligence as a weapon. Focus on its role in warfare, where a machine can make the advanced decision to take a human life without intervention, as well as its potentially positive role in the media and other subtle subjects.

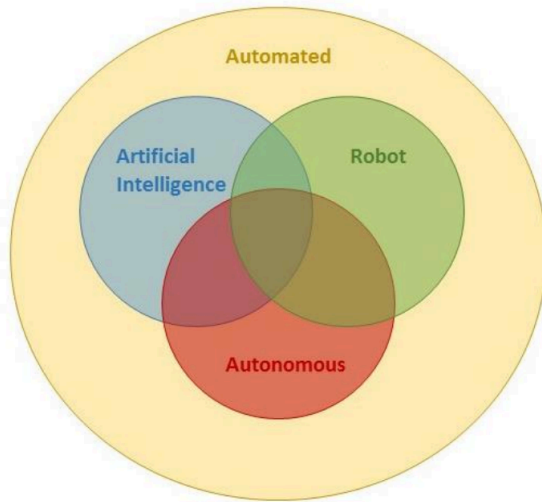
Topic History

Artificial intelligence is a rapidly expanding field that is growing fast in this day and age. We have seen it used for a variety of purposes, including analyzing data for patterns, performing surgeries,

diagnosing patients, helping children learn, and so much more, and always far more accurately than a human could accomplish. But with the power to make decisions without human interference comes a great number of uncertainties. Is AI powerful enough to make the right decisions when it comes to human lives? If not, whose fault is it if something goes wrong? How can the use of AI in media be regulated? How can we ensure that people are well informed enough about its capabilities to know when something is real and something isn't? During major historical moments, such as the first use of nuclear weapons in World War II, the world has seen the way that seemingly good technological advancements can be incredibly threatening [4].

However, regulation of AI in warfare or cyberattacks may be difficult without a clear definition of Artificial Intelligence. Since AI can be defined as a technology capable of altering a weapon, and not necessarily as a weapon itself, whether augmenting the standards set out in the Convention on Conventional Weapons is necessary is up for debate [4]. Consider how AI has already been weaponized, for both good and bad: in logistics and training through augmented reality systems (which has already been used to train engineers of the Royal New Zealand Navy); for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR); in missile defense systems and unmanned vehicles for targeting people or weapons systems. These are just a few examples of the rapidly

progressing usage of AI for weaponry and surveillance [5].



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Militarized AI

Advancements in traditionally offensively employed AI have raised concerns about the potential for a new wave of weapons of mass destruction. There is, however, still quite a bit of time before that can be realized; researchers are currently looking into maintaining connections with allies in warfare, as well as considering the anticipated level of human involvement [5]. An instance of a fully autonomous weapon system is the Israeli Harpy drone, also known as the “fire and forget” system (i.e. a system programmed to attack without much consideration for the consequences). Autonomous ballistic missile defense drones that can track incoming missiles have also been considered by the Japanese military in the past [5]. Furthermore, it is not just state actors who are interested in military AI. In 2016, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) started a trend of using new, complex technologies against its enemies

when it carried out a drone attack in combat that killed two Peshmerga warriors in northern Iraq. ISIL announced their new division dedicated to the development and use of drones, “Unmanned Aircraft of the Mujahedeen,” a year later. Some more recent examples include altercations between an unidentified Syrian rebel group and Russian bases at Khmeimim and Tartus, where the rebel group deployed 13 armed homemade drones. Another 2018 instance of the deadly weaponization of AI was an assassination attempt using exploding drones against Venezuela’s Nicolás Maduro. Iran has deployed drone-carried explosives several times, such as during the attack on Saudi oil facilities in 2019. However, delegates must keep in mind that UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) are not the only type of weaponized AI, but simply one instance of it. The chairs will look favorably upon delegates discussing the broad field of AI in warfare to its full extent as much as possible.

These lethal attacks are just the start of AI being used as a weapon in warfare. In some cases, the mission was effectively carried out (whether for good or for bad), but it must be noted that a mistake with this type of technology can cause an explosion of problems.

Defensive AI & Counterterrorism

Artificial Intelligence is also used for defensive purposes such as training and counterterrorism, as briefly discussed in the previous section. Its ability to analyze large sets of data makes it a useful asset in predicting and preparing for outside attacks.

For example, the National Security Agency's (NSA) 'PRISM' program applied AI systems to Big Data in an attempt to take action on counter-terrorism initiatives [5]. When the program's existence was revealed by the Snowden leaks, a heated public debate erupted surrounding this kind of government surveillance. The vigor of this debate hides the program's popularity, however. Most people would allow the US government to be in the "intelligence-gathering business," if only to stop terrorism [6]. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the next section, AI can help prevent terrorist propaganda from flowing through the media [7]. Defensive AI truly goes hand in hand with attack-focused intelligence, as AI can be used for both the greater good and evil—it all depends on intent.

To fight terrorism, Western states have been trying to strengthen their defense against AI, but this is an incredibly costly expense [8]. According to Max Heinemeyer, the director of threat hunting at Darktrace, a world-leading AI cybersecurity company, "To mitigate the threat of AI-powered attacks, we must fight fire with fire. Only AI itself can keep pace with AI" [9].

AI in the Media & Programmatically Generated Content

AI has proven to be a dangerously powerful force in the media. With AI, a single picture of a celebrity or government official can be digitally manipulated into an incredibly realistic video of their likeness moving and speaking. These "deepfakes" are

a tool that terrorist organizations seek to use to mislead the public.

With this comes the concern of bias within systems. A prominent example of this is when Microsoft created a chatbot, named "Tay" with its own Twitter account. After being released to interact with the public, it was infiltrated and fed malicious data, so it began to exhibit racist, sexist, and extremist political viewpoints [5]. A vast number of people get their information from social media, so the fact that terrorist organizations and other malicious groups have been using it to spread propaganda is a major cause for concern. Another instance of this was in the run-up to the 2016 US general election, where Russian data algorithms were used in the media to worsen societal tensions [5].

However, AI in the media can also be a good thing. Researchers have worked on creating algorithms to search for and remove propaganda from dangerous organizations by utilizing AI. For instance, The New York Times reported that "Facebook's A.I. found 99.5 percent of terrorist content on the site, leading to the removal of roughly 1.9 million pieces of content in the first quarter" [7]. Again, there is the potential for error and manipulation with this, but it has been proven useful on several occasions.

Current Situation

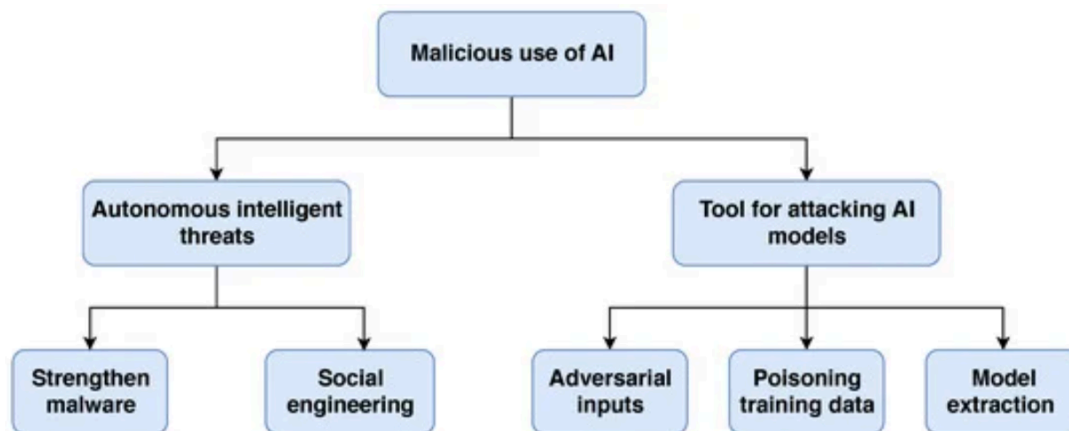
The use of Artificial Intelligence in cyberattacks to cause harm to both private citizens and global networks has slowly been increasing. For example, the WannaCry AI ransomware attack in 2017 targeted more than 200,000 computers in 150+ countries.

This attack marked a new era in cyberattacks and their use of AI. Currently, this “cycle of innovation” will continue, and according to Forrester’s Using AI for Evil report, “mainstream artificial intelligence (AI)- powered hacking is just a matter of time” [10].

At the moment, computer systems that can improve, adapt, reason, and execute independent actions are still in their early stages. For instance, machine learning algorithms in real-world systems, like driverless cars, require large datasets and sophisticated software and technology to allow AI to make decisions. Although businesses may have an easier time adopting AI for commercial purposes, it should be monitored for autonomy risks in general. However, intelligence and espionage services may be willing to embrace Artificial Intelligence for national security purposes, since cybercriminals and even governments look to use it for corrupt reasons. According to a Gartner report, “through 2022, 30% of all AI cyberattacks will leverage training-data poisoning, model theft, or adversarial samples to attack machine learning-powered systems” [10]. In

other words, AI systems and attacks will continue to develop and advance in their intricacies every year.

One area in which AI hasn’t yet been applied is in Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). During the first meeting of the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on LAWS in 2017, no universal definition was agreed upon, although participating states offered proposals based on technological, military, ethical, and legal aspects. As of 2018, the autonomy of AI systems was limited so that only a human can authorize a “lethal attack”. However, technological advances may cause this to change soon [11]. At the moment, the United States Navy plans to construct at least 21 naval vessels with drone boats over the next five years (ending in 2026). In 2019, China, too, displayed a large unmanned submarine in its annual military parade [12]. The use and development of LAWS for defense systems are quite advanced, even without Artificial Intelligence implementation. Thus, AI is certainly recognized as a field to be watched in the upcoming years by the international community.



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Region-Specific Background

North America: Artificial Intelligence has grown rapidly in the private sector in the United States, stopping the government from controlling or containing it. In 2019, North America's global competitors have accelerated to embrace and weaponize AI to counter their "traditional strengths."

Therefore, NA adopted Artificial Intelligence for "support and warfighting operations alike," especially in the U.S. Air Force [15]. Specifically, the U.S. Department of Defense has been working on projects which include "tactical-edge AI," but are not autonomous weapons systems [16]. Since it is not enough of a focus at the moment, North American delegates should focus on defense against AI weapons, both physically and through the media.

Europe: The European Union is noted as the world's "most aggressive watchdog of the technology industry" due to its thorough data protection policies [17]. Therefore, the European Union (and even non-EU members) can help shift the focus from the "global AI arms race" to presenting initiatives and frameworks for ethical usage of Artificial Intelligence in weapons. This would likely mitigate power competition between the most prominent nations with advanced AI systems. Although the EU has begun AI research for weapons, it falls behind in innovation compared to the United States, China, and Russia [18]. However, with more funding, research, and legislation, as well as strict ethical guidelines, European AI leadership may be unique.

Asia: Each sub-region of Asia has experienced unique armed conflict situations varying based on political and socio-economic challenges. Some regions of Asia, such as East Asia, have solid policies/plans concerning LAWS, while others, such as Southeast and South Asia, are more tentative. Ethical issues surrounding the use of LAWS are a concern of most Asian countries, but none have openly condemned it. For this reason, delegates representing these nations should emphasize ethics in the usage of this technology. In terms of AI military development, China is the leading country, with the declaration to catch up to the U.S. in AI technology development by 2025 and lead the world by 2030 [19]. As a result, Asian nations would likely want to put more focus on the development of their AI sector, while also building up their defenses for it, since they have the resources.

Africa: Most African nations believe that weaponized AI would only bring instability and terror to their land, and like to focus on the ethics and regulation of its use. Some argue that lethal automated weapons would save lives in an environment like this since they do not have prejudice and do not seek revenge the way that humans do. However, studies have shown that biased data leads to biased AI. Africa is prone to conflicts, oftentimes fueled by easy access to weapons, such as LAWS, from Western nations, and the fragility of the nation does not make civilian disarmament easy either [20].

Issues to Address

Manipulation of AI

As Artificial Intelligence algorithms become more sophisticated and intricate, more exploits may arise. These algorithms can be manipulated or hacked in the same way other data and programs can. This allows hackers to turn the algorithms/machines against the programmer, raising concerns globally as an “emerging security crisis” [5]. One notable example is the use of AI to crack passwords faster. With the use of deep learning algorithms, brute-force attacks by cybercriminals can be substantially sped up [13].

Transparency vs. Sovereignty

There is a lack of transparency when it comes to Artificial Intelligence systems, which is a significant problem that may create more obstacles for the international community. Although AI technology may be used for security and defense purposes, the designated tasks it performs are sometimes ambiguous. Several instances have shown that there is a “misalignment of goals” between these machines and humans, in which an AI is programmed and planned to accomplish a specific job, but might not progress according to the programmer’s expectations [5]. This dichotomy between humans and machines, in this case, solely relies on the need for information and specification from the system itself. However, the sovereignty of said AI system should be respected on a national level.

Fault of Machines and Resulting Liability Issues

Sometimes, AI systems and machines can accidentally or purposefully cause harm to human beings or the surrounding environment. While errors and mistakes can happen from unintentional human programming, nations must not dismiss the potential for Artificial Intelligence systems to misinterpret specified instructions. The data used to create AI systems may also affect how it responds to a certain situation. For example, if an algorithm is trained with racist data, the algorithm may end up exhibiting racist qualities [14]. Ultimately, these Artificial Intelligence systems must be held to some standard.

AI in the Media

Artificial Intelligence is a powerful instrument in communication in the technology age, and terrorist groups have certainly realized this. Whether it be publicizing and praising attacks, fundraising, or recruiting new members, non-state actors can take advantage of these platforms to reach an immense audience. With technology improving every year, terrorist and extremist groups can “[combine] easy accessibility to operatives via social media with new advances in encryption to create a ‘virtual planner’ model of terrorism,” allowing online members to receive the

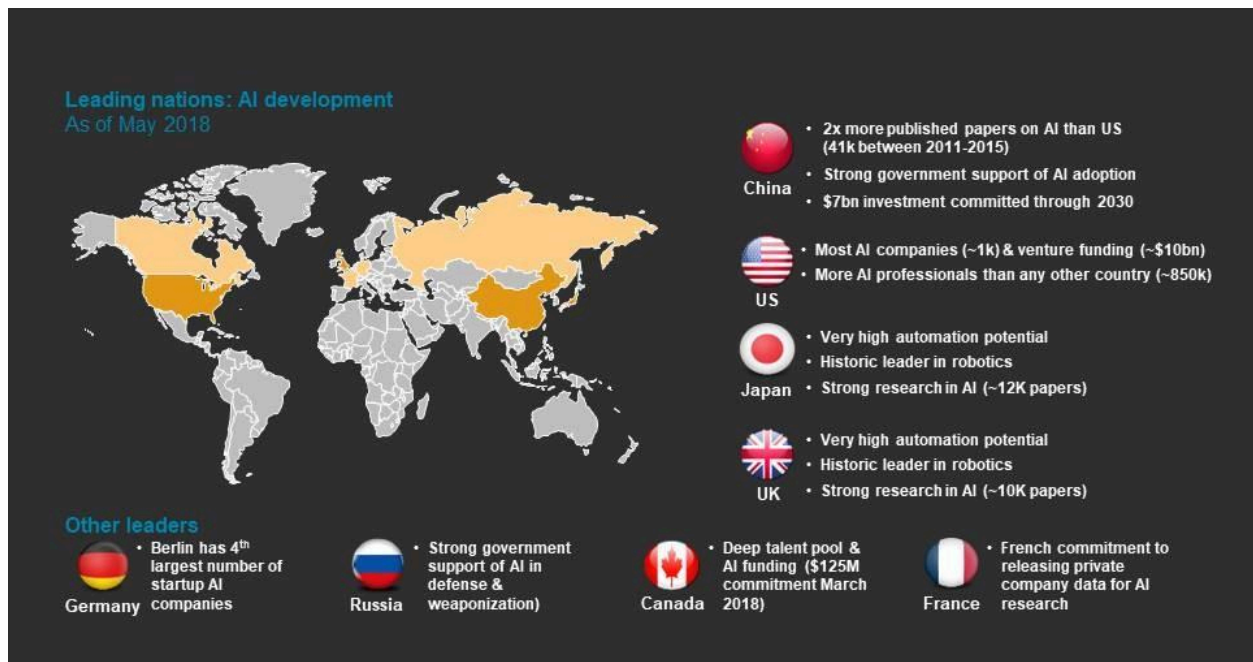
same training and attack information as those who would typically be in-person [23]. Furthermore, social media is the source of endless misinformation, some of which leads to harmful and real action. For example, one such nefarious use of AI in social media is the creation of an account that acts and appears to be human, describing certain false situations, like closed polling places during elections. John Villasenor, Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution, notes that online aggressors have "used artificial intelligence (AI) to construct realistic photographs and profiles of account owners to vary the content and wording of their postings" [24]. These methods would not allow these accounts to be detected as "fake account[s]," increasing the prominence of misinformation on social media platforms alike.

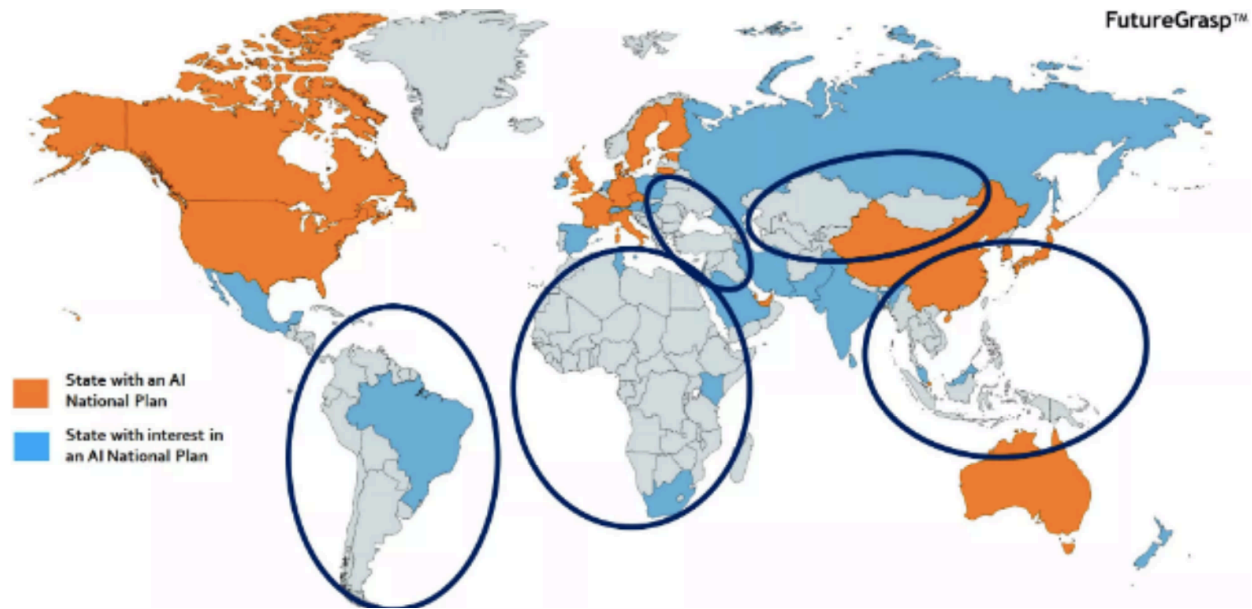
However, AI has proven to be a useful tool in global media. For example, deep learning AI tools can now be used to

both source and fact-check a story to identify "fake news" [21]. On the other hand, this creates complexities concerning censorship on platforms that are meant to foster civil discourse. Delegates should therefore consider both aspects of this issue when developing solutions.

Smaller Players in AI (Underdeveloped Nations)

For underdeveloped nations and those with fragile infrastructures, weaponized AI is generally viewed as a major threat and danger that needs to be regulated. With a lack of access to these weapons themselves, underdeveloped nations need to focus on defense and protection from them, which is also costly. With help and cooperation from the international community, underdeveloped nations could redirect their resources from protection against weaponized AI to other critical sectors, like agriculture or education.





Questions to Consider

- What measures should nations take to regulate the use of Artificial Intelligence in both digital and physical weapons?
- To what extent should governments be transparent about their use of AI technology in weapons? What standards should there be?
- How can nations address liability issues when determining programmer fault versus machine fault?
- How can nations protect their citizens' privacy and individual rights, while maintaining a secure and protected state?
- Can AI, together with emerging technologies, lead to the emergence of a new era of weapons of mass attrition or weapons of mass destruction? How should this be anticipated or addressed?

Topic B: Fighting the Spread of Digital Extremism

Introduction

The emergence of modern technology has greatly enabled the spread of information, allowing a single person to spread a message to the entire world in mere seconds. A single picture, a bit of text, or a short clip can instantly change a person's opinions and beliefs; however, every single one of these forms of communication can be falsified. Whether it be a video of the president encouraging extremist values, a fake tweet from an influential account, or simply a blatant lie that goes viral, extremist groups have learned to take advantage of social media and people who are on it (i.e. almost everyone with access to the internet). Media platforms are currently developing technology to filter and stop the spread of extremist messages, but "all it takes is one of these 'low-volume, high-risk' pieces to leak through to potentially cause disastrous impact" [1].

In this committee, take the time to consider the fine line between censorship and protection. Additionally, focus on both the current and future potential uses of digital extremism, such as for terrorist recruitment or conspiracy theories.

Topic History

Though social media rose to prominence in the early 2000s, its current indispensable role in society makes it feel like it has been around for far longer. Since its inception, social media has become a complicated web of information and

misinformation that a huge portion of the world has access to. Through the years, groups like ISIS, jihadists, the Taliban, the Khorasan group, and many more have been using social media to promote their groups, recruit new supporters, fundraise, and organize attacks. One member of the U.S. House of Representatives makes an analogy: would any nation allow the enemy to publish propaganda in their country's newspapers in the past? The answer was once no, but that is exactly what is happening today [2].



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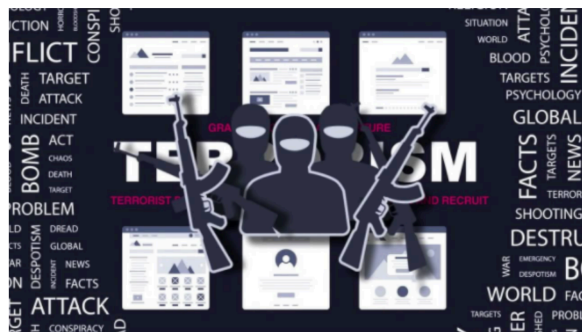
Terrorist Recruitment

Terrorists understand the benefits of social media: it is easy to use, is free, and reaches a larger audience than possible at any other time in history.

After the 2015 Paris attacks, terrorists and their supporters used social media to praise the attack, gain new supporters, and fundraise. Jihadists from all over the world used Twitter to threaten America and brag about ISIS around the same time. The Khorasan Group, set up by al-Qaeda and Syria to attack the US and

Europe, has a fan page on Facebook with photos and a message board. In 2013, AQIM, the al-Qaeda branch in Yemen, used Twitter to host an online press conference where users could submit questions that the terror group would respond to. In 2014, a Saudi cleric launched a fundraising drive on Twitter for jihadists in Syria [2]. These are only a few examples of the vast uses of social media by terrorist groups in the last several years. It is also believed that the rise of lone wolf terrorism, or “political violence perpetrated by individuals who act alone” in recent years has been fueled in part by terrorists' use of social media [5]. For instance, the recipes for the Boston bombs were published in al-Qaeda’s Inspire magazine before the attack [2].

Some believe that shutting down social media accounts is ineffective, as they will simply appear again, but a 2013 example demonstrates this to be false. Twitter shut down an account after al-Shabaab live-tweeted its attack on a part of Kenya that killed 72 people. Al-Shabaab stopped trying to reopen accounts on Twitter after it kept getting shut down. However, the argument still stands that strict regulation on social media may one day not be enough to restrain extremist groups on digital platforms.



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Conspiracy Theories

Social media is an easy way for conspiracy theories to rapidly spread and gain popularity. Whether it be Facebook groups dedicated to proving that the Earth is flat, or Twitter threads explaining Democrats’ equivalency to devils, everyone is at risk of being affected by a conspiracy theory.

Although they may seem like complete nonsense to a large portion of the U.S. population, popular theories like Pizzagate or QAnon are believed by thousands of people across the globe. Concerningly, conspiracy believers take extremist action at times. A prominent example involves Pizzagate. This theory holds that senior members of the U.S. Democratic Party abused and murdered children in the basement of the Comet Ping Pong pizza restaurant. Promoted on a wide range of social media accounts (including celebrities’), websites, and even a news network, heavily-armed believers of the conspiracy launched a disastrous raid on the pizza place in question [6]. The ‘QAnon’ conspiracy theory holds that a cabal of pedophiles runs a global child sex trafficking ring, and similar to Pizzagate, this theory led to frightening action. In 2019, the FBI published a bulletin warning that conspiracy theories were very likely to motivate further criminal and violent activity, especially in terms of the 2020 election. QAnon and Pizzagate were both cited as concerns and past examples of conspiracy gone extreme [6].



[28]

Current Situation

The use of social media and online sharing platforms to spread extremist viewpoints has only been increasing as the years go by. Currently, TikTok algorithms can “swiftly channel young users from relatively benign interests to more troubling topics,” including extremist movements such as the Three Percenters, involved in the U.S. Capitol Riot in January [12]. However, the international community may be at a turning point in tackling online extremism. Well-known companies, such as Twitter and Google, are doubling down their efforts to address and remove misinformation and extremist content from their platforms [7]. Additionally, in 2020, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) “scaled up its efforts to help Member States achieve a world free from terrorism [and violent extremism] by adapting and innovating to meet this challenging moment” [9].

Real-world results from extremist and terrorist propaganda can already be seen. Sadly, we are living in a dangerous era “in which children have been taught to hate, are recruiting others, and are plotting

terrorist attacks” [8]. For example, in October 2020, German police arrested a 14-year-old “accused of plotting violence at a synagogue or a mosque” [8]. In that same month, another 14-year-old was arrested in San Diego after punching a rabbi in the face. Lastly, social media platforms, like YouTube, aided in the radicalization of the person who committed a “2019 terrorist attack on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand that left 51 people dead.” One of the attacker’s beliefs is known as the “Great Replacement” theory, which holds that white populations, mainly in Europe, are being replaced by minorities/people of color [10]. This ideology was presented to the attacker through far-right extremist videos on YouTube and discussion boards on 4chan and 8kun.



Starting in late 2020, “with the physical caliphate in ruins, ISIS [continued rebuilding] its network throughout Iraq and Syria,” preserving a fixed speed of attacks and amassing large funds to wage “low-level” campaigns of terrorism and sabotage in the area. While thousands of fighters are in prisons and detention camps, tens of thousands of people who live among ISIS are still vulnerable to further extremism and radicalization [11]. Hardly any countries are willing to repatriate their citizens from

these camps, making it incredibly difficult to reverse the effects of their indoctrination. The COVID-19 pandemic was a large factor in the recent rise of extremist behavior. For example, “in Germany, far-right extremists have used the COVID-related lockdown measures to accelerate recruitment trends of neo-Nazis and white supremacists” [11]. In other words, extremists have taken

advantage of the current global crisis and used it exploited it for villainous purposes. Terrorist groups have also taken advantage of the pandemic to spread their own extremist views to citizens. Therefore, it is imperative that the international community, as well as the global private sector, act to reduce the spread of extremist and terrorist content on the Internet.

Region-Specific Background

North America: Various North American governments, aware of the issues with their social platforms, have released counter-radicalization strategies. These reports commit to devising a strategy to deal with digital extremism, but little action has been taken. However, in 2018, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism was created to effectively counter extremist and terrorist activities [20]. Having dealt with a great number of misinformation waves and social media attacks, North American delegates should focus on restricting the spread of adverse messages without infringing on individual and corporate rights.

Europe: Europe has made a lot of progress in terms of the protection of digital forms of media. Specifically, it has guidelines “ensuring the security of citizens, preventing radicalization, and safeguarding values cooperating with international partners.” Furthermore, in March of 2021, a regulation on monitoring terrorist content online was adopted, authorizing states to order service providers to remove content [14]. Since European nations already have several institutions in place to monitor and regulate digital platforms, delegates should focus on improving upon existing legislation, while emphasizing and protecting free speech rights.

Asia: With much of East Asia already being technologically advanced, Central Asia has had a “rapid digital transformation” over the past decade. Unfortunately, these governments “have struggled to contain

organized terrorist activities” since extremist groups discovered novel ways to access social media after being blocked on certain channels. Recently, investments by governments, private companies, and local communities have made some progress to stimulate the economy by creating jobs, expanding education access, and improving respect for human rights. Although these actions are only “a drop in the bucket,” they start to address a very troubling conflict.

Africa: Most African nations believe that though social media has helped grow their infrastructure over the past few years, its potential for harm can only bring instability and terror to their land. Due to a lot of religious extremism, African nations should focus on the ethics and regulation of media use, while still ensuring free speech. The ability for extremist groups to spread their messages farther and faster can only bring about more fragility to a conflict-riddled continent [15].

Latin America: Internet access in Latin America has expanded quickly, far too quickly for online security measures to be put in place. Thus, the barriers to entry on the Internet are low, allowing for “leftist armed groups, jihadists, right-wing paramilitaries, criminal syndicates, and autodefensas or vigilante groups” to enter cyberspace and plan acts of violence. However, governments and analysts have taken advantage of online extremist activity to learn more about and counter these actions [2]

Issues to Address

Vulnerability of Children and Teenagers

As mentioned above, exposure to online radical content is pulling children and teenagers into believing in extremist and hateful ideologies. The advent of terrorist attacks where an individual acts alone prompted an increase in young people's involvement. "When radicalization occurs in the living room and not places of worship, and when acts of terrorism no longer require complex planning, barriers to entry are lowered, allowing even teenagers to take active part" [8].

Many teenagers spend hours upon hours on the Internet, trying to comprehend a complex social, political, and economic climate. Anyone of any age can be radicalized, but "factors such as being easily influenced and impressionable make children and young people particularly vulnerable" [16]. Therefore, the safety of the global younger generation must be addressed to combat digital extremism.



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Terrorist Recruitment Methods

Terrorists frequently take advantage of online platforms to recruit new members

and spread their message both locally and internationally. Two classifications of these platforms are "hard platforms" and "friendly platforms." These classifications allow one to categorize a specific platform based on the barriers to entry. "Hard platforms (like Internet forums, Tor hidden services, etc.) require considerable user effort in terms of learning and location of information resources [while] friendly platforms (like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.) include... exclusively tools designed with ease of use and adoption by Internet users in mind" [13]. Terrorist operations on platforms with "high barriers to entry", or hard platforms, are done by those who are already in contact with jihadist militants, making it much harder to catch them. However, a wide majority of terrorist involvement on the Internet is through "friendly platforms," contributing to an ever-growing wave of radicalization. Since this type of activism is low-commitment, "propaganda activities [are] swift, simple and compatible with work and family commitments" [13]. In other words, ordinary people can easily be turned into terrorist recruits without much suspicion.

Misinformation and Extremist Propaganda

Whether it be misinformation about COVID-19 or extremist propaganda on a seemingly innocent social media page, "fake news" can rapidly spread across the Internet. A "pandemic of misinformation" has occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic, says U.N. Secretary-General António

Guterres [17]. According to a 2018 study by MIT, "falsehoods are 70% more likely to be retweeted on Twitter than the truth, and reach their first 1,500 people six times faster" [18]. This is because people are typically interested in new and unfamiliar information, as "fake news" often is. Moreover, extremist groups often utilize "their own websites" to "share propaganda and to become friends with people who seem to display interest in what they are thinking, doing, and saying" [19]. By taking advantage of unknowing victims, extremists can effectively gain new supporters. Addressing the magnitude of misinformation and extremist propaganda on the Internet certainly may be a daunting task.

Protection or Censorship?

With all of this in mind, one must note that heavy regulation may not be the best solution for all nations. This can lead to complications concerning the fine line between protection and censorship/ extremism on the government's behalf. Furthermore, delegates should consider the enforceability of various types of regulation, as well as the potential for error, which can lead to the removal of innocent civilian posts. It is difficult to establish standard practices among a myriad of different platforms from different nations, so attempting this could potentially lead to only more global miscommunication [23].



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Questions to Consider

- What is the difference between protection and censorship in the context of fighting digital extremism?
 - How can nations balance along this fine line while still accomplishing their goals in this field?
- What are potential ways that extremist groups can take advantage of social media and how can these ways be prevented?
- Is it better to have an AI system that over-predicts or under-predicts extremist content, or one that does not censor innocent civilians but misses more true propaganda?
- How could researchers predict if a conspiracy theory could one day lead to dangerous action? Should every conspiracy theory be shut down on social media?

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