# Disinformation and Foreign Interference, Susceptibility and Resilience: Lessons for the U.S. 2024 Election from Recent Global Elections

The Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity and the National Task Force on Election Crises have surveyed recent global elections for examples and notable trends in disinformation narratives, foreign interference, and resilience strategies, to highlight lessons U.S. media, political leaders, and civil society can learn in preparation for their roles in the U.S. 2024 general elections.

## Background

The United States operates a distinctive electoral system compared to most democracies around the world, including elections run at the local and state level and significant partisan involvement in election administration. While these features limit the direct applicability of international lessons to the U.S. context, valuable insight can be gained from the numerous democratic elections around the world since the last U.S. presidential election in 2020. Challenges such as disinformation, deepfakes, foreign interference, and questions about the integrity of election results are present worldwide, often accompanied by similar conspiracy theories and tactics to create the appearance of election crisis. ***U.S. media, political leaders, and civil society can learn from these international trends both to prebunk with the public, and to offer the public key context when bad-faith actors use similar tactics to try to create or exacerbate any election crises during the U.S. 2024 general election and post-election period.***

## Disinformation in Recent Global Elections

Every surveyed country's election system, politics, and underlying culture are unique, which means the content and form of disinformation will not be exactly alike across countries. Disinformation campaigns also do not spread via a single predictable pathway, such as a foreign actor planting a news story and then attempting to make it go viral. Disinformation may begin with domestic sources, only to be opportunistically amplified by foreign actors before gaining further traction among local

audiences. In some cases, stories do in fact originate with foreign actors such as Russia or China, who seed the narrative, which then spreads through domestic users. There are also instances where the origin of the story is unclear, but its spread is amplified by a mix of foreign and domestic users, with a small number of hyperactive accounts playing a significant role in its dissemination. And yet, amidst all this diversity, *there are two sets of disinformation narratives that we can observe across widely differing countries as well as in the United States: claims of fabricated election interference or system changes, and disinformation around immigrants and noncitizen voters*.

## Claims of Fabricated Election Interference or System Changes

*Bad-faith actors across the globe have attempted to persuade citizens that political leaders, political parties, or unknown actors are interfering with elections. They have also spread disinformation about last-minute changes to the election system.* With the sole possible exception of Slovakia, these efforts so far have not succeeded in affecting the outcome of the election, thanks to the vigilance of fact-checkers and others.

> **Slovakia:** Just two days before the Slovak elections, unknown actors released an audio deepfake on Facebook accusing Michal Šimečka, the leader of the Progressive Slovakia party, of election interference.[1] The deepfake portrayed Šimečka speaking with a journalist about buying votes from the Roma ethnic minority group. Šimečka immediately denied the audio was authentic, and international news media determined it showed signs of manipulation. However, the creators of the audio exploited two factors that helped make this deepfake impactful. First, because the audio was posted within the 48-hour period before the election when Slovak media and politicians are generally prohibited from comment on elections, the recording was not widely debunked. Second, Facebook parent company Meta's manipulated-media policy at that time[2] only covered deepfake video posts, so it was not labeled or removed.[3] Progressive Slovakia subsequently lost the election by a close margin.
>
> **Spain:** In the period immediately preceding and following both the May 2023 regional and the July 2023 national elections, conspiracy theorists made a wide range of false election interference claims on social media that were seen by millions of Spaniards.[4] Some falsely claimed that the governing Socialist Workers' Party did not allow trains to leave the Spanish city of Valencia to prevent people from voting. Others circulated an image of mail-in ballots

[1]Zuidijk, Daniel. "Deepfakes in Slovakia Preview How AI Will Change the Face of Elections." Bloomberg.com, 4 October 2023, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2023-10-04/deepfakes-in-slovakia-preview-how-ai-will-change-the-face-of-elections. Accessed 5 September 2024.

[2]"Misinformation." Transparency Center, https://transparency.meta.com/en-gb/policies/community-standards/misinformation. Accessed 5 September 2024.

[3] Meaker, Morgan. "Slovakia's Election Deepfakes Show AI Is a Danger to Democracy." WIRED, 3 October 2023, https://www.wired.com/story/slovakias-election-deepfakes-show-ai-is-a-danger-to-democracy/. Accessed 5 September 2024.

[4] Klepper, David. "Voting fraud claims spread ahead of Spain's pivotal election." AP News, 18 July 2023, https://apnews.com/article/spain-election-misinformation-trump-25add18d4bacb5a90e423b1925673006. Accessed 5 September 2024. There were also allegations before the election that votes from Spaniards living abroad were manipulated because of a change in the law that resulted in ballots automatically being sent to voters living abroad. Following the election, there were dozens of other false claims offered as reasons the election result was invalid and should be rejected. One claim stated that the Spanish Central Electoral Board had asked provincial and local election boards for the minutes of their electoral operations and deliberations on the basis of unsubstantiated claims of fraud, which it had explicitly decided not to do.

in a trash bin, which had been manipulated from a photo actually taken years previously in Argentina,[5] but was widely shared in Spain. After the election, election fraud narratives included claims that a specific type of voting machines had been used to manipulate votes, but those machines are not used in Spain. Others alleged that – because results initially favored populist candidates  but over time left-wing parties[6] prevailed – inside actors had changed the results to swing the election, echoing the "red mirage, blue shift" phenomenon and related conspiracy theory claims following the 2020 U.S. election.

**South Africa:** False claims of manipulated voter registration databases and alleged vote rigging permeated the 2024 general election in South Africa. One fake message purporting to be from the South African Electoral Commission (IEC) circulated on social media leading up to the election, stating that polls would open early for South Africans above the age of 60.[7] The IEC swiftly denied and fact checkers widely debunked the claims before election day, minimizing the damage.

## Disinformation Around Immigrants and Noncitizen Voters

Recent global elections have highlighted cases of disinformation about attempts by noncitizens to vote, playing upon country-specific divisions between communities, with parallels to bad-faith claims about widespread noncitizen voting in the United States.

**Turkey**: Among other false claims of interference in the election,[8] social media posts claimed that over three million Syrian refugees with a temporary protection identity document would be able to vote in the 2023 election.[9]  In fact, refugees are not able to vote in Turkey.

**Poland**: The former journalist Mariusz Max Kolonko, an avowed supporter of Russian President Putin, promoted a conspiracy theory that both the then-opposition liberal Civic Platform Party and the then-ruling populist conservative Law and Justice Party were going to rig the 2023 parliamentary election using millions of Ukrainian refugees living in Ukraine.[10] The false claims in the days before the election were fortunately quickly debunked.

---

[5] "23 bulos y desinformaciones sobre pucherazo después de las elecciones generales del 23-J · Maldita.es - Periodismo para que no te la cuelen." Maldita.es, 28 July 2023, https://maldita.es/malditobulo/20230821/pucherazo-post-electoral-elecciones-generales-2023/. Accessed 5 September 2024.
[6] Ibid.
[7] "News - IEC dismisses as fake news special vote for over 60s." SABC Elections, 30 April 2024, https://elections.sabc.co.za/elections2024/news/iec-dismisses-as-fake-news-special-vote-for-over-60s/. Accessed 5 September 2024.
[8] One claim with echoes of ongoing conspiracy theories in the United States following the 2020 election was that there were "extra votes"— specifically over 6 million additional votes— tabulated following the May 14, 2023 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Turkey resulting in the re-election of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. *See* "14 Mayıs seçimlerinde fazladan 6 milyon 770 bin 786 oy kullanıldığı iddiası - 14 Mayıs seçimlerinde fazladan 6 milyon 770 bin 786 oy kullanıldığı iddiası." Teyit, 17 May 2023, https://teyit.org/analiz/14-mayis-secimlerinde-fazladan-6-milyon-770-bin-786-oy-kullanildigi-iddiasi. Accessed 5 September 2024.
[9]"99 ve 98 numara ile başlayan yabancı kimlik numarasına sahip sığınmacılarla ilgili iddialar." Teyit, 14 April 2023, https://teyit.org/analiz/99-ve-98-numara-ile-baslayan-yabanci-kimlik-numarasina-sahip-siginmacilarla-ilgili-iddialar#99-ile-baslayan-numara-gecici-koruma-altina-alinan-multecilere-veriliyor. Accessed 5 September 2024.
[10] "Fałszowanie wyborów z udziałem Ukraińców? Teoria spiskowa." Demagog, 18 July 2023, https://demagog.org.pl/fake_news/falszowanie-wyborow-z-udzialem-ukraincow-teoria-spiskowa/. Accessed 5 September 2024.

Unrelatedly, but which further restricted his reach, Kolonko's YouTube channels ceased operating later in 2023, soon after he threatened to kill Polish President Andrzej Duda.[11]

**Spain:** False claims on Facebook, X, and Telegram stated that over half a million new Spanish citizens living in Latin America who were naturalized under a new Spanish heritage law[12] would be voting in the general election, including a 700% increase in such overseas voters in Madrid alone.[13] The claims were debunked by Comprobado.es, "an alliance of fact-checkers and media outlets to combat disinformation about the general elections."[14]

## The Use, Misuse, and Gray Zone of AI

In the run-up to the "super election year" of 2024, many experts and governments warned of the potential misuse of AI to manipulate democratic elections. While interference in foreign and domestic elections has been a threat to liberal democracies for some time, technological developments and in particular the widespread public availability of new generative AI tools have the potential to enable bad actors to develop high-quality synthetic disinformation at an unprecedented speed and scale. However, well into 2024, the results are relatively mixed. There is only one election (the case of Slovakia described above) where it appears AI-generated disinformation was potentially the but-for cause of a different election result. As described below, *generative AI has been used to create deepfakes in recent global elections, as well as misleading yet legal content in a "gray zone" such as avatars and memes but attempts to create an election crisis or overturn a legitimate election result with the aid of generative AI have otherwise failed.*

**India**: During the Spring 2024 campaign season for elections to the Indian Parliament, manipulated videos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's top aides circulated on social media. One showed Home Minister Amit Shah stating that the ruling BJP would stop certain social guarantees for minorities.[15] Shah responded on X by posting his original video and the edited fake speech. A speech by opposition party leader Kumari Mayawati was separately misleadingly edited to make it appear as if she was endorsing Modi.[16] The speech was debunked by domestic and international media fact checkers. Deepfakes of two Bollywood

[11] "Mariusz Max Kolonko groził śmiercią Andrzejowi Dudzie. Prokuratura przesłuchuje świadków." Wirtualne Media, 8 December 2023, https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/mariusz-max-kolonko-prezydent-andrzej-duda-prokuratura-przestepstwo. Accessed 5 September 2024.
[12] "Cómo se está usando el voto CERA para promover la narrativa del pucherazo electoral en el 23-J." maldita.es, 20 July 2023, https://maldita.es/malditobulo/20230720/voto-cera-pucherazo-elecciones-generales-23j/.
[13] "El voto en Madrid de residentes en el extranjero no ha aumentado un 700 %." Newtral.es, 7 July 2023, https://www.newtral.es/voto-extranjero-madrid-cera-elecciones/20230707/. Accessed 5 September 2024
[14] Comprobado · Alianza de verificadores y medios para luchar contra la desinformación sobre las elecciones generales, https://comprobado.es/. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[15] "Fake videos of Modi aides trigger political showdown in India election." The Hindu, 6 May 2024, https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/fake-videos-of-modi-aides-trigger-political-showdown-in-india-election/article68144464.ece. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[16] "Fact Check: Viral video alleging Mayawati's support for BJP debunked." Hindustan Times, 6 May 2024, https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fact-check-did-president-droupadi-murmu-accompany-pm-modi-during-his-nomination-for-2024-elections-101714982168153.html. Accessed 6 September 2024.

stars criticizing Modi went viral, though seemingly had no effect on the election other than heightening concerns over the use of generative AI tools.[17]

**Indonesia**: Generative AI had a visible role in February in the presidential election campaign in Indonesia, the world's third largest democracy. A fake video of former President Suharto, who ruled Indonesia as a dictator for 30 years and died in 2008, was created and shared by the Golkar party, depicting Suharto endorsing their candidates.[18] Another tactic was the use of an AI-generated avatar to give presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto — who was found guilty of human rights crimes during his tenure as an army general — a completely new image that all but replaced his own during the campaign and was featured in dancing videos on TikTok appealing to the young Indonesian population.[19]

**Mexico:** Unknown parties have circulated deepfakes targeting President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, including a video in which she appears to promote a pyramid scheme — likely intended both to generate profit for outside groups and to damage her electoral prospects — as well as an audio clip in which she allegedly discusses her campaign failing in a specific Mexican state that was released just weeks before the election in June.[20]

## Foreign Interference in 2024 Global Elections

Recent elections have highlighted how both foreign and domestic bad actors are continuing to capitalize on technological advances to attempt to interfere in elections.. Russia continues to play an outsized role in foreign influence efforts, and Moscow's willingness to engage in high-risk but potentially high-reward methods might be higher this year because of the increased stakes in its war with Ukraine.[21] China also has honed highly sophisticated influence methods.[22] Other countries, including Israel[23] and Iran,[24] that have also developed their influence operation capabilities.

[17] Kalra, Aditya, et al. "Deepfakes of Bollywood stars spark worries of AI meddling in India election." Reuters, 21 April 2024, https://www.reuters.com/world/india/deepfakes-bollywood-stars-spark-worries-ai-meddling-india-election-2024-04-22/. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[18] "Fake Suharto video fuels debate on AI use in Indonesian election campaign." Benar News, 12 January 2024, https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/indonesian/suharto-deepfake-used-in-election-campaign-01122024135217.html. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[19] Lamb, Kate, et al. "Generative AI may change elections this year. Indonesia shows how." Reuters, 8 February 2024, https://www.reuters.com/technology/generative-ai-faces-major-test-indonesia-holds-largest-election-since-boom-2024-02-08/. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[20] "Video circulating of Claudia Sheinbaum is apparently a 'deepfake.'" Mexico News Daily, 26 January 2024, https://mexiconewsdaily.com/politics/video-circulating-of-claudia-sheinbaum-is-apparently-a-deepfake/. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[21] On September 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted two Russian nationals affiliated with Russian state-controlled media outlet RT for creating and distributing Russian government messaging — some of which was aimed at undermining the U.S. relationship with Ukraine — through a US media company. This campaign echoed Russia's efforts to sow division in Europe and erode support for Ukraine in the run-up to the European Parliament elections in June 2024 by impersonating legitimate news outlets and amplifying fake pro-Russian content. "Two RT Employees Indicted for Covertly Funding and Directing U.S. Company that Published Thousands of Videos in Furtherance of Russian Interests." U.S. Department of Justice, 4 September 2024, https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-rt-employees-indicted-covertly-funding-and-directing-us-company-published-thousands and "Doppelganger Strikes Back: Unveiling FIMI Activities Targeting European Parliament Elections." EUvsDisinfo, 19 June 2024, https://euvsdisinfo.eu/doppelganger-strikes-back-unveiling-fimi-activities-targeting-european-parliament-elections/. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[22] "ODNI Releases 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community." Office of the Director of National Intelligence, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/press-releases-2024/3789-odni-releases-2024-annual-threat-assessment-of-the-u-s-intelligence-community. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[23] Gedeon, Joseph, and Maggie Miller. "Israel targeted more than 120 US lawmakers in a disinformation campaign." Politico, 5 June 2024, https://www.politico.com/news/2024/06/05/israel-targeted-lawmakers-in-disinformation-campaign-00161906. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[24] "Joint ODNI, FBI, and CISA Statement on Iranian Election Influence Efforts." Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, 19 August 2024, https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/joint-odni-fbi-and-cisa-statement-on-iranian-election-influence-efforts. Accessed 5 September 2024.

**Germany:** In May 2024, just one month before the European Parliament elections, the campaign of Ursula von der Leyen, current President of the European Commission and lead candidate of the center-right European People's Party, was targeted by a cyber-attack.[25] The cyber-attack, carried out by bots, hit von der Leyen's electoral website ursula2024.eu, attempting to disrupt her campaign. On June 1, von der Leyen's home party in Germany, the Christian Democrats (CDU), was hit by another serious cyber-attack, indicating a pattern of targeting center-right parties associated with von der Leyen leading up to the election.[26]

**Poland:** Less than two weeks before the European Parliament elections, a national news agency carried a fake report saying that Polish Prime Minister Tusk was mobilizing 200,000 men to be sent to Ukraine, an action that could have caused panic or diminished support for his government.[27] Polish authorities[28] blamed Russia for the apparent hack. The news agency removed the report minutes later and issued a statement saying that it was not the source. The European Union's External Action Service's "EUvsDisinfo" disinformation team also debunked a Russian-language video on YouTube that said citizens were fleeing "dictatorship" in Poland to seek refuge in Belarus.[29]

**Taiwan:** Chinese state-backed actors used a variety of tools to interfere in the Taiwanese presidential and legislative elections, especially generative AI. On election day, a group close to the Chinese Communist Party posted an AI-generated recording of prominent businessman and former presidential candidate Terry Gou supporting another candidate.[30] However, Gou had never made such an endorsement, and YouTube along with other social media platforms quickly removed the recording. After voting ended, rumors of vote fraud swirled. In a widely shared video, a woman counting votes mistakenly enters one in the column for the wrong candidate.[31] However, fact-checkers discovered this video was edited and subsequently debunked it as Chinese-origin disinformation. Despite these high profile and well-crafted attempts to interfere with its election, Taiwan was able to effectively respond to Chinese disinformation, mainly because of its multifaceted approach that relied

---

[25] Ahmatović, Šejla. "Von der Leyen's campaign website hit by cyberattack." POLITICO.eu, 8 May 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/ursula-von-der-leyen-campaign-website-attack-cybersecurity-eu-election/. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[26] "Germany: Major hack targets center-right CDU party – DW – 06/01/2024." DW, 1 June 2024, https://www.dw.com/en/germany-major-hack-targets-center-right-cdu-party/a-69242147. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[27]"Poland says a fake news report on mobilizing 200000 men was likely the work of Russia." AP News, 31 May 2024, https://apnews.com/article/poland-cyberattack-russia-fake-news-mobilization-f5c1cfa4d2b0b0f7e4207e416e19eee0. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[28] Ibid.
[29] EUvDisinfo. "DISINFO: Poles are fleeing the Polish dictatorship and are seeking refuge in Belarus." European Union, European External Action Service East StratCom Task Force, https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/poles-are-fleeing-polish-dictatorship-and-are-seeking-refuge-in-belarus/.
[30] "Microsoft Threat Intelligence: East Asia threat actors employ unique methods." Microsoft, https://cdn-dynmedia-1.microsoft.com/is/content/microsoftcorp/microsoft/final/en-us/microsoft-brand/documents/MTAC-East-Asia-Report.pdf. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[31] "【查證】網傳唱三號畫二號的開票？當下已立即修正！影片未呈現完整情況." MyGoPen, 17 January 2024, https://www.mygopen.com/2024/01/Changhua.html. Accessed 6 September 2024.

on government, independent fact-check groups, and private citizens to call out disinformation.[32]

# Lessons for the U.S. 2024 General Election

The examples above are only illustrative highlights of the disinformation and foreign interference strategies used in recent global elections. In most cases, *disinformation and interference did not directly affect the results of the election* or singularly tip a population to reject their country's election results, even in cases such as India and Spain which experienced a wide array of negative interference tactics as described above and more. However, *there was at least one case, in Slovakia, where disinformation and an AI-generated deepfake was a contributing cause – and potentially even a but-for cause – of swinging the election to the winning candidate*. There are also other elections, such as in Taiwan and Spain, where the election system held, despite extremely sophisticated or high volume attempts to interfere with the election.

The United States is already facing a disinformation and interference environment on a par with the most extreme examples offered above[33]. *Concerned U.S. actors must take steps[34] to follow other countries in resilience against these attacks on our elections and our institutions.*

## Lock Arms Against Foreign Interference

Russia is likely to build upon its sophisticated past influence campaigns as it ramps up efforts to interfere in U.S. politics ahead of the election. The United States will also need to guard against increased influence operations capabilities of other countries and nonstate actors,whose efforts may be difficult for Americans to detect if they use different tactics than Russia. *The United States should take its cue from past American and European successes in undercutting foreign interference efforts by encouraging government transparency and downplaying false and misleading content.* The swift efforts by U.S. officials and media to publicly identify the Trump campaign materials released by hackers linked to Iran undercut that attempted influence operation and proves the value of this approach.

> **Promote transparency, adopt best practices**: While the federal government cannot and should not censor content, it can work with state and local governments to disseminate

---

[32] Klepper, David, and Huizhong Wu. "How Taiwan beat back disinformation and preserved the integrity of its election." AP News, 29 January 2024, https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-election-china-disinformation-vote-fraud-4968ef08fd13821e359b8e195b12919c. Accessed 6 September 2024.

[33] For an up to date resource tracking disinformation narratives and providing clarifications to debunk them, see Task Force member organization Brennan Center for Justice's "Election Rumors in 2024", https://www.brennancenter.org/series/election-rumors-2024, updated in collaboration with the Alliance for Securing Democracy, the Atlantic Council, and other partners

[34] Although this document is focused on lessons learned from recent global elections, there are many complementary steps that U.S. civil society leaders, media, and the general public can take to build trust in the U.S. election infrastructure and build resilience against foreign interference and disinformation. See Task Force member organization Issue One's "How Elections Work: Election Integrity Toolkit", https://www.howelectionswork.org/resources; and the joint publication from Task Force member organization Bipartisan Policy Center, Issue One, and R Street: "United in Security: How Every State Protects Your Vote", https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/united-in-security-state-vote-protections/ for tools to assist in these efforts, as well as the Task Force member organization Interfaith America's "Faith in Elections Playbook", https://www.interfaithamerica.org/resources/faith-in-elections/, tailored to support faith leaders and community members in these efforts.

correct information to the public. As other countries have shown, ***government and campaign collaboration to share the truth is an effective model to demonstrate national unity and oppose foreign efforts to sow confusion and mistrust***. Campaigns should publicize hacking attempts against them as soon as they become aware of them, to help gain control of the narrative following any subsequent disclosure of hacked material. In order to reduce the impact of cloned official websites (as seen in the Doppelganger network's cloning of European news sites, referenced in footnote 21), election officials should transition websites to .gov domains and/or publicize that they have done so.

**Quiet foreign narratives**: ***The media and civil society should amplify verified facts and not drive attention to false and misleading content to disincentivize foreign interference and limit its reach within the United States.*** In conjunction with effective action within hours from President Macron's campaign[35] France's mandatory 44-hour media blackout ahead of elections blunted some of the impact of the "MacronLeaks" of a large volume of actual hacked material and forgeries on the French presidential elections in 2017.[36] Slovakia's media blackout conversely allowed the deepfake audio clip to go viral with limited public clarification, which allowed the deepfake to potentially swing the election. The U.S. does not have a media blackout period; thus, the media and civil society should take their cue from Taiwan's multifaceted and coordinated approach and focus on disseminating accurate information when false content is likely to reach large numbers of voters but not give attention to false narratives that are unlikely to go viral.

**Expect Fake October, November, and December Non-Surprises:** The media and civil society should be on high alert for deceptive AI-generated or AI-manipulated information and imagery timed around the election — a popular foreign influence tactic — so they can identify and de-amplify that material. ***This is the best way to avoid a potentially election-changing impact like what happened in Slovakia.*** They should be especially mindful of AI-manipulated material that is seeded in otherwise legitimate files, modeled after the "MacronLeaks" in 2017. They should also be prepared for cyberattacks on key electoral and political institutions using AI that aim to cast doubt on the integrity of the election.

---

[35] In a public statement published hours after the leak and four minutes before the start of the media blackout period, President Macron's campaign declared that the leaked material was a combination of forged and authentic material, and as such entirely intended to sow disinformation and distrust. With the media blackout immediately following this statement, there was not an opening to widely rebut it or amplify the leaked material through both conventional media and social media, despite attempts by alt-right U.S. internet personalities, Wikileaks, and Russia-affiliated bots to do so. Wemer, David A. "The "#Macron leaks" operation: a post-mortem." Atlantic Council, 20 June 2019, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/the-macron-leaks-operation-a-post-mortem/. Accessed 6 September 2024.
[36] Schultheis, Emily. "The Macron Leaks Probably Came Too Late to Change the French Election." The Atlantic, 6 May 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/france-macron-leak-hack/525738/.

## Watch for the Gray Zone Use of AI and Other Tools

While the advent of artificial intelligence has enabled novel disinformation tactics in recent elections that might not otherwise have been possible, the greatest election threat currently posed by AI is its potential to amplify existing mis- and disinformation and election interference narratives. In addition to simply repeating existing false narratives, synthetic content can be used to engage in subtle manipulation and parody, to flood communication channels, and to seed foreign interference material more effectively.[37]

**Minimize AI-generated celebrity content and parodies:** Political campaigns and civil society should refrain from creating or sharing AI-generated celebrity endorsements or commentary for their candidates or causes, even if they are intended to be obvious parodies. When these manipulated endorsements do occur, such as when deepfakes of Indian movie and sports stars opining on politicians circulated before their national election, or when former U.S. President Donald Trump shared a fake, AI-generated endorsement of his campaign by Taylor Swift,[38] civil society and the media should focus on amplifying accurate information and take care to not spread these false endorsements and criticisms. *Similarly, media and civil society should avoid amplifying AI-generated parody content in their election-related work, as humorous parody content will be more likely to stick with many audiences than whatever context they offer.*

**Expect subtle manipulation:** The tactic of selectively editing genuine videos in the Indian and Taiwanese election cycles points to the mis- and disinformation potential of authentic content that is only lightly modified. Both sophisticated AI tools and widely available apps to create "cheap fakes" are already being employed to create this content in the U.S. 2024 election.[39] *These tactics could produce content that substantiates false claims while appearing to be technically authentic, and any subsequent debunking might have limited effectiveness in a fast-moving information environment immediately before or after the election.*

---

The National Task Force on Election Crises is a diverse, cross-partisan group of more than 50 experts in election law, election administration, national security, cybersecurity, voting rights, civil rights, technology, media, public health, and emergency response. The Task Force's mission is to use its expertise to help civil society and decision-makers prevent, prepare for, and mitigate a range of election crises. The only electoral outcomes the Task Force advocates for are free, fair, and safe elections in the United States.

---

[37] Growing public familiarity with the power of artificial intelligence also raises the possibility of public figures making bad-faith assertions that controversial or unflattering legitimate audio content or video footage is actually AI-generated and false, a dynamic known as the "liar's dividend." While there are no known examples of this tactic in recent global elections, Americans should nonetheless remain vigilant for false claims about AI usage.
[38] Robins-Early, Nick. "How did Donald Trump end up posting Taylor Swift deep fakes?" The Guardian, 26 August 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/article/2024/aug/24/trump-taylor-swift-deepfakes-ai.
[39] Swann, Sara. "'Cheap fake' videos, and the phrase itself, take the 2024 election's center stage." Poynter, 24 June 2024, https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2024/cheap-fake-edited-video-no-context-biden-trump/. Accessed 6 September 2024.