

Riga StratCom Dialogue 2022

25 – 26 May 2022 | Riga, Latvia

AGENDA

DAY 1 – 25 MAY

08:30 – 09:30 REGISTRATION

09:30 – 10:00 OPENING REMARKS

- » **Mr Jānis Sārts**, Director, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence
- » **Mr Krišjānis Kariņš**, Prime Minister of Republic of Latvia

10:00 – 11:30 Under fire: Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the global information space

In February, Russia launched an unprovoked and unjustified military attack against Ukraine, posing the gravest threat to Euro-Atlantic security in decades. As part of this attack, it has further invaded the global information space with everything from misleading narratives to deceiving images and flat-out lies. What communication tactics has the Kremlin used to justify war and to what impact? How effective has the communication response been by Ukraine and the West? Which of our long-standing assumptions and beliefs about Russian communication warfare have been confirmed or proven wrong?

Moderator:

- » **Dr Maxine David**, Lecturer in European Studies at Leiden University and Research Fellow at the Global Europe Centre, University of Kent

Speakers:

- » **Mr Ross Burley**, Co-Founder & Executive Director, the Centre for Information Resilience
- » **Amb Juris Poikāns**, Ambassador of Latvia to Poland
- » **Ms Liubov Tsybulska**, Founder of the Centre for Strategic Communications and Information Security under the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine

11:30 – 12:00 COFFEE BREAK

12:00 – 13:30 Battlefields in the mind: societal resilience and cognitive defence

Undermining an opponent's will without firing a shot is an ancient strategy with continued appeal. Societal resilience is key to effective defence. In the past, imminent threats and clear enemies have helped unite societies in times of crisis. But today, social media's information silos and echo chambers have fragmented people into their own micro worlds. Against this backdrop, how do we make sure that people in democracies can find common ground and unite to meet the myriad crises we face?

Moderator:

- » **Ms Elīna Lange-Ionatamishvili**, Senior Expert, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

Speakers:

- » **Amb Mark Regev**, Senior Fellow, The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at Tel Aviv University
- » **Ms Natalya Popovich**, Co-founder, Ukrainian Crisis Media Center
- » **Mr Paul Bell**, Strategic and Conflict Communications Consultant

13:30 – 14:30 LUNCH

14:30 – 16:00

What strategic communications has to say about NATO's new Strategic Concept

When NATO leaders meet at the Madrid summit later this year, they will finalise the new Strategic Concept and determine the Alliance's approach to defence and deterrence for the next decade. This is a pivotal time for the future role of strategic communications in NATO. In the lead-up to the summit, people thinking about and practicing strategic communications must clarify the following questions: How can a strategic communications mindset further strengthen NATO deterrence? What are the main tensions in the field of strategic communications which must be heeded in the new Strategic Concept? And more generally, what are the prerequisites and priorities for its implementation over the next years?

» **Moderator: Dr Neville Bolt**, Director, King's Centre for Strategic Communications

Speakers:

- » **Dr Artis Pabriks**, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia
- » **Amb Julianne Smith**, United States Permanent Representative to NATO
- » **Mr Giedrimas Jeglinskas**, Assistant Secretary General, NATO

16:00 – 16:30

COFFEE BREAK

16:30 – 18:00

Foreign election interference: where we are today

Years after extensive Russian election meddling in the United States and elsewhere was brought to light, we are still grappling with its political, legal, and social ramifications. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, today's information environment has become even more tense. As tensions continue to escalate between Russia and the West, are governments, media, and NGOs ready to fight disinformation and foreign interference and secure electoral integrity? The value liberal democracies place on freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, and a competitive media environment means our societies are inherently vulnerable to ruthless and cynical methods of manipulation. Can we finally address the challenge of identifying and holding to account those who peddle disinformation? And, if not, what are avenues available to nation states in fighting and retaliating against foreign interference?

Moderator:

- » **Mr Sebastian Bay**, Team Leader, Election Security, Swedish Election Authority

Speakers:

- » **Ms Laura Thornton**, Director and Senior Fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy, German Marshall Fund
- » **Dr Marija Golubeva**, Former Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia
- » **Dr Martyna Bildziukiewicz**, Head, East StratCom Task Force, European External Action Service
- » **Mr Raphaël Glucksmann**, Member of the European Parliament, the Chair of the Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation

18:00 – 18:15

CLOSING REMARKS

18:15 – 20:30

DINNER

DAY 2 – 26 MAY

09:00 – 09:45

REGISTRATION

09:45 – 10:00

OPENING REMARKS

10:00 – 11:30

Formulating a rules-based order for the digital age: big tech in the spotlight

Billions of people begin and end their days immersed in online environments and virtual reality. While the offline world has largely been marked by peace, in the online world, an information battleground is only ever a few clicks away. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we are witnessing the coalescing of offline and online battlegrounds. Social media giants know that decisions they make at this time concerning their platforms can be matters of life or death and provoke tectonic geopolitical shifts. Russia's invasion has highlighted still unanswered questions concerning how much responsibility big tech and social media companies have in preventing online propaganda. For example, what have these companies done to limit the spread of Russian disinformation about the war in Ukraine? What role can NATO play in envisioning and realising what a rules-based virtual life should look like?

- » **Moderator: Mr Felix Kartte**, Senior Advisor, Reset

Speakers:

- » **Mr David Agranovich**, Director, Global Threat Disruption, Meta (Facebook)
- » **Dr Yoel Roth**, Senior Director of Safety & Integrity, Twitter
- » **Ms Quinn McKew**, Executive Director, Article 19

11:30 – 12:00 COFFEE BREAK

12:00 – 13:30 How to be smart about Artificial Intelligence

Over the past ten years, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning has experienced unprecedented growth. These developments have made it easier for malicious actors to manipulate audiences, but have also offered up new methods to counter the spread of disinformation. As the application of AI reaches into more areas of human life, what risks and opportunities must we balance against each other? What can and should be done to ensure oversight and control? More fundamentally, the immersive experiences of enhanced reality and virtual reality are poised to profoundly alter our perception of reality. Will this change what we believe and who we think we are?

» **Moderator: Ms Nora Biteniece**, Consultant, the State Chancellery of Latvia

Speakers:

- » **Dr Jean-Christophe Boucher**, Professor, School of Public Policy, Department of Political Science, University of Calgary
- » **Mr Kevin Zerrusen**, Chief Operating Officer, Reality Defender
- » **Mr Frantisek Vrabel**, CEO, Semantic Visions

13:30 – 14:30 LUNCH

14:30 – 15:00 KEYNOTE

» **General Philippe Lavigne**, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

15:00 – 16:30 War of the words: military strategy and strategic communications

A motivated soldier, demoralised enemy, and supportive population are the dream of any commander. Those who view conflict through the lens of strategic communications know that these key ingredients of victory rely on the power of narratives to inspire minds and channel emotion. In a time of informational incoherence and societal division, military commanders have a role to play in both physical and virtual battlefields. Hard questions need to be asked, not in pursuit of final answers, but to remain self-aware and keep pushing strategic communications forward. How do we measure outcomes in the cognitive domain? And how can commanders of Western militaries make sure that the practice of strategic communications are in line with democratic, liberal, and ethical values?

Moderator:

» **Lieutenant Colonel (ret.) Rita LePage**, Strategic Communications Consultant

Speakers:

- » **Major General (ret.) Pekka Toveri**, Chairman, Finnish Strategic Studies Support Foundation
- » **Mr Jay H. Janzen**, Director of the Communications Division, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
- » **Mr Jānis Kažociņš**, National Security Adviser to the President of Latvia

16:00 – 16:30 CLOSING REMARKS

» **Mr Jānis Sārts**, Director, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

16:45 – 18:00 VERRE DE L'AMITIE

