

Biden administration sets up Disinformation Governance Board ahead of 2022 elections

Kevin Reed
2 May 2022

The secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Alejandro Mayorkas, revealed last week during several appearances before Congress that the Biden administration was creating a Disinformation Governance Board in advance of the 2022 midterm elections.

Speaking before the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, called to discuss the DHS budget for 2023, Mayorkas said that the board had just been established to combat disinformation and misinformation and to “bring the resources of [DHS] together to address this threat.”

Mayorkas added that the department is focused on the spread of disinformation in minority communities and that the new board would help DHS be more effective in combatting the purported threat “not only to election security but to our national security.”

A report by the Associated Press on Thursday said that DHS is “stepping up an effort to counter disinformation coming from Russia as well as misleading information that human smugglers circulate to target migrants hoping to travel to the U.S.-Mexico border.”

The story quoted from a DHS statement that said, “The spread of disinformation can affect border security, Americans’ safety during disasters, and public trust in our democratic institutions,” but no one from the department would respond to AP requests for an interview on the matter.

Although no details about the functioning of the governance board, its purpose or duties had been published prior to Mayorkas’ testimony, the secretary told the House hearing that it would be co-chaired by Undersecretary for Policy Rob Silvers and principal deputy general counsel Jennifer Gaskill.

An indication of the reactionary nature of the DHS

board was revealed in the appointment of Nina Jankowicz as executive director. According to her official bio, Jankowicz was a “disinformation fellow” at the Wilson Center—a nonpartisan foreign policy think tank named after Woodrow Wilson—and she “advised the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry” and oversaw “Russia and Belarus programs at the National Democratic Institute (NDI).”

The NDI is a well-known nongovernmental organization that engages in US imperialist and CIA-sponsored political interventions in countries, particularly in Latin America, under the banner of “human rights,” “democracy” and “entrepreneurship.” The NDI has counted among its board of directors leading figures of US militarism and war such as Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Paul Wolfowitz, Madeleine Albright and Elliott Abrams.

In a tweet on Wednesday morning, Jankowicz posted, “Cat’s out of the bag: here’s what I’ve been up to the past two months, and why I’ve been a bit quiet on here. Honored to be serving in the Biden Administration @DHSgov and helping shape our counter-disinformation efforts.” In plain language, this means that Jankowicz and the Disinformation Governance Board will be working on shutting down the flow of information that runs counter to the interests of American imperialism, both within the country and abroad, especially as it applies to the war in Ukraine.

Following the hastily prepared announcement by Mayorkas before Congress, a barrage of attacks were launched by right-wing and fascist Republicans, claiming that the board was the Democrats’ response to the purchase of Twitter by Elon Musk and part of a plan to suppress the free speech rights of the ultra-right.

On Monday, DHS published a “Fact Sheet” about the

board aimed at clarifying what it is now calling an “Internal Working Group” that will “address disinformation that threatens the security of the United States.” Among the primary targets of the DHS initiative is “disinformation spread by foreign states such as Russia, China and Iran.”

Significantly, amid all the topics listed by DHS as national security threats—including the activity of “transnational criminal organizations,” “human smugglers” and “malicious actors”—there is not one reference to elected Republican politicians or fascist groups and individuals outside the government who are actively working to disrupt the democratic process in the 2022 elections and previously attempted to overthrow the US Constitution to keep Trump in the White House.

In a tweet on Monday, Trump devotee Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri summed up the Republican response, “There’s no ‘confusion’ over the Biden Disinformation Board. Everyone understands exactly what it is—a censorship committee to punish free speech. Dissolve it now.”

Other Republicans called the board “Orwellian.” The *Wall Street Journal* injected its own anticommunist voice by comparing the DGB to the Soviet-era KGB. Far-right Colorado Republican Congresswoman Lauren Boebert tweeted. “Today’s news of a Biden backed ‘Disinformation Governance Board’ is dystopian. They can’t afford to let the truth be anything but what they say.”

In reality, the Republican response to the DHS disinformation board is part of the ongoing conspiracy against democratic rights that was being run out of the White House during the Trump administration and culminated in the attempt to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential elections with a right-wing coup attempt on January 6, 2021.

While the DHS disinformation effort may cut across some of the conspiracy theories embraced by a faction of extreme right-wing Republicans, the US political establishment and corporate media as a whole have embraced the Biden administration’s militarist arming of Ukraine in the war with Russia, including the preparations for the use of nuclear weapons.

The central target of the Democrats’ disinformation board is anyone who opposes the US imperialist narrative regarding the Russian government of

Vladimir Putin. This includes, above all, left-wing voices who are exposing the role of the US and NATO in instigating and stoking the war with Russia as part of larger geostrategic aims that include war with China. Both the Democrats and Republicans agree that the DHS board should be used for “counter-disinformation” and censorship to silence working class and revolutionary socialist opposition to this imperialist drive for World War III.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact