

Facebook and The Atlantic Council Unite: Now Social Media Giant Serves NATO's Agenda

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Facebook has engaged a think tank funded by weapons manufacturers, branches of the US military and Middle-Eastern monarchies to safeguard the democratic process. It's akin to hiring arsonists to run the fire brigade.

If Facebook truly wanted to “*protect democracy and elections worldwide*,” it would build a broad coalition of experts and activists from a wide and disparate range of the countries it serves. Instead, the American social media giant has outsourced the task to NATO's propaganda wing.

For the uninitiated, the Atlantic Council serves as the American-led alliance's chief advocacy group. And its methods are rather simple: it grants stipends and faux academic titles to various activists that align with NATO's agenda. Thus, lobbyists become “*fellows*” and “*experts*,” while the enterprise constructs a neutral sheen, which is rarely (if ever) challenged by Western media outlets – often reliant on its employees for easy comment and free op-eds.

While that has always been ethically questionable, Facebook's latest move, given its effective monopoly position, is far more sinister. Because it is now tied to a “*think tank*” which has [proposed](#) terrorist attacks in Russia and has [demanded](#) Russian-funded news outlets be forced to register as “*foreign agents*” in the United States.

Make no mistake: this is a dream scenario for NATO and those who depend on it for their livelihoods and status. Because the Atlantic Council is now perfectly positioned to be the tail wagging the Facebook dog in the information space.

Fresh hell

On Thursday, the social network announced how it was “*excited to launch a new partnership with the Atlantic Council, which has a stellar reputation looking at innovative solutions to hard problems.*” It then added that “*experts*” from the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRL) will liaise closely with Facebook's “*security, policy and product teams*” to offer “*real-time insights and updates on emerging threats and disinformation campaigns from around the world.*”

Now, this sort of talk would be fine if Facebook had assembled a diverse group, comprised of stakeholders from a wide range of democracies. But, by selecting a clearly biased actor to police “*misinformation and foreign interference*” during “*elections and other highly sensitive moments*” and also work to “*help educate citizens as well as civil society*,” Mark

Zuckerberg's team has essentially made their company a tool of the US military agenda.

Just look at who [funds](#) the Atlantic Council: donors include military contractors such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon, all of whom directly profit from tensions with powers like Russia and China. Meanwhile, in addition to NATO itself, there are also payments made by the US State Department, along with bungs from the US Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines.

Other major paymasters include the government of the United Arab Emirates, which is, of course, an absolute monarchy. And more UAE cash comes via the Abu Dhabi state oil company and Crescent Petroleum. Not to be [outdone](#), Morocco, again not noted for its freedoms, also throws significant coin into the bucket.

Clear bias

And here's the absurdity inherent in Facebook's approach. It has essentially handed over control to activists who are funded by enemies of democracy and entities which benefit from stirring up hysteria about malevolent external influence in Western elections. Not forgetting, naturally, how the US itself has been, by some distance, the biggest election meddler around.

What's more, the paucity of Western media coverage of Thursday's announcement is alarming, because big-hitters like CNN, the Washington Post, BBC and the New York Times (who all frequently use Atlantic Council lobbyists as guests, "experts" or analysts) more-or-less ignored the story. And the outlets who have covered it, such as CNET and The Hill, failed to reference the think tank's agenda. Notably, influential media journal Adweek even [began](#) its report with a description of the lobby group as "non-partisan."

Now, if you are sitting in Washington, non-partisan may mean supporting neither the Democratic or Republican parties, but in the rest of the world, the Atlantic Council is clearly factional. Because it exists to promote, via NATO, US foreign policy objectives, particularly in Europe.

And, let's be clear, without Moscow as an enemy, NATO ceases to exist. Which means smearing Russia is an existential matter for the Atlantic Council.

As a result, Facebook's new partners bear a vested interest in creating the impression that Moscow is interfering in Western elections. Indeed, given the platform's penetration rates in the country itself, they now also have the power to potentially meddle in Russia's own polls. This hasn't been lost on officials in Moscow who appeared alarmed at the development on Friday.

As for why the Atlantic Council was chosen? Well, only last month Mark Zuckerberg was the subject of an intense [grilling](#) at the US House of Representatives. And what better way to assuage the Washington establishment's fears than to employ workers from NATO's own propaganda adjunct as fact-checkers?

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