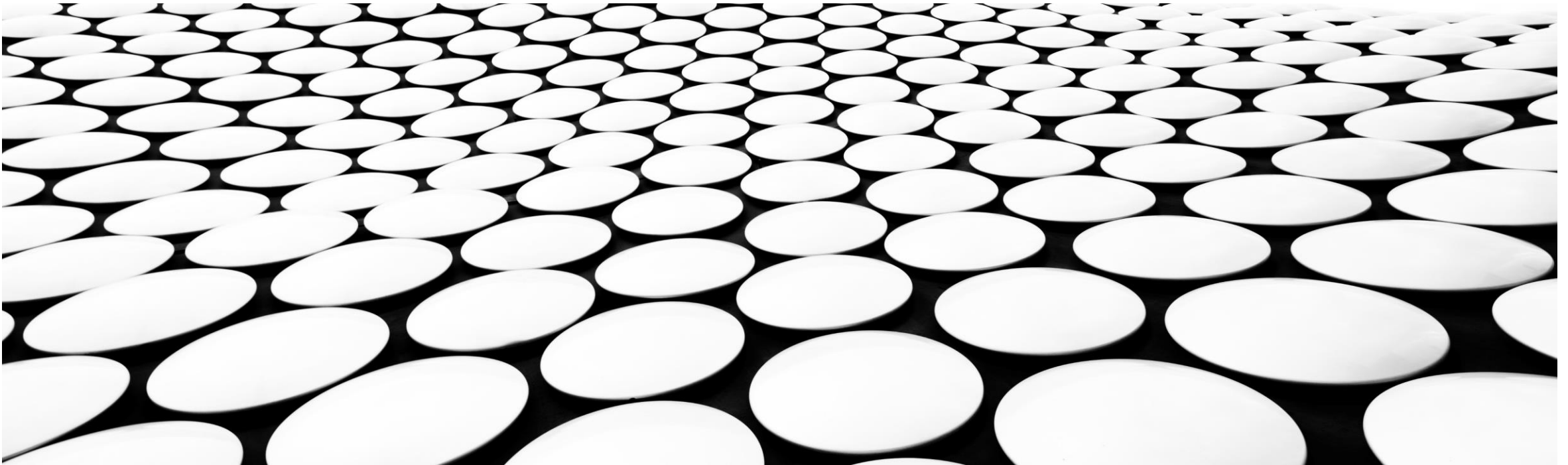


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# INFLUENCE CAMPAIGNS

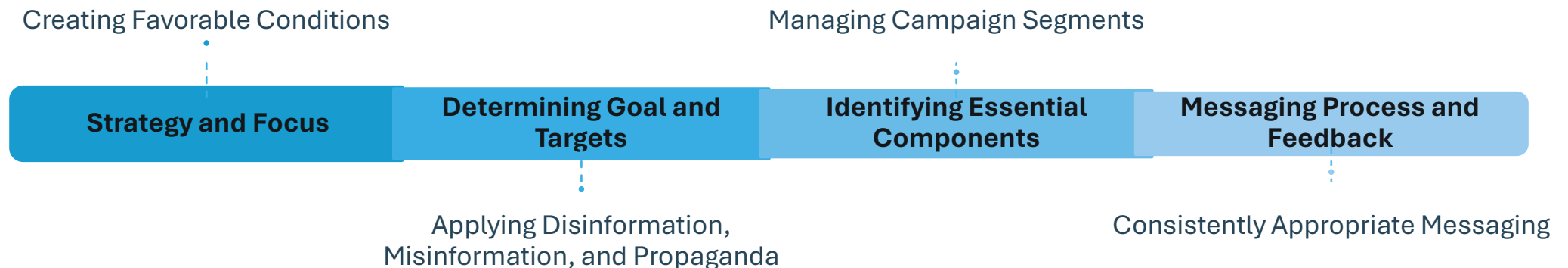
THE ROLE OF INFORMATION MANIPULATION IN DIRECT ACTIONS



**John Rodman**, Strategy Futures Reimagined (SFR), LLC

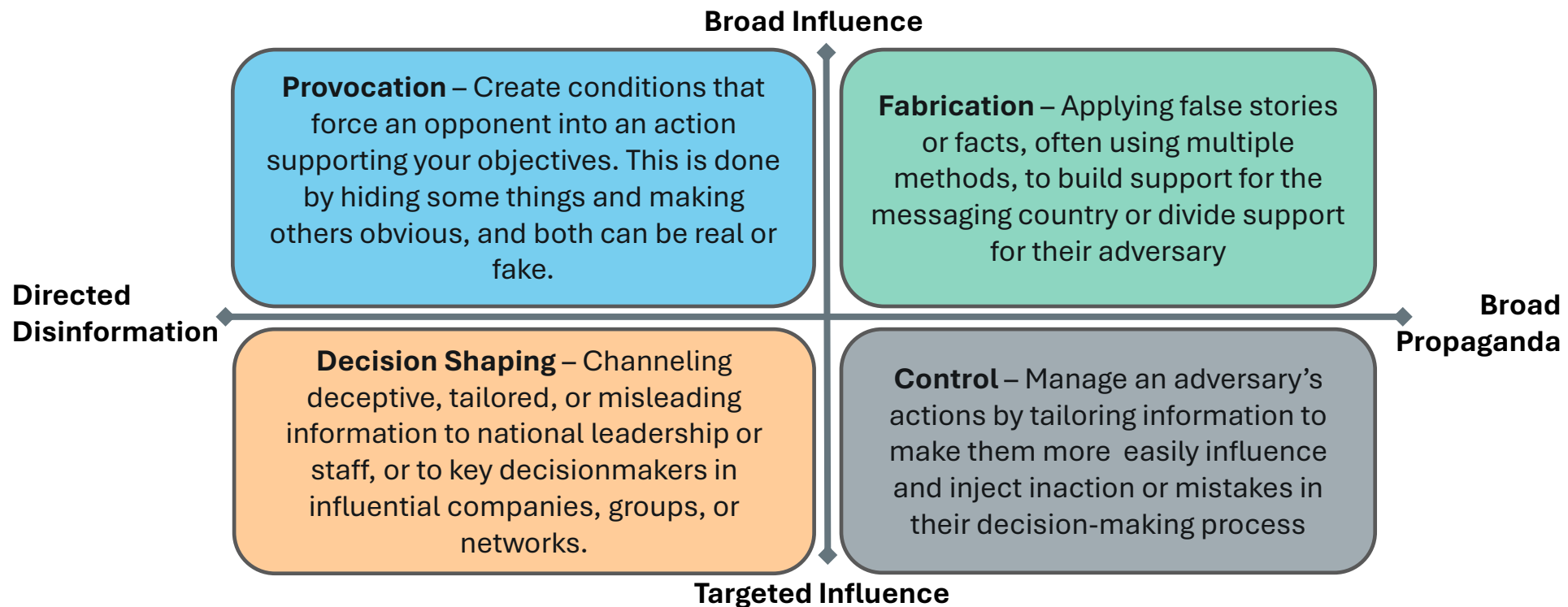
# CORE ELEMENTS OF INFLUENCE CAMPAIGNS

- Influence Campaigns are often long games with big goals of shaping an adversary's decision or opportunity space, but good Campaigns leave room for opportunistic operations.
- Direct actions using manipulated information are often connected to a strategic goal in some way and that intent changes the use and value of all information and dissemination.
- Disinformation provides focused manipulation, misinformation creates decision delay, and propaganda shifts popular opinion—together these tactics can be used in innumerable ways to gain advantage. There is no innocent misuse of information in an influence campaign.
- Successful Influence Campaigns depend on comprehensive knowledge of the target audience, whether an individual or potential influential group.



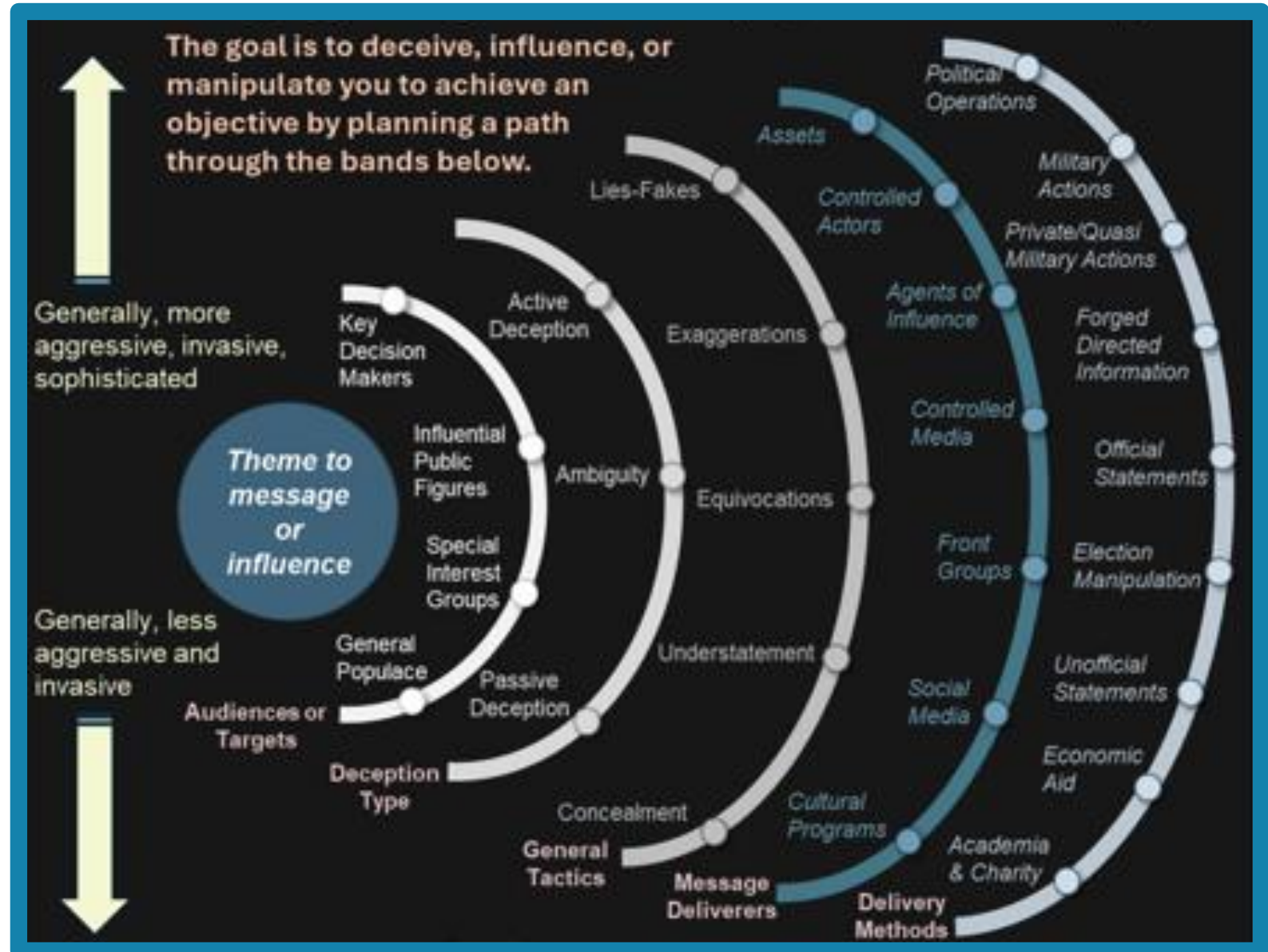
# STRATEGY AND FOCUS OF THE INFLUENCE CAMPAIGN

- Nations create favorable conditions for their strategic goals by manipulating intelligence and diplomatic, economic, military, political, cultural, social, and religious information by combining technology and psychology.
- By systematically creating ambiguity or misleading information the nation hopes to delay or misdirect actions adverse to their goals. The objective is to correctly use Provocation, Fabrication, Control, or Decision Shaping against a target audience so they will assimilate and use the information in a way that benefits their goals.



# THE INFLUENCE SPECTRUM

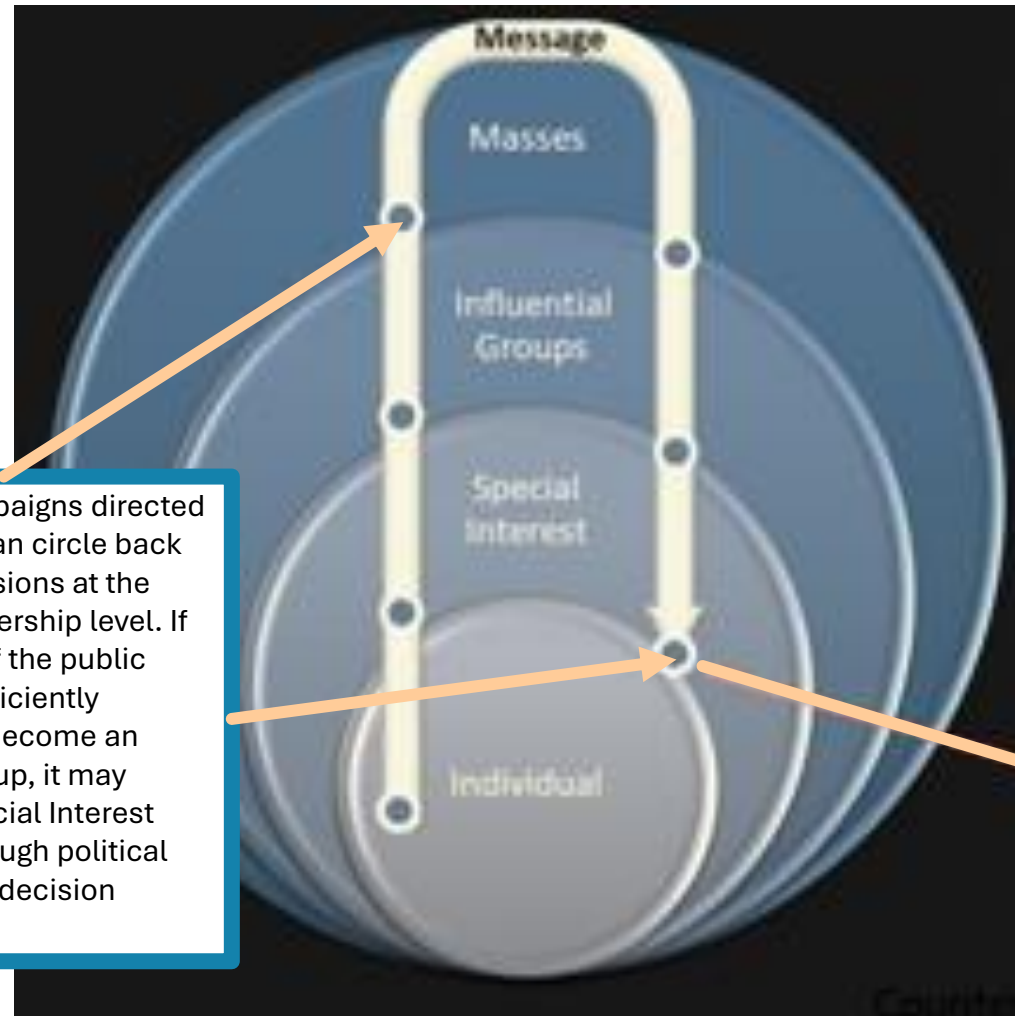
- In general, the more you know about the adversary the more you can tailor the message to influence them in the way you want. This makes the message believable, consistent with their current preferences and biases, and verifiable—through sources they trust (advisors of the same ilk, media they follow, etc.)
- Good influence plans target multiple, reinforcing targets at various levels—leadership, influential groups, mass media—and are complementary or contradictory as needed to convince the group being targeted.
- Pathways are developed, sometimes multiple ones, to achieve behavioral and decisional influence against the adversary. Some paths may be intentionally discoverable, while others may continue for many years undiscovered.



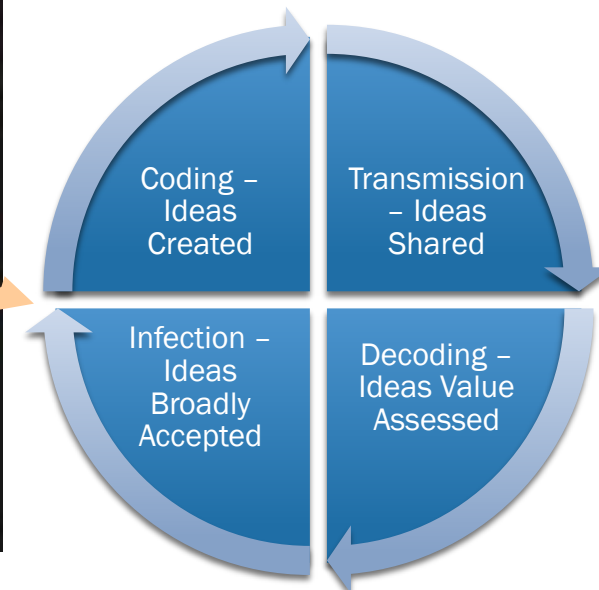
# TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGING AND LEVERAGING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

- In every influence campaign feedback is gathered along the paths chosen. Short-term adjustments are made to the messaging based on feedback and the possibility of a growing awareness by the targeted audience of the influence campaign.
- Some messaging components are added or removed, played or ignored, and exposed or hidden depending on the strategic intent of the influence campaign.

Influence campaigns directed at the public can circle back and force decisions at the individual leadership level. If the segment of the public targeted is sufficiently influenced to become an Influential Group, it may become a Special Interest group with enough political power to sway decision makers.



When influence is applied through disinformation and misinformation, the target begins the process of assimilation. In a sophisticated and important influence campaign, this process is monitored and used to tailor the information as the audience receptivity changes. This is especially important if the information is being transmitted across multiple target audiences.



# KEY ASPECTS OF INFORMATION MANIPULATION TODAY

- The time it takes to disseminate and assess the response to malign information could be near real-time for some actors, depending on their resources, sophistication, and digital tools.
- Influence campaign effectiveness is increased by using more rapid and widespread information insertion into multiple forms of media to create ambiguity, while also targeting specific audiences hungry for clarity in the information space.
- Tailoring to specific audiences and fine tuning information disbursement is benefited by commercial technology used to monitor and segment audiences by receptiveness.
- Effective countering disinformation and misinformation requires a coordinated, comprehensive, and committed effort by governments to educate and protect the public.
- Some aspects of artificial intelligence may be effective in mapping changes in information that indicate direct manipulation, but only if the cultural attributes, political intent, and strategic goals of the country initiating the potentially manipulated information are well understood by the AI platform.
- Careful assessment is necessary to not confuse random information with coordinated information influence campaigns.