

EXAMPLES OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Singapore is not immune to foreign interference. We have been the subject of foreign interference in the past and it may happen again. The Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Bill will counter foreign interference attempts conducted through hostile information campaigns (HICs) and the use of local proxies.

HOSTILE INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

United States Presidential Election 2020

Aim: To discredit candidates and deepen sociopolitical divisions, thereby undermining electoral process.

- Proxies were used to push allegations aimed at discrediting the Democratic Party's candidate.
- Over 1,000 pieces of online content were published against Donald Trump.

EU's Response to COVID-19

Aim: To erode trust in EU's COVID-19 strategy and to spread skepticism of Western-developed vaccines.

- State-controlled media, networks of proxy media outlets and social media (including official diplomatic social media accounts) were used to spread disinformation about side effects of western vaccines and sow doubts.

USE OF LOCAL PROXIES

Interference in Australia

Aim: To advance own interests.

- In 2017, an Australian former Senator apparently received donations from an individual with connections to the foreign government.
- He then advocated for the foreign government's position on the South China Sea.

Interference in Singapore

Aim: To influence and instigate local individuals to oppose the Government.

- In the late 1980s, Mr Hank Hendrickson (the First Secretary at the US Embassy in Singapore) cultivated and instigated former Law Society President Francis Seow to organise a group of lawyers to contest in the 1988 General Election.
- He told another Singaporean lawyer that lawyers should contest elections against the Government.

