

CND Integrity Initiative visit to Oslo, 29-31 Aug 2016

Programme

29 August

1730 -1900 Meeting with Cecilie Prebensen and E Africa team, National Youth Council, re Daesh info and the radicalisation of youth

1930 Dinner meeting with Chris Prebensen and Sven Ullring (former Chairman of Fridtjof Nansen Institute) on getting the Norwegians' attention

30 August

1000 – 1130 Discussion with Kristin Ven Bruusgård Institute for Defence Studies, MOD (kvbruusgaard@ifs.mil.no) on Russian infowar and hybrid war

1130 - 1300 Seminar at the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Chair – Secretary General Kate Hansen Bundt (bundt@dnak.org): speakers - Kristin Ven Bruusgård and Chris Donnelly; *From Cold War to Hot Peace, Russia's tools of influence and information warfare*

1330- 1530 Informal Workshop on *Fighting the Information War*, Chair - Henning-Andre Sogaard, Defence Research Institute, MOD (Henning-Andre.Sogaard@ffi.no).

Intro by Chris Donnelly about the *Integrity Initiative* background and concept:

The first workshop in Brussels 22 June, conclusions and lessons learned; where will the international project go from here.

General discussion as to how this can be generated in Norway nationally, across Nordic states, and Internationally. Building the cooperation between the classified and unclassified world, keeping in mind that one of the main targets is the hearts and minds of the public.

1600-1800 Meeting with Tor Bukkvoll, Defence Research Institute (tor.bukkvoll@ffi.no) on info war as an element of the Ukraine conflict.

1900 Working dinner to summarize and plan the way forward.

31 August

1000 Meeting to discuss countering radicalisation with Superintendent Andreas Corvalan, Oslo Police, i/c radicalisation, and Jon Fitje Hoffman, Director Strategic Analysis, Police Security Service

1200 Meeting with Elin Solberg and Siv Syversen-Nordberg, responsible for counter-radicalisation at the Ministry of Justice

1330 Chris Prebensen: next steps re creating in Norway an education process on Russian influence and disinformation

The current situation in Norway

- The community of those in Norway across government and outside government studying Russia, hybrid warfare, info & influence etc. Do not often get together to exchange ideas.

- A lot of good work on disinformation and influence from Russia is being done in Governmental bodies (PST, Int Svce, Institute for Defence Studies, Communications Security, Civil Preparedness Directorate). But there is very little effective transmission of this to the press, academia and public understanding.
- There is even a sense in some quarters (military, political, public) that, because Oslo is not one of Russia's main direct disinformation targets, this issue is not so important. This fails to recognise that Norway would be seriously affected by Russian influence on Allies, and ignores what is happening in the North and in other Nordic countries.
- The Norwegian public are generally inclined to be soft on Russia as a near neighbour in the North (where there is a tradition of friendship and a good working relationship). Although the public can be hard-nosed about Putin and Moscow's policies, their scepticism of US/western politics can lead to their being less critical of Russia's position at times. Norwegian journalists tend to give Russian information the same weight as western information, not testing its veracity. The essential strategic balance between working with Russia on mutually important issues and standing up to pressure from Russia is not always maintained.
- Since 2013, less detailed attention has been given to the High North and Russia's increasing military presence. Since 2015 there has been a neglecting of the valuable information opportunity provided by *The Barents Observer*, the Independent Barents Council's proven means for transmitting straight news and information to Russian audiences both within Russia (as far as Moscow) and to Russians now resident in North Norway (currently 25% of the population of the three northern counties).
- There is now growing governmental concern about Russian influence (a) on the population in North Norway and (b) on international opinion concerning the High North sea route and the status of Svalbard. Moreover, Norwegians working in Northern Russia are now experiencing pressure and harassment from the FSB and finding the authorities generally much more antagonistic.

Next steps

- Follow up by exploiting Ben Nimmo's visit to Oslo to talk to the army at the end of September by arranging a follow up talk to an Atlantic Committee audience.
- Identify and bring to this talk a group of interested, competent Norwegians as the basis for a new network to become de facto part of the Integrity Initiative. Find someone prepared to coordinate this local network.
- Identify who can write papers on this issue for publication locally and as part of our Integrity network. Stimulate a series of papers.
- Put pressure on governmental bodies to share information, help open source exploitation and improve dissemination.
- Publicise what Russian influence is doing in other countries (Allies on which Norway relies) and what other countries are doing about it.

- Approach influential journalists to pick up this story and educate the public (e.g. Aftenposten; Per Anders Johansson, Moscow correspondent, or, more likely, Per Christian Aale, who heads the European desk). Improve the integrity of Norwegian journalists and encourage their competence and willingness to challenge information sources. Approach academics to track and expose the Russian distortion of history.
- Recognise that there are Russians who oppose Putin and want a democratic Russia, and need us to provide them with information. Focus first on the three northern counties and the High North and help revive the Barents Observer.