

What is Foreign Interference?

  James Gomez
  @jamesgomezsg

"It is usually actions taken by a foreign entity or its partners to secretly subvert a country's national interest, sovereignty, and its political values"

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Definition Issues

Too Broad

Demonising any foreign political expression

Too Narrow

Focused on specific political threats



Key Concern

Covert funding to institutions and persons that can influence political values or control.

Democratic Countries



Cyberattacks: Disruption of official government websites and online services, electronic voting systems and prominent internet infrastructure



Educational Institutions: Covert funding towards research and teaching institutions to influence outputs, expert opinions and student communities, or steal intellectual property



Elections: Influencing election outcomes through online content manipulation and political parties and candidates



Funding: Covert funding to institutions and persons that can influence the democratic values and institutions



Media: Covert and overt actions towards media outlets or prominent media professionals of all kinds to encourage, force or dissuade publications in the interests of a foreign state



NGOs: Covert funding, partnership or involvement aiming to disrupt NGOs operations internationally or influence their ability to collaborate with their partners



Terrorism: Encouraging, funding, offering protection to persons planning or having committed acts of terrorism locally and abroad

Authoritarian Countries



Civil Society Empowerment: Barriers against local civil society organisations' ability to advocate for issues



Loss of Economic Monopolies: Safeguards economic control, including corrupt access, to ensure ability to perpetuate stay in power



Loss of Political Power: Protect political control against creation of independent institutions which challenge its central authority



Western Interventionism: Against political ideas and values that may challenge the views of those in power

On 13 September 2021, the Singapore Government proposed the Foreign Interference Countermeasure Act (FICA) bill in Parliament. To provide some comparison, this fact sheet is based on a review of "foreign interference" laws and political statements of the following countries: Australia, Canada, Central African republic, China, Finland, France, Germany, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, North Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam.