

Foreign AI-Enabled Influence and the 3 November 2026 Midterms

Public Attribution Series, dossier 1: what American bodies said, what vendors found, and what stays unattributed

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TL;DR

Twenty-two days before the midterms, no American executive agency has said on the record that AI-enabled foreign influence targets them. No lab or vendor report in the record ties an AI operation to them either. Researchers and journalists describe a Russian network that already sends doctored video to American viewers, with AI-altered audio in one account. The Washington Post reported on 4 October that a National Intelligence Council product, kept from the public, ranks Russia first among adversaries and notes rising AI use. Anonymous sources carry the account. Read the silence as a gap in the record. Do not read it as safety. Section 8 forecasts the weeks to 9 November and expects noise around the count, with the certified totals untouched.

BLUF

Four calls stand. Silence in American sources is a logged search result, and it proves neither safety nor danger. The best-evidenced foreign AI use aimed at American political audiences is a network of Iran origin that Meta removed, which posed as US activists and posted AI-generated content on American politics. Meta ties it to no named Iranian body and to no election. And Forecast 1 holds at 74 percent: no federal agency will name AI-enabled foreign influence aimed at the midterms before 3 November. Likely (55 to <85), Low confidence. A fourth call looks ahead. Through 9 November, adversaries will work the perception of the count and not the count: a cyber change to any certified result stands at Almost no chance (1 to <5), Moderate confidence. A refresh on 12 October put each call against the newest facts, and no number moved. Section 8.9 shows the test.

Who

Iran: the Islamic Culture and Communications Organization (ICCO), the Islamic Propaganda Office of Khorasan Razavi and the Bina Cultural Observatory, with the IRGC-affiliated channels @hamyane_sepah and @moghavematnews_iran. Russia: Matryoshka, which researchers also call Operation Overload and Microsoft tracks as Storm-1679, and CopyCop, which Recorded Future also tracks as Storm-1516. China: Spamouflage, with no midterm item on file. On the American side: the White House, the Departments of War, Justice, State and Homeland Security, the FBI, ODNI, CISA and NSA, the Election Assistance Commission, NASS and NASED, and the Congress.

What

The American executive record holds four texts on foreign danger to the November elections. None names AI. No text names an adversary. Vendors have reported AI-enabled influence cases with American audiences, and none ties to the midterms. Only the Congress holds a paper that puts Russia, AI and the midterms in one letter, and members of Congress are no executive agency. A New York Times story of 18 September, read in a repost, carries a leaked account in which anonymous officials say Moscow ordered another campaign against the midterms, and analysts and reporters describe doctored videos that match it. Graphika's own page on the wave, which the editor supplied as text, names Operation Overload as the source and says nothing of AI. The Post of 4 October describes an unpublished council product that ranks Russia as the busiest adversary and lists AI among growing tools. No agency has released it.

So What

A client that reads only American sources in the weeks before the vote sees silence and reads safety into it. That reading fails on the record. The same record shows Meta removing an Iran-origin network that spoke to American politics, and it shows press accounts of Matryoshka videos built from real faces and altered speech.

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Brand misuse is the exposure that reaches every firm. Matryoshka wraps its fakes in the logos of CNN, the BBC and the New York Times. A firm with a logo is open to the same treatment. That link is our inference, and the sources do not state it.

Why Now

The election falls on 3 November. A War Department directive on election defense carries a memorandum of 22 September and a release of 28 September. Press accounts date the Matryoshka wave from about 10 September. OpenAI published two false-front cases on 8 October. Senators Padilla and Schiff asked seven company heads for replies by 15 October, three days after 12 October. On 9 October the president announced a Russian diesel supply deal, and two House Democrats asked the FBI Director to cancel a trip hosted by Russia's security service. Representative Himes and Senator Warner ask the Director of National Intelligence for a classified update by 31 October. The window for a federal statement is short and it closes on election day.

Impacts So Far

No source measures a change in belief or behavior. Counts exist for reach. Meta says 79,400 accounts followed the Iran-origin network. Mother Jones counts roughly 155,000 views over one day for one fake and nearly 200,000 for another. Researchers and an unnamed source told the magazine that bots inflated the counts and that the real audience ran to a few thousand. ISD found limited reach for the same network in Germany. NewsGuard's tracker of 9 October counts 23 viral false claims about the midterms across 328 appearances, and it ties none of them to a foreign actor. No election outcome in the record changed because of AI.

Outlook

Two events frame the next 22 days. A US federal agency naming that threat on the record stands at 26 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45), Low confidence. Documentation of such an incident by a platform, vendor or state election official stands at 40 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45), Low confidence. The second is likelier than the first, because platforms publish on their own schedule and agencies do not. Section 8.7 lists the dates and the actions.

Section 8 extends the outlook to 9 November, which falls five days past the public results. The modal path runs through hoax threats and fake graphics on 3 and 4 November, a House call on 4 November, and a federal statement of no material effect by 9 November at 71 percent, Likely (55 to <85), Low confidence.

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1 Scope, window and rules

The dossier covers foreign AI-enabled influence aimed at American audiences in the run-up to 3 November 2026. Its core source window runs from 1 September through 09:45 eastern on 12 October. Items from March through August enter as context where they frame the American record. Section 8.9 tests each call against newer facts. The window ahead, in Section 8, runs from 9 October to 9 November. Its calls stay as made on 9 October, which keeps the Brier score clean.

The work is defensive and open-source only. Every call rests on public pages. The dossier treats each actor as a node with capability and incentive, and assumes no master plan that links the nodes. Findings come from the evidence, and the evidence fixes the limits.

Four rules govern the text.

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Table 1. The four rules.

Rule	Content
Fact and claim apart	A verified fact and an adversary claim never share a sentence. A ministry statement, a PLA essay or a Putin speech enters as a claim at grade C
Silence as a logged search result	The silence found in US executive-agency sources enters with the pages read and the dates read. The dossier does not read it as proof of safety or of danger
Named bodies	The dossier names chain of command, channels, tradecraft and targets for the Iranian bodies, and grades every source under the ASA Evidence Standard
Confidence on every call	Attribution, motive, effect and implication each carry a probability band or a source grade. A call without one stays a draft

Grades follow the NATO Admiralty anchor, printed apart: source reliability A to F, information credibility 1 to 6, axes never averaged. A source on a scored ledger row of the parent report, The Mind Domain Gets an Engine, carries its ASA T-Score. Every other source carries the anchor alone. Silence carries F6, since the page lets us judge neither the source nor the information. Probability bands follow the Sherman Kent spectrum with half-open intervals: Almost certain 95 to 99, Highly likely 85 to <95, Likely 55 to <85, Roughly even chance 45 to <55, Unlikely 15 to <45, Highly unlikely 5 to <15, Almost no chance 1 to <5.

2 What American executive bodies said

2.1 Four texts and a fifth

Five executive items speak of foreign danger to the elections or frame the American record. Each records what an agency published. None carries a finding on AI.

The Department of War dated its memorandum 22 September and released it on 28 September. Cyber Command's commander and the heads of NSA, DIA and NGA are the addressees. The text directs work against foreign interference in the 2026 elections and uses the phrase "foreign malign influence." Neither the memorandum nor the release names a country or AI. Its story of 29 September names the 3 November contests and no state. A one-page scan of the memorandum is public. The White House repeated the plan in an item of 1 October, again without a finding.

DHS announced the 2026 Election Infrastructure Security Plan on 24 September. CISA published the plan, which runs 13 pages. Twelve pages carry no word on AI, deepfakes, synthetic media, disinformation, propaganda or narratives. Russia, China and Iran go unnamed. The plan scopes itself to cyber and physical threats against election technology, processes, facilities and personnel, and it hands CISA no counter-influence role. Of 107 election-related incidents tracked since 1 January 2022, the plan counts 96 as bomb threats. The Associated Press reports the plan holds no specific information on 2026 foreign interference.

The FBI Cyber Strategy of 9 September says the Bureau defends elections against foreign cyber threats. AI appears there in cyber terms only. The 2026 Annual Threat Assessment of 18 March carries no AI-influence line, and the phrase "malign influence" never appears in its 34 pages. ODNI's grade is A1 at T 88, Strong (row GV-1). Absence is a finding about the source.

A fifth item sets the frame. The ODNI 2.0 fact sheet of August 2025 folds the Foreign Malign Influence Center into the National Intelligence Council and Mission Integration. Its stated gain is savings of about $7 million a year. State's Global Engagement Center closed earlier in 2025, and the foreign information manipulation unit

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closed in April 2025. In 2024, ODNI, the FBI and CISA issued joint public statements on specific fake election videos. We re-read one 2024 text, the CISA director's statement of 6 November 2024. The statement reports no evidence of malicious activity with a material impact on election infrastructure and does not mention AI. We did not open the joint statements themselves.

A White House order of 29 September, as its fact sheet reads, tells agencies to drop the term AI. Absence of the word proves less than it did a year ago. The listings hold no statement under "super intelligence" or "SI" either.

White House pages of 16 to 30 July name China, Russia, Iran and North Korea as election interferers. They speak of earlier cycles and of voting systems and voter data, and carry no AI line and no midterm frame. The grade for each page is A1 as to what it says.

The Washington Post of 4 October, which we read in an archive copy, adds an unpublished item. Its reporters say the National Intelligence Council assessed Russia as the most active adversary, using digital tools to sow dissent and weaken confidence in the vote. China works on individual races where policy toward Beijing is at issue. Iran shows activity on a smaller scale. The council's report, the Post says, finds adversaries leaning harder on AI to create and spread false content. People familiar with the reports are the sources, and the Post credits the Times with the first account. An ODNI report shared with Congress in recent weeks, the Post adds, sees little chance of a foreign actor interfering directly with the 2026 vote counts. Representative Himes spoke on the record after a classified House briefing in mid-September. He sees no sign of a change in the long-held finding that no adversary interfered with election infrastructure or vote counting.

No agency has published any of it. The Times page sits behind a paywall. We read its opening paragraphs there and the rest in the repost, and we did not go around the wall. Forecast 1 stays unmet on the on-record test. A reliable outlet relays anonymous sources, and the earlier Times story points the same way, so the Post account grades B3. The Preamble, in a commentary of 12 October, repeats the claim and names no new source. We count the chain once.

The same story lists late federal steps. NSA recently rebuilt its Election Security Group. CISA's plan of 24 September promises threat briefings, exercises and new advisers, and states began to receive briefings only in recent days, per the Post. Arizona's Secretary of State, Adrian Fontes, a Democrat, says CISA's acting director told states in August that the agency had little to offer before election day. Federal grants for state election security ran $55 million in 2024, $15 million in 2025 and $45 million in 2026, the Post reports. CISA has had three acting directors and no confirmed one. The agency told the Post that it backs state and local officials.

The Council on Foreign Relations ran a piece by James Lindsay on 7 October, which the editor supplied as text. Jessica Brandt, who led the Foreign Malign Influence Center in 2024, tells him that the Center, the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force and CISA's election work have been scaled back or stood down entirely. Lindsay writes that no evidence exists of any foreign government running a substantial interference operation, a class he separates from influence operations. The piece names no finding and no AI case. One expert's account supports the posture reading in Section 2.3 and grades B3. We did not hear the podcast it summarizes. A Newsmax interview of 9 October with CISA's acting director we read in a wire copy and set aside, and it carries no weight here.

Two items of 9 October bear on the federal voice. President Trump announced a deal for Russian diesel, and the Treasury Department issued a temporary license for Russian diesel supplies to global markets (ABC30, B3). Representatives Raskin and Himes asked FBI Director Patel to cancel a reported trip to Moscow and St. Petersburg, hosted by the FSB, and asked for a closed briefing if he goes. Accounts differ on the date of the trip. The letter is a claim by members and grades C. Neither item concerns AI. Each bears on how willing an agency is to name Russia before 3 November. Section 8.9 weighs the two, and the calls stay put.

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2.2 The silence log

The next table lists the pages read. Every read took place on 9 October unless the row says 12 October. A row carries F6 where the page was read and None where it was not.

Table 2. Executive-agency pages read and results.

Source	What was read	Result	Grade
ODNI newsroom	Pages 1 to 20, every 2026 item. Latest item 12 August. On 12 October the front address redirected to the archive host and returned Not found	No item pairs foreign influence with the midterms or with AI. The 12 October re-read of page 1 shows the newest item still 12 August	F6
ODNI Mission Integration page	Full page	No election threat update	F6
ODNI site search	https://www.odni.gov/?s=election	Service unavailable (503) on 9 and 12 October. Not read	None
ODNI Foreign Malign Influence Center election pages	Archive address	Not found	None
CISA	Election security topic page. News feed pages 0 to 5, 1 January to 9 October. Election Security Plan of 24 September. Topic page re-read on 12 October	No statement on AI-enabled influence. Plan reads as above. The topic page leads with the plan and holds no new product on 12 October	F6
NSA	Press room pages 1 to 10, 8 October 2026 back to October 2023	No election, influence or disinformation item in 2026. NSA's 2026 AI items concern cyber	F6
DHS	Releases of 24 September and 1 October	Nothing on AI or foreign influence	F6
Justice	2026 pages	One item of 19 March on Iranian cyber-enabled psychological operations, which names MOIS. No election, no AI	F6
State	Listing of 150 items, 1 September to 7 October. Rubio remarks of 23 July. Bureau menu	No counter-disinformation office. No statement on AI-enabled midterm influence	F6
White House	Listing of 114 items, 1 September to 7 October. July pages. Election integrity page, re-read on 12 October	Names four states in earlier cycles. No AI. No midterm frame. The 12 October re-read shows the same 2020 and China voter-data pillars	F6
FBI	Cyber alerts for 2026. Cyber Strategy of 9 September. Page 1 of the counterintelligence news list	Nothing on elections beyond the strategy sentence. Latest counterintelligence item 5 October, an arrest on China-agent charges. Press list read on 12 October for 5 to 9 October: nothing on election influence. Foreign influence page redirected to the home page	F6
EAC, NASS, NASED	EAC news listing of 295 items and a title search for "artificial". NASS and NASED news listings	Newest EAC press release 1 July 2026. No statement on foreign AI influence	F6
State election offices	Washington Secretary of State release	Nothing on AI-enabled foreign influence. Other states unread, so the row is thin	F6
CISA acting director, interview of 9 October	Read in a wire copy and set aside	No weight	None
Domain-scoped sweep, 8 to 12 October	Search of the ODNI, CISA, FBI, DHS, NSA, Justice, State, War and EAC domains for election and foreign influence	No election item on AI surfaced. A search result is no page read	F6
Congress.gov	The search page stands behind a bot check, which we did not pass. Four bills read through GovInfo and GovTrack	Bill findings in Section 3	None

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The null covers listing pages and the documents read. Nothing follows about agency holdings, and the pages behind the listings are a separate question. The Post's account of a council report shows a holding that no listing shows. A statement is still possible before 3 November.

2.3 What the silence means

Three readings compete. One says the American posture and capacity changed. Another says no foreign AI operation aimed at the midterms exists to report. A third says agencies hold findings and keep them back. Eight items test each reading in the table below, where C is consistent, I is inconsistent and N is neutral.

Table 3. *Competing readings of the American silence.*

Item	Posture and capacity changed	Nothing to report	Findings held back
ODNI 2.0 fact sheet folds the Center into the National Intelligence Council	C	N	N
CISA plan limits itself to infrastructure	C	N	N
War Department directive orders a defense with no finding	N	N	C
New York Times story of 18 September, read in a repost	N	I	C
Warner and Himes letter of 2 October, and the briefings it cites	C	N	C
Meta removes an Iran-origin network that spoke to US politics	N	I	N
Public joint statements in 2024, none in 2026	C	N	N
Washington Post of 4 October, on a non-public council report	C	I	C

Reading two fails three times. Meta's removal shows foreign-origin AI content in American politics in 2026. The Times story, if its officials are right, shows a Kremlin-authorized campaign that they assess as smaller than past cycles. If the Post's sources are right, a council report names Russian activity and rising AI use. Readings one and three do not exclude each other, and the public record cannot separate them.

Assessment: the American silence reflects posture, held-back findings or the two together. The silence does not show an absence of foreign activity. Likely (55 to <85), Low confidence. Confidence steps down twice because the call rests on a gap in the record and on our own reasoning. The sample covers the pages read only.

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3 What the Congress said

Members of Congress write letters and press releases. Each item records what the member wrote. A member's assessment is a claim, and it enters at grade C.

Table 4. *Congressional items, 9 June to 9 October 2026.*

Date	Issuer and addressee	What it says	Names state	Names AI	Midterms
9 Jun	Warner to ODNI, DOJ, FBI, DHS, NSA	Asks the agencies to resume regular election threat briefings. Says ODNI election threat executives briefed Senate staff on 8 May	No	No	Yes
10 Jun	Padilla, Warner, Peters to the heads of ODNI, DHS, DOJ, FBI, NSA	Says ODNI's election security work is "still in their infancy". Disputes public claims about voting systems	No	No	Yes

Date	Issuer and addressee	What it says	Names state	Names AI	Midterms
7 Jul	Lawler and Gottheimer	Asks about harmful or incomplete chatbot answers on elections. Not about foreign influence	No	Yes	General
15 Jul	Warner memo. HPSCI statement	The memo is political and holds no AI. The statement names "influence operations" only for China	China	No	No
16 Jul	Himes and House Intelligence Committee Democrats to the Acting DNI and the FBI, CIA and NSA directors	Asks that intelligence on foreign plans against the 2020 election be coordinated and reviewed before release. Says the community is nearly two months late on a report the law requires on foreign threats to the midterms	No	No	Yes
20 Jul	Ross and House members to CISA and the Attorney General	Cites Russian campaigns in Moldova in September 2025 and Armenia in June 2026 that used AI, deepfakes and cyberattacks. Asks whether the same tactics threaten the November contests	Russia	Yes	Yes
30 Jul	Steil, House Administration Committee	Writes to the Acting DNI, the FBI Director and the Homeland Security Secretary for classified briefings on non-citizen voting and foreign interference, after the president's July address. The text reached us through a search result, and the committee page returns Not found. Press headlines add alleged Chinese election interference	China, per press	No	Not in the excerpts
3 Sep	Padilla and Morelle to DHS and CISA	Funding letter. Says Russia, China and other actors hold interference capabilities "likely increasing with advances in artificial intelligence technology"	Yes	Yes	Yes
1 Oct	Padilla and Schiff to seven company heads (xAI, Google, YouTube, TikTok, Snap, Meta and Instagram)	Says AI and chatbots open new chances for large-scale election misinformation by foreign and domestic actors. Asks how each firm treats political actors, verified accounts and synthetic accounts. Asks for replies by 15 October	No	Yes	Yes
2 Oct	Warner and Himes to the Director of National Intelligence	Asks for a classified interagency update by 31 October and public unclassified updates. Ties real-time notice to tampering with infrastructure, results or voting integrity. Says that, absent warnings, the signers "will assume that no such foreign interference has been observed"	No	No	Yes
9 Oct	Raskin and Himes to FBI Director Patel	Asks him to cancel a reported trip to Moscow and St. Petersburg hosted by the FSB. Says Russia conducts influence operations against American elections. Asks for a closed briefing on FBI cooperation with Russian and Chinese agencies if he goes	Russia, China	No	Yes

Four bills of the 119th Congress touch the subject. We read them through GovInfo and GovTrack, since the Congress.gov search stands behind a bot check. H.R. 2152, the AI PLAN Act (Nunn and Himes), concerns AI in financial crime by adversarial actors and lists foreign election interference as one of ten risks the reports must weigh. The Financial Services Committee reported it on 24 June 2026, and it sits on the Union Calendar with no floor action found. S. 1213 (Klobuchar, Hawley, Coons, Collins and Bennet, 31 March 2025) and its House twin

H.R. 5272 (Johnson of Texas, 10 September 2025) bar deceptive AI media about federal candidates from any source. Each of the two sits in committee with no later action. H.R. 8721 (Steil, 11 May 2026) concerns foreign money in elections, and neither its title nor the sponsor's account of its earlier form mentions AI. The text grades A1. No bill ties foreign AI influence to the midterms.

The Ross letter is the only paper in the record that names Russia, AI and the midterms together. Its text reports foreign cases and asks for an assessment, and describes no foreign operation aimed at the midterms. The 16 July Himes letter carries a claim that bears on the silence: the minority says the community is nearly two months late on a report the law requires. Whether the report the Post describes is the one the letter calls late, the record does not show. The Padilla and Morelle line is the members' hedged and unsourced view. Warner and Himes tie real-time notice to tampering with infrastructure, results or voting integrity, and their own words also reach efforts to "interfere with or influence" the contests. Their letter names no AI. A fact stays apart from an inference here. Career analysts briefed the House committee on foreign threats to the midterms, and that fact is on the page. The signers' inference, that silence means nothing was observed, is theirs.

Press dates differ from file dates in one case. The Padilla and Morelle release reached the press on 3 September, its file name says 2 September and the date inside the letter stays unconfirmed.

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4 What platforms, labs and vendors reported

Each entry below is a fact about what the reporter published. Most reporters see their own users and nothing else. A lab that sees no case has seen no case on its own platform.

Table 5. *Vendor and laboratory reports bearing on American audiences.*

Reporter and date	What it holds	Midterm link	Grade
Anthropic, 10 September. Case GTG-34001	Three Iranian state-aligned accounts traced to ICCO, the Khorasan Razavi propaganda office and the Bina Cultural Observatory. Claude wrote doctrine, personas and amplification schedules. Anthropic rates the case Category Three on the Breakout Scale	None stated. The report states no midterm targeting	B2, T 75 (IR-1)
Meta, H2 2026 adversarial threat report, August, listing updated 27 August	Removal of 4 Facebook and 31 Instagram accounts that originated in Iran and posed as US activists, students and designers. They posted content on American politics, some AI-generated, with anti-Republican views among it. 79,400 accounts followed them. Meta says its investigation found links to actors in Iran. A second case ties a Russian network, ANO Dialog and the firm US-Media, to pay-to-play coverage of Kirill Dmitriev and surveys of how Americans viewed him	The word midterm appears nowhere in the report. Meta ties the Iran-origin network neither to the three Iranian bodies nor to an election	B2, T 63 (CN-11)

Reporter and date	What it holds	Midterm link	Grade
OpenAI, 8 October	A Russian false-front operation, "Dark Clark," built on a fake Social Research Center in Latin America, rated Category Five, OpenAI's first. An Iranian operation, "Bogus Bylines," with seven personas and nearly 100 articles in about a dozen outlets, rated Category Four for the articles and Category Two for the comments. OpenAI calls it "consistent with a commercial actor running a for-hire influence campaign"	Neither case names the midterms	B2, unscored
OpenAI, 25 August	Russia-origin accounts that wrote English posts for a front, the International Burke Institute. OpenAI rates the case Category Three	None	B2, T 66 (RU-11)
Microsoft, 15 September and Digital Defense Report of 1 October	The statement says deepfakes remain a serious concern. Its threat analysis center page lists no midterm report. The report says lines between state activity, crime and influence keep eroding, and it describes Iranian cyber, military and information activity as integrated, with more US targeting	None stated	B2, unscored
Google and GTIG, 8 and 9 September	GTIG shows the Iranian actor APT42 using Gemini for research and lures. Google describes watermark and label measures	None	B2, unscored
ISD, 4 September	Matryoshka posted 269 times on X between 24 June and 1 September at German state and municipal elections. About 40 percent of its videos seem to use AI voiceovers. Cameo clips paired real faces with cloned voices. ISD reports basic errors and limited reach	A German case. The method matches the American wave	B2, T 76 (RU-7)
Graphika, 21 July and 13 July	Pundit by Prompt: more than 300 assets and one persona on 154 channels, operators unidentified. A report on Spamouflage flyers carries no AI element in its public summary	None	B2, unscored
Graphika, Operation Overload page, September 2026	Between 7 and 14 September, likely inauthentic X accounts seeded videos and doctored newspaper pages that accuse German and US politicians of fraud and corruption. Videos used the names of BBC, CNN, Politico, VIGINUM and an MS NOW journalist, and footage of actors under the tag #AllDemocratsAreCriminals. Nine Democratic candidates are named. Graphika attributes the activity with high confidence to Operation Overload and the Foundation to Battle Injustice, founded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, and says it gave the finding to the Times first. The page text we hold has no AI term and no reach count	Yes. A Russia-aligned operation aimed at the midterms and at Berlin's 20 September vote	B2, unscored

Reporter and date	What it holds	Midterm link	Grade
Graphika, The #Americans, September 2024	Chinese Spamouflage personas posing as US voters before the 2024 election. The report calls some content almost certainly AI-generated and expects wider use of generative AI. It uses its own likelihood scale, which differs from ours	None. A 2024 case	B2, unscored
Anthropic, 8 October. 2026 Usage Policy update, effective 12 November	A new section on deceptive campaigns and artificial activity gathers the rules on fake accounts, fabricated news sites and influence-operation tooling. The elections section becomes Do Not Undermine Democratic Processes and narrows to deceiving voters or disrupting elections	None. A rule change and no case report	B2, unscored
OpenAI, 11 October, as reported	Crypto Briefing, read in full, says OpenAI launched a ChatGPT feature on 11 October that restricts realistic election images that risk misleading voters, with a focus on polling places, ballots and election-day logistics. It adds work with Democracy Works and the Associated Press, SynthID and C2PA marks, and support for the Protect Elections from Deceptive AI Act, and says a Brennan Center test in September got past similar limits. Punchbowl News carries a matching headline. We found no OpenAI page for it, and the outlet carries a sponsored advertisement	None. Neither report names a foreign operation	C4, unscored
NewsGuard, 9 October. 2026 elections tracker	23 viral false claims, 328 appearances on 11 platforms, more than 184 accounts, 54 websites and 24 cable segments. Eleven claims concern fraud. X carries 54 percent of appearances, and 13 claims began on X. One claim is an AI-generated image of an Iowa candidate	No claim in the pages read is tied to a foreign actor	B2, unscored

No published report from OpenAI, Graphika, ISD, DFRLab, Recorded Future or NewsGuard in the record ties foreign influence that uses AI to the midterms. Graphika's page on the September wave blames Operation Overload and carries no AI term, so the AI element rests on press accounts. The reports index of the firm stopped at 25 August when read on 9 and 12 October, and the wave page sits outside it. A domain search for 8 to 12 October across the Graphika, ISD, Recorded Future, DFRLab, Microsoft, Google and Meta sites found no new influence report from them. Anthropic's election page of 24 April reports a 600-prompt test and an influence-operation autonomy test, and each test is Anthropic's own.

Two analyses add context and no new case. The Brennan Center reviewed reports from Anthropic, Google, Meta, OpenAI, Microsoft, Cloudflare, ISD and the DFRLab for its piece of 25 September. AI, the review finds, is a standard feature of influence and cyber operations, and Meta says every network it disrupted used some form of generative AI. Iranian operators hid behind US and Canadian proxy or hosting addresses, the review repeats from Meta. Press reports cited there say China, Iran and private groups in Israel ran autonomous influence campaigns on open-source Chinese models, and that Iran-linked actors attacked at least 100 water systems across a dozen states in 2026. Renee DiResta, writing in Lawfare on 5 October, argues that AI cuts the cost of

influence operations and has not yet made them persuasive. OpenAI rated two China-linked campaigns Category One, and the data-center campaign drew almost no reach. Her paper does not discuss the midterms.

Recorded Future tracks CopyCop at more than 300 sites in the year, and it carries an AI-hosting claim that rests on its own reading of host artifacts (rows RU-5 and RU-6). The record holds no 2026 CopyCop report on the midterms.

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5 The one named operation: Matryoshka

Researchers and the press name the only operation aimed at the American midterms, and no agency has named it. We read four press accounts dated 14 to 29 September and a repost of the leaked Times story.

The Insider of 14 September counts at least eight posts of 11 and 12 September that carry CNN-branded videos of actors under the hashtags #midterms2026 and #AllDemocratsAreCriminals. Their text urges viewers not to vote for Democrats. La Voce di New York of 16 September reports real footage of actors under AI-generated or altered audio, and says CNN denies making the clips. X, Bluesky and TikTok removed some of them. La Voce names the Senate candidates Jon Ossoff and James Talarico among the targets.

Mother Jones of 24 September reports a fake video in its own name, built on the likeness of its editor Clara Jeffery, that drew about 155,000 views in a day on one X account and about 50,000 on a second. X removed the first after a lawyer complained. Researchers told the magazine the counts run high. On 29 September its editor David Corn adds that at least nine more videos carry the magazine's logo. A fake book promotion in his name showed nearly 200,000 views, which an unnamed source told him came largely from bots, with a real audience of a few thousand. Corn is a party to the case.

Antibot4Navalny, a group of anonymous activists, attributes the accounts to the Matryoshka network. Graphika's own page, which it gave to the Times first, ties the content to the same network and calls it Operation Overload, a name that press reports pair with Matryoshka. Its analyst Jean Le Roux told the Times he expects the campaign to ramp up.

The Times story also carries claims by anonymous officials. They describe classified assessments from recent months that the Kremlin again authorized a campaign to deepen divisions before the midterms. The campaign looks less extensive and less coordinated than past ones to the same officials, aimed mainly at chaos, though the examples found so far attack Democrats, and they report no evidence of efforts against voting machinery. On other states, they say Iran has shown little in classified channels so far and China is a possible actor, with fear of backlash as a brake. The story names nine candidates in nine states as targets. ODNI, the White House and the Russian Embassy did not respond to the Times. The story also cites Meta's report of a small Iran-origin network focused on US politics, the case in Section 4.

Later syntheses repeat the accounts above and add no source. Brennan's review says the wave used AI-generated audio, citing the Times. The Washington Post and The Preamble name the celebrity videos and the CNN fakes. A search on 12 October found no press or vendor account of new items dated after 29 September. Silence in a sample of outlets is no proof that posting stopped.

Grades. Press accounts of the wave grade B2. Officials' assessments grade C3, since they are anonymous and no agency confirms them. Reach figures grade C4, since they come from an interested party and an unnamed source. Method matches the ISD report on Germany: AI voiceovers, cameo clips of celebrities, stolen outlet logos and thin reach.

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Assessment: the American wave belongs to the Matryoshka network. Likely (55 to <85), Moderate confidence. A named vendor whose own page makes the attribution, anonymous activists, four outlets and a method match with a B2 report support the call, and every account depends on the same few analysts.

Assessment: the Kremlin authorized the campaign. Likely (55 to <85), Low confidence. One story and anonymous officials carry the call.

Assessment: AI makes or alters the audio across the wave. Likely (55 to <85), Low confidence. One press account says so, Graphika's page holds no AI term, and no researcher in the record names a tool.

A leak is no on-the-record federal statement, and the Times story does not name AI. The forecast rule is not met.

Graphika's own page now backs the vendor attribution. What raises the grades further: the full Times page, platform takedown notices naming the accounts, or a federal statement that names the network.

Forward call: a new fake that uses a real face or a news brand surfaces by 19 October at 92 percent, Highly likely (85 to <95), Moderate confidence. Section 8 carries the wave on to 9 November.

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6 Attribution table

Each row carries four calls. Attribution asks who ran the activity. Motive asks why. Effect asks what changed in an audience. Implication asks what follows by 3 November. Where no source supports a call, the cell carries a source grade and no band.

Table 6. Attribution, motive, effect and implication by actor.

Actor and activity	Source and grade	Attribution	Motive	Effect	Implication by 3 November
Iranian bodies (ICCO, Khorasan Razavi office, Bina): AI-written doctrine, personas, amplification schedules	Anthropic, B2, T 75	AI use by the three bodies: Likely (55 to <85), Moderate	Shaping opinion at home and abroad, in the operators' own words. Targeting of American voters: Roughly even chance (45 to <55), Low	F6, nothing measured	Content tied to the three bodies surfaces in a US election context and is publicly attributed: Unlikely (15 to <45), Low
Iran-origin network posing as US activists	Meta, B2, T 63	Iran-origin: Likely (55 to <85), Moderate. Tie to the three bodies: F6, no source	Shaping American political debate: Likely (55 to <85), Low	79,400 followers is reach. Belief change: F6	A platform or vendor documents the network or a sibling as aimed at the midterms: Unlikely (15 to <45), Low
Matryoshka in the United States	The Insider, La Voce, Mother Jones and the Times repost, B2. ISD, B2, T 76 for Germany	Russia-aligned network: Likely (55 to <85), Moderate. Kremlin authorization, per anonymous officials: Likely (55 to <85), Low	Sowing chaos, with content that attacks Democratic candidates: Likely (55 to <85), Low	Reach in the thousands where counted. Belief change: F6	Further videos before 3 November: Likely (55 to <85), Moderate. Reach stays small: Likely (55 to <85), Low
CopyCop, tracked also as Storm-1516	Recorded Future, B2. Treasury release of 31 December 2024 on a GRU-linked server	GRU-linked: Likely (55 to <85), Moderate	Not assessed for the midterms	F6	No 2026 midterm report in the record. A vendor report before 3 November: Unlikely (15 to <45), Low
ANO Dialog and US-Media	Meta, B2	Russian network: Likely (55 to <85), Moderate	Courting American views of a Russian official, per Meta's case. No election tie	F6	None for the midterms
For-hire Iranian placement operation, "Bogus Bylines"	OpenAI, B2	Commercial actor, unnamed: Likely (55 to <85), Low	Not stated	Category Four for articles	None stated. Audience not shown in our reading
China, Spamouflage	Graphika and Meta, B2	No midterm item in the record	Not assessed	F6	Absence in the record is not absence of activity

The reach and effect cells of the Matryoshka row lean on one editor and one unnamed source. Graphika's page names the wave and holds no reach count, so a platform notice or a federal source must settle them. The two Iranian rows must not merge. Meta ties its network to no Iranian body, and Anthropic ties its three bodies to no American voter.

7 What stays unattributed

Six points stay open in the open sources.

Whether the three Iranian bodies direct any content at American voters. Anthropic states no midterm targeting, and Iranian statements frame the war as a cognitive contest. Whether the Meta network belongs to those bodies, to another Iranian unit or to a contractor. Meta says only that it found links to actors in Iran. Which tool made the audio. One press account says AI produced or changed it, and no researcher names a tool. Whether the Times account of 18 September is accurate on a Kremlin authorization. Anonymous officials carry it and no agency confirms it. What the classified briefings and the National Intelligence Council report hold. The Warner and Himes letter says briefings exist, and the Post describes a council report shared with Congress. No text is

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public. Whether any Chinese operation targets the midterms. The record holds no midterm item, and the record samples what vendors choose to publish.

Two more open points weigh on every call. No source measures belief or behavior, so effect stays at F6 for every actor. Domestic actors sit outside the dossier. The Padilla and Schiff letter names foreign and domestic actors, and open sources cannot separate organic domestic direction from foreign direction without non-public evidence.

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8 Forecast window: 9 October to 9 November

The window opened on 9 October and closes five days after the results go public. Networks will probably call House control on the morning of 4 November, which sets the close at 9 November. If a chamber stays uncalled, the five days run from the call.

Four modes of judgment appear, each tagged. F is a forecast: a probability on a dated event. E is an estimate: a quantity with a median and an 80 percent range. P is a prediction: a committed call on a named day. S is foresight: a scenario with signposts, built for watching and not for ranking. Probabilities use the bands in Section 1 and carry a confidence level. Each number is a judgment. None is a measurement.

One finding frames the rest. Adversaries have no shown path to the count. They work on how the count looks and sounds: when it ends, who announces it, which screenshots circulate, and which claims of a hack follow. Anonymous officials in the Times story, read in a repost, say they see no effort against voting machinery. That is a claim at grade C3. The Post adds that an ODNI document shared with Congress finds little chance of direct interference with counts, and Representative Himes says on the record that he sees no change in the long-held finding. Together the claims grade B3. We expect noise at the edges of the process and certified totals that no cyber action alters. The odds that one does: Almost no chance (1 to <5), Moderate confidence.

8.1 What past cycles show

Past cycles set the base rates. Federal naming of a foreign actor in the final month happened in 2018, 2020 and 2024. The 2022 cycle brought public service announcements and no name. Election-week disruption grew over time. In 2024 the FBI tied hoax threats to polling places to Russian email domains.

Federal capacity in 2026 is smaller than in any of those years. The Justice Department ended the FBI Foreign Influence Task Force in February 2025 (CyberScoop, B2), the foreign influence center sits in a refocus, and CISA's 2025 budget plan projected a loss of nearly 1,000 positions, about 29 percent of staff (Defense One, B2). Nearly a third of CISA staff were laid off in early 2025, the Post says (B3). We shade federal calls down for that reason. Platform and vendor calls go up, because they carry the load when agencies go quiet.

Table 7. Base rates from four cycles.

Cycle	Federal action in the final month	Election week	Lesson for 2026
2018	Justice charged a Russian accountant, Elena Khusyaynova, on 19 October for work on Project Lakhta (NBC News, B2)	Facebook blocked 115 accounts on 5 November after a law-enforcement tip about suspected foreign ties (CNBC, B2)	Platforms act in the last 72 hours
2020	The Director of National Intelligence said at a press conference on 21 October that Iran and Russia had obtained voter registration data (ODNI transcript, B2)	A joint statement of federal, state and vendor councils on 12 November called the vote the most secure in American history (NASED, B2)	Federal naming came two weeks out. The all-clear came nine days after the vote
2022	FBI and CISA public service announcements on 4 and 6 October (B3)	Mississippi's Secretary of State website went down under a traffic flood. A Russian hacking group claimed it on Telegram. CISA said on 8 November that counting was unaffected and saw no coordinated campaign (Nextgov, B2)	Claims and nuisance disruption, with no effect on counts
2024	Joint ODNI, FBI and CISA statements named Russian influence actors behind fake videos, including one on 1 November (Fox 5 Atlanta, B2)	Hoax bomb threats reached polling places in several states. The FBI said they came from Russian email domains. Fulton County, Georgia, closed two sites briefly (PBS, B2). CISA's director said the next day that she saw no evidence of malicious activity with a material impact (CISA, A1 as to text)	Naming came fast when the apparatus was whole

8.2 Phases and the modal path

Five phases split the window. Each carries one prediction, the single path we judge most likely, and the event that breaks it.

Table 8. Phases, predictions and breakpoints.

Phase	Dates	Prediction (P)	What breaks it
1 Positioning	9 to 19 October	Matryoshka keeps posting. A researcher or outlet reports another fake with a real face or a news brand. No federal agency speaks on AI	A joint federal statement lands early: 12 percent
2 Late campaign	20 October to 2 November	Platforms publish takedowns. The 31 October date set by Warner and Himes passes without a public text. One fake or synthetic-audio item reaches national coverage. Iran-origin content leans on war framing	A hack-and-leak goes public: 12 percent
3 Election Day	3 November	Hoax threats reach polling places in several states. Fake results graphics start after the eastern polls close. A state results page slows. Officials say counting is unaffected	A verified intrusion touches a reporting channel (S4)
4 Count and call	4 and 5 November	Networks call the House on 4 November and the Senate by 6 November. Adversary outlets describe disorder in the count. Fake concession clips circulate	Slow-count states hold a seat open (S2)
5 Aftermath	6 to 9 November	A federal statement says no material effect. Platforms and vendors publish what they removed. Political figures blame foreign hands for losses. Adversary outlets cite the blame as proof of decay	A national figure disputes a result and files suit (S3)

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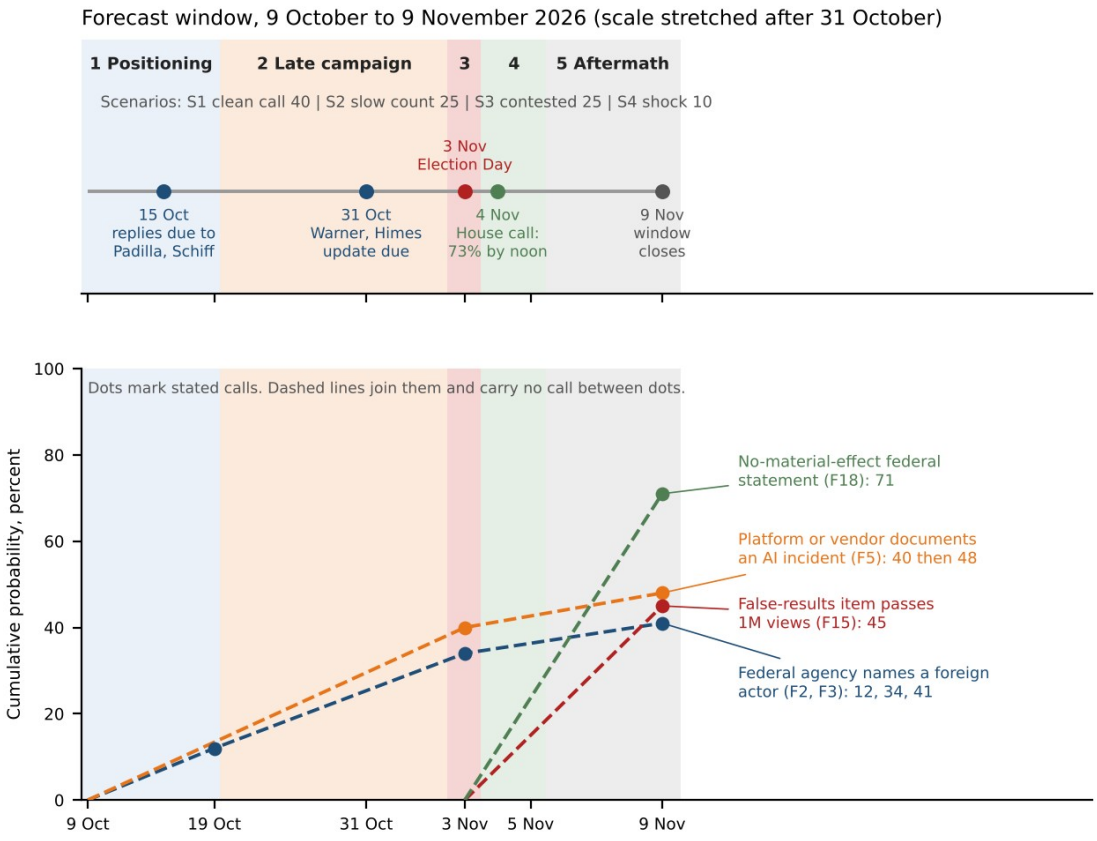


Figure 1. *Forecast window: phases, dated checks and cumulative odds.*

8.3 Four scenarios

Legal ground is unsettled. On 14 September the Supreme Court left in place an order that blocks parts of a Postal Service mail-ballot rule (SCOTUSblog, B2). The Justice Department said in August that it plans about 1,000 monitors at polling sites (Democracy Docket, B3). California accepts mail ballots that arrive up to seven days after the vote, and Alaska must finish counting absentee ballots by day 15 (Ballotpedia, B2). Each fact adds friction, and friction feeds disputes.

We borrow the outcome baseline from raters. Cook Political Report moved Kansas to Toss Up, New Hampshire to Lean Democratic and North Carolina to Likely Democratic on 6 October, and puts Democratic Senate gains at two to six seats against the four needed (political.org, B3). On 9 October it moved 18 House races toward the Democrats, four of them GOP-held seats from Toss Up to Lean Democratic (The Hill and Mediaite listings, B3). At the 11 October close the DeFi Rate history tables showed a Democratic House at 89.5 percent on Kalshi and a Democratic Senate at 62.4 percent (B3). The 9 October reading showed about the same two figures. We set the joint outcomes at 57 percent for Democratic control of the House and the Senate, 33 percent for a Democratic House and Republican Senate, and 10 percent for a Republican House.

The paths split on one point: whether the count finishes clean and fast.

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Table 9. Scenarios to 9 November (S). Probabilities sum to 100. Confidence is Low for all four.

Scenario	Probability	What happens	What adversaries do	Signposts
S1 Clean call, loud noise	40 percent	Networks call both chambers by 5 November. Losers concede within two days	Fake results graphics, hoax threats and state-media sneers. Content spreads fast and fades fast	Tipping-point margins above 3 points. Calls before midnight eastern. Concessions by 5 November
S2 Slow count, long fuse	25 percent	A Senate seat, or control, stays open for days. Mail-ballot states count on their own clocks	Feed "late ballot" stories to every side and time fakes to the gaps. Hardest for attribution, since every claim carries some grain	A Senate race inside one point. Control hangs on one seat
S3 Contested result	25 percent	A national figure or the White House disputes a result and files suit or threatens certification	Amplify the dispute and cite it as proof of a failing system. Foreign-interference claims become a domestic weapon	The administration disputes a result within 24 hours. Suits in more than three states
S4 Shock	10 percent	A verified intrusion on a reporting channel, a hack-and-leak, political violence or a restart of US operations in the Iran war lands in election week	Pile onto the event faster than agencies attribute it	An official confirms an intrusion. Operations restart before 9 November

8.4 Calls

The table runs in date order, and the same numbers feed the chart that follows.

Table 10. Dated calls to 9 November (F).

ID	When	Call	Probability and band	Confidence
F1	By 19 October	A researcher or outlet reports a new fake video or audio item that uses a real US candidate's face or voice, or a news brand	92 percent, Highly likely (85 to <95)	Moderate
F2	By 19 October	A federal agency names a foreign actor tied to midterm influence on the record	12 percent, Highly unlikely (5 to <15)	Moderate
F3	By 3 November	A federal agency names a foreign actor tied to midterm influence on the record	34 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45)	Low
F4	By 3 November	A federal agency names AI-enabled foreign influence aimed at the midterms. The complement of Forecast 1	26 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45)	Low
F5	By 3 November	A platform, vendor or state official documents an AI-enabled incident aimed at the midterms. Indicator L5	40 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45)	Low
F6	By 9 November	A platform or vendor publishes a takedown or report on a foreign operation aimed at US political audiences	92 percent, Highly likely (85 to <95)	Moderate
F7	By 9 November	Iran-origin content aimed at US voters is newly documented by a platform, vendor or researcher	65 percent, Likely (55 to <85)	Low
F8	By 9 November	A Chinese operation aimed at the midterms is documented. A North Korean one, in the same test, stands at 4 percent	35 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45)	Low
F9	By 2 November	A hack-and-leak of campaign or party material is made public	12 percent, Highly unlikely (5 to <15)	Low
F10	By 9 November	A synthetic-audio or fake-video item aimed at US voters is tied to a foreign network and reaches national coverage	60 percent, Likely (55 to <85)	Low

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ID	When	Call	Probability and band	Confidence
F11	3 November	Hoax threats reach polling places in at least two states	75 percent, Likely (55 to <85)	Low
F12	By 9 November	A federal agency attributes the hoax threats to a foreign actor	10 percent, Highly unlikely (5 to <15)	Low
F13	3 to 5 November	A state results page suffers a publicly reported flood of traffic or intrusion	36 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45)	Low
F14	By 9 November	A fake results graphic, call or concession clip in a news brand's livery is documented	86 percent, Highly likely (85 to <95)	Moderate
F15	By 9 November	One foreign-attributed false-results item passes 1 million views	45 percent, Roughly even chance (45 to <55)	Low
F16	By 9 November	Russian, Iranian or Chinese state outlets or officials call the US count flawed or illegitimate	91 percent, Highly likely (85 to <95)	Moderate
F17	By 9 November	A US political figure of national standing blames foreign interference for a result	49 percent, Roughly even chance (45 to <55)	Low
F18	By 9 November	A federal agency says on the record that no foreign activity materially affected the election	71 percent, Likely (55 to <85)	Low
F19	By noon eastern, 4 November	Networks call House control. Senate control stands at 49 percent. By 9 November the figures are 94 and 81 percent	73 percent, Likely (55 to <85)	Moderate
F20	By 9 November	A cyber action changes a certified result	2 percent, Almost no chance (1 to <5)	Moderate

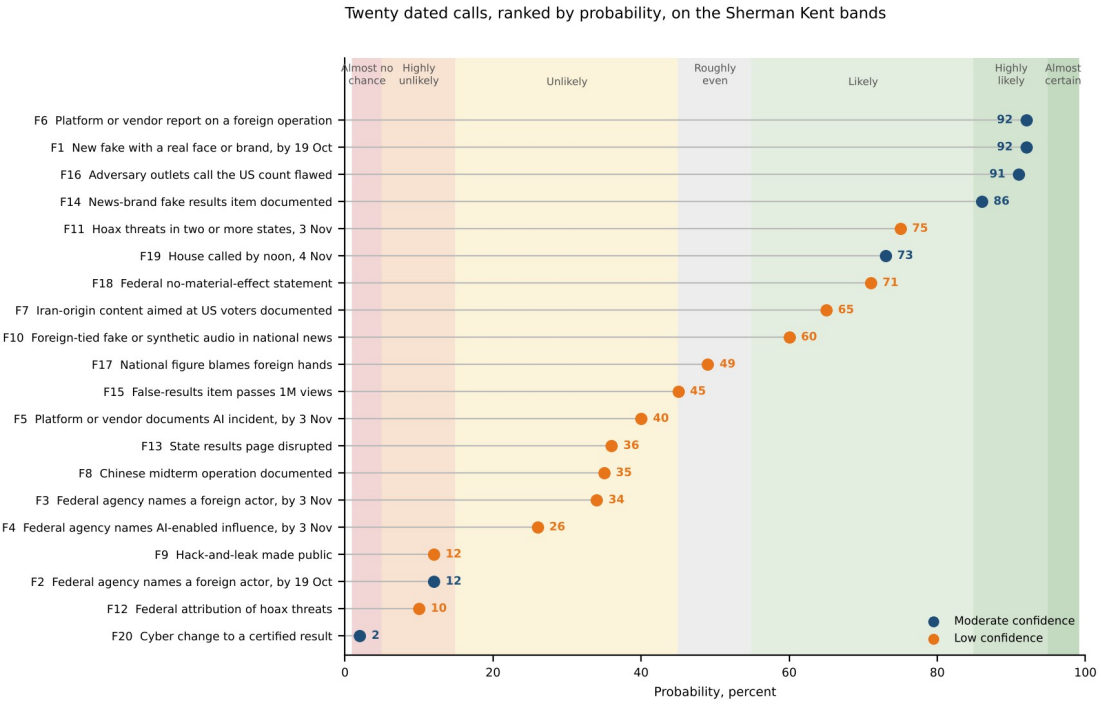


Figure 2. *Calls ranked by probability and colored by confidence.*

8.5 Estimates

Each quantity carries a median and a range that should hold the real figure four times in five.

Table 11. Estimates to 9 November (E).

ID	Quantity	Median	80 percent range	Basis
E1	Items a researcher or outlet ties to Matryoshka, 9 October to 9 November	60	25 to 150	A wave running since about 10 September. No public item count
E2	Views on the most-viewed foreign-attributed item with a platform count	400,000	120,000 to 3,000,000	Mother Jones fakes drew roughly 155,000 and nearly 200,000 views, with bot inflation reported
E3	Polling sites reported with a hoax threat on 3 November	40	8 to 250	Threats in several states in 2024. No 2026 count
E4	On-record federal statements naming foreign election influence	1	0 to 4	None on file for 2026 in Section 2.2
E5	Platform and vendor reports naming a foreign operation aimed at US politics, 24 October to 9 November	3	1 to 7	Cadence of Meta, OpenAI, Microsoft, Google and Graphika in 2026
E6	Days from Election Day until networks call Senate control	1	0 to 12	Slow-count states and close races

8.6 How adversaries work the result

Five levers act on perception. None touches a ballot. Timing is the opening. The hours between poll close and the last call leave the field to whoever speaks first, and the federal voice is thinner than in 2024. Fakes posted into that gap meet fewer official answers.

Mirror claims are the second feature. A domestic figure says foreign hands changed the outcome. Adversary outlets then repeat the claim as proof that American democracy has failed. The loop costs the adversary nothing.

Table 12. Levers on the result (forecast).

Lever	Likely actor	Form	Timing	Call
Fake results and fake concessions	Russia, through Matryoshka	Graphics in the livery of CNN, the BBC or the Times. Altered clips of candidates and officials. Voice clones	Evening of 3 November to 5 November	F14, F15
Hoax threats	Senders with Russian domains in 2024, and copycats	Emailed bomb threats at polling places	Hours of 3 November	F11, F12
Reporting-channel noise	Hacktivist personas with Russian or Iranian ties	Traffic floods at state results pages, and claims of a hack that outrun the effect	3 to 5 November	F13
Pretext and mirror claims	State outlets of Russia, Iran and China. Domestic voices	Reports of a flawed count. Blame placed on foreign hands	4 to 9 November	F16, F17
Hack-and-leak	Iran, on the 2024 precedent	Stolen campaign or party material released near the vote	20 October to 2 November	F9
Model poisoning	Russia, through the Pravda network	Planted articles meant to shape chatbot answers to results queries. A documented test on midterm queries stands at 25 percent, Unlikely (15 to <45), Low confidence	Whole window	None

The frames shift with the outcome. Each cell predicts content and carries Low confidence. The cells rest on each actor's pattern in the parent report and on the Times account.

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Table 13. Likely frames by outcome (P).

Outcome	Russia	Iran	China
Democrats take both chambers: 57 percent	Fraud and elite-rigging stories for the right, chaos stories for the left, attacks on the winners' legitimacy	The vote as a verdict against the war	State media on a divided, failing democracy
Democratic House, Republican Senate: 33 percent	Gridlock stories and fights over aid to Ukraine	A split verdict on the war and the war-powers fight	The same dysfunction frame, with little else
Republican House: 10 percent	A stolen-by-Republican-states line for left audiences	Rigged-vote claims in Persian and Arabic outlets	Restraint

8.7 Signposts and actions

Signposts move the numbers. Each row names the sign and the new figure.

Table 14. Signposts that move the calls.

If this appears	Then
A platform or vendor names a Matryoshka takedown before 24 October	F5 rises from 40 to 70 percent
A joint ODNI, FBI and CISA statement	F3 resolves. F18 rises to 80 percent. Forecast 1 flips
A tipping-point Senate race stays inside one point at poll close	S2 rises from 25 to 40 percent
The White House or Justice disputes a result within 24 hours	S3 rises from 25 to 45 percent. F17 rises to 75 percent
Hoax threats reach three or more states before noon on 3 November	E3 median rises to 90. F12 rises to 15 percent
An official confirms an intrusion on a results page	S4 rises from 10 to 30 percent
US operations in the Iran war restart before 9 November	S4 rises to 35 percent. F7 rises to 85 percent

Actions follow the dates, nearest first.

Table 15. Actions by date.

By	Action
Today, then daily to 3 November	Read the White House, War Department, ODNI, CISA and FBI release pages. One federal statement that pairs AI, foreign influence and the midterms flips Forecast 1
15 October	Name a contact at each platform for your brand and executives. Write the holding statement for a fake in your logo. Seven company heads owe Padilla and Schiff replies the same day, and a reply that names a foreign operation raises L5
Weekly to 3 November	Read the research pages of Meta, OpenAI, Microsoft, Google, Graphika, ISD, DFRLab and Recorded Future. A report that ties an AI-enabled operation to the midterms resolves L5
24 October	Check for a platform or vendor takedown that names Matryoshka. One before this date lifts F5 from 40 to 70 percent
31 October	Brief the board that silence is no safety. Set a watch roster for 3 to 9 November. Warner and Himes asked for a classified update by this date, and a public update that names AI ends the silence
3 November, poll close	Staff the watch. Treat any news-branded results graphic as false until the outlet's own channel confirms it. Forecast 1 resolves
4 and 5 November	Share no unverified results clip. Check every claim against the AP and the state results page
6 to 9 November	Log what you saw. Hand it to the platform or the vendor. Score the calls against the pages and log the Brier figure

8.8 Where the forecast breaks

Four conditions break the forecast. A federal agency speaks early and often, which lifts the federal calls and shortens the life of fakes. An intrusion on a reporting channel, once verified, lifts S4 and every count call. The

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Iran war restarts in election week and pulls adversary effort away from the vote. On 8 October the president said the United States will not resume strikes before the midterms, and reports of talks followed. The pledge came from a party to the war, and it carries no date past election day. A recount runs past 9 November, and the window extends.

The weak joints sit in three places: base rates that rest on press accounts of past cycles, an outcome baseline that comes from raters and markets, and scenario odds that are judgments with no history behind them. Calls resolve against public pages on 3 November and 9 November, and the Brier score for the set goes to the run log.

8.9 The 12 October test

The calls hold as they stood on 9 October, so the Brier score on 9 November stays clean. Each row names a new item and states whether it moves a call.

Table 16. New items and their effect on the calls.

New item	Calls it bears on	Effect
Post of 4 October: a non-public council report names Russia and rising AI use	Forecast 1, F3, F4, F18	Holds. A leak is no on-record statement. The report's existence slightly raises the odds of an unclassified update after 31 October, and the warmer line toward Moscow lowers the odds of naming Russia. The two offset inside one band
Russian diesel deal and Treasury license, 9 October. Raskin and Himes letter on the Patel trip	F2, F3, F12	Holds. Two executive moves cut against naming Russia. The War Department directive of 22 September and pressure from members cut the other way
NewsGuard tracker, 9 October: 23 claims, none tied to a foreign actor	F1, F10	Holds. The sample shows domestic spread. F1 covers a different class of item, a fake with a real face or a news brand
OpenAI cases and Anthropic policy of 8 October. OpenAI feature of 11 October, as reported	F5, F6, F7	Holds. None ties a case to the midterms
Himes statement and the ODNI document on vote counts	F20	Holds at 2 percent. A second outlet supports the no-path finding
The president on Iran, 8 October: no strikes before the midterms	S4, F7	Holds. The pledge ends at election day, and a party to the war made it
Graphika page on the September wave, read 12 October	Forecast 1, F1, Section 5	Holds. The page ties the videos to Operation Overload and names no AI. Its wave ran from 7 to 14 September, before the call window opened
CFR piece of 7 October, with Brandt on cuts to the Center, the FBI task force and CISA	Forecast 1	Holds. One expert supports the thin-capacity reading that the call already assumes
CISA statement of 6 November 2024	Forecast 1, F20	Holds. The 2024 text reports no material impact and no AI, which fits the no-path finding
H.R. 2152, S. 1213, H.R. 5272 and H.R. 8721	Forecast 1	Holds. No bill reached a floor vote in the pages read, and Congress is no executive agency
Cook, 9 October, and markets, 11 October close	Section 8.3 baseline	Unchanged at 57, 33 and 10 percent

One point stands out. F1 and F2 cover the days to 19 October, and seven of ten days remain. A flat-hazard reading lowers F1 to about 83 percent and F2 to 9 percent. We hold F1 and F2 where they stand, since posting and naming rates tend to rise as the vote nears. The 19 October result will test that judgment.

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9 Advanced SATs applied

The parent report holds the full runs. Section 9 carries the parts that bear on the midterm window.

Table 17. Advanced analytic techniques applied.

Technique	Applied to	Result
Key assumptions check	Assumption A5: government silence means absence	Unsupported. The foreign influence center sits in a refocus. Silence tells about American capacity and posture and not about adversary activity
Competing hypotheses	Three readings of the American silence (Section 2.3)	The nothing-to-report reading fails on two items. The other two stay open
Red team on Forecast 1	A federal statement before 3 November	Three paths exist: an agency statement, a public step by Cyber Command under the War Department directive that names a case, and a leak turned official. The model puts the first at 26 percent
Indicators of change	T4, a federal agency names the threat (26 percent). L5, a platform, vendor or state official documents an incident (40 percent)	Section 8.7 carries the dated actions
Adversarial cognitive simulation	Iranian reaction to public attribution	Expected pivots: deny, reframe, relocate. Four outlets that covered Anthropic's report record no official Iranian response
Scenario analysis and foresight	The window to 9 November	Four paths at 40, 25, 25 and 10 percent, each with signposts. Section 8.3 carries the table
Forecast, estimate and prediction calls	Twenty dated calls, six estimates and five phase predictions	Ranked on the Sherman Kent bands, with a Brier score due on 9 November. Section 8.4 carries the table
Source-risk check	Persian-language and platform sources	ASA cluster C6 applies. Every public claim about what Iranians think carries a source-risk flag
Audience read	Matryoshka in Germany	The parent report scores Matryoshka at Monitor 30.0, lowest of eight campaigns. High media trust and strong institutional filters hold the German audience at an HTIM Index of 46.0. No American audience read exists
Source tracing	The National Intelligence Council claim in the commentary of 12 October	Traced from The Preamble to the Post of 4 October to the Times of 18 September. One chain, so the claim counts once
Date-bounded sweep	News, agency, congressional, lab and vendor domains, 8 to 12 October	No on-record federal statement and no new vendor report on the midterms. New items are logged in Section 8.9

10 Sources

Every address below was read on 9 October 2026 unless the row says otherwise.

Table 18. Sources by section.

Section	Source and address	Grade
2	Department of War release, 28 September: https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4613090/secretary-of-war-pete-hegseth-signs-directive-to-defend-2026-elections-from-for/ . Memorandum: https://media.defense.gov/2026/Sep/28/2004007844/-1/-1/1/COUNTERING-FOREIGN-THREATS-TO-2026-ELECTIONS.PDF . Story of 29 September: https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4614290/war-department-prepares-to-protect-election-from-foreign-interference/	A1 as to text
2	CISA, 2026 Election Security Plan: https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/2026-09/2026-CISA-Election-Security-Plan-FINAL-508c.pdf . DHS release, 24 September: https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/09/24/dhs-announces-release-2026-election-infrastructure-security-plan	A1 as to text
2	FBI Cyber Strategy, 9 September: https://www.ic3.gov/CSA/2026/260909.pdf	A1 as to text
2	ODNI, 2026 Annual Threat Assessment: https://archive.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2026-Unclassified-Report.pdf	A1, T 88 (GV-1)
2	White House, 17 July: https://www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2026/07/setting-the-record-straight-president-trump-declassifies-intel-on-foreign-election-interference-deep-state-coverup/ . Election integrity page: https://www.whitehouse.gov/election-integrity/	A1 as to text
2	Washington Post, 4 October, read in an archive copy on 12 October: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/10/04/with-threats-midterms-states-say-trump-administration-isnt-helping/ and https://archive.ph/FWSlJ . The Preamble, 12 October: https://thepreamble.com/p/washington-is-warning-of-election	B3
2	CISA election security page and White House election integrity page, re-read 12 October: https://www.cisa.gov/topics/election-security and https://www.whitehouse.gov/election-integrity/	A1 as to text
2	Council on Foreign Relations, Lindsay with Brandt, 7 October, text supplied by the editor: https://cfr.org/articles/are-the-u-s-midterms-vulnerable-to-foreign-meddling	B3
2	Justice, 19 March: https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-disrupts-iranian-cyber-enabled-psychological-operations	A1 as to text
3	Ross letter, 20 July: https://ross.house.gov/2026/7/ross-leads-lawmakers-in-calling-for-federal-review-of-russian-election-interference-tactics-ahead-of-2026-midterms . Warner letter, 9 June: https://www.warner.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/2026.06.09-Letter-to-ODNI-DOJ-FBI-DHS-and-NSA-re-Election-Security-Briefings.pdf . Padilla, Warner, Peters, 10 June: https://www.padilla.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/padilla-warner-peters-demand-answers-on-election-security-preparations-ahead-of-2026-midterms/ . Warner memo, 15 July: https://www.warner.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Interested-Parties-Memo-on-Election-Security-July-15-2026.pdf . Steil, 30 July, release text in a search result: https://cha.house.gov/2026/7/chairman-steil-requests-classified-briefings-on-non-citizen-voting-and-foreign-interference-in-american-elections . The page at https://cha.house.gov/press-releases?ID=374A3E34-DC9C-47DB-819E-0829185BEECA rendered empty. The bills: https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BILLS-119hr2152rh , https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BILLS-119s1213is , https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-119hr5272ih/xhtml/BILLS-119hr5272ih.html and https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/BILLS-119hr8721ih . Status on https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/119/hr2152 and https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/119/s1213	B2 as to what members wrote. Claims at C

Section	Source and address	Grade
3	HPSCI minority letter, 16 July: https://democrats-intelligence.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hpsci_minority_letter_to_pulte__ratcliffe_rudd_patel_elections_7.16.26_signed.pdf . Raskin and Himes, 9 October: https://democrats-judiciary.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/ranking-members-raskin-himes-urge-kash-patel-to-abandon-russia-trip-hosted-by-putin-s-security-service-amid-espionage-concerns . Padilla and Schiff, 1 October: https://www.padilla.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/padilla-schiff-press-big-tech-ceos-on-social-media-platforms-efforts-to-combat-election-disinformation/ . All read 12 October	A1 as to text
4	Anthropic, 10 September: https://www.anthropic.com/threat-intelligence-report-september-2026	B2, T 75 (IR-1)
4	Meta, H2 2026: https://transparency.meta.com/sr/H2-2026-adversarial-threat-report/	B2, T 63 (CN-11)
4	OpenAI, 8 October: https://openai.com/index/disrupting-ai-enabled-false-front-operations/ . OpenAI, 25 August: https://openai.com/index/disrupting-malicious-uses-of-ai-influence-campaign-russia/	B2
4	ISD, Matryoshka in Germany: https://www.isdglobal.org/digital-dispatch/investigation-an-old-dog-with-no-new-tricks-matryoshka-targets-regional-elections-in-germany/	B2, T 76 (RU-7)
4	Anthropic, 2026 Usage Policy update, 8 October, read 12 October: https://www.anthropic.com/news/2026-usage-policy-update . NewsGuard, 2026 elections tracker, 9 October, read 12 October: https://www.newsguardtech.com/special-reports/2026-elections-misinformation-tracker/ . Crypto Briefing on the OpenAI feature of 11 October, read 12 October: https://cryptobriefing.com/openai-election-deepfake-safeguards-midterms	B2 for the first two. C4 for the third
4	Brennan Center, 25 September: https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/ai-changing-foreign-election-influence . Brennan Center, 9 October: https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/anticipating-election-misinformation-2026-midterms . Lawfare, DiResta, 5 October: https://lawfaremedia.org/article/production--persuasion--and-power--how-generative-and-agentic-ai-are-transforming-influence-operations . All read 12 October	B2
4	Graphika, Operation Overload page on the midterms and the Berlin vote, September 2026, text supplied by the editor, address not recorded. Graphika, The #Americans, September 2024, PDF supplied by the editor	B2
4	Recorded Future, CopyCop: https://www.recordedfuture.com/research/copycop-deepens-its-playbook-with-new-websites-and-targets . Microsoft Digital Defense Report: https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/security/security-insider/threat-landscape/2026-digital-defense-report	B2
5	New York Times, 18 September, read in a repost: https://dnyuz.com/?p=275949 . The Insider, 14 September: https://theins.press/en/news/297122 . La Voce di New York, 16 September: https://lavocedinewyork.com/en/news/2026/09/16/new-russian-disinformation-campaign-targets-u-s-midterms/ . Mother Jones, 24 September: https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/09/how-a-russian-attack-on-the-midterms-deepfaked-mother-jones-matryoshka-putin-trump/ . Mother Jones, 29 September: https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/09/russian-disinformation-election-matryoshka-david-corn-mother-jones/ . Howard W. Gordon, Beyond the Narrative, 30 September, which relays the Times story: https://howardwgordon.substack.com/p/the-kremlin-is-at-it-again-this-time	B2 for the press accounts. C3 for the officials' claims

Section	Source and address	Grade
8	Base rates. NBC News on the 19 October 2018 charge: https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/russian-woman-indicted-alleged-meddling-upcoming-u-s-midterms-n922206 . Nextgov, 9 November 2022: https://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2022/11/no-specific-or-credible-cyber-threats-affected-integrity-midterms-cisa-says/379546/ . PBS NewsHour, 5 November 2024: https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/fbi-says-bomb-threats-to-several-states-are-non-credible-sent-from-russian-domains	B2
8	Base-rate pages read on 9 October. CNBC on Facebook, 2018: https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/06/facebook-blocks-115-accounts-ahead-of-us-midterm-elections.html . ODNI transcript, 21 October 2020: https://www.iranwatch.org/library/governments/united-states/executive-branch/director-national-intelligence/dni-john-ratcliffes-remarks-press-conference-election-security . NASED joint statement, 12 November 2020: https://www.nased.org/news/jointstatement111220 . Fox 5 Atlanta on the 1 November 2024 joint statement: https://fox5atlanta.com/news/u-s-intelligence-agencies-expose-foreign-produced-disinformation-video-ahead-2024-election . CISA statement on the 2024 elections, read in full on 12 October: https://cisa.gov/news-events/news/statement-cisa-director-easterly-security-2024-elections	B2
8	Capacity and counting. CyberScoop, 6 February 2025: https://cyberscoop.com/doj-disbands-foreign-influence-task-force/ . Defense One, 2 June 2025: https://www.defenseone.com/policy/2025/06/cisa-projected-lose-third-its-workforce-under-trumps-2026-budget/405729 . Ballotpedia, 11 June 2026: https://news.ballotpedia.org/2026/06/11/californias-election-results-timeline-and-what-to-know-about-how-states-count-absentee-mail-in-ballots/	B2
8	Market odds, 9 October, 8:43 am eastern: https://defirate.com/odds/2026-midterms/snapshot/2026-10-09T0843/	B3
8	Market history, 11 October close, read 12 October: https://defirate.com/odds/2026-midterms/ . The 9:57 am snapshot of 12 October, set aside: https://defirate.com/odds/2026-midterms/snapshot/2026-10-12T0957/ . Cook, 9 October, listings read 12 October: https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/6138736-cook-political-report-shifts-house/ . Trump on Iran, 8 October, headline read 12 October: https://www.wcax.com/2026/10/08/trump-says-us-will-not-resume-military-strikes-iran-before-midterm-elections/ . Russian diesel, 9 October, read 12 October: https://abc30.com/post/trump-says-us-get-diesel-russia-relaxing-pressure-moscow-ease-prices-before-midterms/19925563/	B3
8	SCOTUSblog on the 14 September order: https://www.scotusblog.com/2026/09/supreme-court-denies-trump-administrations-request-to-implement-parts-of-usps-rule-on-mail-in-vo/	B2
8	Democracy Docket on the Justice monitors: https://www.democracydocket.com/news-alerts/trump-doj-readies-1000-election-monitors-for-midterm-elections/ . Cook rating changes, 6 October, in political.org: https://political.org/2026/10/06/cook-political-report-shifts-kansas-new-hampshire-and-north-carolina-senate-races-toward-democrats-putting-majority-within-reach/	B3

11 Wrap-up

The American public record is quiet on foreign AI influence and the midterms. Three plausible causes explain the quiet, and the record cannot rank two of them. One cause fails: that nothing is happening. Meta removed accounts from Iran that passed as American activists and wrote on American politics, and outside analysts report Russian videos in circulation since about 10 September. The Post story of 4 October adds a council product that no agency has put out.

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Nothing in the record shows the efforts moved a vote. Reach is small where anyone counted it. That shapes the call. Expect more content, expect it to be cheap, and expect any public attribution to come from researchers, platforms and vendors ahead of an agency.

The forecast to 9 November sharpens the call. No open source shows an adversary path to the count, so adversaries work on how it looks. Expect emailed threats at polling places and news-branded results fakes over election night and the next day, state-media talk of a flawed count, and a federal statement that nothing material changed. Odds of a cyber change to a certified total: Almost no chance (1 to <5).

Act on three points. Do not tell a board that silence means safety. Read the research pages of Meta, OpenAI, Microsoft, Google, Graphika, ISD, DFRLab and Recorded Future each week, and check the White House, War Department, ODNI, CISA and FBI release pages each day until 3 November. Monitor your own logos and executive names for impersonation in news-style video.

Dated actions fall on 15 October and 31 October, and Section 8.7 sets them in order. The election resolves Forecast 1 on 3 November, and the window closes on 9 November.

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