

THE IMPACT OF FAKE NEWS ON NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the concept of fake news, its causes, and the threats it poses to national security. The study highlights the impact of fake content disseminated through information technologies and social media on public consciousness, social stability, and state security. Additionally, the article discusses the state policies of Uzbekistan aimed at combating fake news and emphasizes the importance of enhancing media literacy.

Keywords: fake news, national security, information security, social media, media literacy, blogging, information policy

Introduction

In recent years, the flow of information has been developing at an extremely rapid pace. In particular, the widespread use of the internet and social networks has transformed every citizen into both a creator and a distributor of information. While this process contributes to democratic transparency and freedom of information, it has also significantly increased the spread of false information—fake news.

Fake news is becoming a factor that threatens not only the interests of individuals or groups but also the stability of society and the state. In today's global information environment, fake news can influence public consciousness, create a climate of distrust, and potentially disrupt political and economic situations. Therefore, the issue of fake news is closely linked with a new form of national security: information security.

Uzbekistan is not an exception to this trend. The increasing number of internet users in the country, coupled with the growing number of active bloggers and mass media channels on social networks, raises the risk of spreading fake content. In some cases, false information can lead to social tensions, conflicts, or a decline in public trust in government institutions.

Thus, scientifically analyzing the impact of fake news on national security, developing preventive mechanisms, and enhancing media literacy are among the most urgent tasks today.

The nature, forms, and factors of fake news

Fake news is false, distorted, or misleading content designed to disrupt public perceptions of reality for the benefit of an individual, social group, or organization. Often, it is disseminated by embedding false information within truthful facts to gain credibility.

Information analysts categorize fake news into the following types:

- Accidental fakes – arise from the dissemination of unverified information;
- Manipulative fakes – intentionally created according to a specific scenario for a particular purpose;
- Provocative fakes – deliberately distributed to create social unrest or an atmosphere of distrust.

The main factors contributing to the spread of fake news include:

- Speed and competition in information dissemination – the desire to be the first to publish often leads to sharing unchecked information;



- Weak editorial and journalistic standards – in blogging, the culture of verifying information sources is often low;
- Social polarization – division of citizens into different political or religious groups increases the likelihood of accepting fake content as credible;
- External information influences – sometimes fake news is disseminated through foreign sources and affects national stability.

Social networks such as Facebook, Telegram, Instagram, and TikTok contribute to the rapid spread of fake news due to algorithms that prioritize “viral content.” This system emphasizes emotionally engaging posts, allowing false or misleading information to spread faster.

The relationship between national security and fake news

National security is not limited to military or political stability. In modern conditions, information security is recognized as a crucial component of national security.

Threats in the information space can influence public consciousness, weaken trust in state institutions, and create social instability through the dissemination of false information, thereby harming the stability of the country.

The impact of fake news on national security manifests in several areas:

- Threats to political stability – fake news can influence political processes, spread misinformation about elections or reforms, and increase public distrust;
- Disruption of social stability – fake news can provoke conflicts over interethnic relations, religious harmony, or gender equality;
- Impact on economic security – false information regarding investment or economic decisions can reduce market confidence;
- Threats to information infrastructure – fake content reduces the efficiency of information exchange between the state and civil society, making it difficult for citizens to distinguish reliable sources.

All of these threats can undermine national security by eroding one of the most critical resources of a state: social trust and unity.

Combating fake news and ensuring information security in Uzbekistan

In recent years, the problem of fake news has been discussed at the state level in Uzbekistan. A series of measures have been implemented to improve information security policies, introduce fact-checking culture, and regulate blogging activities legally.

Legal framework

- The Law on Informatization (2019) established basic norms to ensure information reliability;
- Amendments to the Law on Mass Media increased responsibility for disseminating false information;
- In 2021, the Cybersecurity Concept was adopted, recognizing it as an integral part of the national security system.

Institutional Measures

- A Center for Detecting Fake News was established under the Agency for Information and Mass Communications;
- Independent platforms like Factcheck.uz and Kun.uz Factcheck analyze fake content and distribute official refutations;
- Media literacy courses are being implemented in national universities and media education institutions.

Blogging and social responsibility



Bloggers play an important role in information dissemination in Uzbekistan. However, the spread of unverified information can negatively impact public opinion. In response, in 2023, the Bloggers' Association developed a code of ethics and standards for information culture.

Education and public media literacy

Enhancing media literacy among citizens is one of the most effective ways to ensure information security. Skills such as detecting fake news, verifying sources, and critically evaluating information create immunity in the population. Media literacy programs are being integrated into both school and higher education curricula.

Prospective directions for combating fake news

Today, fake news cannot be limited solely by technical or legal methods. This issue requires a comprehensive approach:

- Technological solutions: implement AI-based systems to automatically detect fake content;
- Educational solutions: integrate mandatory media literacy courses starting from school;
- Community oversight: develop information culture standards for bloggers and journalists;
- Effective communication policies: ensure rapid and transparent information delivery from official sources.

An effective system to combat fake news can only work through the collaborative and trusted interaction of society, the state, and mass media.

Conclusion

The spread of fake news represents a new type of threat to national security. It disrupts the information environment and undermines public trust. Therefore, cooperation between the state and society is essential to:

- Enhance systems for quickly detecting and refuting fake news;
- Improve media literacy and widely implement fact-checking culture;
- Regulate blogging activities both legally and ethically;
- Strengthen information security as a distinct direction within the national security concept.

These measures can only be effective through the joint responsibility of the state, civil society, media, and citizens

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