

London University Diplomatic Summit

DAY 3: “Diplomacy in the age of misinformation and political polarisation”

————— University College London —————

9th March 2025

PARTICIPANT PACK



DAY OVERVIEW

Timings	Sessions
10:00	Student Attendees Arrive
10:15 - 10:30	Introduction to UCL Day by UCL Summit Directors Moulika Shome, Ingrid Chan and LUDS founder Matthew Bittle.
10:30 - 11:30	<u>Panel 1</u> : Social Media and the Crisis of Truth: Disinformation, Algorithms, and Democracy – lessons from Politics and Journalism.
11:30 - 12:00	Catered Networking Session with Guest Speakers.
12:00 - 13:00	<u>Panel 2</u> : Protecting democracy and diplomacy from hybrid threats: Cyberwarfare and mass Disinformation campaigns.
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:00	<u>Panel 3</u> : Misinformation, Tribalism, Security and Conflict Escalation in the Global South.
15:00-16:00	Concluding remarks by UCL Summit Directors.

SESSIONS OVERVIEW

PANEL 1: Social Media and the Crisis of Truth: Disinformation, Algorithms, and Democracy – lessons from Politics and Journalism.

Introduction to the Session:

Our panellists will explore how social media algorithms and disinformation threaten democratic discourse and journalistic integrity. This panel will examine the mechanics of how false information spreads online, the challenges facing modern newsrooms, and the impact on political processes. Through real-world examples and research insights, they will discuss practical solutions for rebuilding trust and protecting democratic institutions in our digital age. Join us for an essential conversation about navigating truth in an era of algorithmic amplification and viral misinformation.

Speakers:

Carl Jack Miller - leading author, speaker, and researcher specialising in the intersection of technology, politics, and power. Co-founder of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Media (CASM) at the London-based think tank Demos and a visiting scholar at King's College London. His research explores the implications of the digital age on governance, cybercrime, disinformation, and social media intelligence (SOCMINT), a term he helped coin. He is the author of *The Death of the Gods: The New Global Power Grab*, which examines how technology is reshaping power structures worldwide. His work has been widely published in *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *Wired*, *The Financial Times*, and *The Sunday Times*. In 2024, he released *Kill List*, an investigative podcast exposing a murder-for-hire website on the dark web, which led to multiple criminal convictions and gained global recognition.

PANEL 2: The weaponization of information: Protecting international relations from hybrid threats (cyberwarfare and disinformation campaigns).

Introduction to the Session:

This panel will explore how state and non-state actors leverage cyberwarfare and disinformation to destabilize international relations. Our experts will examine emerging hybrid warfare tactics, where traditional military operations merge with digital attacks and coordinated disinformation campaigns. Drawing from recent global events, they will analyze detection strategies, resilience building, and international cooperation frameworks to counter these evolving threats. Join us for an important discussion on safeguarding diplomatic relations and national security in an era where information itself has become a battlefield.

Speakers:

Denise Schipani - a security expert with a background in threat intelligence and cybersecurity. In her previous role as a Threat Intelligence Researcher, she focused on monitoring high-risk individuals and extremist far-right groups, identifying the ways in which these actors exploit disinformation and cyber tactics. She also has experience in integrating technical cybersecurity solutions to protect against cyber incidents. Denise holds a Master's degree in Security Studies from UCL, where her research explored the potential of climate policies to mitigate.

Vidhya Ramalingam - "Specialist in far right extremism and co-founder of Moonshot Vidhya led the European Union's first inter-governmental initiative on far-right terrorism and extremism. She worked with hundreds of practitioners in 10 European countries to design policy, initiate projects, and build capacity to respond to far-right extremism and terrorism. As co-founder of Moonshot CVE, she directs overall strategy and oversees campaigns, software development, and digital projects in over 25 countries. Under her leadership, the company has pioneered new partnerships with tech companies to respond to violent extremism on their platforms. In her spare time, Vidhya serves on the Board of Life After Hate, an organisation set up by former white supremacists, and dedicated to helping individuals leave hate groups." Link: <https://tedxlondon.com/speaker/vidhya-ramalingam/>

Moderated by Dr. Melanie Garson - Associate Professor (Teaching) in International Conflict Resolution & International Security at the UCL Department of Political Science.

PANEL 3: Misinformation, Tribalism, Security and Conflict Escalation in the Global South**Introduction to the Session:**

This panel will examine how digital misinformation interacts with existing tribal and ethnic tensions in developing regions, often accelerating conflict cycles. Our experts will explore unique challenges faced by the Global South, where social media platforms intersect with complex historical grievances and limited digital literacy. Through case studies from various regions, speakers will analyze how false narratives exploit communal divisions, impact local security, and complicate peace-building efforts. The discussion will offer crucial insights into building context-sensitive solutions for communities where viral misinformation can trigger real-world violence.

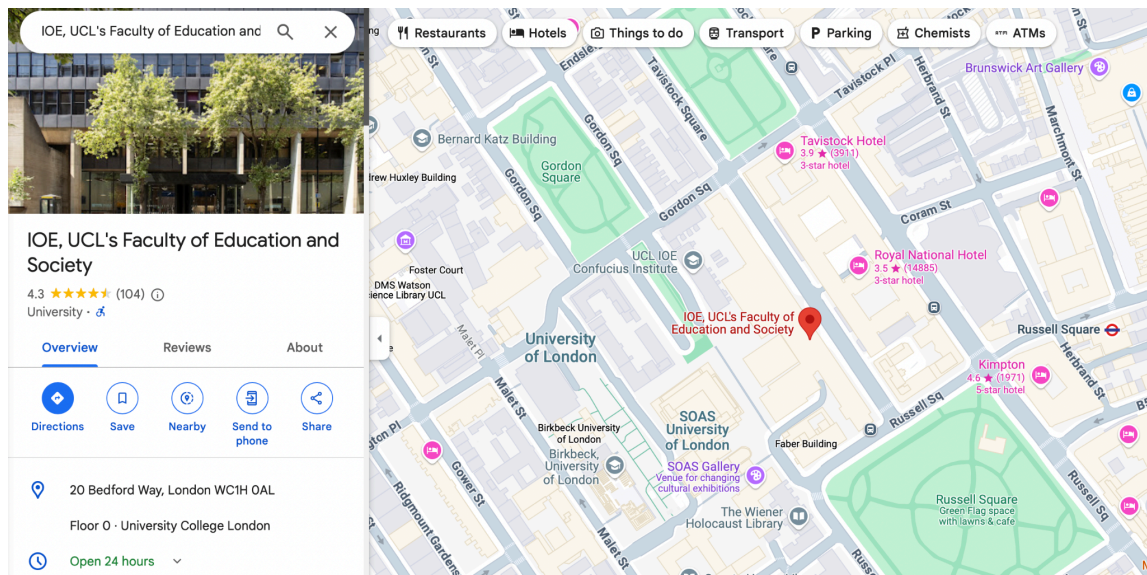
Speakers:

Martin Barber OBE - Martin Barber is a retired senior UN official. He served as director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) at UN Headquarters from 2000 until 2005. Before that, he was chief of policy in the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). From 1996 to 1998, he was Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From 1989 to 1996, he worked with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan, serving as UN Humanitarian Coordinator in 1995-6. He is also a Chatham House speaker.

Dr. Ala'a Shehabi - Dr. Ala'a Shehabi is an Associate Professor (Teaching) in Middle East Politics at EISPS. Previously, she was the deputy director of the Institute for Global Prosperity at UCL, Senior Research at the University of Lancaster's Work Foundation, and Analyst at the RAND Corporation. Trained in economics, she is now a transdisciplinary and mixed methods researcher focusing on infrastructure politics and development in Lebanon and Bahrain; energy justice; participatory action methods and citizen-scholarship through citizen science and citizen assemblies.

Note: The speaker list is subject to change without prior notice.

EVENT ACCESS:





W3.01 Lecture Theatre in IOE, 20 Bedford Way

By underground:

Russell Square (Piccadilly line): 4 minutes walking distance

Euston (Victoria and Northern lines): 11 minutes walking distance

Euston Square (Metropolitan, Circle and Hammersmith and City lines): 11 minutes walking distance

Goodge Street (Northern line - Charing Cross branch): 11 minutes walking distance

By train:

Euston: 11 minutes walk, King's Cross: 18 minutes

By bus:

Buses stopping near the venue: 14, SL6, 1, 68, 91, N91 (Russell Square station and Tavistock Square)

Parking:

No public parking, but there are Pay & Display car parks surrounding UCL. There is a blue badge parking bay, which can accommodate three cars, outside 20 Bedford Way.

Royal National Hotel offers parking at £8 for two hours and is one minute's walking distance away from the venue.

ATTENDING THE UCL DAY OF THE LONDON UNIVERSITY DIPLOMATIC SUMMIT

Venue: W3.01 in IOE, 20 Bedford Way

Location: University College London, Bloomsbury Campus, London WC1H 0AL

Time: Please kindly arrive at 10:00 am, allowing time for registration and finding the lecture theatre.

Dress Code: Business-casual

Contact us: ldnunidiplomaticsummit@gmail.com

Connect with us: [LinkedIn](#) or [Instagram](#)

Visit our website: <https://www.londonuniversitydiplomaticsummit.com/>

