

New Documents Reveal a Covert British Military-Intelligence Smear Machine Meddling in American Politics

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A bombshell [domestic spy scandal](#) has been unfolding in Britain, after hacked internal communications exposed a covert UK state military-intelligence psychological warfare operation targeting its own citizens and political figures in allied NATO countries under the cover of fighting “Russian disinformation.”

The leaked documents revealed a secret network of spies, prominent journalists and think-tanks colluding under the umbrella of a group called “Integrity Initiative” to shape domestic opinion—and to smear political opponents of the right-wing Tory government, including the leader of the opposition Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn.

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Until now, this Integrity Initiative domestic spy scandal has been ignored in the American media, perhaps because it has mostly involved British names. But it is clear that the influence operation has already been activated in the US. Hacked documents reveal that the Integrity Initiative is cultivating powerful allies inside the State Department, top DC think tanks, the FBI and the DHS.

The Integrity Initiative has spelled out plans to expand its network across the US, meddling in American politics and recruiting “a new generation of Russia watchers” behind the false guise of a non-partisan charity. Moreover, the group has hired one of the most notorious American “perception management” specialists, John Rendon, to train its clusters of pundits and cultivate relationships with the media.

Back in the UK, Member of Parliament Chris Williamson has clamored for an investigation into the Integrity Initiative’s abuse of public money.

The Integrity Initiative story is just growing and growing. Many are rightly outraged that this Tory government could fund a political smear unit.

Questions need to be answered. Share this video on Facebook to make that happen. <https://t.co/MGepalEfGw>

— Chris Williamson MP #GTTO (@DerbyChrisW) [December 14, 2018](#)

In a [recent editorial](#), Williamson drew a direct parallel between the group’s collaboration

with journalists and surreptitious payments the CIA made to reporters during the Cold War.

“These tactics resemble those deployed by the CIA in Operation Mockingbird that was launched at the height of the cold war in the early 1950s. Its aims included using the mainstream news media as a propaganda tool,” Williamson wrote.

“They manipulated the news agenda by recruiting leading journalists to write stories with the express purpose of influencing public opinion in a particular way,” the Labour parliamentarian continued. “Now it seems the British Establishment have dusted off the CIA’s old playbook and is intent on giving it another outing on this side of the Atlantic.”

Unmasking a British military-intelligence smear machine

The existence of the Integrity Initiative was virtually unknown until this November, when the email servers of a previously obscure British think tank called the Institute for Statecraft were hacked, prompting allegations of Russian intrusion. When the group’s internal documents appeared at a website hosted by Anonymous Europe, the public learned of a covert propaganda network seed-funded to the tune of over \$2 million dollars by the Tory-controlled UK Foreign Office, and run largely by military-intelligence officers.

Through a series of cash inducements, off the record briefings and all-day conferences, the Integrity Initiative has sought to organize journalists across the West into an international echo chamber hyping up the supposed threat of Russian disinformation—and to defame politicians and journalists critical of this new Cold War campaign.

A [bid for funding submitted](#) by the Integrity Initiative in 2017 to the British Ministry of Defense promised to deliver a “tougher stance on Russia” by arranging for “more information published in the media on the threat of Russian active measures.”



The Integrity Initiative has also worked through its fronts in the media to smear political figures perceived as a threat to its militaristic agenda. Its targets have included a Spanish Department of Homeland Security appointee, Pedro Banos, whose nomination was scuttled thanks a media blitz it secretly orchestrated; Jeremy Corbyn, whom the outfit and its [media cutouts painted](#) as a useful idiot of Russia; and a Scottish member of parliament, Neil Findlay, whom one of its closest media allies [accused](#) of adopting “Kremlin messaging” for daring to protest the official visit of the far-right Ukrainian politician Andriy Parubiy — the founder of two neo-Nazi parties and author of a white nationalist memoir, [“View From The Right.”](#)

These smear campaigns and many more surreptitiously orchestrated by the Integrity Initiative offer a disturbing preview of the reactionary politics it plans to inject into an already toxic American political environment.

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