

Britain Using PsyOps Domestically to Encourage “Conformity”

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According to newly released documents published by *The Intercept*, a special unit with the British spy agency is involved in psychological operations, or PsyOps, and propaganda campaigns against groups it labels “extremist.”

The documents are the latest from the trove released by [whistleblower Edward Snowden](#). The new documents show that the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) operates an elite unit known as the Joint Threat Research Intelligence Group (JTRIG). First [revealed](#) last year, JTRIG is known for using sexual “honey traps” to discredit targets, using denial-of-service attacks to shut down Internet chat rooms, and generally pushing propaganda on social media.

Despite official claims that JTRIG is focused on international targets in Iran or Afghanistan, the latest information reveals that the unit was focusing on domestic activity within the U.K.—activity typically monitored by local police or domestic law enforcement agencies.

[The Intercept reports:](#)

An August 2009 JTRIG memo entitled ‘Operational Highlights’ boasts of ‘GCHQ’s first serious crime effects operation’ against a website that was identifying police informants and members of a witness protection program. Another operation investigated an Internet forum allegedly ‘used to facilitate and execute online fraud.’ The document also describes GCHQ advice provided ‘to assist the UK negotiating team on climate change.’

Particularly revealing is a fascinating [42-page document](#) from 2011 detailing JTRIG’s activities. It provides the most comprehensive and sweeping insight to date into the scope of this unit’s extreme methods. Entitled ‘Behavioral Science Support for JTRIG’s Effects and Online HUMINT [Human Intelligence] Operations,’ it describes the types of targets on which the unit focuses, the psychological and behavioral research it commissions and exploits, and its future organizational aspirations. It is authored by a psychologist, Mandeep K. Dhani.

The documents ([Behavioural Science Support for JTRIG’S Effects and Online HUMINT Operations,U.K. Ministry Stakeholder Relationships Spreadsheets](#)) outline tactics employed by the agency, including ways to manipulate public opinion, understand human thinking and behavior, and encourage conformity.

According to the documents, JTRIG “currently collaborates with other agencies,” including

the Metropolitan police, the Security Service (MI5), the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the Border Agency, Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and the National Public Order and Intelligence Unit (NPOIU). One of JTRIG's objectives includes "monitoring 'domestic extremist groups such as the English Defence League by conducting online HUMINT'; 'denying, deterring or dissuading' criminals and 'hacktivists'; and 'deterring, disrupting or degrading online consumerism of stolen data or child porn.'"

One of the reports from 2011 outlines JTRIG's tactics, including uploading YouTube videos containing "persuasive communications," starting Facebook groups and Twitter accounts, and creating fake online personalities and supporters "to discredit, promote distrust, dissuade, deter, delay or disrupt."

JTRIG also relies on an understanding of psychology which is "critical" to operations. The unit used social media campaigns to encourage and foster "obedience" and "conformity". Section 3.6 Obedience, says compliance can be achieved by "engendering liking (attractiveness); instilling a sense of scarcity or secrecy; getting compliance to a small request at first."

Essentially, the U.K. government is using an elite unit of spies to launch psychological operations on "extremists" by creating fake accounts and videos to promote conformity and obedience. However, the practice is not exclusive to the U.K.. PsyOps are used by nations around the world.

The 2002 edition of the *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* [defines](#) psychological operations as

integrated employment of the core capabilities of electronic warfare, computer network operations, psychological operations, military deception, and operations security, in concert with specified supporting and related capabilities, to influence, disrupt, corrupt or usurp adversarial human and automated decision making while protecting our own.

Since that time, PsyOp has fallen out of favor and the term is now officially known as Military Information Support Operations, or MISO. It is [defined as](#)

Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives.

The United States military was famously caught using psychological operations in 2011, when [Rolling Stone reported](#) that "the U.S. Army illegally ordered a team of soldiers specializing in 'psychological operations' to manipulate visiting American senators into providing more troops and funding for the war."

Indeed, the operations seem crucial to the mission of the United States government (and totalitarian governments around the globe, for that matter). According to the leaked [U.S. Special Forces counterinsurgency manual](#):

PSYOP [Psychological Operations] are essential to the success of PRC

[Population & Resources Control]. For maximum effectiveness, a strong psychological operations effort is directed toward the families of the insurgents and their popular support base. The PSYOP aspect of the PRC program tries to make the imposition of control more palatable to the people by relating the necessity of controls to their safety and well-being. PSYOP efforts also try to create a favorable national or local government image and counter the effects of the insurgent propaganda effort.

Without a doubt, the U.S. government continues to label its own population “extremist” and is focusing its propaganda efforts domestically. The U.S. Special Forces Counterinsurgency Manual—as well as the new Snowden documents—should be required reading for all revolutionaries seeking to understand the tactics of the U.S. government. Only by educating ourselves can we hope to form a united, empowered front against government tyranny.

Derrick Broze writes for theAntiMedia.org, where this article [first appeared](#). Tune in! [Anti-Media Radio](#) airs Monday through Friday @ 11pm Eastern/8pm Pacific. Help us fix our typos: edits@theantimedia.org.

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