

Facebook Hires NATO Press Officer as Intelligence Chief

It is now difficult to distinguish where the deep state ends and the fourth estate begins and Ben Nimmo's move from NATO to NATO-aligned think tank to Facebook is just another example of this phenomenon.

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Global Research, February 10, 2021

[MintPress News](#) 9 February 2021

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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Ben Nimmo, a former NATO [press officer](#) and current senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, has [announced](#) Facebook has hired him to “lead global threat intelligence strategy against influence operations” and “emerging threats.” Nimmo specifically named Russia, Iran and China as potential dangers to the platform.

His announcement was greeted with [joy by several](#) NATO officials but was not met with such enthusiasm by others. “More censorship on the way as the former NATO press officer turned Pentagon-funded ‘researcher’ who labeled real people as Russian bots and peddled disinformation to link Jeremy Corbyn to Russian active measures moves to big tech,” [responded](#) investigative journalist Max Blumenthal.

More censorship on the way as the former NATO press officer turned Pentagon-funded “researcher” who labeled real people as Russian bots and peddled disinformation to link Jeremy Corbyn to Russian active measures moves to Big Tech <https://t.co/XcfGbdPJtv>

— Max Blumenthal (@MaxBlumenthal) [February 7, 2021](#)

Nimmo's questionable past certainly raises questions over whether such an official having a substantial say in what [2.8 billion](#) Facebook users worldwide see in their feeds is such a positive step for the free and open exchange of information.

“Disinformation agents”

For example, in 2019, U.K. Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn revealed secret Conservative Party documents showing negotiations the Tory government had with the U.S. over the privatization of the National Health Service (NHS). With just days to go before the U.K. general election, the scandal could have toppled the government and brought into power the most radical antiwar, anti-establishment government in the country's history. Corporate

media went into overdrive to spin the news, and Nimmo was a key part of this, immediately [announcing](#), without evidence, that the documents “closely resemble...a known Russian operation.” His supposedly expert conjecture allowed the story to become “Corbyn’s links to Russia” rather than “Tories privatizing the NHS in secret.” Nimmo’s work helped the Conservatives to an election victory and consigned Corbyn to the scrapheap.

This was much to the relief of Nimmo’s Atlantic Council, who had [branded](#) Corbyn the “Kremlin’s Trojan Horse” — someone pushing Moscow’s agenda abroad. A British Army general was of a similar opinion, [claiming](#) that if Corbyn were to win the election, the military would respond. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also [said](#) that the U.S. government was “doing its best” to prevent a radical leftist from winning power in the U.K.

Nimmo has been extremely liberal with whom he labels Russian disinformation agents. In 2018, his research [identified](#) one Twitter user, @lan56789, as a “Kremlin troll.” In reality, the user, Ian Shilling, was a British pensioner, as Sky News was easily able to confirm, [interviewing](#) him on air and asking him the patently absurd question if he was actually a Russian bot or not. Despite clearly being a flesh and blood human, Shilling’s account was later deleted anyway.

In the past, Nimmo has also [insisted](#) that Ruslana Boshirova was an influential Russian bot. In reality, she is an internationally known concert pianist, as one Google search would have shown. This sort of behavior does not augur well for those critical of Western foreign policy, who have faced constant harassment, suspension, or outright bans from social media.

NATO's Atlantic Council "analyst" [@benimmo](#) has called me an influential Russian bot.
Influential? You bet.
With 170 000 000 YouTube views and 400 000 subscribers.
Russian? Oh well, Ukrainian-American, but take it as a compliment. ☐
Bot? Yeah. Humans can't play like this. pic.twitter.com/pReCwBBaZ5

— Ruslana Boshirova Альянс пианистов (@ValLisitsa) [March 27, 2018](#)

Pro-war putsch

The Atlantic Council began as an offshoot of NATO itself and maintains extremely close connections to the military alliance. It continues to receive major funding from Western governments and weapons contractors, and its board of directors is filled to the brim with senior American statespersons, such as Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, and Henry Kissinger. Also appearing on the board are no fewer than seven former CIA directors and a number of top military generals, such as Jim “Mad Dog” Mattis, Wesley Clark, and David Petraeus.

In recent years, the council’s employees have penetrated deep into big tech and social media organizations. In 2018, it [announced](#) it had partnered with Facebook to aid in the curation of Facebook news feeds of users worldwide, giving it considerable power over what sort of views to highlight and which to demote. One year previously, Jessica Ashooh left the position of the council’s Deputy Director of Middle Eastern Strategy to take the position of Director of Policy at Reddit, the [eighth-most visited](#) website in the United States. However,

as with many intelligence agencies, it is unclear whether one truly “leaves” the Atlantic Council.

It is not just Russia that is in NATO’s crosshairs. Last week, the Atlantic Council [published](#) an anonymous, 26,000-word report stating that their goal for China was regime change and advising President Biden to draw a number of “red lines” around it, beyond which the U.S. would respond militarily. Meanwhile, the head of STRATCOM, Admiral Charles A. Richard, [wrote](#) that the U.S. must prepare for a potential nuclear war with Beijing.

Greater control

The military escalation has been mirrored by an intensifying online propaganda war, where the U.S. has attempted to isolate China economically and stop advancing Chinese technologies such as [Huawei’s](#) 5G network, mobile phone, and semiconductor manufacturer [Xiaomi](#), and video sharing app [TikTok](#). Nimmo has played his part in ramping up suspicions of nefarious Chinese activity online, [claiming](#) the existence of a wide-ranging pro-Beijing bot network encouraging Americans to believe that China has handled the COVID-19 pandemic far better than the United States. That Americans might have come to that conclusion on their own appears not to have been considered.

There is an enormous government effort to convince its population of the existence of (foreign) government efforts to manipulate their opinions online. In a massive case of projection, Western governmental organizations point the finger at their enemies, all the while securing greater access and control over the means of communication themselves, to the point where it is now difficult to distinguish where the deep state ends and the fourth estate begins. Nimmo’s move from NATO to NATO-aligned think tank to Facebook is just another example of this phenomenon. Perhaps the reason Nimmo is not looking for any Western influence operations online is that he is part of one.

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