

# Tweet This! The ISIS Terrorists and Social Media

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#), [SYRIA](#)

*Few people, if any, would argue the existence of the [ISIS](#) terrorists. Fewer still doubt the origins and motivation of the group. Appearing on CNN's "State of the Union" Senator Rand Paul (R-Kentucky) said: "I think we have to understand first how we got here," ..... "I think one of the reasons why ISIS has been emboldened is because we have been arming their allies. [We have been allied with ISIS in Syria.](#)" ISIS features prominently in every new outlet around the world - but what's with the Twitter?*

Curiously, while the conflict in Syria has destroyed its infrastructure, amidst the bombing, fleeing, starvation, [power cuts and fuel shortages](#), mainstream media would have us believe that ISIS has successfully set up shop in Syria to recruit "jihadist" using Google Chat, Skype, and Twitter ([CNN](#)). Clearly, these terrorists are tech-savvy and know how to use in Twitter Digital Terrorism.

In their study, Burson-Marsteller concluded that Twitter was 'a powerful channel for digital diplomacy' - but what of propaganda? To borrow from President Eisenhower, surely, Twitter propaganda 'has proved its right to a place of dignity in our military arsenal.'

Let us recall the role Twitter played in Iran's 2009 presidential elections. While the mainstream media in the US hailed the success of "[Twitter Revolution](#)" in Iran, *Wired Magazine* dispelled the notion in an aptly titled article "[Iran: Before You Have That Twitter-Gasm...](#)" pointing to the origins of the tweets (US) and their irregularity. Elsewhere, it was revealed that much of the mischief behind the 'newsfeed' from Iran [traced back to Israel](#).

Egypt was another example. The Western media contributed to the success of the Egyptian revolution [to social media, Facebook and Twitter](#), earning Google boy Wael Ghonim a glorious, albeit fleeting moment in history. This narrative obfuscated America's role in the uprisings. Freedom House had provided "[advanced training on civic mobilization, strategic thinking, new media, advocacy and outreach](#)". In 2010, Freedom House boasted of teaching new media tools to Egypt's "hope".

This much said, what is the purpose behind tweeting gruesome [images](#) of mass killings in Iraq; proposing that Westerners are being recruited, and in some cases, 'ordered to go back to Britain' to continue the 'jihad'; prompting the British PM David Cameron to warn that 'jihadist were planning to attack Britain' ([The Telegraph](#))? Regardless of where these tweets are being originated, one must surely wonder Cui bono?

To understand to whose benefit, we must look at the potential impact of these messages. Without a doubt, the fear instilled by seeing images of these atrocities could break down or weaken resistance. This is an old tactic using modern technology. For example, during the Persian Gulf War of 1991, PSYOP units dropped over 29 million leaflets to encourage Iraqi soldiers to surrender, usually by stressing the inevitability of their defeat. Estimates show

that “nearly 98% of all Iraqi prisoners acknowledged having seen a leaflet; 88% said they believed the message; and 70% said the leaflets affected their decision to surrender.” Of the estimated 100,000 soldiers who deserted or surrendered, many were found carrying leaflets in their hands or carrying them in their clothes[i]. It is plausible that surrender is a motive behind these tweets.

Additionally, both fear-induced surrender and revenge could serve to draw in fighters to side with one group or another, lubricating the killing machine. As importantly, if not more so, the tweets promoted by mainstream media are intended not only for Western audiences, but also as far and wide as the media’s reach takes it. Accompanied by propagandist commentaries and language such as [another 9/11 is upon us](#), the US (with help from some allies) has presented a justification for intervention and occupation of sovereign lands – a plan in the making for decades (see *Terror in Iraq; Roots and Motivation*).

In all this, there is another prize. The US-led countries that devastated Iraq, Libya, and Syria in the last decade alone have been harshly criticized for barring refugees from entering their country, even those [Iraqi interpreters](#) who helped the allied forces. The ‘threat’ of “jihadists” going to Britain (France, Germany, or elsewhere) ensures that that door is slammed shut in the faces of those who escape from the mayhem created by the “free and civilized world” (with help from local allies).

It may well be that these tactics are not without some forethought. In 2006, Max Boot who was introduced to a gathering at the Milken Institute as one of the top 500 most influential people in the making of US foreign policy in America, addressed the matter of ‘homebound terrorists’. Using 21<sup>st</sup> century terminology ‘Jihadist’, he was referring to the 1859 invasion of Sudan by the British and the ease with which the crazy ‘jihadist Mahdi’ and his followers were gunned down without any fear of repercussion that the enemy – Sudanese who had been terrorized, would follow them back to England. In his view, these days, open borders posed a problem which could open the door to ‘enemy Jihadists’ retaliating. Rest easy Max. Twitter has solved the problem for you.

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