

The truth about Cambridge Analytica-SCL: Psy-ops by UK-US deep state actors

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26 March 2018

The scandal surrounding Facebook's relationship with Cambridge Analytica, the election data company previously associated with former Trump campaign Chairman Steve Bannon, dominates the media in the US and Britain.

The serious privacy concerns involved in the harvesting of the personal information of some 50 million Facebook users were underscored by Britain's Channel 4 News. An undercover investigation filmed Cambridge Analytica CEO Alexander Nix boasting of dirty tricks operations to ensnare politicians and subvert elections.

But while the disclosures are being used to bolster hysterical claims of "Russian meddling," a closer examination reveals that the real and far more fundamental threat to democratic rights involves psy-ops programmes run by elements of the British and US deep state.

Cambridge Analytica's parent company is British-based SCL. Formerly Strategic Communication Laboratories, it is a private behavioural research and strategic communication company, founded in 1993 by Nigel Oakes. The son of Major John Waddington Oakes and a former boyfriend of Lady Helen Windsor, Oakes was formerly employed by Margaret Thatcher's favourite advertising agency, Saatchi & Saatchi, before establishing SCL.

As with Oakes, SCL's board members include scions of the British ruling class, from former military officers and defence contractors to major Conservative Party donors.

Lord Ivar Mountbatten, third cousin to Queen Elizabeth, is on the board, while CEO Roger Gabb is a millionaire wine merchant, a former British special forces officer and major contributor to the Tory Party. SCL President Sir Geoffrey Pattie was a defence undersecretary in the Thatcher government. SCL chairman is the venture capitalist Julian Wheatland, also chairman of Oxfordshire Conservatives Association. Former Conservative Party Treasurer Jonathan Marland, trade envoy under Prime Minister David Cameron, is a shareholder.

Others associated, past or present, with SCL include property billionaire and Tory Party donor Vincent Tchenguiz; Sir James Allen Mitchell, privy counsellor since 1985; Rear Admiral John Tolhurst, a former assistant director of naval warfare in the Ministry of Defence and aide de camp to the Queen; and Gavin McNicoll, creator of the Eden Intelligence firm, which has run

projects for the British government.

SCL boasts of providing "data, analytics and strategy to governments and military organizations worldwide," notably the British Ministry of Defence, the US State Department and NATO. It states that it has carried out "behavioural change programs" in more than 60 countries. One of its first contracts in 1999 was promoting Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid. It has worked to influence elections in Afghanistan, Latvia, Ukraine, Nigeria and Kenya among others.

Cambridge Analytica was launched in 2012 by SCL to extend its operations to the US. In partnership with hedge fund billionaire Robert Mercer, this included the Republican primaries for the 2016 election, where it worked to support Ted Cruz and then Donald Trump.

There is nothing new in this. Similar activities were known of, facilitated and endorsed by the political and military establishment in Britain and the US for years.

According to Liam O'Hare at *Bella Caledonia*, SCL went public in 2005 at the DSEI conference, a global arms fair in London, promoting itself as the first private company to provide psychological warfare services to the British military:

"Its 'hard sell' was a demonstration of how the UK government could use a sophisticated media campaign of mass deception to fool the British people into thinking an accident at a chemical plant had occurred and threatened central London."

Such a sales pitch is even more chilling given the recent events in Salisbury, where the alleged attempted assassination of double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia—victims of a still unidentified nerve agent—is being used by the government to stage provocations against Russia.

A Freedom of Information request from August 2016 showed the MoD took out a £40,000 contract with SCL for the "provision of external training" in 2010/11 and £150,000 for the "procurement of target audience analysis" in 2014/15.

"In addition, SCL also carries a secret clearance as a 'list X' contractor for the MOD. A List X site is a commercial site on British soil that is approved to hold UK government information marked as 'confidential' and above. Essentially, SCL got the green light to hold British government secrets on its premises."

Revelations of the British military's connections with SCL

forced Prime Minister Theresa May to declare in Parliament Wednesday, “As far as I’m aware the government has no current contracts with Cambridge Analytica or with the SCL Group.”

A spokesperson admitted that the government had held three previous contracts with SCL Group, but said these had now ended.

According to the *Guardian*, in 2014 “MoD officials worked with SCL Group on ‘Project Duco’ to analyse how people would interact with certain government messaging.”

The project was carried out by the MoD’s Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), which is focused on maximising “the impact of science and technology for the defence and security of the UK.”

Project Duco was part of the government’s “human and social influence” work, and SCL was paid £150,000. It assessed how Target Audience Analysis (TAA) could “contribute to the government’s strategic communications.”

The *Guardian* has been in the forefront of the campaign over Russian fake news in the UK. But it was forced to acknowledge that SCL’s work on Project Duco and its “list X” ranking “is likely to raise concerns that government officials were aware of Cambridge Analytica and SCL’s operations, and intended to use them to promote government messages.”

In other words, Cambridge Analytica and SCL were not acting as proxies for the Russian state but rather for significant sections of the US/UK military and intelligence apparatus. A link to the heavily redacted report on Project Duco is here. Note that intellectual copyright is held by the government’s science and technology laboratory at Porton Down, just eight miles from Salisbury.

Nafeez Ahmed at INSURGE intelligence elaborated on the connections between SCL, the British foreign office and “other elements of the UK political and financial establishment.” These are so close that “last year the Foreign Office executive agency, Wilton Park, invited SCL Group subsidiary, SCL Elections, to speak about how the use of data in the 2016 Presidential election could be applied in the British government’s diplomatic and foreign policy agenda.”

The SCL Group executives were Mark Turnbull, managing director of SCL Elections, and David Wilkinson, then lead data scientist, who addressed the FCO in February 2017 on the subject of “examining the application of data in the recent US Presidential election.”

“The meeting was attended and opened by Jonathan Allen—then the FCO’s Acting Director General for Defence and Intelligence. Allen is now Theresa May’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.”

O’Hare explains that the TAA “evolved during the battle for hearts and minds in Afghanistan.”

A SCL whistle-blower has charged that techniques used by the SCL Group has traced TAA back to the methods used by the US and UK militaries in Iraq. IR.net reports the whistle-

blower stating that “some of this technology was actually owned by the UK Ministry of Defence and/or the US Military, and now they don’t want people to know that it was their weapon that’s currently in the wild, being used privately to manipulate elections worldwide.”

SCL received £548,000 for delivering training to NATO that included providing an eight-week course for its staff. This was “subsequently passed on to Georgian, Ukrainian and Moldovan government officials.”

Turnbull is also head of Cambridge Analytica Political Global. He was previously employed for 18 years at Bell Pottinger where, O’Hare reports, he headed up “the Pentagon funded PR drive in occupied Iraq which included the production of fake al-Qaeda videos.”

The US State Department has a contract for \$500,000 with SCL to provide “research and analytical support in connection with our mission to counter terrorist propaganda and disinformation overseas.”

An offshoot, SCL Defense, received \$775,000 “to support NATO operations in Eastern Europe targeting Russia.”

O’Hare reports, “The company delivered a three-month course in Riga which taught ‘advanced counter-propaganda techniques designed to help member states assess and counter Russia’s propaganda in Eastern Europe.’

“The NATO website said the ‘revolutionary’ training would ‘help Ukrainians better defend themselves against the Russian threat’.”

SCL has also had contracts with the Pentagon for psy-ops in Iran and Yemen.

Whatever the exact beginnings of the TAA programme, the real news story being buried by the official media is that the covert operations and subversion techniques deployed in US and British imperialism’s neo-colonial adventures are now being used on their domestic populations.



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