



Shock Files: What Role Did Integrity Initiative Play in Sergei Skripal Affair?

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Sputnik

Fri, 04 Jan 2019 17:56 UTC



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Hacking syndicate Anonymous has just released its fourth tranche of documents hacked from the internal servers of the Institute for Statecraft and its subsidiary, the Integrity Initiative. Several explosive files raise serious questions about the shadowy British state and NATO-funded 'think tank' and its connections with the Skripal affair.

The files were [released](#) just after 2:30pm GMT on January 4 - I've barely scratched the surface of the content, but what I've seen so far contains a panoply of bombshell revelations - to say the least, the organization(s) now have serious questions to answer about what role they played in the poisoning of Sergei Skripal in March, and its aftermath both nationally and internationally.

Sinister Timeline

[One file](#) apparently dating to "early 2015" - "Russian Federation Sanctions" - written by the Institute's Victor Madeira **outlines "potential levers" to achieve Russian "behaviour change", "peace with Ukraine", "return [of] Crimea", "regime change" or "other?". The suggested "levers" span almost every conceivable area, including "civil society", "sports", "finance" and "technology".**

In the section marked "intelligence", Madeira suggests simultaneously expelling "every RF [Russian Federation] intelligence officer and air/defense/naval attache from as many countries as possible". In parentheses, it references '[Operation Foot](#)', the expulsion of over 1000 Soviet officials from the UK in September 1971, the largest expulsion of intelligence officials by any government in history.

The section on sports also suggests "advocating the view [Russia] is unworthy of hosting [sporting] events" - and the section marked "information" recommends the sanctioning of 'Russian' media "in West for not complying with regulators' standards".

Intelligence e.g.

- Simultaneously expel every RF intelligence officer and air/defence/naval attaché from as many countries as possible (global *Operation FOOT*, 1971)
- Increase scrutiny of RF religious, academic, think-tank & business links in West

Military e.g.

- Suspend military/defence delegation visits/exchanges
- Suspend all defence-related sales to RF
- Suspend RF from international defence- & security-related *fora*
- Expand sanctions on/to RF companies (in)directly profiting from UKR invasion

Politics e.g.

- Make ordinary Russians *the direct* focus of & audience for Western politicians
- Suspend RF & any other State helping it evade sanctions from international *fora*

Sports e.g.

- Expose RF corruption of bidding processes for international sports events
- Advocate view that RF unworthy of hosting such events
- Publicise RF labour violations when building venues for such events
- Publicise RF programmes that encourage athletes to engage in doping

Security e.g.

- Simultaneously expel every RF intelligence officer and air/defence/naval attaché from as many countries as possible (global *Operation FOOT*, 1971)
- Arrest every known RF agent — not least "agents of influence"
- Publicise arrest of key RF "agents of influence"
- Increase funding & operational tempo of counter-intelligence operations against RF
- Revive Lists "N", "U" & "X" fully

2015 File Written By Victor Madeira on Possible Anti-Russian Actions

In April that year, Institute for Statecraft chief Chris Donnelly [was promoted](#) to Honorary Colonel of SGMI (Specialist Group Military Intelligence), and [in October](#) he met with General Sir Richard Barrons. Notes from the meeting don't make clear who said what, but one despaired that **"if no catastrophe happens to wake people up and demand a response, then we need to find a way to get the core of government to realise the problem and take it out of the political space."**

"We will need to impose changes over the heads of vested interests. We did this in the 1930s. My conclusion is **it is we who must either generate the debate or wait for something dreadful to happen to shock us into action.** We must generate an independent debate outside government. We need to ask when and how do we start to put all this right? Do we have the national capabilities [and/or] capacities to fix it? If so, how do we improve our harnessing of resources to do it? We need this debate now. There is not a moment to be lost," they said.

Operation IRIS Begins

On 4 March 2018, former Russian military officer and double agent for MI6 Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were poisoned in Salisbury, England.

Within days, the Institute had submitted a proposal to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, "to study social media activity in respect of the events that took place, how news

spread and evaluate how the incident is being perceived" in a number of countries.

The bid was accepted, and the Initiative's 'Operation Iris' was launched. Under its auspices, the Institute employed 'global investigative solutions' firm Harod Associates to analyze social media activity related to Skripal the world over.

Comment: On this, RT [writes](#):

However, Harod's confidential [report](#) did more than just parse social media reactions to the Skripal affair: **It compiled a list of alleged "pro-Russia troll accounts" accused of "bombarding the audience with pro-Kremlin propaganda and disinformation relevant to the Skripal case."**

Among those who found themselves listed as nefarious thought-criminals were Ukrainian-born pianist Valentina Lisitsa, **and a gentleman from Kent who goes by Ian56 on Twitter.**

It also conducted media monitoring of its own, with Institute 'research fellow' Simon Bracey-Lane [producing regular 'roundups'](#) of media coverage overseas, based on insights submitted by individuals connected to the Initiative living in several countries. One submission, from an unnamed source in Moldova, says they "cannot firmly say" whether the country's media had its "own point of view" on the issue, or whether news organizations had taken "an obvious pro-Russian or pro-Western position", strongly suggesting these were key questions for the Initiative.



Estonia:

Dear Simon,

The summary of publications presented by the main Estonian news outlets is the following:

Postimees(the biggest newspaper in Estonia):

Postimees has published 14 articles after the Skripal attack. Most of them are referring to the facts announced by the UK government or security forces.

Out of the three biggest stories, the first one is giving a board overview of the GRU and its background, operating techniques and its subordination.

The second specifically focuses on the analysis of the Skripal cord and examines whether such an attack was a rather unsuccessful secret murder attempt or a desire to show to the West through robust measures of violence, that no one is protected anywhere.

The third one cites the Russian official's responses by reporting the Russian ambassador to the UN Security Council, according to whom allegations, made by the UK officials that GRU is behind the attack are taken from the air and are full of contradictions. Her overall message is that the investigation is politically manipulated.

Integrity Initiative Seeks Intelligence On How Overseas Media Reported Skripal Incident

Moreover though, **there are clear indications the Institute sought to shape the news narrative on the attack - and indeed the UK government's response.** [One file dated March 11](#) appears to be a briefing document on the affair to date, with key messages bolded throughout.

It opens by setting out "The Narrative" of the incident - **namely "Russia has carried out yet another brutal attack, this time with a deadly nerve agent, on someone living in Britain"**.

"Use of the nerve agent posed a threat to innocent British subjects, affecting 21 people and seriously affecting a police officer. This is not the first time such an attack has been carried out in the UK...14 deaths are believed to be attributable to the Kremlin...Russia has poisoned its enemies abroad on other occasions, most notably then-candidate for the Presidency of Ukraine, Viktor Yushchenko, in 2004. Russian political activist Vladimir Kara-Murza has been poisoned twice; and the journalist Anna Politkovskaya was also poisoned and later shot dead. Since Putin has been running Russia, the Kremlin has a history of poisoning its opponents in a gruesome way," the "narrative" reads.

The file goes on to declare the British response has been **"far too weak...it's essential the government makes a much stronger response this time"** - and then lists **"possible, realistic, first actions"**, including **banning RT and Sputnik from operating in the UK, boycotting the 2018 World Cup, withdrawing the UK ambassador from Moscow and expelling the Russian ambassador to the UK, and refusing/revoking visas to leading Russians within Vladimir Putin's "circle", and their families.**

Possible, realistic, first actions:

- **Actively publicise the above facts about the Russian leadership**, through regular media, social media; and with the assistance of specialists such as those at The Institute for Statecraft
- **Boycott this summer's football World Cup**, and try to persuade other nations to do likewise. This might be a gamble, but the US boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980 (following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan) *really hurt* Moscow. This was their big show on the world stage and the Americans spoilt it. The UK allowed athletes to compete, but not under the Union Flag
- **Withdraw the British Ambassador from Moscow and order the Russian Ambassador to leave the UK**
- **Refuse or revoke visas to leading Russians who are in or dependent on Putin's circle – and their families**. This would really cause disquiet at the top, especially if their children who are at school here were forced to leave
- **Ban private jets carrying Russians from landing in the UK or British dependent territories**
- **Start discussions with the banks on stopping Russian access to SWIFT codes**
- **Start a campaign to prevent construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline**
- **Ban RT TV and Sputnik from operating in the UK**. They are not media outlets; their constitutions make it clear they are merely the mouthpieces of the Kremlin
- **Engage with British Muslims to publicise what has been happening with their Muslim brethren in Crimea since the Russian invasion**
- **Enlist cross-party help from MPs who understand the threat Russia poses to help publicise that threat**
- **Start a programme for schools to teach critical thinking and recognising false narratives**. Ask experts in combatting disinformation and outside education to help draw up the programme

It's not clear who the document was distributed to - but it may have been given to journalists within the Initiative's UK 'cluster', if not others. **This may explain why the Institute's "narrative", and its various recommended "responses" utterly dominated mainstream media reporting of the affair for months afterwards**, despite the glaring lack of evidence of

Russian state involvement in the attack.

It's extremely curious so many of the briefing document's recommendations almost exactly - if not exactly - echo several of the suggested "levers" outlined in the 2015 document. It's also somewhat troubling the "Global Operation Foot" spoken of in that file duly **came to pass on March 28 2018, with over 20 countries expelling over 100 Russian diplomats.**

Likewise, it's striking Victor Madeira, the Institute staffer who made the recommendations in 2015, made many media appearances discussing the poisoning following the incident [routinely documented](#) by the Institute. Security consultant Dan Kaszeta also wrote a number of articles for the Integrity Initiative website about chemical weapons following the attack - including a July 14 article, *How could Novichok have poisoned people four months after the Skripal attack?*- [receiving 40 pence per word](#).

Comment: The articles were for the purpose of debunking Russian state 'claims' and 'conspiracy theories' re: Skripal. Ironically, none of his explanations of how the Skripals managed to be poisoned have been backed up British authorities. As Tom Secker [writes](#):

1. Kaszeta's [attempt](#) to debunk conspiracy theories relied almost entirely on information about other nerve agents, not Novichok, and speculated that the Skripals were wearing gloves, OR washed their hands because they got some 'muck' on them, OR that the door handle got wet, diluting the poison. **But no evidence has emerged in support of any of these possibilities**, the Skripals were apparently so covered with the stuff that a table in the seafood restaurant they visited three hours later had to be burned, and the OPCW's testing of the door [found](#) 'the chemical substance found was of high purity, persistent and resistant to weather conditions.'
2. **Kaszeta is not a scientific expert in chemical weapons** (least of all Novichok) but an [expert](#) in crisis response planning, especially in the wake of a CBRN attack. It [appears](#) he never wrote a word about Novichok prior to March 2018.



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DATE: 23 JUL 2018

TO:

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FOR:

1 article for Integrity Initiative

DESCRIPTION	Word count	Rate	Total
Article by D. Kaszeta on Porton Down	1555	£0.40 / word	622.00
VAT (see note)	0	0	0
TOTAL			£622.00

Invoice submitted to Integrity Initiative by Dan Kaszeta

Strange Connections

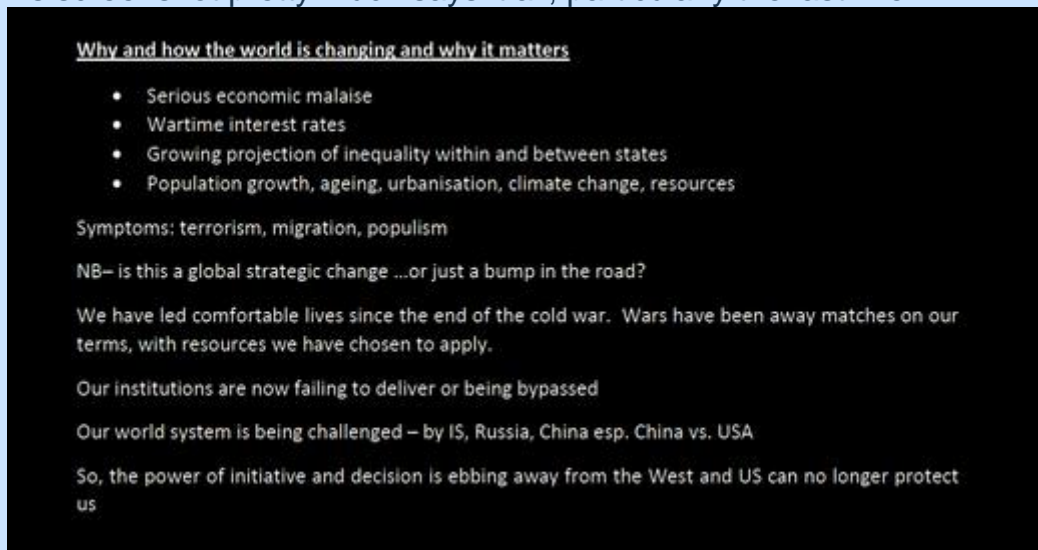
The Institute's bizarrely intimate connections with the incident don't end there. [Another document](#) apparently dating to July 2018 **contains the contact details of Pablo Miller, Skripal's MI6 recruiter, handler and - unbelievably - neighbor in Salisbury.** Anonymous claims the document is an invitee list for a meeting the Institute convened between a number of individuals and Syria's highly controversial White Helmets group, but this is yet to be verified.

Whatever the truth of the matter, the latest document dump raises yet further questions about how and why it was BBC Diplomatic and Defense Editor Mark Urban - **who was in the same tank regiment as Miller after leaving University** - came to meet with Skripal in the year before his poisoning. When I [attended the launch](#) of his book on the affair in October - *The Skripal Files* - **he was evasive on whether he played a role in connecting him with Skripal, and denied Miller was Skripal's recruiter.**

The latest trove also raises yet further questions about the activities of the Institute for Statecraft and Integrity Initiative. In light of these revelations, reading the record of Donnelly's meeting with General Barrons takes on an acutely chilling quality. **It may be that purely serendipitously the pair got their "catastrophe", their "something dreadful", which "[woke] people up" and made the government "realise the problem" posed by Russia - or it could be they one way or another played a facilitative role of some kind.**

After months of refusing to answer the vast number of questions I and thousands of others have submitted to the paired organizations, it's high time for them to break cover, and be honest with the public.

Comment: This screenshot pretty much says it all, particularly the last line:



Excerpt from Integrity Initiative document on meeting between Donnelly and Barrons
As Tom Secker [concludes](#) after taking a look at the latest documents:

In sum, we have a group that called for a ratcheting up of sanctions and actions against Russia, then called for a 'catastrophe to wake people up and demand a response', who in effect are plotting a military takeover of the British foreign policy establishment, who work closely with both scientific and non-scientific officials at Porton Down, and have some association with Skripal's handler, and were for a time engaged in information warfare on the Skripal case.

If I were in the business of constructing rival conspiracy theories then I'd be tempted to make an accusation against the Institute for Statecraft and the Integrity Initiative.

Put simply, this is a more coherent and incriminating series of events than the evidence cited in support of the British government's story.