



## British Intelligence reactivates Empire's tools for worldwide dirty tricks

By Rachel Douglas

The British Empire has long outlasted the era of redcoats and gunboats, as we have often reminded our readers, in the form of the post-war global financial empire centred in the City of London. But as Anglo-American finance teeters on the brink of collapse, brought on by its own never-ending binges of financial speculation and the rise of the superior, real-economy-based model of China and its BRICS and Belt and Road partners, imperial-minded strategists in the UK have re-suscitated the full military and intelligence legacy of the old Empire for efforts to hold on to power and global dominance.

The targets of those efforts are not only the Eurasian great powers themselves, but also the slightest hint that US President Donald Trump would seek cooperation with those countries.

In recent months, the AAS has reported on the return of UK military programs to “east of Suez”, under the perspective dubbed “Global Britain” by the current Tory government. We have also highlighted the leading British role in pushing the Five Eyes intelligence complex (the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) and NATO into upgraded cyber warfare activity, both to confront Russia and China and for surveillance of the citizenry at home. We have compiled dossiers of the outstanding AAS articles on these developments; they are listed, with download links, at the end of this article.

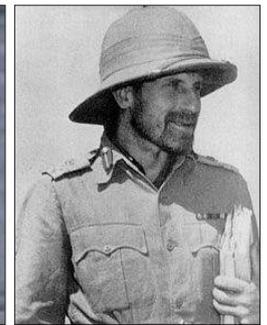
In the final weeks of 2018, investigative journalists and hacktivists helped lift the veil from two major projects of British Intelligence proper: the rapid build-up of the 77th Brigade, a regular and Army Reserve unit specialising in cyber warfare, and the Integrity Initiative of the Institute for Statecraft (IfS), a British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)-funded project headed by a military intelligence colonel. Revelations of Integrity Initiative activity, through the online publication of its voluminous files by the hacktivist group Anonymous, confirmed what the AAS had said back in January 2017, namely that the chief foreign power that interfered in the 2016 American Presidential election was not Russia, but Britain (Dossier No. 4, listed below).

### MI6 leaders speak

Before either the Integrity Initiative or the 77th Brigade drew much public attention, there was already a trend of British Intelligence figures coming out to make political interventions in their own name. Two of the most vocal were a former and the current head of British foreign intelligence—the Secret Intelligence Service, or MI6: Sir Richard Dearlove and Alex Younger.

Dearlove oversaw MI6 operations between 1999 and 2004, the time of the instigation of the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. In April 2017 Dearlove declared his open offensive against the newly inaugurated Trump, who had campaigned against “globalisation”. “I Spy Nationalism” was the headline of Dearlove’s 13 April 2017 interview in *Prospect* magazine, in which the former spy boss dubbed Trump “very strongly nationalist” and termed “nationalism” more dangerous than Islamist terrorism.

Dearlove was even more aggressive in attacking UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, denouncing him in the *Telegraph* of 17 June 2017 under the headline, “Jeremy Corbyn is a



HQ of the British Army’s 77th Brigade, a cyber warfare unit whose name and symbol—the “Chinthe” beast on the placard—come from notorious British Military Intelligence “terror against terror” specialist Orde Wingate (r.). In Nov. 2018 Channel One Russia’s correspondent triggered a security alert at UK military bases and tabloid press accusations of “espionage” for filming the gate from a public road. Photos: Screenshot, 1tv.ru; Wikimedia

danger to this nation”, as “an old-fashioned international socialist” who “wouldn’t clear the security vetting” at MI6.

Against Russia itself, Dearlove went on Sky News in October 2018 to preach that Russia is irremediably attached to... its own national interest! Like US ex-CIA chief James Clapper, Dearlove believes that Russia is genetically hostile to other nations. “It’s deeply embedded in Russia’s DNA”, he told Sky News, “to use the capabilities that it has, to disrupt other nations, to pursue their own national interest”.

Then there is Alex Younger, the current “C”, as the head of MI6 is known in intelligence community parlance (short for “chief”), since 2014. In the first of two unprecedented public speeches while in office, December 2016, Younger declared that Britain was facing “hybrid warfare” from hostile powers using cyber-attacks, propaganda, and subversion of the democratic process. On 3 December 2018, he followed up with a recruitment speech to students at St Andrews University. He motivated a huge upgrade of MI6 operational capabilities, especially in cyber space: to “master covert action in the data age” and, above all, defeat attempts by Russia—so Younger said—“to probe our institutions and defences in ways that fall short of traditional warfare.” These “hybrid threats”, he added, “include the cyber attacks, misinformation and disguised use of military force seen in Ukraine and elsewhere, combined with political obfuscation”. Younger referred to Russia strictly and solely as an adversary, “intent on subverting our way of life”, and warned Russia “not to underestimate our determination and our capabilities”.

As always, MI6 fluidly exchanges personnel and beliefs with the Crown’s top think tanks. Thus it is informative to look back over the publications list of the flagship Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. In the 1990s, when British establishment thinking was that Russia could be taken over through the agency of neoliberal economic reformers trained at places like the Thatcherite Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Chatham House publications looked benignly at Russia, as at a subordinate country. As late as 2000, Chatham House would publish a paper titled “Russian Economic Reforms as Seen by an Insider”, by Vladimir Mau, a Russian economist and government official whom the late IEA head Lord Harris had termed one of “our men” in Russia.

The attitude towards Russia changed after the Yevgeni Primakov government (1998-99) rolled back the most radical neoliberal deregulation and began to save some of Russia's industry; it stiffened when the new President, Vladimir Putin, beat back a separatist insurgency in Chechnya, support for which by Thatcher and by British Intelligence was an open secret; it became uniformly hostile, practically ruling out co-operation with Russia, after Putin's reassertion of a sovereign Russian military and foreign policy and his strong opposition to the eastward expansion of NATO in the 2000s. Other landmarks of the growing confrontation with Russia were the 2008 war in which Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, a darling of London and Washington, attacked Russian forces in South Ossetia, and the failure of an Anglo-American-backed "colour revolution" against Putin in 2012. In June 2015 Chatham house issued *The Russian Challenge*, a militant document that recommended a permanent regime of sanctions until Russia were to yield to demands from the "rules-based" order as defined by the UK (which the report stated would not happen with President Vladimir Putin in power), and a "robust" response to alleged Russian "hybrid" war that would, inclusively, "invest in defensive strategic communications and media support in order to counter the Kremlin's false narratives."

The late-2018 revelations regarding the 77th Brigade and the Integrity Initiative demonstrated that the Dearlove and Younger statements and the Chatham House report were not merely words, but rather battle cries in a British Intelligence offensive on behalf of preserving the modernised British Empire. This drive draws on the experience and methods of more than 200 years.

### In the footsteps of Orde Wingate

"Counter-adversarial information activity" and "collecting, creating and disseminating digital and wider media content in support of designated tasks" are listed in the [online mission statement](#) of the British Army's "77th Brigade: Influence and Outreach". It was organised in 2015, prompted—according to Carl Miller's 14 November 2018 "Inside the British Army's secret information warfare machine" in *Wired* ([www.wired.co.uk](http://www.wired.co.uk))—by a memo the previous year titled "Warfare in the Information Age". That title, in turn, harked back to a 1995 study under the same name done by Bruce D. Berkowitz for the RAND Corporation, a top American war-planning think tank. The UK's info warfare, as Miller quoted the memo, should include "countering the narratives of others, and if necessary manipulating the opinion of thousands concurrently in support of combat operations".

One of the first exposés of the 77th Brigade, written by *Guardian* defence correspondent Ewen MacAskill in January 2015, described it as "a special force of Facebook warriors, skilled in psychological operations and use of social media to engage in unconventional warfare in the information age".

The 77th Brigade takes its name from unconventional warfare in the imperial age—its late phase in the mid-20th century. The 77th Indian Infantry Brigade, known as the Chindits, was created by British military intelligence figure Orde Wingate to infiltrate behind Japanese lines in Burma during World War II and organise locals into irregular warfare units, as well as to foster "uncertainty in the Japanese high command", as MacAskill noted. Its 21st-century namesake wears the insignia of Wingate's forces, a shoulder patch showing the mythical Burmese beast called a Chinthee.

In the 1930s, Wingate had been a military intelligence officer in the British Mandate of Palestine, where he gained notoriety for his "terror against terror" strategy for fighters of

the Zionist Haganah to use against Palestinian Arab guerrillas. His Special Night Squads carried out massive retaliation for any incident, using the principle of "one hundred eyes for an eye, one hundred teeth for a tooth". When some Zionist fighters objected to this approach, Wingate, a member of the Protestant sect called Darbyism (or the Plymouth Brethren), would exhort them with tales of the glory of the Roman Empire's Maccabean military sect. He would stage public torture and execution of captured Arab fighters to "stiffen" the Zionist militias' resistance.

Wingate's Darbyist beliefs included a vision of a future state of Israel as a reborn "Jewish Kingdom", which would precede the End Times. The ideology of his co-thinker in the matter of "massive retaliation" by the Zionist forces, fellow British Army officer Vladimir Jabotinsky, meanwhile, was called outright fascist by his opponent within the Zionist movement David Ben-Gurion, who in 1948 would become Israel's first prime minister.

Writing in March 2015 for the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Simon Anglim of the King's College London Department of War Studies acknowledged that the 77th Brigade's name and badge were "loaded with historical significance". He quoted a BBC commentary saying that the new unit would follow Wingate's "spirit of innovation", while playing an "unorthodox and controversial" role.

### The 'Integrity' thought police

On 5 November 2018 Anonymous posted in the [cyberguerrilla.org](http://cyberguerrilla.org) blog the first of several large data dumps from a hack of the UK's Institute for Statecraft and its Integrity Initiative. The IfS was founded in 2009 and is headed by Christopher Donnelly, a colonel in British Military Intelligence who previously worked as an adviser to PM Margaret Thatcher and to the secretary-general of NATO. The Integrity Initiative project dates from 2015, the same time frame as the 77th Brigade—when the Anglo-American campaign to blame Russia for the crisis in Ukraine was escalated across the board. Unlike the 77th Brigade, the Integrity Initiative was not announced to the public.

As we have reported ("Integrity Initiative: Britain's foreign interference machinery exposed", *AAS*, 5 Dec. 2018), its self-assigned mission was to "reveal and combat propaganda and disinformation" spread by "the Kremlin and its various proxies". Its purpose, said the Integrity Initiative in a 26 November 2018 statement after its existence had become known, was "to bring to the attention of politicians, policy-makers, opinion leaders and other interested parties the threat posed by Russia to democratic institutions". According to information in the leaks, it has incorporated practically every layer of the British Establishment—politicians, academics, intelligence officers, journalists, etc.—into political dirty tricks run through media manipulation, all around the world, including in the United States and within the UK itself.

The Integrity Initiative has acknowledged that the body of documents in the Anonymous dump is theirs, and has wiped its website clean, posting a notice that there will be no new postings while "the theft of data from the Institute for Statecraft and its programme, the Integrity Initiative" is under investigation.

The content of the leaks is explosive, but has drawn little attention from major media. Labour MP Chris Williamson asked on 9 January, if the media were not avoiding the story "because of their involvement". The main investigative reports can be found in smaller Internet media and the Russian press, including these:

- *The Canary* ([thecanary.co](http://thecanary.co)), "If you thought the

Cambridge Analytica scandal was big...”, 29.11.2018 (Cambridge Analytica was the private, but well-connected, British data-mining firm that sold its services to the Trump campaign in the USA and was caught using Facebook profiles that were supposed to be private); and “By posting anti-Corbyn tweets this ‘black ops’ organisation has just shot itself in the foot”, 11.12.2018;

- The *UK Column* ([ukcolumn.org](http://ukcolumn.org)), “Integrity Initiative: A Look into the Deep State?”, by Mike Robinson, 2.12.2018; and follow-up articles;

- Gray Zone ([grayzoneproject.com](http://grayzoneproject.com)), two articles by its editor Max Blumenthal and co-authors Mohamed Elmaazi and Mark Ames, respectively: “Inside the Temple of Covert Propaganda”, 17.12.2018; and “Covert British Military-Smear Machine Moving into US”, 8.01.2019;

- Sputnik, the Russian state-owned news agency ([sputniknews.com](http://sputniknews.com)), by Germany-based writer Kit Klarenberg, “Damaging Ties: Why Germany is the Integrity Initiative’s ‘Most Important Target’”, 7.01.2019; and “Close Associate: The Integrity Initiative’s Intimate Connections to ‘Russia-Gate’”, 18.01.2019.

Several of these authors did the legwork that confirmed that the Institute for Statecraft is not really based at the address in Scotland where it is legally listed, but in the basement of 2 Temple Place, a prestigious London building, from which one after another of them was brusquely escorted out. They looked in-depth at the “clusters” through which the Integrity Initiative has organised its operations abroad.

By 26 November, the Integrity Initiative was forced by even this much publicity to release a statement about itself, in which it acknowledged being funded by a grant from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Canary reported that FCO Minister Alan Duncan had likewise confirmed more than £2 million in such funding. Information in the leaks themselves indicates that the Integrity Initiative has received money also from the US State Department and Facebook.

The documents reveal that the Integrity Initiative is a black propaganda machine, which conducted psychological warfare within the targeted countries, to build up the image of Russia and China as enemies, and to smear political figures who advocate normal diplomacy and mutually beneficial cooperation with those countries. In the case of Spain, Blumenthal and Elmaazi noted, the Integrity Initiative “waged a successful covert campaign to destroy the appointment of Pedro Baños to Director of Spain’s National Security Department on the bogus grounds that he was ‘pro-Kremlin’”.

Klarenberg, writing about the Integrity Initiative cluster in Germany, zeroed in on a list found among the leaked files, of alleged “Kremlin key messages”, which emanate from “pro-Kremlin trolls”. These included many ideas that are truths or, at the very least, legitimate opinions that could be debated, such as, “Germany and Russia had a ‘special relationship’ in the past and should return to it”; “The Ukrainian revolution [in 2014] was actually a coup d’etat”; “Russia has legitimate interests and the West should respect them”. The list’s compiler was Harold Elletson, a former Tory MP with a long history of being named as an MI6 operative in the Balkans (“Pro-Serb Tory MP was MI6 Agent”, the *Observer*, 22 Dec. 1996), evidently serving as the Integrity Initiative point man for Germany.

### Information warfare on the home front

*UK Column* author Robinson pointed up the make-up of the UK “cluster” of Integrity Initiative. It includes hedge fund executives, the Ministry of Defence and the FCO, and the top think tanks of the realm, as well as of recent decades’ war party: RUSI, the Henry Jackson Society, and Chatham House.

Most striking is the IIS’s own list of its Integrity Initiative “Expert Team”. Among the “Specialist Team Members” are three Chatham House associates who in 2015 were co-authors of *The Russian Challenge*, cited above: military specialist Keir Giles; James Sherr, who has been writing for years about ideas for waging economic warfare against Russia; and former Ambassador to Russia Sir Andrew Wood.

When the Integrity Initiative’s barrage of tweets in its own Twitter feed framing Corbyn as being pro-Russian came to light, Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry protested, “It is one of the cardinal rules of British public life that official resources should not be used for party political purposes.... Why did the Foreign Office allow public money to be spent on attempting to discredit Her Majesty’s Opposition?”

In the USA, as well, political campaign interference was the order of the day. Simon Bracey-Lane, a young man recently listed as a “research fellow” at the Integrity Initiative who also works as a bouncer there, as Klarenberg reported from personal experience, turned up in the key US Presidential state of Iowa as a volunteer in Sen. Bernie Sanders’s campaign for the 2016 Democratic Party nomination. That was in September 2015, well before Donald Trump’s emergence as a front-runner on the Republican side. Bracey-Lane stayed in the Sanders operation for eight months, gaining attention as a “Brit for Bernie”. Yet the views he promotes at the Integrity Initiative are far from those of Sanders, whose UK friends are chiefly from Labour.

Besides such ground-level dirty tricks as infiltrating the Sanders campaign, the Integrity Initiative’s institutional “cluster” members in the USA, as we reported last week (“British Intelligence ‘Integrity Initiative’ ops in USA exposed”, *Washington Insider*, AAS, 23 Jan. 2019), were just as high-level within the war party as they were in the UK, the British government-funded Atlantic Council and the State Department’s Global Engagement Centre being among them.

Most striking is the Integrity Initiative’s overlap with the Russiagate drive to oust Trump or at least make him back off from his stated intention to improve relations with Russia. The IIS describes its activist Sir Andrew Wood as unparalleled in “understanding the current Russian strategy and modus operandi, influence and information operations”. Wood has figured in Russiagate since the late 2016 public surfacing of the “dodgy dossier” on Trump and Russia, a set of intelligence source reports of dubious provenance, compiled by Wood’s friend and colleague ex-MI6 Russia specialist Christopher Steele. It was prepared as opposition research for the Hillary Clinton campaign and parlayed into grounds for opening the FBI’s investigation of Trump. Wood had worked with Steele’s Orbis Business Intelligence and, according to reports that emerged in the course of Russiagate, strongly vouched for Steele’s reliability to the late Sen. John McCain and others who were determined to block Trump.

### Dossiers: 2017-18 AAS articles on Global Britain and British Intelligence

*These collections are or will soon be online at the URL addresses shown.*

Dossier No. 1, ‘Global Britain’—UK imperial faction bids to keep worldwide dominance, <http://cecaust.com.au/aas/globbrit1-AAS20172018.pdf>

Dossier No. 2, Five Eyes and NATO upgrade cyber warfare, [cecaust.com.au/aas/globbrit2-AAS20172018.pdf](http://cecaust.com.au/aas/globbrit2-AAS20172018.pdf)

Dossier No. 3, Britain takes the lead against Russia, <http://cecaust.com.au/aas/globbrit3-AAS20172018.pdf>

Dossier No. 4, The British-led Russiagate coup in the USA, [cecaust.com.au/aas/globbrit4-AAS20172018.pdf](http://cecaust.com.au/aas/globbrit4-AAS20172018.pdf)