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1. TWITTER FILES PART 8

How Twitter Quietly Aided the Pentagon's Covert Online PsyOp Campaign

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Despite promises to shut down covert state-run propaganda networks, Twitter docs show that the social media giant directly assisted the U.S. military's influence operations.

2. Twitter has claimed for years that they make concerted efforts to detect & thwart govbacked platform manipulation. Here is Twitter testifying to Congress about its pledge to rapidly identify and shut down all state-backed covert information operations & deceptive propaganda.

C. State-Backed Information Operations

Combatting attempts to interfere in conversations on Twitter remains a top priority for the company, and we continue to invest heavily in our detection, disruption, and transparency efforts related to state-backed information operations. Our goal is to remove bad faith actors and to advance public understanding of these critical topics.

Twitter defines state-backed information operations as coordinated platform manipulation efforts that can be attributed with a high degree of confidence to state-affiliated actors. State-backed information operations are typically associated with misleading, deceptive, and spammy behavior. These behaviors differentiate coordinated manipulative behavior from legitimate speech on behalf of individuals and political parties.

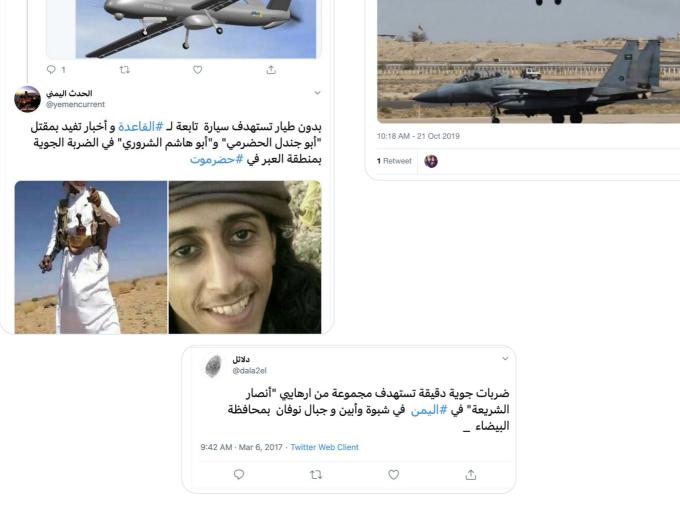
Whenever we identify inauthentic activity on Twitter that meets our definition of an information operation, and which we are able to confidently attribute to actors associated with a government, we share comprehensive data about this activity.

3. But behind the scenes, Twitter gave approval & special protection to the U.S. military's online psychological influence ops. Despite knowledge that Pentagon propaganda accounts used covert identities, Twitter did not suspend many for around 2 years or more. Some remain active.

4. In 2017, a U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) official sent Twitter a list of 52 Arab language accounts "we use to amplify certain messages." The official asked for priority service for six accounts, verification for one & "whitelist" abilities for the others.

Date: Wed, Jul 26,	haniel B CTR CENTCOM CCJ3 (US) 2017 at 1:39 PM	@mail.mil>	
To:	DoD Source] Re: Twitter at SOCOM twitter.com>		
Thanks	sure is tough to do web ops whe	n you can't Tweet!	
them verified them, @yem	d (blue check mark) and "whiteliste	ar priority accounts. Ideally, we could hav ed" (if there is such a thing?) – one of ng. @Justice_AR currently has a request	
"whitelisted"	as well. Again, if it's too big an as	in messages – ideally, they could be sk, the first 6 are the priority. If you need office or SOCOM, please just let me kno	w.
	COM guys mentioned that they'd the to talk if you think the right Twitt	l love to be able to come and meet up for ter folks would be up for it?	r
5. The same d	ay CENTCOM sent the list, Twitte	er officials used a tool to grant a special	
"whitelist" tag	that essentially provides verificati	on status to the accounts w/o the blue	
check, meanin	ng they are exempt from spam/abus	e flags, more visible/likely to trend on	
hashtags.			
6. The CENT	COM accounts on the list tweeted f	frequently about U.S. military priorities in	
the Middle Ea	st, including promoting anti-Iran m	nessages, promotion of the Saudi Arabia-	
U.S. backed w	var in Yemen, and "accurate" U.S. o	drone strikes that claimed to only hit	
terrorists.			
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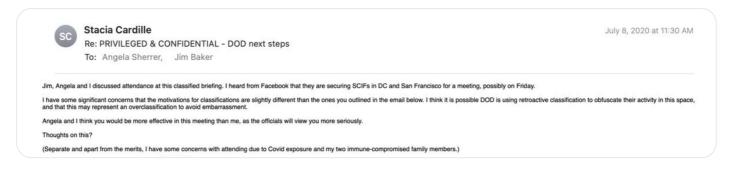
7. CENTCOM then shifted strategies & deleted disclosures of ties to the Twitter accounts. The bios of the accounts changed to seemingly organic profiles. One bio read: "Euphrates pulse." Another used an apparent deep fake profile pic & claimed to be a source of Iraqi opinion.



8. One Twitter official who spoke to me said he feels deceived by the covert shift. Still, many emails from throughout 2020 show that high-level Twitter executives were well aware of DoD's vast network of fake accounts & covert propaganda and did not suspend the accounts.

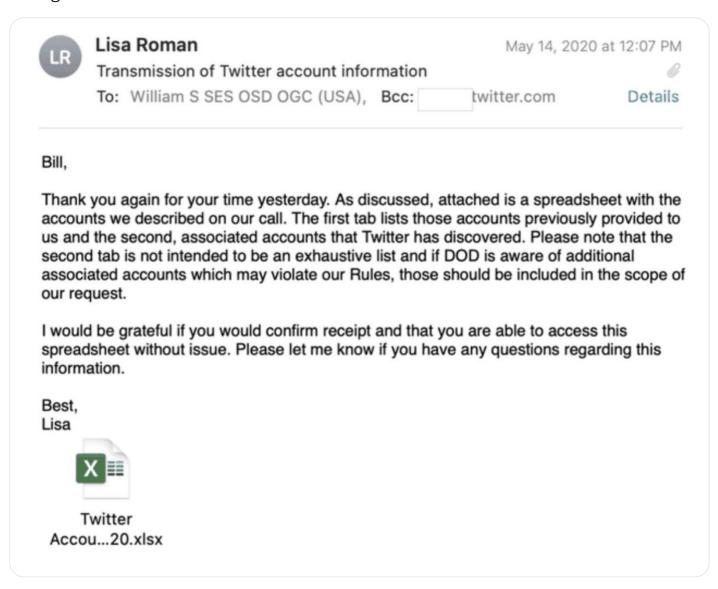
9. For example, Twitter lawyer Jim Baker mused in a July 2020 email, about an upcoming DoD meeting, that the Pentagon used "poor tradecraft" in setting up its network, and were seeking strategies for not exposing the accounts that are "linked to each other or to DoD or the USG."

10. Stacia Cardille, another Twitter attorney, replied that the Pentagon wanted a SCIF & may want to retroactively classify its social media activities "to obfuscate their activity in this space, and that this may represent an overclassification to avoid embarrassment."



11. In several other 2020 emails, high-level Twitter executives/lawyers discussed the covert network and even recirculated the 2017 list from CENTCOM and shared another list of 157 undisclosed Pentagon accounts, again mostly focused on Middle East military issues.

12. In a May 2020 email, Twitter's Lisa Roman emailed the DoD w/two lists. One list was accounts "previously provided to us" & another list Twitter detected. The accounts tweeted in Russian & Arabic on US military issues in Syria/ISIS & many also did not disclose Pentagon ties.



13. Many of these secretive U.S. military propaganda accounts, despite detection by Twitter as late as 2020 (but potentially earlier) continued tweeting through this year, some not suspended until May 2022 or later, according to records I reviewed.

14. In August 2022, a Stanford Internet Observatory report exposed a U.S. military covert propaganda network on Facebook, Telegram, Twitter & other apps using fake news portals and deep fake images and memes against U.S. foreign adversaries. public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphi...

15. The U.S. propaganda network relentlessly pushed narratives against Russia, China, and other foreign countries. They accused Iran of "threatening Iraq's water security and flooding the country with crystal meth," and of harvesting the organs of Afghan refugees.

16. The Stanford report did not identify all of the accounts in the network but one they did name was the exact same Twitter account CENTCOM asked for whitelist privileges in its 2017 email. I verified via Twitter's internal tools. The account used an AI-created deep fake image.



17. In subsequent reporting, Twitter was cast as an unbiased hero for removing "a network of fake user accounts promoting pro-Western policy positions." Media covering the story described Twitter as evenly applying its policies & proactive in suspending the DoD network.

18. The reality is much more murky. Twitter actively assisted CENTCOM's network going back to 2017 and as late as 2020 knew these accounts were covert/designed to deceive to manipulate the discourse, a violation of Twitter's policies & promises. They waited years to suspend.

19. Twitter's comms team was closely in touch with reporters, working to minimize Twitter's role. When the WashPost reported on the scandal, Twitter officials congratulated each other because the story didn't mention any Twitter employees & focused largely on the Pentagon.

Non Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 4:52 PM Rebecca Hahn Initiat comp wrote: ack Initiat comp wrote: by On Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 1:23 PM Katle Rosborough ·	On Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 5:22 PM Lauren Culbertson Thank you for the flag, Katie On Fri, Sep 16, 2022 at 5:15 PM Jim Baker • twitter.com> wrote: Got it. Thanks	From: Releace Hain twitter.com Subject: Re::rhighed and confidential fortionil Follow-up on Graphika/Stanford report Rel Date: September 19, 2022 at 8.03 PM To: Katie Roborough Phatter.com To: Katie Roborough Phatter.com Itwitter.com Ce: Lauren Cubertson Itwitter.com Twitter.com, John Hughes twitter.com, Itwitter.com, Itwit
Privileged and confidential Hithere, Ihope you're well. We wanted to give you a heads up that The Washington Post will be publishing a piece (most likely this weekend) that sheds more light on the U.S. government aspects of the recent <u>Graphike/Stanford report</u> about tech companies removing U.Sbased influence campaigns. It's a story that's mostly focused on DOD and Facebook; however, there will be a couple lines that reference us alongside Facebook in that we reached out to them for a meeting. We don't think they'll is it to anything Mudge-related or name any Twitter employees. We declined to comment.	ack	it didn't seem to get too much traction beyond verge, cnn and wapo editors promoting. On Mon, Sep 19, 2022 at 6:29 AM Katie Rosborough - http://wrote.
Facebook in that we reached out to them for a meeting. We don't think they'll lie it to anything Mudge-related or name any Twitter employees. We declined to comment.	Privileged and confidential Hi there, I hope you're well. We wanted to give you a heads up that The Washington Post will be publishing a piece (most likely this weekend) that sheds more light on the U.S. government aspects of the recent <u>Graphika/Stanford report</u> about tech	The Washington Post: Pentagon opens sweeping review of clandestine psychological operations Complaints about the U.S. millary's influence operations using Facebook and Twitter have raised concern in the White House and federal agencies. By Eleo. Nakashima
I suspect this piece will get more attention in Washington with the DoD angle — we'll keep you posted.	Facebook in that we reached out to them for a meeting. We don't think they'll tie it to anything Mudge-related or name any	
	I suspect this piece will get more attention in Washington with the DoD angle - we'll keep you posted.	
Thanks, Kale		

20. The conduct with the U.S. military's covert network stands in stark contrast with how Twitter has boasted about rapidly identifying and taking down covert accounts tied to state-backed influence operations, including Thailand, Russia, Venezuela, and others since 2016.

21. Here is my reported piece w/more detail. I was given access to Twitter for a few days. I signed/agreed to nothing, Twitter had no input into anything I did or wrote. The searches were carried out by a Twitter attorney, so what I saw could be limited.



Twitter Aided the Pentagon in its Covert Online Propaganda Campaign Internal documents show Twitter whitelisted CENTCOM accounts that were then used to run its online influence campaign abroad. https://theintercept.com/2022/12/20/twitter-dod-us-military-accounts/

If you want details about how I go about my reporting, a little more about myself, and further documentation & discussion, I just started a Substack. Sign up here:

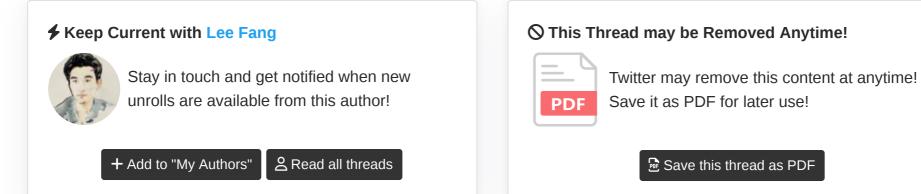


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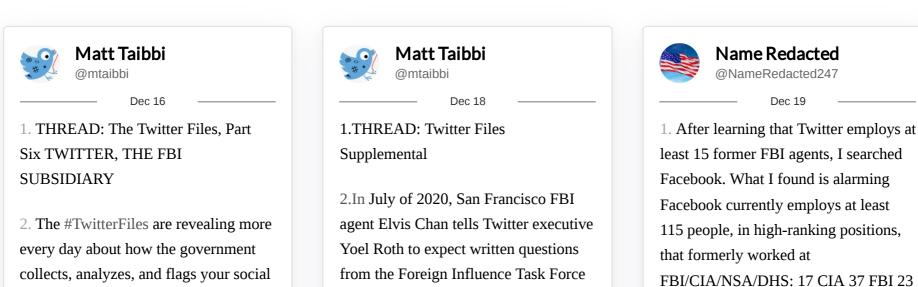
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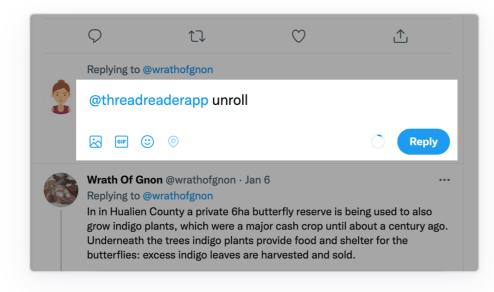


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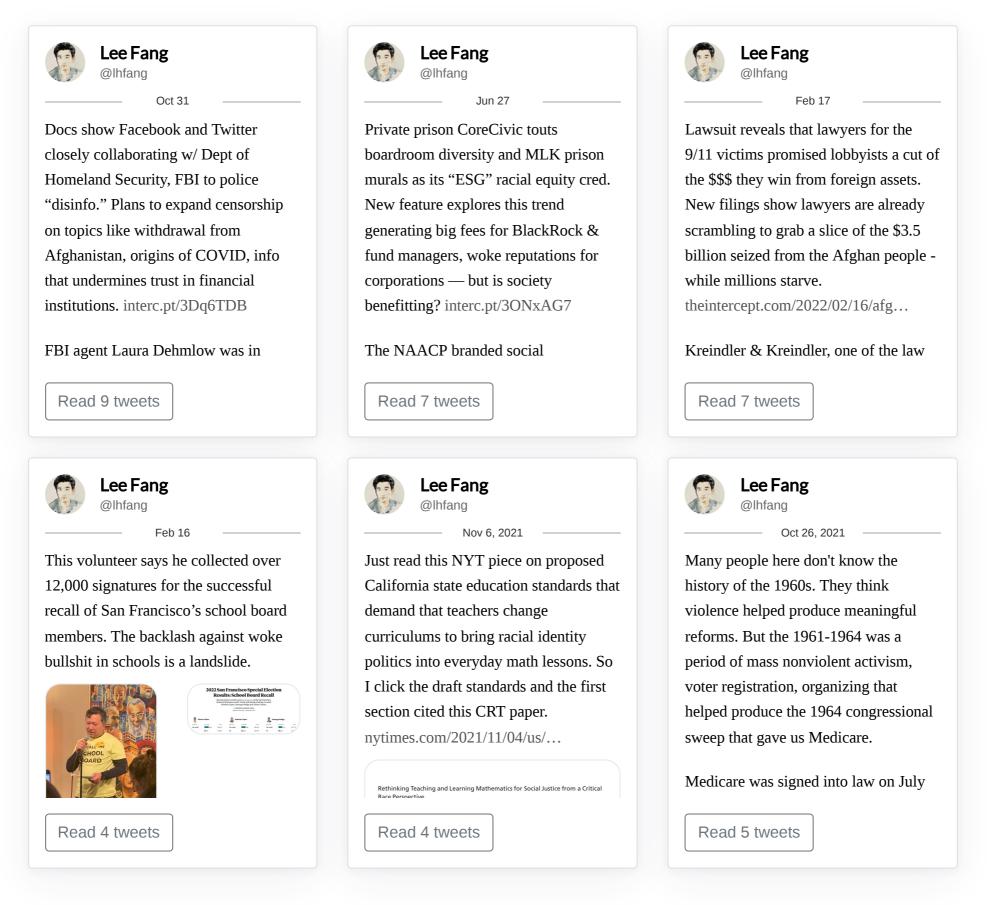


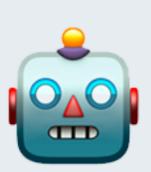
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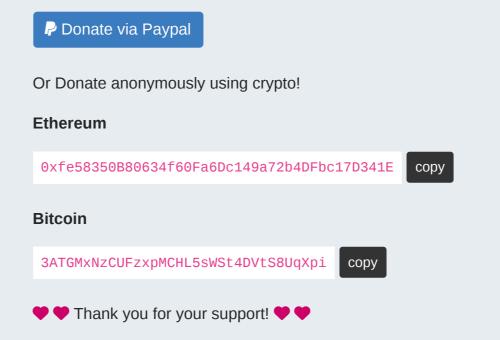
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