



Leaked files expose high-level UK military plot to destroy The Grayzone



KIT KLARENBERG · NOVEMBER 20, 2024

In a bid to “keep Ukraine fighting,” a covert cell of British military strategists and spooks plotted to destroy “media outriders” that threatened their narrative. Among their top targets was The Grayzone.

Leaked documents obtained by The Grayzone have revealed the existence of a British military-intelligence cabal, which plotted since the onset of the Ukraine proxy war to prolong the conflict “at all costs.” Known as Project Alchemy, the secret cell was convened under the watch of the British Ministry of Defense, and overseen by a high-ranking Lieutenant General, Charlie Stickland.

As we revealed in [part one of this ongoing investigative series](#), Project Alchemy put forward an array of highly aggressive schemes, from cyber attacks to “discreet operations” to outright terrorism inspired by notorious Operation Gladio, the Cold War-era pan-European CIA and MI6 “stay-behind” fascist terror army. Its stated objective was to “keep Ukraine fighting” for as long as possible, no matter the cost.

Complementing its calls for clandestine special forces-style attacks on Russian territory, Project Alchemy proposed an aggressive propaganda blitzkrieg, under the bland banner of “information operations.” In order to manage Western public, which was likely to turn against a long war if its economic costs grew too steep, the cabal’s members whipped up a menu of malign attacks on disruptive media outlets through a campaign of legal harassment.

Among the British military cabal's top targets was this outlet, The Grayzone.

Through Project Alchemy's leaked files, we learned that the same shadowy figure who plotted to destroy this alongside London-based celebrity client journalist Paul Mason was nominated to direct the project's information warfare campaign. He is Amil Khan, a veteran psychological warfare operative previously exposed by The Grayzone for running an array of covert propaganda operations, from **astroturfing** pseudo-leftist YouTube influencers to fomenting **regime change** from Syria to **Ethiopia**.

Khan's involvement in Project Alchemy suggests his crusade against this outlet was approved at the highest levels of the UK's national security state.

Underlining London's obsession with maintaining control of the Ukraine proxy war's narrative, The Grayzone was earmarked for destruction just days after Russian troops crossed into Ukrainian territory.



Valent Projects founder Amil Khan

“A number of actions can be undertaken against these outlets”

In leaked internal discussions obtained by The Grayzone, Project Alchemy members openly fantasized about the downfall of the Russian government at the end of a long, grinding war. However, the military cell also held open the possibility that the West’s program of proxy war and sanctions against Moscow could boomerang, and worried how the British public would respond.

In a “grand strategy paper” submitted on February 27, 2022 to Boris Johnson’s chief foreign policy advisor, John Bew, Alchemy plotters expressed concern about the threat posed by the rising BRICS alliance. They urged British leadership to “prepare for SWIFT II,” as the US-controlled SWIFT financial transfer system was “going to be destroyed” by the West’s anti-Russia sanctions, “slowly, but inevitably.”

According to Alchemy’s analysts, countries across the globe **would naturally** “see the need for a non-US alternative” means of safely parking their cash and trading. The British spooks predicted that sanctions on Russia combined with the Ukraine proxy war would impose higher prices on consumer goods and “hit British voters in the pocket.”

They fretted that this could pose “a threat to public support” for the British government’s “hard line” on Ukraine. “Domestic UK public opinion” would understandably get “fed up” paying more for everyday goods, meaning “pressure grows for a compromise.” To prepare the British public for the coming storm, and to undermine opponents of Western financial domination, Project Alchemy’s plotters proposed a blend of domestic state propaganda and malign attacks on counter-hegemonic media outlets.

The task they outlined not only included “[dismantling] Russian disinformation infrastructure” by pressuring social media to ban state outlets like RT and Sputnik, but also targeting critical independent media like The Grayzone.

“A number of actions can be undertaken against these outlets. The most obvious is legal since the content of these media outriders is frequently in contravention of media law in the UK, US and EU,” Project Alchemy’s info ops team proposed.

“Aggrieved parties currently tend to ignore libel/defamation by these outlets. Were they to aggressively pursue these outlets, it is likely they would be forced to close.”

The Grayzone, it was claimed, had so far “managed to obscure” its funding - a suggestion that this outlet is covertly funded by Russia or some other enemy state, which is absolutely false. Despite having no basis for the line of attack, one of the leaders of Project Alchemy’s information warfare team went to plot with prominent British media figures to neutralize The Grayzone through a relentless campaign of legal harassment.

Engaging social media platforms, diplomatically, legislatively and perhaps legally to ensure they enforce their existing policies is a quick and relatively easy way to seriously disrupt Russian power projection

Although there has been political focus on RT broadcasts, Russia’s “information seeding” capability encompasses a far greater array of online media outlets. Some like Breakthrough News, Sputnik and Maffick have already been identified as Russian state-affiliated entities. Others, like Grayzone, have

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² In one instance in Sudan, a Facebook takedown of 1,000 Pages caused disinformation output to fall by 75%

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Exposed by The Grayzone, “StratComms Ninja” Amil Khan plots revenge

According to leaked files obtained by The Grayzone, Project Alchemy’s information operations were assigned to a member of the British Army’s psychological warfare unit, the 77th Brigade. Multiple emails reviewed by suggest the role was ultimately filled by **Major General Alex Turner**, who headed the 77th Brigade from 2020 to 2022.

Also listed as a participant in the clandestine effort was longtime British intelligence-adjacent regime change propagandist **Amil Khan**, who founded the “counter-disinformation” analysis firm, **Valent Projects**.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Serial	Post	Rank/Grade	Last	First	Remarks	Cost
2	1	Mil Lead	Brig	Scott	Simon		
3	2	Civ Lead	n/a	Morris	Dom	No extra cost if mobilised	500
4	3	COS	Maj	Powell	Jonathan	Private Sector Coord	
5	4	Lead X-Gov Planner	SO1				
6	5	x-Gov planner	Capt	Smith	Ben		
7	6	Logistics	SO2				
8	7	Civ Humanitarian	n/a	Sawyer	Aleks		
9	8	Mil Humanitarian	SO2			Exp planning and delivering CIMIC Operations	
10	9	Info Ops	SO3			77X	
11	10	J2	SO2			Rus/ Ukr SME	
12	11	Info Ops	n/a	Lersten	Gus		500
13	12	Info Ops	n/a	Khan	Amil		500
14	13	Academic	n/a	Boff	Johnathan		500
15	14	Academic	n/a	Ledwidge	Frank		500
16	15	Academic	n/a	Johnson	Rob		500
17	16	Grand Strat	n/a	Fennell	James		500
18	17	X-Gov Results/ Campaign Change Management	n/a	Austin	Becky		500
19	18	Inter Agency Civilian Planner	n/a				500
20							
21						Total Cost for 3 week	40500
22							
23						Requires trawl	
24						Individual Identified but requires funding	
25						Filled	

Amil Khan is listed as a leader of Project Alchemy's "Info Ops" team. Khan did not answer calls by The Grayzone to his personal cellphone, and ignored emailed questions about his participation in Project Alchemy. The project's founder, Gen. Charlie Stickland, and his assistant, Maj. Ed Harris, also ignored our calls, and did not respond to detailed questions submitted to them through WhatsApp.

On April 22 2022, Elders chief Dominic Morris wrote to Matthew Waterfield, **team leader** of the Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine (PFRU), to put Khan forward as a member of Alchemy's info ops team.

Hyping Khan as a "StratComms [strategic communications - information warfare] Ninja," Morris gushed, "you know Amil, he's the best in the business and has been working against this adversary for years."

Waterfield thanked Morris for the "great recommendation," while informing Khan, "I concur with Dom's assessment." Khan responded that Valent Projects already had a contract with Chemonics, a Washington DC-based "**Beltway Bandit**" firm which was overseeing the PFRU, so taking on more work would be no issue.

He added: "We've been tracking pro-Russian disinfo targeting key audiences in key countries (e.g. US hard right, UK hard left) with the aim of influencing policy in a pro-Russian direction. Presently, these assets are trying to turn key audiences against the idea of support for Ukraine. We have past performance in identifying, monitoring and closing such activity. Would something like that be of interest?"

Amil Khan [REDACTED]

24/04/2022 20:

Re: StratComms Ninja

To : Matthew Waterfield [REDACTED]

Cc : Dom Morris [REDACTED]

Hi Matthew,

The company I run has a contract with Chemonics countering Disinfo in Africa. Would it make more sense if we submitted a project idea? We've been tracking pro-Russian disinfo targeting key audiences in key countries (e.g. US hard right, UK hard left) with the aim of influencing policy in a pro-Russian direction. Presently, these assets are trying to turn key audiences against the idea of support for Ukraine. We have past performance in identifying, monitoring and closing such activity. Would something like that be of interest?

Let me know what you think. If you see potential, I would be happy to reach out to Emma to discuss further.

Thanks

Amil

Amil Khan
Founder/Director

Valent Projects
London

The Chemonics/Valent project was concerned with “countering disinfo in Africa.” Khan referred here to an effort in Sudan funded to the tune of over \$1 million by USAID’s Agency’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which “provides fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key political transition” - in other words, regime change. Valent identified residents of Sudan voicing online criticism of the since-disintegrated, **USAID-supported** government in Khartoum, then petitioned social media platforms to delete their accounts and pages on bogus grounds, with **some success**.

In December 2021, **The Grayzone revealed** how the then-Prince of Wales, now King Charles, enlisted Khan’s Valent Projects to astroturf pseudo-socialist YouTube influencer Philosophy Tube to attack skeptics of the government’s ham-fisted response to Covid. Previously, **Khan participated** in the British Foreign Office’s lavish program to foment regime change in Syria, working for a variety of intelligence cutouts, including **MI6-run** InCoStrat. A leaked document refers to Khan’s personal history of “[embedding] himself into terrorist organizations in the UK and the Middle East.”

Khan was so aggrieved by that investigation, the “Stratcomms Ninja” became obsessed with taking revenge on this outlet. A leaked May 2022 Valent report documenting purported “online manipulation” related to the Ethiopian civil war falsely alleged The Grayzone’s reporting on his work was part of a state-directed “doxxing” attack. It also fraudulently charged that a December 2021 **Twitter thread** by this journalist contained information “obtained through espionage/security links.” In reality, the material was gleaned from internet search engines.

Khan’s determination to destroy The Grayzone intensified over time. In June 2022, we **exposed** him for plotting with the infamously **conniving** celebrity-left pundit Paul Mason to destroy the publication. Leaked emails showed Khan proposing a “clever John Oliver style stunt that makes [The Grayzone] a laughing stock,” along with a “full nuclear legal [attack] to squeeze them financially.” The latter strategy closely mirrored the ambitions and phrasing outlined in Elders’ “grand strategy paper.”

Together, Khan and Mason **attempted to convene** an anti-Grayzone summit in London, inviting operatives from pro-war US and UK government-backed outlets like Bellingcat and the BBC. It is unclear if the proposed plotting session amounted to anything other than massive embarrassment to its planners once we revealed the vindictive scheme.

Paul Mason [REDACTED]

5/5/2022 7:10 PM

Re: I provoked Aaron Mate...

To: AK [REDACTED]

The latter - but combined with relentless deplatforming - as with PayPal / compendium and mintpress - and a kind of permanent rebuttal operation

Sent from ProtonMail Mobile

On Thu, May 5, 2022 at 17:19, AK <ak@valentprojects.com> wrote:

I feel like there's a couple options with these clowns:

- some sort of clever John Oliver style stunt that makes them a laughing stock
- full nuclear legal to squeeze them financially

I dont know if you saw the CIJA sting, but as clever and shocking as it was, it didnt really affect them substantially

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/mar/28/the-uk-professor-a-fake-russian-spy-and-the-undercover-syria-sting>

Khan demands “urgent police action” against foes

Just days after The Grayzone exposed Khan and Mason's harebrained plot, Khan fired off an email to Conservative MP Bob Seeley, a hawkish **military veteran** and member of the British parliament's foreign affairs committee, whining that he had become a target of a “serious escalation in Russian state cyber targeting of British researchers, journalists and experts.”

Read Amil Khan's letter to MP Bob Seeley [here](#).

Khan told Seeley he had informed British police and his local member of parliament that his ProtonMail had been hacked, which could only have been the result of “a state-level capability.” In a reference to The Grayzone, he claimed this resulted “in an article in a US pro-Russian outlet,” before “networks of social media accounts...spread the claims” contained in that article. Khan lamented that “the police are looking at this as a series of isolated incidents and not taking into account the broader implications.”

Khan insisted to Seeley that if the “serious escalation” was “not addressed soon,” and there was no “urgent police action to investigate the criminal behaviour taking place,” it would “likely continue to escalate, probably in the direction of physical attacks.” He compared his suffering to that of Syrian White Helmets founder and former British military intelligence agent James Le Mesurier, who died under **suspicious circumstances** in November 2019, proclaiming that “what we are seeing now is the same playbook on a wider scale.”

It is uncertain whether Seeley responded to Khan's paranoid rant. Nonetheless, the Valent chief's zealous crusade against The Grayzone may explain why I, Kit Klarenberg, was harassed by a British police detective by email over that summer, then **hailed off an airplane** at London's Luton Airport by British counter-terror police in May 2023. For six hours, the counter-terror cops grilled me about my reporting and the general operations of this outlet, while digitally strip-searching my digital devices.

Alchemy spooks push religious conflict in Chechnya

Besides the proposed legal assault on The Grayzone and other outlets that have criticized Western military support for Ukraine, Project Alchemy's information warfare specialists outlined cynical plans to "drive [a] wedge between perception and reality of [the] Russian state as a global 'live' player." Alchemy considered it vital to "understand then shift needle showing Russians [the war] was Putin's error."

One means of sowing domestic discontent outlined was to "agitate around Kadyrov's Chechen Islamist thuds sullyng [the] land of Pecherska Lavra" - the historic Orthodox monastery in Kiev - "and heritage of St. Vladimir." Here, the objective was clear, and undeniably twisted: to foment hatred between Russia's Christian and Muslim populations, for the purposes of destabilization.

- **Global Information Operation (AK, AL)**

- A) Drive wedge between perception & reality of Russian State as global 'live' player
- B) Russian population Information: Understand then shift needle showing Russians that this was Putin's error (builds on PM's speech to Russian people) (See RJ's Signal note on Sefton Delmer WWII exampled)
 - Agitate around Kadirov Chechen Islamist thudgs sullyng land of Pecherska Lavra and heritage of St Vladimir
- C) Dismantle Russian disinformation infrastructure
- INSERT AIs example on Signal of Fin Tech and hacking networks