

Emails confirm pro-NATO warmonger Paul Mason works with intelligence agencies

Thomas Scripps
13 June 2022

On March 28, the *World Socialist Web Site* published an article naming Paul Mason “The pseudo-left’s chief pro-NATO, pro-war ideologue”. The piece identified his role as “an anti-Russian war propagandist”, a “go-between linking Kiev with the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress” and imperialist attack dog using “pseudo-Marxist jargon to attack anyone on the ‘left’ opposing NATO’s war plans.”

Mason’s connections with the British state have now been extensively detailed by an important exposé in *The Grayzone*, one of the targets of his witch-hunts for its critical journalism on the NATO-Russia war. The article by Kit Klarenberg and Max Blumenthal, “Paul Mason’s covert intelligence-linked plot to destroy *The Grayzone* exposed”, reveals a series of leaked emails between Mason and Amil Khan.

Khan, *The Grayzone* has reported, was heavily involved in the imperialist regime change operation in Syria. In 2015, he spoke alongside former MI5 head Eliza Manningham-Buller at an event in the House of Lords. His profile for the event noted he was “providing political and media support to opposition political and military groups fighting the [Assad] regime.” He is the founder of Valent Projects, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to “investigate disinformation”.

Evidence of Mason’s conspiracy

In an email to Khan dated April 30, Mason explains that he is “keen to help re Grayzone.”

The message includes a chart drawn up by Mason of the connections he alleges between Russia and China at one end and the “Muslim Community”, “Young Networked Left”, “Labour Left”, “Trade Unions”, “Black Community” and “Scottish Nationalism” at the other, via groups like Stop the War, the Progressive International, the *Morning Star*, RT and Sputnik, *Counterfire* and *Socialist Appeal* and prominent figures including Jeremy Corbyn, George Galloway and Lindsey German.

Mason has produced a graphical representation reminiscent of a conspiracy-obsessed police spy. He comments that “traffic analysts” could map their interaction and help “work out who might be pulling the strings.” Highlighting his intimate state connections, he writes, “I asked two people on the official side who are concerned about this ‘does the state monitor and counter left disinfo’ and they said no ... this is exactly why someone needs to do it.”

Khan responds with “a couple of options” for taking down *Grayzone*, including “full nuclear legal to squeeze them financially.” Mason suggests combining this tactic with “relentless deplatforming – as with PayPal”, referring to the payment company’s cutting off WikiLeaks and news sites like *Consortium News* and *MintPress News* from funding sources.

A meeting was planned to organise the operation. Mason suggests the inclusion of BBC journalist Chloe Hadjimatheou and the private intelligence firm Bellingcat. Hadjimatheou produced and presented a podcast series, *Mayday*, whitewashing the imperialist-backed White Helmets in Syria.

Bellingcat is a supposed “independent international collective of researchers, investigators and citizen journalists” staffed by former British and US army and security service figures, closely tied to the Atlantic Council and governments in London and Washington and funded by the CIA front organisation, the National Endowment for Democracy. It produces “investigations” conducive to the interests of US and British imperialism. Mason writes that the organisation can provide “intel service input by proxy”, which is what his and Khan’s plan “really also needs.”

Khan later informs Mason that he has spoken “to a friend at National Security Council comms directorate.” They were wary of sending an official to Mason and Khan’s meeting “as it could jeopardise outcomes later”, but suggested they work towards a formal complaint against *The Grayzone* “which would kick off an investigation” into its “funding and activities”, at which point the government “can get properly involved.” The official agreed to “keep talking” and suggested bringing in “Reuters Foundation” and “BBC Media Action”. Khan also informs Mason that he has separately contacted “the new FCDO [Foreign Office] disinfo team”.

He explains, “Re what it leads to; I hear they don’t like being tagged as ‘Russian state affiliated media’ as it hits their reach. But I think/hope there’s potential to go further.” Mason says this sounds like “a good idea”, but presses on, “what we need is intel on who funds them and what their ultimate deliverables are on behalf of the ppl their work benefits.”

A draft invitation to Mason and Khan’s wargaming meeting calls on people to oppose “a network of pro-Russian trolls ... They present themselves as journalists when they are in fact an information operation of a dictatorship.” They note, “Social media platforms and governments have identified the RT, Sputnik etc as Russian state affiliated outlets and taken action accordingly. Grayzone, however, has avoided scrutiny.”

Another email shows him complaining about a *Consortium News* article questioning the NATO narrative of the killings at Buca to Andy

Pryce, head of the British Foreign Office's Counter Disinformation & Media Development. Mason asks, "Who's behind Consortium News?" Pryce explains that he has "messed Nina Jancowitz on this (she is now leading some efforts at the US DHS [Department of Homeland Security])."

Jancowitz was head of the US government's now "paused" Disinformation Governance Board. She spent time with the foreign ministry of Ukraine working for anti-Russian news site *StopFake*, funded by the National Endowment for Democracy and the British Embassy. She is on the advisory board of the Open Information Partnership, shown by *MintPress* to be a heavily funded arm of the British Foreign Office, with a mission to "weaken the Russian state's influence" in Moscow's "near abroad."

Pryce and Mason discuss heading up a similar, Ukraine-focused state psy-ops organisation. This would be, writes Mason, an "International information brigade – a civil society organisation with contacts into government" which would be "the major, forward leaning, player in the information war" over Ukraine, "the beneficiary of intelligence but also guide governments" and "be funded by a collective from like minded western countries."

Pryce warns Mason that a "public" group would "become a target." However, "if you adopted a matryoshka [Russian doll] approach and the 'real' IIB [International information brigade] was a private core of committed people, you could be far more effective."

Mason's denial: a tacit admission of guilt

Mason's response to the devastating exposé is as good as an admission of guilt. It carefully avoids denying the validity of the emails while advancing the same slander campaign against *The Grayzone*. He states an attempt was made to hack his email account and that "The circumstances of the attack suggest it is highly likely that a Russian state or state-backed unit carried out the attack." He absurdly claims that the *Grayzone* article "may have risked the exposure of my confidential journalistic sources."

Mason then suggests the leaked emails "may be altered or faked." Either they are or they are not. Mason should know. He accuses the *Grayzone* article of having "the effect of assisting a Russian state-backed hack-and-leak disinformation campaign." But there would be no hacking operation necessary if the emails were indeed faked. He urges his "colleagues in the Labour and trade union movement to remain vigilant against the information war being waged on us."

Reality is turned on its head. It is Mason who is plotting an "information war", in which his collaborators are not "journalistic sources" but state operatives. The contents of the emails clearly identify him as a participant in the massive state censorship and black propaganda campaign being carried out in support of the NATO-led war against Russia over Ukraine.

Mason is waging this war on every front, publishing scores of articles and social media posts attacking opponents of the NATO war and championing Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer's successful witch-hunt of Labour MPs to ensure they make no criticism whatsoever of his own warmongering agenda. He is now planning on playing a direct role within the Labour Party, longlisted as a candidate to contest the parliamentary seat of Stretford and Urmston.

Running for the Labour Party

In his piece for the *New Statesman*, "My bid to become a Labour MP and why we must not let Ukraine fade into the background", Mason sets out his platform. He laments that journalists should have "shouted louder that Putin is a totalitarian ethno-nationalist fantasising about mass death" and "exposed Russian and Chinese influence networks in British public life more thoroughly." He chides politicians for not "explain[ing] to voters that they are going to have to fight, and probably suffer economic pain, for the basic privilege of living in a democracy."

He compliments Labour's front bench for having "risen enthusiastically to the practical challenge of the Ukraine crisis: backing the government on the supply of arms and getting ahead of the Tories on sanctions." But, he says, "few politicians of any party are prepared to explain" that everything "from energy to fiscal policy" must be "reframed around the survival of the West."

Having just returned from a ten-day trip in Germany and Austria, where he told the German trade union federation, to applause, "Don't be worried about Germany supplying them [Ukraine] with heavy weapons: be proud of it", he decided to make a play for the role of a Labour MP to build "a belligerent left." That is, one prepared to "rally the progressive half of society to a militant defence of democracy at home and the rules-based global order abroad."

He concludes with unparalleled cynicism that his putting himself forward will be opposed, but that at least his opponents "will hear the other side of the argument."

The Grayzone emails show up such claims to be engaging in a democratic debate as filthy lies. Mason's is the only side of the argument he wants people to be able to hear, with his opponents censored. His programme is for total war against Russia, which requires the relentless suppression of any political or journalistic organisation inconvenient to British imperialism and of anti-imperialist sentiment in the population. His articles and tweets are the public face of a conspiracy for a state crackdown which he hopes to be able to pursue more effectively from within parliament.

In the context of the government's planned National Security Bill—providing for life sentences for anyone deemed on the loosest of grounds to have disclosed information prejudicial to the interests of the UK in the service of a foreign power—his map of "connections" between Russia/China and prominent political figures and organisations of thousands of people reads like a hit list. The last time such a map surfaced in British politics, it was constructed and promoted by a collection of far-right, ex-military and security service figures under the heading "The Traitor's Chart."

Mason is moving in these circles. He is a state collaborator and McCarthyite witch-hunter who must be shunned, prevented from intelligence gathering at all left and anti-war events, and politically exposed before the working class.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact