

THEMIS APPLIES JSOC TECHNIQUES TO CITIZENS “EXTORTING” FROM CORPORATE CLIENTS

✘ I have a feeling I’ll be doing a lot of these posts, showing how Hunton & Williams asked “Themis” (the three firm team of HBGary, Palantir, and Berico Technologies) to apply counterterrorism approaches to combat First Amendment activities.

This particular installment comes from an early presentation and accompanying proposal Themis prepared for Hunton & Williams. These documents were attached to an email dated November 2, 2010 sent out by Berico Technologies’ Deputy Director. He explains that the presentation and proposal would be briefed to H&W the following day.

The Powerpoint includes a slide describing the purpose of Themis’ pitch to H&W.

Purpose: Develop a corporate information reconnaissance service to aid legal investigations through the open source collection of information on target groups and individuals that appear organized to extort specific concessions through online slander campaigns.

Now, this is in the period when H&W was only beginning to discuss the Chamber of Commerce project with Themis, long before the BoA pitch. That is, this is the period when they were discussing generalized opposition to Chamber of Commerce.


And of that they got “extortion”? “slander”?

Apparently the team members of Themis—several of whom, as veterans, would have sworn an oath to

our Constitution—accepted the premise that union members and poorly financed liberals opposing the wholesale sellout of our politics to private corporations constituted “extortion” and “slander.”

These firms, two of which deny any ill will, were willing to describe political speech—the opposition of working people to the Chamber’s hijacking of our politics—as “extortion” and “slander.”

More shocking to me, though, is where the proposal uses a Special Operations model to describe what Themis planned to do for H&W. On a proposal bearing Berico Technologies’ document header, Themis places their proposed “Corporate Information Reconnaissance Cell” next to a Joint Special Operations Command F3EA “targeting cycle” with this explanation:



Team Themis will draw on our extensive operational and intelligence experience to rapidly make sense of the volumes of data we’ve collected through the application of proven analytical/targeting methodologies. Drawing on the principles and processes developed and refined by JSOC in the “*Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze*” (F3EA) targeting cycle, we will develop and execute a tailored CIRC intelligence cycle suited to enable rapid identification/understanding, refined collection/detection, focused application of effects, exploitation, and analysis/assessment.

Mind you, this is just a fancy graphic for “analysis”—the kind of stuff civilians do all the time. But Themis—led by Berico Technologies in this case—decided to brand it as a JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) product, applying an American unconventional warfare model to targeting political opponents engaging in free speech.

This is a bunch of veterans proposing to go to war against citizen activism on behalf the Chamber of Commerce and other corporations.

The proposal also highlights the JSOC experience of one Palantir team member.

He commanded multiple Joint Special Operations Command outstations in support of the global war on terror. Doug ran the foreign fighter campaign on the Syrian border in 2005 to stop the flow of suicide bombers into Baghdad and helped to ensure a successful Iraqi election. As a commander, Doug ran the entire intelligence cycle: identified high-level terrorists, planned missions to kill or capture them, led the missions personally, then exploited the intelligence and evidence gathered on target to defeat broader enemy networks.

Berico's statement (from their CEO, Guy Filippelli, whose experience as Special Assistant to the Director of National Intelligence was also highlighted in the proposal) denied they would proactively target any Americans and spun the project itself as "consistent with industry standards for this type of work."

Berico Technologies is a technical and analytic services firm that helps organizations better understand information critical to their core operating objectives. Our leadership does not condone or support any effort that proactively targets American firms, organizations or individuals.

[snip]

Late last year, we were asked to develop a proposal to support a law firm. Our corporate understanding was that Berico would support the firm's efforts on behalf of American companies to help them analyze potential internal

information security and public relations challenges. Consistent with industry standards for this type of work, we proposed analyzing publicly available information and identifying patterns and data flows relevant to our client's information needs.

Yet it was Berico Technologies' Deputy Director who sent out these documents adopting a military targeting approach for responding to citizens engaging in free speech.