The Global Military Infrastructure and You

Networks, data, AI, and the blurring of boundaries between military, political and civil conflict

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Telling you about the hardware at Croughton’s new JIAC* development does not tell you what the hardware at JIAC is there to do.

* JIAC – NATO Joint Intelligence Analysis (or ‘Analytic’) Complex (or ‘Centre’)
“Data” is meaningless when devoid of context. When data is organised into patterns it is the relationships this creates which gives it “meaning”.

“Data Fusion” does not match just the data itself, it matches and relates the connections in metadata and relational context, and then provides a ‘visualisation’. 
“Data” is meaningless when devoid of context. When data is organised into patterns it is the relationships this creates which gives it “meaning”.

‘The Frackogram’
Paul Mobbs, 2015

~2,500 pieces of information linking political, PR, academic & finance links which supported shale gas industry in Britain
“Data” is meaningless when devoid of context. When data is organised into patterns it is the relationships this creates which gives it “meaning”.

‘The Tufton Street Brexit Nexus’
Paul Mobbs, 2018

~3,500 pieces of information linking Brexit lobby and the historic Eurosceptic political lobby
The new ‘data fusion’ approach requires large amounts of computer power to run the analysis programs, and serve the large databases required.

Neither the existing NATO “Joint Analysis Centre” at Molesworth, nor Croughton, have that capacity today.

The greater purpose of ‘data fusion’ is to bring-together data from multiple sources – held by many different agencies/companies at many locations that are geographically isolated.

For that reason a key requirement is high-bandwidth communications links to a wide range of other military and civil installations: *Croughton has many of these links already*.
The ultimate purpose of the Joint Intelligence Analysis Complex at USAF Croughton is to bring together differing data sources in advance of that data being required for ‘information operations’ – through the creation of merged maps or views of metadata. New data flowing in from ‘live’ operations can then be seamlessly merged into that network of data using real-time analysis. 

*That’s what ‘it does’; this does not say what ‘it is for’.***
Why Did the US Drop 26,171 Bombs on the World Last Year?

Our endless wars have destroyed nations and warped our own political culture.

By Greg Grandin

JANUARY 13, 2017

The United States started bombing Iraq on January 16, 1991, and, except for a few brief intervals, hasn’t stopped since. Twenty-six years this Monday, more than a quarter of a century, and four US presidents, all of whom have bombed Iraq. Last year, the rate of bombing increased over 20,105. The lion’s share of the 26,171 bombs dropped by the United States on the world was split evenly between Iraq and Syria, though we did reserve a dollop for Yemen. And the United States dropped more on Libya, about 500, in 2016, than in 2015. Trump, and Trumpism, is a symptom of the sickness, not the source.

The 1991 bombing began at 2:10 AM Baghdad time (January 17 there)—over 100,000 sorties, tens of thousands of bombs dropped by thousands of planes. “Smart bombs” lit up the sky as the TV cameras rolled. Featured were new night-vision equipment, real-time satellite communications, and cable TV—as well as former US military commanders ready to narrate the war in the style of football announcers, right down to instant replays. “In sports-page language,” said CBS News anchor Dan Rather on the first night of the attack, “this... it’s not a sport. It’s war. But so far, it’s a blowout.”

The next day, January 18, in the CBS studio, Walter Cronkite and Rather engaged in an extended conversation that made them seem less like sports announcers describing live action than veteran color commentators comparing today’s game to how it used to be played. The two men concluded that the old big-bellied B-52s that had been used extensively in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and now were being deployed to bomb Baghdad were more effective at sowing terror and generating panic than the lean “high-tech” missiles the media was
This book is about technologies developed to wage a campaign which is neither conventional war nor policing operation...

Equally important, we aim to show that the development of this more novel technology – the technology of political control – is the result of powerful social and political processes, and is itself part of these processes.

To understand the weapons, we must look at the way in which the apparatus of the state, especially the army and the police, is transforming itself.
Man 1, machine 1: landmark debate between AI and humans ends in draw

IBM shows off Project Debater, artificial intelligence project designed to make coherent arguments as it processes vast data sets

Olivia Solon in San Francisco

It was man 1, machine 1 in the first live, public debate between an artificial intelligence system developed by IBM and two human debaters.

The AI, called Project Debater, appeared on stage in a packed conference room at IBM’s San Francisco office embodied in a 6ft tall black panel with a blue, animated “mouth”. It was a looming presence alongside the human debaters Nos Ovadia and Dan Zafrir, who stood behind a podium nearby.

Although the machine stumbled at many points, the unprecedented event offered a glimpse into how computers are learning to grapple with the messy, unstructured world of human decision-making.

For each of the two short debates, participants had to prepare a four-minute
Artificial intelligence (AI)

Man 1, machine 1: rivalry between AI and humans.

IBM shows off Project Debater, artificial intelligence system designed to make coherent arguments.

Olivia Solon in San Francisco

It was man 1, machine 1 in the first live debate between a human and artificial intelligence system developed by IBM.

The AI, called Project Debater, appeared in a glass room at IBM's San Francisco office, sporting a blue, animated “mouth”. It was a looming reminder of how we debate with a single human opponent.

Although the machine stumbled at many points, it offered a glimpse into how computers can handle the unstructured world of human decisions.

For each of the two short debates, part of a day-long series of debates, the humans and the machine were given the same topic and 10 minutes to prepare.

The Debater, designed by researchers at IBM’s Almaden Research Center, is described as the first artificial intelligence system designed to make coherent arguments.

The AI was joined by human opponents, including former US Attorney General Eric Holder, Nobel laureate Tim Hunt and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson.

Project Debater

Inequality

Rise of the racist robots - how AI is learning all our worst impulses

There is a saying in computer science: garbage in, garbage out. When we feed machines data that reflects our prejudices, they mimic them - from antisemitic chatbots to racially biased software. Does a horrifying future await people forced to live at the mercy of algorithms?

Stephen Buranyi

In May last year, a stunning report claimed that a computer program used by a US court for risk assessment was biased against black prisoners. The program, Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS), was much more prone to mistakenly label black defendants as likely to reoffend - wrongly flagging them at almost twice the rate as white people (45% to 24%), according to the investigative journalism organisation ProPublica.

COMPAS and programs similar to it were in use in hundreds of courts across the US, potentially influencing the decisions of judges and other officials. The report sparked a backlash and led to the program being abandoned.

On 28 June this year, in a remarkable sign of change, a US judge effectively ruled that the use of COMPAS and similar programs was a violation of fair trial rights. New York Supreme Court Justice George J. Mosca wrote: "The use of COMPAS and similar products is not non-bias, because the algorithm was created by a unit of IBM and not in a vacuum."
Fusion Center Encourages Improper Investigations Of Lobbying Groups And Anti-War Activists

WASHINGTON - A Texas fusion center’s “Prevention Awareness Bulletin” made public last night is the latest example of inappropriate police intelligence operations targeting political, religious and social activists for investigation. The North Central Texas Fusion System bulletin states that it is “imperative for law enforcement officers to report” the activities of lobbying groups, Muslim civil rights organizations and anti-war protest groups in their areas.

“This memo is not a plea for legitimate intelligence, and seems to endorse discrimination against Muslims,” said Caroline Fredrickson, Director of the ACLU Washington Legislative Office. “The idea that the tolerance advocated by the groups being targeted would be treated as a menace to American security demonstrates a disregard for civil liberties and a disdain for democracy itself. The kind of indiscriminate and unlawful investigations this bulletin calls for always results in a chilling effect on free speech and association.”
A prominent goal of domestic security services over the past generation has been to completely remove the distinction between policing and information-collection. Over the past decade, this tendency has become unmistakable as a result of the frenzied privatization of state security under the guise of "homeland security." In the bargain, a new agency of political surveillance has arisen, the fusion center. This phenomenon is a medium of both privatization and assaults on ever-shrinking civil liberties in an ever more militarized, ever more insecure society.
In conclusion, for the **global** military communications network:

- USAF Croughton is just one site – amongst many sites around the world, **all** undergoing changes in their network-related functions;

- All sites will be influenced by the shift towards ‘data-centric’ operations – creating a unified network, where it is proximity to the centres of networked decision-making that determine their importance, not their geographical location or **legal jurisdiction**;

- Due to the parallel development of data-centric operations in the corporate/on-line world, every part of the international data network will be susceptible to becoming – deliberately or not, and whether military, civilian, or private – part of this global ‘military-intelligence network’;

- This is not an issue of ‘peace’ or ‘militarism’ – it raises fundamental questions of political and civil liberties, and the peace movement must build relationships with the other related campaign groups to tackle this common concern.