

Pentagon program hunts those who embarrass its generals



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A new system is capable of pinpointing the 'exact location' of anyone who could cause reputational damage to its charges ??

Washington, June 20 (RHC)-- A secretive division of the Pentagon is now tasked with protecting its high-ranking officials not only from assassination and other bodily harm, but also from negative portrayals on social media, according to a procurement document obtained by The Intercept.

While military records officially state the U.S. Army Protective Services Battalion protects its charges from "assassination, kidnapping, injury or embarrassment," this now includes monitoring social media for "direct, indirect, and veiled" threats, as well as identifying "negative sentiment" about individuals like Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley, according to the document, which is dated September.

The document describes the program as “a reliable social media threat mitigation service” with an “Open-Source Web based tool-kit with advanced capabilities to collect publicly available information (PAI).” Beyond the data from Twitter’s “firehose,” 4Chan, Reddit, YouTube, VK, Discord, Telegram, and the like, “PAI” also includes a wealth of commercially acquired information from surveillance firms and private contractors like Dataminr, other data brokers, and unscrupulous smartphone apps and advertisers.

All this would be apparently combined with geo-fencing capabilities and actual cellular location data, allowing for near-exact pinpointing of the location of the supposedly “signal-rich discussions from elicited threat-actor communities” – keeping in mind that the “threats” discussed in the procurement document potentially include unkind tweets about current and retired generals.

The entirety of this information hoard – including CCTV feeds, radio stations, personal records, even individuals’ webcams – would be accessible through a “universal search selector,” according to the document.

The document specified the need for a two-way stream, requiring the contractor to maintain “the anonymity and security needed to conduct publicly accessible information research through misattribution” by “using various egress points globally to mask their identity.” The contract was given to SEWP Solutions LLC, described as the only company capable of “tunnel[ing] into specific countries/cities like Moscow, Russia or Beijing, China and come out on a host nation internet domain.”

The procurement document specifies that it does not want the Pentagon advertising its interest in violating the online and, potentially, physical privacy of those it deems threats to the reputation of generals retired and current. It is stamped “Controlled Unclassified Information”/FEDCON, meaning it is not meant to be seen by those outside the federal government and contractor system.

The revelation that still more intrusive powers are being sought by the national security state has outraged privacy advocates. “Expressing ‘positive or negative sentiment towards a senior high-risk individual’ cannot be deemed sufficient grounds for government agencies to conduct surveillance operations, even going as far as ‘pinpointing the exact locations’ of individuals,” Iliia Siatitsa of Privacy International told The Intercept.

“The ability to express opinions, criticize, make assumptions, or form value judgments – especially regarding public officials – is a quintessential part of democratic society.”

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