

Google Directly Involved in 'Regime Change': Proven

by Yazan al-Saadi via stan - al-akhbar.com *Monday, Apr 8 2013, 10:01pm*

international / prose / post

Top Google execs, including the company's CEO and one of Barack Obama's major presidential campaign donors Eric Schmidt, informed the intelligence agency Stratfor about Google's activities and internal communication regarding "regime change" in the Middle East, according to Stratfor emails released by WikiLeaks and obtained by Al-Akhbar. The other source cited was Google's director for security and safety Marty Lev.



The briefings mainly focused on the movements of Jared Cohen, currently the director of Google Ideas, a "think/do-tank" billed as a vehicle for spreading American-style liberal democracy. Cohen was also a former member of US Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff and former advisor to Condoleezza Rice and Hillary Clinton.

Email exchanges, starting February 2011, suggest that Google execs were suspicious that Cohen was coordinating his moves with the White House and cut Cohen's mission short at times for fear he was taking too many risks. Stratfor's vice-president of counter-terrorism Fred Burton, who seemed opposed to Google's alleged covert role in "foaming" uprisings, describes Cohen as a "loose Cannon" whose killing or kidnapping "might be the best thing to happen" to expose Google.

The Cohen Conspiracy

Stratfor's spotlight on Cohen began on 9 February 2012 after Burton forwarded to the secure email list a Foreign Policy article discussing Cohen's move from the State Department to Google Ideas. With this article, Burton noted that Cohen had dinner in Cairo with Wael Ghonim on January 27, 2011 just hours before the Egyptian Google Executive was famously picked up by Egypt's State Security. (doc-id 1122191)

On the same day, Stratfor's staff make reference to a Huffington Post article which highlighted Cohen's role in "delaying the scheduled maintenance on Twitter so the Iranian revolution could keep going" and a Foreign Policy article that noted that Cohen "was a Rhodes scholar, spent time in Iran, [and] hung out in Iraq during the war...". These casual discovers further perked Stratfor's curiosity about Cohen. (doc-id 1629270)

The following day, Burton forwarded a message to the secure email list from "a very good Google source" who claimed that Cohen "[was] off to Gaza next week". Burton added, "Cohen, a Jew, is bound to get himself whacked...Google is not clear if Cohen is operating [with a] State Dept [or] WH [White House] license, or [is] a hippie activist."

Korena Zucha, another senior analyst on the list, queried, "Why hasn't Google cut ties to Cohen yet? Or is Cohen's activity being endorsed by those higher up in the [company] than your contact?"

In turn, Burton replied, "Cohen's rabbi is Eric Schmidt and Obama lackey. My source is trying to find out if the billionaire owners are backing Cohen's efforts for regime change." (doc-id 1111729)

Later on, Burton forwarded information from the "Google source" of Cohen's links in establishing Movements.org. The source added, "A site created to help online organization of groups and individuals to move democracy in stubborn nations. Funded through public-private partnerships." Burton pointed out that the US State Department is the organization's public sponsor." (doc-id 1118344)

Indeed, the State Department, partnering with a number of corporations, was the main sponsor for the 2008 inaugural Alliance of Youth Movements summit in New York City that subsequently established Movements.org. Hillary Clinton endorsed the organization and presented a video message during the second summit held in Mexico City a year later.

On 11 February, Burton wrote to the secure email list that Cohen was still planning to head to Gaza. He added, "The dude is a loose can[n]on. GOOGLE is trying to stop his entry into Gaza now because the dude is like scorched earth. It's unclear to GOOGLE if he's driving without a license, but GOOGLE believes he's on a specific mission of "regime change" on the part of leftist fools inside the WH who are using him for their agendas." (doc-id 1113596)

Throughout this day, the idea proposed by Burton, and seemingly felt by his Google contacts as well, of Cohen and the White House's involvement in the uprisings was actively discussed among the analysts, especially in regards to who would be targeted next. (doc-id 1113965)

By Monday, 14 February 2011, Burton shared intelligence with George Friedman, Stratfor's founder, and Scott Stewart, vice-president of Stratfor's tactical department, from his source in Google that Cohen was ordered not to go to Gaza. Burton's Google source further stated, "Also, thinking I [the unnamed source] may be on the right track about him despite his denials [in reference to Cohen working for the White House/State Department]."

When asked to clarify his sources on Cohen, Burton claimed that they were Marty Lev, Google's director for security and safety, and Eric Schmidt, the current CEO of Google. (doc-id 398679)

A week later, Burton forwarded an internal Google email obtained from a 'senior Google executive'. This email was seemingly sent by Cohen to the senior Google executive to discuss Cohen's planned trip in March.

In it, Cohen wrote, "I wanted to follow-up and get a sense of your latest thinking on the proposed March trip to UAE, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. The purpose of this trip is to exclusively engage the Iranian community to better understand the challenges faced by Iranians as part of one of our Google Ideas groups on repressive societies. Here is what we are thinking: Drive to Azerbaijan/Iranian border and engage the Iranian communities closer to the border (this is important because we need the Azeri Iranian perspective)."

After reading Cohen's email, Stewart remarked, "Cohen might end up having an accident if he is not careful. This is not child's play."

Burton responded, "GOOGLE is getting WH [White House] and State Dept. support and air cover. In reality, they are doing things the CIA cannot do. But, I agree with you. He's going to get himself kidnapped or killed. Might be the best thing to happen to expose GOOGLE's covert role in foaming up-risings, to be blunt. The US Gov't can then disavow knowledge and GOOGLE is left holding the

shit bag.” (doc-id 1121800)

On 10 March 2011, Burton forwarded another message from his ‘senior Google executive’ source detailing how Cohen was requested not to travel on his proposed trip. The source explained that Google had concerns over Cohen’s “baggage” as a “US State Dept. policy maker, his research and publications on Muslim extremists and youth movements and his presence in Egypt just as the uprising started.” The source also stated that Cohen was recommended to “take a lower profile on this specific trip and let time pass before being visible and associated with people known by their states to be active in challenging repressive societies.” (doc-id 1164190)

A subsequent message from Burton’s source on 22 March 2011 affirmed that Cohen “heeded the advice not to go to Turkey or UAE for those meetings.” (doc-id 1133861)

The final email dealing with Cohen was on 30 March 2011.

Here, Burton forwarded to the alpha (secure) email list a response by his source to Burton’s question of whether Cohen was playing any role in Libya at the time. The source stated, “Not that I’m aware of. He heeded the advice to avoid Turkey and UAE and didn’t go on that trip.” (doc-id 1160182)

Google Ideas: Politicizing Technology

Certainly, there is more than meets the eye to Cohen and his actions; even his superiors in Google seem to think so.

The belief, chiefly by Burton, that Cohen had seemingly played a role in fermenting the uprisings that toppled Zine el Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak underplays, and at times entirely disregards, the ability and agency by local movements in Tunisia and Egypt.

Nevertheless, Google Ideas, which Cohen directs, is a new animal. According to a report by the Financial Times published last July, Google Ideas seems to bond idealistic activist sensibilities with Google’s pursuit for continued global expansion - blurring the lines between business and political action. Schmidt and Cohen dub Google Ideas as a “think/do-tank” that aims to tackle political and diplomatic matters through the use of technology.

The first public event for the think/do-tank, in partnership with the Council on Foreign Relations and the Tribeca Film Festival, was held last June in Dublin. It gathered around 80 ‘former’ extremists, including former Muslim radicals, neo-Nazis, US gang members, and others, in a “Summit Against Violent Extremism”. The announcement by Google declared that the summit’s aim is “to initiate a global conversation on how best to prevent young people from becoming radicalised and how to de-radicalise others” and that “the ideas generated at the Dublin summit will be included in a study to be published later in the year.”

One spin off was the creation of the Against Violent Extremism group, apparently a network for those who attended the Dublin Summit. Beyond merely networking, the group also advertises certain projects that are in need of funding. Notably, much of the projects pertain to the Middle East, including an “Al-Awlaki Counter-Campaign” - Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen of Yemeni origin, was assassinated in September of last year by the US for his alleged al-Qaeda connections.

But the Against Violent Extremism site does not seem to be presently active. The last update for projects in need of funding was made in September and the last announcement regarding the workings of the site was made in October.

More recently, Foreign Policy reported in January that the Brookings Institute, one of the oldest and most influential think-tanks in Washington, DC, named Google Ideas as “the best new think tank established in the last 18 months.” Such accolades arguably suggests that Google Ideas is expected to be a major player in the near future.

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article34535.htm>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-477.html>