

Google Is Not What It Seems

by Julian Assange

Google Chairman Eric Schmidt shares a joke with Hillary Clinton during a special "fireside chat" with Google staff. The talk was held on [21 Jul 2014](#) at Google's headquarters in Mountain View, California.

In this extract from his new book [When](#)

[Google Met Wikileaks](#), WikiLeaks' publisher Julian Assange describes the special relationship between Google, Hillary Clinton and the State Department -- and what that means for the future of the internet. WikiLeaks readers can obtain a 20 percent discount on the cover price when ordering from the [OR Books website](#) by using the coupon code "WIKILEAKS".

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Eric Schmidt is an influential figure, even among the parade of powerful characters with whom I have had to cross paths since I founded WikiLeaks. In mid-May 2011 I was under house arrest in rural Norfolk, about three hours' drive northeast of London. The crackdown against our work was in full swing and every wasted moment seemed like an eternity. It was hard to get my attention. But when my colleague Joseph Farrell told me the executive chairman of Google wanted to make

an appointment with me, I was listening.

In some ways the higher echelons of Google seemed more distant and obscure to me than the halls of Washington. We had been locking horns with senior US officials for years by that point. The mystique had worn off. But the power centers growing up in Silicon Valley were still opaque and I was suddenly conscious of an opportunity to understand and influence what was becoming the most influential company on earth. Schmidt had taken over as CEO of Google in 2001 and built it into an empire.¹

I was intrigued that the mountain would come to Muhammad. But it was not until well after Schmidt and his companions had been and gone that I came to understand who had really visited me.

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The stated reason for the visit was

a book. Schmidt was penning a treatise with Jared Cohen, the director of Google Ideas, an outfit that describes itself as Google's in-house "think/do tank." I knew little else about Cohen at the time. In fact, Cohen had moved to Google from the US State Department in 2010. He had been a fast-talking "Generation Y" ideas man at State under two US administrations, a courtier from the world of policy think tanks and institutes, poached in his early twenties. He became a senior advisor for Secretaries of State Rice and Clinton. At State, on the Policy Planning Staff, Cohen was soon christened "Condi's party-starter," channeling buzzwords from Silicon Valley into US policy circles and producing delightful rhetorical concoctions such as "Public Diplomacy 2.0."² On his Council on Foreign Relations adjunct staff page he listed his expertise as "terrorism; radicalization; impact of connection technologies on 21st century statecraft; Iran."³

Director of Google Ideas, and "geopolitical visionary" Jared Cohen shares his vision with US Army recruits in a lecture theatre at West Point Military Academy on 26 Feb 2014 ([Instagram by Eric Schmidt](#))

It was Cohen who, while he was still at the Department of State, was said to have emailed Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to delay scheduled maintenance

in order to assist the aborted 2009 uprising in Iran.⁴ His documented love affair with Google began the same year, when he befriended Eric Schmidt as they together surveyed the post-occupation wreckage of Baghdad. Just months later, Schmidt re-created Cohen's natural habitat within Google itself by engineering a "think/do tank" based in New York and appointing Cohen as its head. Google Ideas was born.

Later that year the two co-wrote a policy piece for the Council on Foreign Relations' journal *Foreign Affairs*, praising the reformative potential of Silicon Valley technologies as an instrument of US foreign policy.⁵ Describing what they called "coalitions of the connected,"⁶ Schmidt and Cohen claimed that

Democratic states that have
built coalitions of their militaries
have the capacity to do the same

with their connection technologies. . . . They offer a new way to exercise the *duty to protect* citizens around the world [emphasis added].⁷

In the same piece they argued that “this technology is overwhelmingly provided by the private sector.” Shortly afterwards, Tunisia, then Egypt, and then the rest of the Middle East, erupted in revolution. The echoes of these events on online social media became a spectacle for Western internet users. The professional commentariat, keen to rationalize uprisings against US-backed dictatorships, branded them “Twitter revolutions.” Suddenly everyone wanted to be at the intersection point between US global power and social media, and Schmidt and Cohen had already staked out the territory. With the working title “The Empire of the Mind,” they began expanding their article to book length, and sought audiences with the big

names of global tech and global power as part of their research.

They said they wanted to interview me. I agreed. A date was set for June.

Eric Schmidt, Chairman of Google, at the "Pulse of Today's Global Economy" panel talk at the Clinton Global Initiative annual meeting, [26 Sept. 2013](#) in New York. Eric Schmidt first attended the CGI annual meeting at its opening plenary in 2010. (Photo: Mark Lennihan)

By the time June came around there was already a lot to talk about. That summer WikiLeaks was still grinding through the release of US diplomatic cables, publishing thousands of them every week. When, seven months earlier, we had first started releasing the cables, Hillary Clinton had denounced the publication as “an attack on the international community” that would “tear at the fabric” of government.

It was into this ferment that Google projected itself that June, touching down in a London airport and making the long drive up into East Anglia to Norfolk and Beccles. Schmidt arrived first, accompanied by his then partner, Lisa Shields. When he introduced her as a vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations—a US foreign-policy think tank with close ties to the State Department—I thought little more of it. Shields herself was straight out of

Camelot, having been spotted by John Kennedy Jr.'s side back in the early 1990s. They sat with me and we exchanged pleasantries. They said they had forgotten their dictaphone, so we used mine. We made an agreement that I would forward them the recording and in exchange they would forward me the transcript, to be corrected for accuracy and clarity. We began. Schmidt plunged in at the deep end, straightaway quizzing me on the organizational and technological underpinnings of WikiLeaks.

Some time later Jared Cohen arrived. With him was Scott Malcomson, introduced as the book's editor. Three months after the meeting Malcomson would enter the State Department as the lead speechwriter and principal advisor to Susan Rice (then US ambassador to the United Nations, now national security advisor). He had previously served as a senior advisor at the United Nations, and is a longtime member of

the Council on Foreign Relations. At the time of writing, he is the director of communications at the International Crisis Group.⁸

At this point, the delegation was one part Google, three parts US foreign-policy establishment, but I was still none the wiser. Handshakes out of the way, we got down to business.

Google's Chairman, Eric Schmidt, [photographed](#) in a New York elevator, carrying Henry Kissinger's new book, "World Order", 25 Sep 2014

Schmidt was a good foil. A late-fiftysomething, squint-eyed behind owlsh spectacles, managerially dressed—Schmidt’s dour appearance concealed a machinelike analyticity. His questions often skipped to the heart of the matter, betraying a powerful nonverbal structural intelligence. It was the same intellect that had abstracted software-engineering principles to scale Google into a megacorp, ensuring that the corporate infrastructure always met the rate of growth. This was a person who understood how to build and maintain *systems*: systems of information and systems of people. My world was new to him, but it was also a world of unfolding human processes, scale, and information flows.

For a man of systematic intelligence, Schmidt’s politics—such as I could hear from our discussion—were surprisingly conventional, even banal. He grasped structural relationships quickly, but struggled to verbalize many

of them, often shoehorning geopolitical subtleties into Silicon Valley marketese or the ossified State Department microlanguage of his companions.⁹ He was at his best when he was speaking (perhaps without realizing it) as an engineer, breaking down complexities into their orthogonal components.

I found Cohen a good listener, but a less interesting thinker, possessed of that relentless conviviality that routinely afflicts career generalists and Rhodes scholars. As you would expect from his foreign-policy background, Cohen had a knowledge of international flash points and conflicts and moved rapidly between them, detailing different scenarios to test my assertions. But it sometimes felt as if he was riffing on orthodoxies in a way that was designed to impress his former colleagues in official Washington. Malcomson, older, was more pensive, his input thoughtful and generous. Shields was quiet for much of the conversation, taking notes, humoring the bigger egos

around the table while she got on with the real work.

As the interviewee I was expected to do most of the talking. I sought to guide them into my worldview. To their credit, I consider the interview perhaps the best I have given. I was out of my comfort zone and I liked it. We ate and then took a walk in the grounds, all the while on the record. I asked Eric Schmidt to leak US government information requests to WikiLeaks, and he refused, suddenly nervous, citing the illegality of disclosing Patriot Act requests. And then as the evening came on it was done and they were gone, back to the unreal, remote halls of information empire, and I was left to get back to my work. That was the end of it, or so I thought.

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Two months later, WikiLeaks' release of State Department cables was

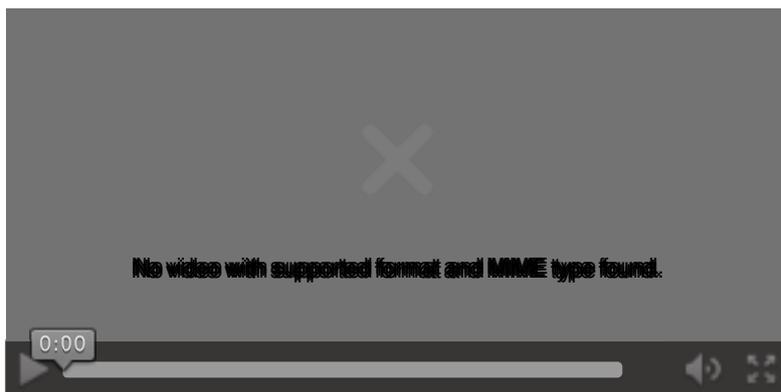
coming to an abrupt end. For three-quarters of a year we had painstakingly managed the publication, pulling in over a hundred global media partners, distributing documents in their regions of influence, and overseeing a worldwide, systematic publication and redaction system, fighting for maximum impact for our sources.

But in an act of gross negligence the *Guardian* newspaper—our former partner—had published the confidential decryption password to all 251,000 cables in a chapter heading in its book, rushed out hastily in February 2011.¹⁰ By mid-August we discovered that a former German employee—whom I had suspended in 2010—was cultivating business relationships with a variety of organizations and individuals by shopping around the location of the encrypted file, paired with the password's whereabouts in the book. At the rate the information was spreading, we estimated that within two weeks

most intelligence agencies, contractors, and middlemen would have all the cables, but the public would not.

I decided it was necessary to bring forward our publication schedule by four months and contact the State Department to get it on record that we had given them advance warning. The situation would then be harder to spin into another legal or political assault. Unable to raise Louis Susman, then US ambassador to the UK, we tried the front door. WikiLeaks investigations editor Sarah Harrison called the State Department front desk and informed the operator that "Julian Assange" wanted to have a conversation with Hillary Clinton. Predictably, this statement was initially greeted with bureaucratic disbelief. We soon found ourselves in a reenactment of that scene in *Dr. Strangelove*, where Peter Sellers cold-calls the White House to warn of an impending nuclear war and is immediately put on hold. As in the film,

we climbed the hierarchy, speaking to incrementally more superior officials until we reached Clinton's senior legal advisor. He told us he would call us back. We hung up, and waited.



Sarah Harrison and Julian Assange call the U.S. State Department in September 2011.

When the phone rang half an hour later, it was not the State Department on the other end of the line. Instead, it was Joseph Farrell, the WikiLeaks staffer who had set up the meeting with Google. He had just received an email from Lisa Shields seeking to confirm that it was indeed WikiLeaks calling the State Department.

It was at this point that I realized Eric Schmidt might not have been an emissary of Google alone. Whether officially or not, he had been keeping some company that placed him very close to Washington, DC, including a well-documented relationship with President Obama. Not only had Hillary Clinton's people known that Eric Schmidt's partner had visited me, but they had also elected to use her as a back channel. While WikiLeaks had been deeply involved in publishing the inner archive of the US State Department, the US State Department had, in effect, snuck into the WikiLeaks command center and hit me up for a free lunch. Two years later, in the wake of his early 2013 visits to China, North Korea, and Burma, it would come to be appreciated that the chairman of Google might be conducting, in one way or another, "back-channel diplomacy" for Washington. But at the time it was a novel thought.[11](#)

Eric Schmidt's [Instagram](#) of Hillary Clinton and David Rubinstein, taken at the Holbrooke Forum Gala, 5 Dec 2013. Richard Holbrooke (who died in 2010) was a high-profile US diplomat, managing director of Lehman brothers, a board member of NED, CFR, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg steering group and an advisor to Hillary Clinton and John Kerry. Schmidt donated

I put it aside until February 2012, when WikiLeaks—along with over thirty of our international media partners—began publishing the Global Intelligence Files: the internal email spool from the Texas-based private intelligence firm Stratfor.¹² One of our stronger investigative partners—the Beirut-based newspaper *Al Akhbar*—scoured the emails for intelligence on Jared Cohen.¹³ The people at Stratfor, who liked to think of themselves as a sort of corporate CIA, were acutely conscious of other ventures that they perceived as making inroads into their sector. Google had turned up on their radar. In a series of colorful emails they discussed a pattern of activity conducted by Cohen under the Google Ideas aegis, suggesting what the “do” in “think/do tank” actually means.

Cohen’s directorate appeared to cross over from public relations and “corporate responsibility” work into active corporate intervention in foreign

affairs at a level that is normally reserved for states. Jared Cohen could be wryly named Google's "director of regime change." According to the emails, he was trying to plant his fingerprints on some of the major historical events in the contemporary Middle East. He could be placed in Egypt during the revolution, meeting with Wael Ghonim, the Google employee whose arrest and imprisonment hours later would make him a PR-friendly symbol of the uprising in the Western press. Meetings had been planned in Palestine and Turkey, both of which—claimed Stratfor emails—were killed by the senior Google leadership as too risky. Only a few months before he met with me, Cohen was planning a trip to the edge of Iran in Azerbaijan to "engage the Iranian communities closer to the border," as part of Google Ideas' project on "repressive societies." In internal emails Stratfor's vice president for intelligence, Fred Burton (himself a

former State Department security official), wrote,

Google is getting WH [White House] and State Dept support and air cover. In reality they are doing things the CIA cannot do . . . [Cohen] is 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.¹⁴

In further internal communication, Burton said his sources on Cohen's activities were Marty Lev—Google's director of security and safety—and Eric Schmidt himself.¹⁵ Looking for something more concrete, I began to search in WikiLeaks' archive for information on Cohen. State Department

cables released as part of Cablegate reveal that Cohen had been in Afghanistan in 2009, trying to convince the four major Afghan mobile phone companies to move their antennas onto US military bases.¹⁶ In Lebanon he quietly worked to establish an intellectual and clerical rival to Hezbollah, the “Higher Shia League.”¹⁷ And in London he offered Bollywood movie executives funds to insert anti-extremist content into their films, and promised to connect them to related networks in Hollywood.¹⁸

Three days after he visited me at Ellingham Hall, Jared Cohen flew to Ireland to direct the “Save Summit,” an event cosponsored by Google Ideas and the Council on Foreign Relations. Gathering former inner-city gang members, right-wing militants, violent nationalists, and “religious extremists” from all over the world together in one place, the event aimed to workshop technological solutions to the problem of

“violent extremism.”¹⁹ What could go wrong?

Cohen’s world seems to be one event like this after another: endless soirees for the cross-fertilization of influence between elites and their vassals, under the pious rubric of “civil society.” The received wisdom in advanced capitalist societies is that there still exists an organic “civil society sector” in which institutions form autonomously and come together to manifest the interests and will of citizens. The fable has it that the boundaries of this sector are respected by actors from government and the “private sector,” leaving a safe space for NGOs and nonprofits to advocate for things like human rights, free speech, and accountable government.

This sounds like a great idea. But if it was ever true, it has not been for decades. Since at least the 1970s, authentic actors like unions and churches have folded under a sustained

assault by free-market statism, transforming “civil society” into a buyer’s market for political factions and corporate interests looking to exert influence at arm’s length. The last forty years has seen a huge proliferation of think tanks and political NGOs whose purpose, beneath all the verbiage, is to execute political agendas by proxy.

It is not just obvious neocon front groups like Foreign Policy Initiative.²⁰ It also includes fatuous Western NGOs like Freedom House, where naïve but well-meaning career nonprofit workers are twisted in knots by political funding streams, denouncing non-Western human rights violations while keeping local abuses firmly in their blind spots. The civil society conference circuit—which flies developing-world activists across the globe hundreds of times a year to bless the unholy union between “government and private stakeholders” at geopoliticized events like the “Stockholm Internet Forum”—simply

could not exist if it were not blasted with millions of dollars in political funding annually.

Scan the memberships of the biggest US think tanks and institutes and the same names keep cropping up. Cohen's Save Summit went on to seed AVE, or AgainstViolentExtremism.org, a long-term project whose principal backer besides Google Ideas is the Gen Next Foundation. This foundation's website says it is an "exclusive membership organization and platform for successful individuals" that aims to bring about "social change" driven by venture capital funding.²¹ Gen Next's "private sector and non-profit foundation support avoids some of the potential perceived conflicts of interest faced by initiatives funded by governments."²² Jared Cohen is an executive member.

Jared Cohen on stage with the delegates at the New York City inaugural summit for the Alliance of Youth Movements, in 2008

Gen Next also backs an NGO, launched by Cohen toward the end of his State Department tenure, for bringing internet-based global “pro-democracy activists” into the US foreign relations patronage network.^{[23](#)} The group originated as the “Alliance of Youth Movements” with an inaugural summit in New York City in 2008 funded by the State Department and encrusted with

the logos of corporate sponsors.²⁴ The summit flew in carefully selected social media activists from “problem areas” like Venezuela and Cuba to watch speeches by the Obama campaign’s new-media team and the State Department’s James Glassman, and to network with public relations consultants, “philanthropists,” and US media personalities.²⁵ The outfit held two more invite-only summits in London and Mexico City where the delegates were [directly addressed via video link](#) by Hillary Clinton:²⁶

You are the vanguard of a rising generation of citizen activists. . . . And that makes you the kind of leaders we need.²⁷

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addressing the delegates to the 2009 Alliance of Youth Movements Annual Summit in Mexico City, [on 16 Oct 2009, via videolink.](#)

In 2011, the Alliance of Youth Movements rebranded as “Movements.org.” In 2012 Movements.org became a division of “Advancing Human Rights,” a new NGO set up by Robert L. Bernstein after he resigned from Human Rights Watch (which he had originally founded) because he felt it should not cover Israeli and US human rights abuses.^{[28](#)}

Advancing Human Rights aims to right Human Rights Watch's wrong by focusing exclusively on "dictatorships."²⁹ Cohen stated that the merger of his Movements.org outfit with Advancing Human Rights was "irresistible," pointing to the latter's "phenomenal network of cyberactivists in the Middle East and North Africa."³⁰ He then joined the Advancing Human Rights board, which also includes Richard Kemp, the former commander of British forces in occupied Afghanistan.³¹ In its present guise, Movements.org continues to receive funding from Gen Next, as well as from Google, MSNBC, and PR giant Edelman, which represents General Electric, Boeing, and Shell, among others.³²

*A screen capture of the
["Supporters and sponsors"](#)
[page](#) at [movements.org](#).*

Google Ideas is bigger, but it follows the same game plan. Glance down the speaker lists of its annual invite-only get-togethers, such as “Crisis in a Connected World” in October 2013. Social network theorists and activists give the event a veneer of authenticity, but in truth it boasts a toxic piñata of attendees: US officials, telecom magnates, security consultants, finance capitalists, and foreign-policy tech vultures like Alec Ross (Cohen’s twin at

the State Department).³³ At the hard core are the arms contractors and career military: active US Cyber Command chieftains, and even the admiral responsible for all US military operations in Latin America from 2006 to 2009. Tying up the package are Jared Cohen and the chairman of Google, Eric Schmidt.³⁴

I began to think of Schmidt as a brilliant but politically hapless Californian tech billionaire who had been exploited by the very US foreign-policy types he had collected to act as translators between himself and official Washington—a West Coast-East Coast illustration of the principal-agent dilemma.³⁵

I was wrong.

* * *

Eric Schmidt was born in Washington, DC, where his father had

worked as a professor and economist for the Nixon Treasury. He attended high school in Arlington, Virginia, before graduating with a degree in engineering from Princeton. In 1979 Schmidt headed out West to Berkeley, where he received his PhD before joining [Stanford/Berkley](#) spin-off Sun Microsystems in 1983. By the time he left Sun, sixteen years later, he had become part of its executive leadership.

Sun had significant contracts with the US government, but it was not until he was in Utah as CEO of Novell that records show Schmidt strategically engaging Washington's overt political class. Federal campaign finance records show that on January 6, 1999, Schmidt donated two lots of \$1,000 to the Republican senator for Utah, Orrin Hatch. On the same day Schmidt's wife, Wendy, is also listed giving two lots of \$1,000 to Senator Hatch. By the start of 2001 over a dozen other politicians and PACs, including Al Gore, George W.

Bush, Dianne Feinstein, and Hillary Clinton, were on the Schmidts' payroll, in one case for \$100,000.³⁶ By 2013, Eric Schmidt—who had become publicly over-associated with the Obama White House—was more politic. Eight Republicans and eight Democrats were directly funded, as were two PACs. That April, \$32,300 went to the National Republican Senatorial Committee. A month later the same amount, \$32,300, headed off to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. Why Schmidt was donating exactly the same amount of money to both parties is a \$64,600 question.³⁷

It was also in 1999 that Schmidt joined the board of a Washington, DC-based group: the New America Foundation, a merger of well-connected centrist forces (in DC terms). The foundation and its 100 staff serves as an influence mill, using its network of approved national security, foreign policy, and technology pundits to place

hundreds of articles and op-eds per year. By 2008 Schmidt had become chairman of its board of directors. As of 2013 the New America Foundation's principal funders (each contributing over \$1 million) are listed as Eric and Wendy Schmidt, the US State Department, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Secondary funders include Google, USAID, and Radio Free Asia.³⁸

Schmidt's involvement in the New America Foundation places him firmly in the Washington establishment nexus. The foundation's other board members, seven of whom also list themselves as members of the Council on Foreign Relations, include Francis Fukuyama, one of the intellectual fathers of the neoconservative movement; Rita Hauser, who served on the President's Intelligence Advisory Board under both Bush and Obama; Jonathan Soros, the son of George Soros; Walter Russell Mead, a US security strategist and editor of the *American Interest*; Helene

Gayle, who sits on the boards of Coca-Cola, Colgate-Palmolive, the Rockefeller Foundation, the State Department's Foreign Affairs Policy Unit, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the White House Fellows program, and Bono's ONE Campaign; and Daniel Yergin, oil geostrategist, former chair of the US Department of Energy's Task Force on Strategic Energy Research, and author of *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*.^{[39](#)}

Google Chairman Eric Schmidt [introduces](#) Hillary Clinton as the keynote speaker at the 16 May 2014 conference "Big Ideas for a New America" for the New America Foundation, of which Schmidt is the Chair of the Board and the largest funder.

The chief executive of the foundation, appointed in 2013, is Jared Cohen's former boss at the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, Anne-Marie Slaughter, a Princeton law and

international relations wonk with an eye for revolving doors.⁴⁰ She is everywhere at the time of writing, issuing calls for Obama to respond to the Ukraine crisis not only by deploying covert US forces into the country but also by dropping bombs on Syria—on the basis that this will send a message to Russia and China.⁴¹ Along with Schmidt, she is a 2013 attendee of the Bilderberg conference and sits on the State Department’s Foreign Affairs Policy Board.⁴²

There was nothing politically hapless about Eric Schmidt. I had been too eager to see a politically unambitious Silicon Valley engineer, a relic of the good old days of computer science graduate culture on the West Coast. But that is not the sort of person who attends the Bilderberg conference four years running, who pays regular visits to the White House, or who delivers “fireside chats” at the World

Economic Forum in Davos.⁴³ Schmidt's emergence as Google's "foreign minister"—making pomp and ceremony state visits across geopolitical fault lines—had not come out of nowhere; it had been presaged by years of assimilation within US establishment networks of reputation and influence.

On a personal level, Schmidt and Cohen are perfectly likable people. But Google's chairman is a classic "head of industry" player, with all of the ideological baggage that comes with that role.⁴⁴ Schmidt fits exactly where he is: the point where the centrist, liberal, and imperialist tendencies meet in American political life. By all appearances, Google's bosses genuinely believe in the civilizing power of enlightened multinational corporations, and they see this mission as continuous with the shaping of the world according to the better judgment of the "benevolent superpower." They will tell you that open-mindedness is a virtue,

but all perspectives that challenge the exceptionalist drive at the heart of American foreign policy will remain invisible to them. This is the impenetrable banality of “don’t be evil.” They believe that they are doing good. And that is a problem.

* * *

Google is "different". Google is "visionary". Google is "the future". Google is "more than just a company". Google "gives back to the community". Google is "a force for good".

Even when Google airs its corporate ambivalence publicly, it does little to dislodge these items of faith.⁴⁵ The company’s reputation is seemingly unassailable. Google’s colorful, playful logo is imprinted on human retinas just under six billion times each day, 2.1 trillion times a year—an opportunity for respondent conditioning enjoyed by no other company in history.⁴⁶ Caught

red-handed last year making petabytes of personal data available to the US intelligence community through the PRISM program, Google nevertheless continues to coast on the goodwill generated by its “don’t be evil” doublespeak. A few [symbolic open letters](#) to the White House later and it seems all is forgiven. Even anti-surveillance campaigners cannot help themselves, at once condemning government spying but trying to alter Google’s invasive surveillance practices using appeasement strategies.⁴⁷

Nobody wants to acknowledge that Google has grown big and bad. But it has. Schmidt’s tenure as CEO saw Google integrate with the shadiest of US power structures as it expanded into a geographically invasive megacorporation. But Google has always been comfortable with this proximity. Long before company founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin hired Schmidt in 2001, their initial research upon which

Google was based had been partly funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).⁴⁸ And even as Schmidt's Google developed an image as the overly friendly giant of global tech, it was building a close relationship with the intelligence community.

In 2003 the US National Security Agency (NSA) had already started systematically violating the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) under its director General Michael Hayden.⁴⁹ These were the days of the "Total Information Awareness" program.⁵⁰ Before PRISM was ever dreamed of, under orders from the Bush White House the NSA was already aiming to "collect it all, sniff it all, know it all, process it all, exploit it all."⁵¹ During the same period, Google—whose publicly declared corporate mission is to collect and "organize the world's information and make it universally

accessible and useful”⁵²—was accepting NSA money to the tune of \$2 million to provide the agency with search tools for its rapidly accreting hoard of stolen knowledge.⁵³

In 2004, after taking over Keyhole, a mapping tech startup cofunded by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and the CIA, Google developed the technology into Google Maps, an enterprise version of which it has since shopped to the Pentagon and associated federal and state agencies on multimillion-dollar contracts.⁵⁴ In 2008, Google helped launch an NGA spy satellite, the GeoEye-1, into space. Google shares the photographs from the satellite with the US military and intelligence communities.⁵⁵ In 2010, NGA awarded Google a \$27 million contract for “geospatial visualization services.”⁵⁶

In 2010, after the Chinese government was accused of hacking

Google, the company entered into a “formal information-sharing” relationship with the NSA, which was said to allow NSA analysts to “evaluate vulnerabilities” in Google’s hardware and software.⁵⁷ Although the exact contours of the deal have never been disclosed, the NSA brought in other government agencies to help, including the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security.

Around the same time, Google was becoming involved in a program known as the “Enduring Security Framework”⁵⁸ (ESF), which entailed the sharing of information between Silicon Valley tech companies and Pentagon-affiliated agencies “at network speed.”⁵⁹ Emails obtained in 2014 under Freedom of Information requests show Schmidt and his fellow Googler Sergey Brin corresponding on first-name terms with NSA chief General Keith Alexander about ESF.⁶⁰ Reportage on the emails

focused on the familiarity in the correspondence: “General Keith . . . so great to see you . . . !” Schmidt wrote. But most reports overlooked a crucial detail. “Your insights as a key member of the Defense Industrial Base,” Alexander wrote to Brin, “are valuable to ensure ESF’s efforts have measurable impact.”

The Department of Homeland Security defines the Defense Industrial Base as “the worldwide industrial complex that enables research and development, as well as design, production, delivery, and maintenance of military weapons systems, subsystems, and components or parts, *to meet U.S. military requirements* [emphasis added].”⁶¹



*Google
Chairman Eric
Schmidt's
[Instagram video](#)
from 2 May
2014, showing
an experimental
US military
troop support
drone, the LS3,
or "Cujo",
designed by
Boston
Dynamics, newly
acquired by
Google*

The Defense Industrial Base provides “products and services that are essential to mobilize, deploy, and sustain military operations.” Does it include regular commercial services purchased

by the US military? No. The definition specifically excludes the purchase of regular commercial services. Whatever makes Google a “key member of the Defense Industrial Base,” it is not recruitment campaigns pushed out through Google AdWords or soldiers checking their Gmail.

In 2012, Google arrived on the list of top-spending Washington, DC, lobbyists—a list typically stalked exclusively by the US Chamber of Commerce, military contractors, and the petrocarbon leviathans.⁶² Google entered the rankings above military aerospace giant Lockheed Martin, with a total of \$18.2 million spent in 2012 to Lockheed’s \$15.3 million. Boeing, the military contractor that absorbed McDonnell Douglas in 1997, also came below Google, at \$15.6 million spent, as did Northrop Grumman at \$17.5 million.

In Autumn 2013 the Obama administration was trying to drum up support for US airstrikes against Syria.

Despite setbacks, the administration continued to press for military action well into September with speeches and public announcements by both President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry.⁶³ On September 10, Google lent its front page—the most popular on the internet—to the war effort, inserting a line below the search box reading “Live! Secretary Kerry answers questions on Syria. Today via Hangout at 2pm ET.”⁶⁴

Google's front page on [10 Sep 2013](#), promoting the Obama administration's efforts to bomb Syria

As the self-described “radical centrist”⁶⁵ *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman wrote in 1999, sometimes it is not enough to leave the global dominance of American tech corporations to something as mercurial as “the free market”:

The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald’s cannot flourish

without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies to flourish is called the US Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps.⁶⁶

If anything has changed since those words were written, it is that [Silicon Valley has grown restless with that passive role](#), aspiring instead to adorn the "hidden fist" like a velvet glove. Writing in 2013, Schmidt and Cohen stated,

What Lockheed Martin was to the twentieth century, technology and cyber-security companies will be to the twenty-first.⁶⁷

This was one of many bold assertions made by Schmidt and Cohen in their book, which was eventually

published in April 2013. Gone was the working title, "The Empire of the Mind", replaced with ["The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business"](#). By the time it came out, I had formally sought and received political asylum from the government of Ecuador, and taken refuge in its embassy in London. At that point I had already spent nearly a year in the embassy under police surveillance, blocked from safe passage out of the UK. Online I noticed the press hum excitedly about Schmidt and Cohen's book, giddily ignoring the explicit digital imperialism of the title and the conspicuous string of [pre-publication endorsements](#) from famous warmongers like Tony Blair, Henry Kissinger, Bill Hayden and Madeleine Albright on the back.

Google's Chairman Eric Schmidt and Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State and National Security Council head under President Richard Nixon, during a "fireside chat" with Google staff at the company's headquarters in Mountain View, California, on [30 Sep 2013](#). In the talk, Kissinger says National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden is "despicable".

Billed as a visionary forecast of global technological change, the book failed to deliver—failed even to imagine a future, good or bad, substantially different to the present. The book was a

simplistic fusion of Fukuyama “end of history” ideology—out of vogue since the 1990s—and faster mobile phones. It was padded out with DC shibboleths, State Department orthodoxies, and fawning grabs from Henry Kissinger. The scholarship was poor—even degenerate. It did not seem to fit the profile of Schmidt, that sharp, quiet man in my living room. But reading on [I began to see](#) that the book was not a serious attempt at future history. It was a love song from Google to official Washington. Google, a burgeoning digital superstate, was offering to be Washington’s geopolitical visionary.

One way of looking at it is that it’s just business. For an American internet services monopoly to ensure global market dominance it cannot simply keep doing what it is doing, and let politics take care of itself. American strategic and economic hegemony becomes a vital pillar of its market dominance. What’s a megacorp to do? If it wants to straddle

the world, it must become part of the original “don’t be evil” empire.

But part of the resilient image of Google as “more than just a company” comes from the perception that it does not act like a big, bad corporation. Its penchant for luring people into its services trap with gigabytes of “free storage” produces the perception that Google is giving it away for free, acting directly contrary to the corporate profit motive. Google is perceived as an essentially philanthropic enterprise—a magical engine presided over by otherworldly visionaries—for creating a utopian future.⁶⁸ The company has at times appeared anxious to cultivate this image, pouring funding into “corporate responsibility” initiatives to produce “social change”—exemplified by Google Ideas. But as Google Ideas shows, the company’s “philanthropic” efforts, too, bring it uncomfortably close to the imperial side of US influence. If Blackwater/Xe Services/Academi was

running a program like Google Ideas, it would draw intense critical scrutiny.⁶⁹ But somehow Google gets a free pass.

Whether it is being just a company or “more than just a company,” Google’s geopolitical aspirations are firmly enmeshed within the foreign-policy agenda of the world’s largest superpower. As Google’s search and internet service monopoly grows, and as it enlarges its industrial surveillance cone to cover the majority of the world’s population, rapidly dominating the mobile phone market and racing to extend internet access in the global south, Google is steadily *becoming* the internet for many people.⁷⁰ Its influence on the choices and behavior of the totality of individual human beings translates to real power to influence the course of history.

If the future of the internet is to be Google, that should be of serious concern to people all over the world—in Latin America, East and Southeast Asia,

the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, the former Soviet Union, and even in Europe—for whom the internet embodies the promise of an alternative to US cultural, economic, and strategic hegemony.⁷¹

A “don’t be evil” empire is still an empire.

This has been an extract from Julian Assange's new book [When Google Met Wikileaks](#), available from OR Books. WikiLeaks readers can obtain a 20 percent discount on the cover price when ordering from [the OR Books website](#) by using the coupon code "WIKILEAKS". For reprint rights inquiries, contact [rights \[at\] orbooks.com](mailto:rights@orbooks.com)

Notes

¹ The company is now valued at \$400 billion and employs 49,829 people. The valuation at the end of 2011 was \$200 billion with 33,077 employees. See “Investor Relations: 2012 Financial Tables,” Google, [archive.today/lux4M](#). For the first quarter of 2014, see “Investor Relations: 2014 Financial Tables,” Google, [archive.today/35IeZ](#).

² For a strong essay on Schmidt and Cohen’s book that discusses similar themes, and that provoked some of the research for this book, see Joseph L Flatley, “Being cynical: Julian Assange, Eric Schmidt, and the year’s weirdest book,” *Verge*, 7 June 2013, [archive.today/gfLEr](#).

³ Jared Cohen’s profile on the Council on Foreign Relations website, [archive.today/pkgQN](#).

⁴ Shawn Donnan, “Think again,” *Financial Times*, 8 July 2011, [archive.today/ndbmj](#). See also Rick Schmitt, “Diplomacy 2.0,” *Stanford Alumni*, May/June 2011, [archive.today/Kidpc](#).

⁵ Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, “The Digital Disruption: Connectivity and the Diffusion of Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, November /December 2010, [archive.today/R13l2](#).

⁶ “Coalitions of the connected” is a phrase apparently designed to resonate with the “coalition of the willing,” which was used to designate the 2003 US-led alliance of states preparing to invade Iraq without UN Security Council approval.

⁷ The phrase “duty to protect” is redolent of “responsibility to protect,” or, in its abbreviated form, “R2P.” R2P is a highly controversial “emerging norm” in international law. R2P leverages human rights discourse to mandate “humanitarian intervention” by “the international community” in countries where the civilian population is deemed to be at risk. For US liberals who eschew the naked imperialism of Paul Wolfowitz (on which see Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. strategy plan calls for insuring no rivals develop,” *New York Times*, 8 March 1992, [archive.today/Rin1q](#)), R2P is the justification of choice for Western military action in the Middle

East and elsewhere, as evidenced by its ubiquity in the push to invade Libya in 2011 and Syria in 2013. Jared Cohen's former superior at the US State Department, Anne-Marie Slaughter, has called it "the most important shift in our conception of sovereignty since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648." See her praise for the book *Responsibility to Protect: The Global Moral Compact for the 21st Century*, edited by Richard H. Cooper and Juliette Voïnov Kohler, on the website of the publisher Palgrave Macmillan, archive.today/OdmMq.

For a critical essay on R2P see Noam Chomsky's statement on the doctrine to the UN General Assembly. Noam Chomsky, "Statement by Professor Noam Chomsky to the United Nations General Assembly Thematic Dialogue on Responsibility to Protect," United Nations, New York, 23 July 2009, is.gd/bLx3uU.

See also "Responsibility to protect: An idea whose time has come—and gone?" *Economist*, 23 July 2009, archive.today/K2WZJ.

⁸ The International Crisis Group bills itself as an "independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization" that works "through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict." It has also been described as a "high-level think tank . . . [devised] primarily to provide policy guidance to governments involved in the NATO-led reshaping of the Balkans." See Michael Barker, "Imperial Crusaders For Global Governance," *Swans Commentary*, 20 April 2009, archive.today/b8G3o.

Malcomson's International Crisis Group staff profile is available from www.crisisgroup.org, archive.today/ETYXp.

⁹ One might argue that this is living proof of the weak Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. See "Linguistic Relativity," *Wikipedia*, archive.today/OXJPx.

¹⁰ Glenn Greenwald, "Fact and myths in the WikiLeaks/Guardian saga," *Salon*, 2 September 2011, archive.today/5KLJH.

See also Matt Giuca, "WikiLeaks password leak FAQ," *Unspecified Behaviour*, 3 September 2011, archive.today/ylPUP.

See also "WikiLeaks: Why the Guardian is wrong and shouldn't have published the password," *Matt's Tumblr*, 1 September 2011, archive.today/aWjj4.

¹¹ Andrew Jacobs, "Visit by Google Chairman May Benefit North Korea," *New York Times*, 10 January 2013, archive.today/bXrQ2.

¹² Jeremy Hammond, a brave and principled young digital revolutionary, was later accused by the US government of ferreting these documents out and giving them to WikiLeaks. He is now a

political prisoner in the US, sentenced to ten years after speaking to an FBI informer.

¹³ Yazan al-Saadi, "StratforLeaks: Google Ideas Director Involved in 'Regime Change,'" *Al Akhbar*, 14 March 2012, archive.today/gHMzq.

"Re: GOOGLE & Iran ** internal use only—pls do not forward **," email ID 1121800 (27 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/sjxuG.

For more internal Stratfor discussions about Jared Cohen and Google, see:

"Egypt - Google ** Suggest you read," email ID 1122191 (9 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/DCzIA.

"Re: More on Cohen," email ID 1629270 (9 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/opO3a.

"Re: Google Shitstorm Moving to Gaza (internal use only)," email ID 1111729 (10 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/vpK3F.

"Re: Google's Cohen Activist Role," email ID 1123044 (10 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 11 March 2013, archive.today/nvFP6.

"Re: movements.org founder Cohen," email ID 1113596 (11 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 6 March 2012, archive.today/ToYjC.

"Re: discussion: who is next?," email ID 1113965 (11 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/ofBMr.

"GOOGLE Loose Canon Bound for Turkey & UAE (SENSITIVE - DO NOT FORWARD)," email ID 1164190 (10 March 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/IpY4F.

"Re: [alpha] GOOGLE - Cohen & Hosting of Terrorists," email ID 1133861 (22 March 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/OCR78.

"[alpha] Jared Cohen (GOOGLE)," email ID 1160182 (30 March 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/FYQYe.

For these emails and more, see the collection of sources at when.google.met.wikileaks.org.

¹⁵ "Re: GOOGLE's Jared Cohen update," email ID 398679 (14 February 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 14 March 2012, archive.today/loFw4.

This email is included in the collection of sources

at when.google.met.wikileaks.org.

¹⁶ “Using connection technologies to promote US strategic interests in Afghanistan: mobile banking, telecommunications insurance, and co-location of cell phone towers,” canonical ID: 09KABUL2020_a, Public Library of US Diplomacy, WikiLeaks, archive.today/loAIC.

This cable is included in the collection of sources at when.google.met.wikileaks.org.

In May 2014, WikiLeaks revealed that the NSA had gained access to all Afghan mobile phone calls and was recording all of them for later retrieval. See “WikiLeaks statement on the mass recording of Afghan telephone calls by the NSA,” WikiLeaks, 23 May 2014, archive.today/lp6Pl.

¹⁷ From the Public Library of US Diplomacy, WikiLeaks, see cables with canonical IDs: 07BEIRUT1944_a, 08BEIRUT910_a, 08BEIRUT912_a, 08BEIRUT918_a, 08BEIRUT919_a, 08BEIRUT1389_a, and 09BEIRUT234_a. Collection available at: archive.today/34MyI.

See also the collection of sources at when.google.met.wikileaks.org.

¹⁸ “EUR senior advisor Pandith and s/p advisor Cohen’s visit to the UK, October 9-14, 2007,” canonical ID: 07LONDON4045_a, Public Library of US Diplomacy, WikiLeaks, archive.today/mxXGQ.

For more on Jared Cohen from the WikiLeaks archives see archive.today/5fVm2.

See also the collection of sources at when.google.met.wikileaks.org.

¹⁹ See “Summit Against Violent Extremism (SAVE)” on the Council on Foreign Relations website, archive.today/rA1tA.

²⁰ For an insight into Foreign Policy Initiative, see Max Blumenthal, Rania Khalek, “How Cold War-Hungry Neocons Stage Managed RT Anchor Liz Wahl’s Resignation,” *Truthdig*, 19 March 2014, archive.today/JSUHq.

²¹ “About GNF,” Gen Next Foundation website, archive.today/p91bd.

²² “AgainstViolentExtremism.org,” Gen Next Foundation website, archive.today/Rhdtf.

²³ “Movements.org,” Gen Next Foundation website, archive.today/oVlqH.

Note this extract from a confidential report of a March 2011 meeting between Stratfor and the “main organizer” of Movements.org: “How Movements.org got started: [This part is not for publication] in 2008 it became apparent to the USG that they needed to do public diplomacy over the internet. So Jared Cohen was at DoS then and

played a major role in starting the organization. The main goal was just spreading the good word about the US.” “[alpha] INSIGHT- US/MENA-Movements.org,” email ID 1356429 (29 March 2011), Global Intelligence Files, WikiLeaks, 4 March 2013, [archive.today/PgQji](#).

See also the collection of sources at [when.google.met.wikileaks.org](#).

²⁴ For more on this event see Joseph L Flatley, “Being cynical: Julian Assange, Eric Schmidt, and the year’s weirdest book,” *Verge*, 7 June 2013, [archive.today/gfLEr](#).

See also “The Summit: New York City, The 2008 Inaugural Alliance of Youth Movements Summit,” Movements.org website, [archive.today/H2Ox1#2008](#).

See the logos of the corporate sponsors at “About movements.org,” Movements.org website, [archive.today/DQo19](#).

²⁵ “Attendee Biographies, 3-5 December 2008, New York City,” Alliance of Youth Movements, [is.gd/bLOVxT](#).

See also “09 Summit, Attendee Biographies, 14-16 October 2009, Mexico City,” Alliance of Youth Movements, [is.gd/MddXp7](#).

See also “Attendee Biographies, 9-11 March 2010, London,” Movements.org, [is.gd/dHTVit](#).

²⁶ “The Summit: London, The 2010 Alliance For Youth Movements Summit,” Movements.org website, [archive.today/H2Ox1#2010](#).

And “The Summit: Mexico City, The 2009 Alliance of Youth Movements Summit,” Movements.org website, [archive.today/H2Ox1#2009](#).

²⁷ Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Secretary Clinton’s Video Message for Alliance of Youth Movements Summit,” US Department of State, 16 October 2009, [archive.today/I2x6U](#).

See also Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks At TecMilenio University,” US Department of State, 26 March 2009, [archive.today/49ACj](#).

²⁸ Scott Shane, “Groups to Help Online Activists in Authoritarian Countries,” *New York Times*, 11 June 2012, [archive.today/jqq9U](#).

²⁹ “Mission Statement,” Advancing Human Rights website, [archive.today/kBzYe](#).

Scott Shane, “Groups to Help Online Activists in Authoritarian Countries,” *New York Times*, 11 June 2012, [archive.today/jqq9U](#).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ “People,” Advancing Human Rights website, [archive.today/pXmPk](#).

³² Edelman is famous for a series of

astroturfing campaigns for Big Tobacco and Walmart. The Sourcewatch.org page on Edelman, which is worth reading in full, has a section on Edelman's strategy toward co-opting the nongovernmental sector: "Edelman PR tells clients that activists are winning because 'they play offense all the time; they take their message to the consumer; they are ingenious at building coalitions; they always have a clear agenda; they move at Internet speed; they speak in the media's tone.' The solution, it argues, are partnerships between NGOs and business. 'Our experience to date is positive,' they say, citing examples such as 'Chiquita-Rainforest Alliance' and 'Home Depot-Forest Stewardship Council.'" See "Daniel J. Edelman, Inc.," SourceWatch website, archive.today/APbOf.

For the sponsors of Movements.org, see "About movements.org," Movements.org website, archive.today/NMkOy.

³³ For an example of Alec Ross's writing, see Alec Ross, Ben Scott, "Social media: power to the people?" *NATO Review*, 2011, archive.today/L6sb3.

³⁴ "Speakers," Conflict in a Connected World website, archive.today/Ed8rA.

³⁵ The "principal-agent problem" or "agency dilemma" is where the initiating party, the principal, tasks an accepting party, the agent, to act on his or her behalf, but where the interests of the two parties are not sufficiently aligned and the agent uses his or her position to exploit the principal. A lawyer who makes decisions that are in the lawyer's, but not the client's, interests is a classic example.

³⁶ "PAC" stands for "Political Action Committee," a campaign-funding pool often used to obscure support for particular politicians, to sidestep campaign-finance regulations, or to campaign on a particular issue.

³⁷ All political donation figures sourced from OpenSecrets.org (opensecrets.org/indivs) and the US Federal Election Commission (fec.gov/finance/disclosure/norindsea.shtml). See the results listed for Eric Schmidt on the Federal Election Commission website, archive.today/yjXoi.

See also a screenshot of the results listed for Eric and Wendy Schmidt on the Open Secrets website, archive.today/o6hiB.

³⁸ "Our Funding," New America Foundation website, archive.today/3FnFm.

³⁹ Francis Fukuyama profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/6ZKk5.

Rita E. Hauser profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/oAvJf.

Jonathan Soros profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/ITJy9.

Walter Russell Mead profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/APejM.

Helene D. Gayle profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/72plM.

Daniel Yergin profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/kO4ys.

See the full board of directors on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/iBvgl.

⁴⁰ Anne-Marie Slaughter profile on the New America Foundation website: archive.today/yIoLP.

⁴¹ “The solution to the crisis in Ukraine lies in part in Syria. It is time for US President Barack Obama to demonstrate that he can order the offensive use of force in circumstances other than secret drone attacks or covert operations. The result will change the strategic calculus not only in Damascus, but also in Moscow, not to mention Beijing and Tokyo.” Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Stopping Russia Starts in Syria,” *Project Syndicate*, 23 April 2014, archive.today/GiLng.

Jared Cohen has retweeted approval for Slaughter on the issue. For example, he shared a supportive tweet on 26 April 2014 that claimed that the argument in the article quoted above was “spot on.” archive.today/qLyxo.

⁴² On the Bilderberg conference see Matthew Holehouse, “Bilderberg Group 2013: guest list and agenda,” *Telegraph*, 6 June 2013, archive.today/PeJGc.

On the State Department’s Foreign Affairs Policy Board, see the list of current board members on the US Department of State website: archive.today/Why8v.

⁴³ Attendee lists for Bilderberg conferences since 2010 are available from the Bilderberg website: www.bilderbergmeetings.org. Eric Schmidt was photographed at Bilderberg 2014 in Copenhagen, meeting with Viviane Reding, the EU Commissioner for Justice, and Alex Karp, the CEO of Palantir Technologies, an intelligence data-mining company which sells search and data integration services to clients in the US law enforcement and intelligence community, and which was launched with funding from the CIA’s venture capital fund, In-Q-Tel. See Charlie Skelton, “Bilderberg conference 2014: eating our politicians for breakfast,” *Guardian*, 30 May 2014, archive.today/pUY5b.

In 2011, Palantir was involved in the HBGary scandal, having been exposed as part of a group of contractors proposing to take down WikiLeaks. For more on this, see “Background on US v. WikiLeaks”

in When Google Met WikiLeaks. See also Andy Greenberg, Ryan Mac, "How A 'Deviant' Philosopher Built Palantir, A CIA-Funded Data-Mining Juggernaut," *Forbes*, 2 September 2013, archive.today/ozAZ8.

White House visitor records are available from its website, archive.today/QFQx0.

For coverage of Schmidt at the World Economic Forum see Emily Young, "Davos 2014: Google's Schmidt warning on jobs," BBC, 23 January 2014, archive.today/jGl7B.

See also Larry Elliott, "Davos debates income inequality but still invites tax avoiders," *Guardian*, 19 January 2014, archive.today/IR767.

⁴⁴ Adrienne Jeffries, "Google's Eric Schmidt: 'let us celebrate capitalism,'" *Verge*, 7 March 2014, archive.today/gZepE.

⁴⁵ For an example of Google's corporate ambivalence on the issue of privacy see Richard Esguerra, "Google CEO Eric Schmidt Dismisses the Importance of Privacy," Electronic Frontier Foundation, 10 December 2009, archive.today/rwyQ7.

⁴⁶ Figures correct as of 2013. See "Google Annual Search Statistics," Statistic Brain (Statistic Brain Research Institute), 1 January 2014, archive.today/W7DqX.

⁴⁷ There is an uncomfortable willingness among privacy campaigners to discriminate against mass surveillance conducted by the state to the exclusion of similar surveillance conducted for profit by large corporations. Partially, this is a vestigial ethic from the Californian libertarian origins of online pro-privacy campaigning. Partially, it is a symptom of the superior public relations enjoyed by Silicon Valley technology corporations, and the fact that those corporations also provide the bulk of private funding for the flagship digital privacy advocacy groups, leading to a conflict of interest.

At the individual level, many of even the most committed privacy campaigners have an unacknowledged addiction to easy-to-use, privacy-destroying amenities like Gmail, Facebook and Apple products. As a result, privacy campaigners frequently overlook corporate surveillance abuses. When they do address the abuses of companies like Google, campaigners tend to appeal to the logic of the market, urging companies to make small concessions to user privacy in order to repair their approval ratings. There is the false assumption that market forces ensure that Silicon Valley is a natural government antagonist, and that it wants to be on the public's side—that profit-driven multinational

corporations partake more of the spirit of democracy than government agencies.

Many privacy advocates justify a predominant focus on abuses by the state on the basis that the state enjoys a monopoly on coercive force. For example, Edward Snowden was reported to have said that tech companies do not “put warheads on foreheads.” See Barton Gellman, “Edward Snowden, after months of NSA revelations, says his mission’s accomplished,” *Washington Post*, 23 December 2013, archive.today/d6P8q.

This view downplays the fact that powerful corporations are part of the nexus of power around the state, and that they enjoy the ability to deploy its coercive power, just as the state often exerts its influence through the agency of powerful corporations. The movement to abolish privacy is twin-horned. Privacy advocates who focus exclusively on one of those horns will find themselves gored on the other.

⁴⁸ See section 7, Acknowledgments, in *The Anatomy of a Large-Scale Hypertextual Web Search Engine*, Sergey Brin, Lawrence Page (Computer Science Department, Stanford University, 1998): “The research described here was conducted as part of the Stanford Integrated Digital Library Project, supported by the National Science Foundation under Cooperative Agreement IRI-9411306. Funding for this cooperative agreement is also provided by DARPA and NASA, and by Interval Research, and the industrial partners of the Stanford Digital Libraries Project,” archive.today/tb5VL.

⁴⁹ Michael Hayden is now with the Chertoff Group, a consultancy firm which describes itself as a “premier security and risk management advisory firm.” It was founded and is chaired by Michael Chertoff, who was the former secretary of the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush. See Marcus Baram, “Fear Pays: Chertoff, Ex-Security Officials Slammed For Cashing In On Government Experience,” *Huffington Post*, 23 November 2010, updated 25 May 2011, archive.today/iaM1b.

⁵⁰ “Total Information Awareness” was a radical post-9/11 US intelligence program under the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency to surveil and gather detailed information about individuals in order to anticipate their behavior. The program was officially discontinued in 2003 after public outcry, but its legacy can arguably be seen in recent disclosures on bulk spying by the National Security Agency. See Shane Harris, “Giving In to the Surveillance State,” *New York*

Times, 22 August 2012, [archive.today/v4zNm](#).

⁵¹ “The Munk Debate on State Surveillance: Edward Snowden Video” (video), Munk Debates, [archive.today/zOj0t](#).

See also Jane Mayer, “The Secret Sharer: Is Thomas Drake an enemy of the state?” *New Yorker*, 23 May 2011, [archive.today/pXoy9](#).

⁵² “Company overview,” Google company website, [archive.today/JavDC](#).

⁵³ *Lost in the Cloud: Google and the US Government* (report), Consumer Watchdog’s Inside Google, January 2011, [bit.ly/1qNoHQ9](#).

See also Verne Kopytoff, “Google has lots to do with intelligence,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 March 2008, [archive.today/VNEji](#).

See also Yasha Levine, “Oakland emails give another glimpse into the Google-Military-Surveillance Complex,” *Pando Daily*, 7 March 2014, [archive.today/W35WU](#).

See also Yasha Levine, “Emails showing Google’s closeness with the NSA Director really aren’t that surprising,” *Pando Daily*, 13 May 2014, [archive.today/GRT18](#).

Yasha Levine has written a number of investigative articles on Google’s ties to the military and intelligence industry, which can be browsed at: [pando.com/author/ylevine](#).

⁵⁴ Yasha Levine, “Oakland emails give another glimpse into the Google-Military-Surveillance Complex,” *Pando Daily*, 7 March 2014, [archive.today/W35WU](#).

For more on Google’s ties to the CIA, see Noah Shachtman, “Exclusive: Google, CIA Invest in ‘Future’ of Web Monitoring,” *Wired*, 28 July 2010, [archive.today/e0LNL](#).

⁵⁵ Yasha Levine, “Oakland emails give another glimpse into the Google-Military-Surveillance Complex,” *Pando Daily*, 7 March 2014, [archive.today/W35WU](#).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ellen Nakashima, “Google to enlist NSA to help it ward off cyberattacks,” *Washington Post*, 4 February 2010, [archive.today/hVTVI](#).

⁵⁸ The official name for US military occupation of Afghanistan is similar: “Operation Enduring Freedom.” See “Infinite Justice, out—Enduring Freedom, in,” BBC, 25 September 2001, [archive.today/f0fp7](#).

⁵⁹ Jason Leopold, “Exclusive: emails reveal close Google relationship with NSA,” *Al Jazeera America*, 6 May 2014, [archive.today/V0fdG](#)

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Defense Industrial Base Sector,” on the US

Homeland Security website: archive.today/Y7Z23.

⁶² See "Top Spenders" under "Influence and Lobbying" on the OpenSecrets.org website: archive.today/xOyui.

See also Tom Hamburger, "Google, once disdainful of lobbying, now a master of Washington influence," *Washington Post*, 13 April 2014, archive.today/oil7k.

⁶³ Sy Hersh has written two articles about the Obama administration's ill-fated case for "intervention" in Syria. See Seymour M. Hersh, "Whose Sarin?" *London Review of Books*, 19 December 2013, archive.today/THPGh.

See also Seymour M. Hersh, "The Red Line and the Rat Line," *London Review of Books*, 17 April 2014, archive.today/qp5jB.

⁶⁴ An archive snapshot of the page can be found at archive.today/Q6ug8. Google explicitly prides itself on keeping its front page free of all interference. Its purity and sacredness are incorporated into Google's corporate manifesto: "Our homepage interface is clear and simple, and pages load instantly. Placement in search results is never sold to anyone, and advertising is not only clearly marked as such, it offers relevant content and is not distracting." See "Ten things we know to be true," Google company website, archive.today/s7v9B.

On the rare occasions Google adds a single line to the search page to plug its own projects, like the Chrome browser, that choice itself becomes news. See Cade Metz, "Google smears Chrome on 'sacred' home page," *Register*, 9 September 2008, archive.today/kfneV.

See also Hayley Tsukayama, "Google advertises Nexus 7 on home page," *Washington Post*, 28 August 2012, archive.today/QYfBV.

⁶⁵ Thomas Friedman has published several columns extolling the virtues of his "radical centrism," such as "Make Way for the Radical Center," *New York Times*, 23 July 2011, archive.today/IZzhh.

⁶⁶ Thomas Friedman, "A Manifesto for the Fast World," *New York Times*, 28 March 1999, archive.today/aQHvy.

⁶⁷ Eric Schmidt and Jared Cohen, *The New Digital Age*, British paperback edition (John Murray, 2013), p. 98.

Google is committing to this ambition. Since the beginning of 2013, Google has bought nine experimental robotics and artificial intelligence companies and put them to work towards an undeclared goal under Andy Rubin, the former-head of Google's Android division. See John

Markoff, "Google Puts Money on Robots, Using the Man Behind Android," *New York Times*, 4 December 2013, archive.today/Izr7B.

See also Adam Clark Estes, "Meet Google's Robot Army. It's Growing," *Gizmodo*, 27 January 2014, archive.today/mN2GF.

Two of Google's acquisitions are leading competitors in the DARPA Robotics Challenge, a competition held by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, with lavish Pentagon funding support for competitors. Schaft Inc, a Japanese company, is tipped to triumph at the DARPA competition with its entry—a bipedal, human-like robot that can climb stairs, open doors, traverse rubble, and is impervious to radiation. The other company, Boston Dynamics, specializes in producing running, walking, and crawling military robots for the Department of Defense. The most well known of Boston Dynamics' robots is "BigDog"—a horse-sized troop support carrier, which must be seen (on YouTube: is.gd/xOYFdY) to be believed. See Breezy Smoak, "Google's Schaft robot wins DARPA rescue challenge," *Electronic Products*, 23 December 2013, archive.today/M7L6a.

See also John Markoff, "Google Adds to Its Menagerie of Robots," *New York Times*, 14 December 2013, archive.today/cqBX4.

Google's real power as a drone company is its unrivalled collection of navigational data. This includes all the information associated with Google Maps and the locations of around a billion people. Once gathered, it should not be assumed that this data will always be used for benign purposes. The mapping data gathered by the Google Street View project, which sent cars rolling down streets all over the world, may one day be instrumental for navigating military or police robots down those same streets.

⁶⁸ A utopianism occasionally bordering on megalomania. Google CEO Larry Page, for example, has publicly conjured the image of Jurassic Park-like Google microstates where Google is exempt from national laws and can pursue progress unimpeded. "The laws . . . can't be right if it's 50 years old; that's before the internet. . . . Maybe we could set apart a piece of the world. . . . An environment where people can try new things. I think as technologists we should have some safe places where we can try out new things and figure out the effect on society—what's the effect on people?—without having to deploy it to the whole world." See Sean Gallagher, "Larry Page wants you to stop worrying and let him fix the world," *Ars Technica*, 20 May 2013, archive.today/kHYcB.

⁶⁹ The notorious mercenary security company Blackwater, best known for killing Iraqi civilians, was renamed Xe Services in 2009 and then Academi in 2011. See Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army*, (Nation Books, 2007).

⁷⁰ Historically Google's success was built on the commercial surveillance of civilians through "services": web search, email, social networking, et cetera. But Google's development in recent years has seen it expand its surveillance enterprise by controlling mobile phones and tablets. The success of Google's mobile operating system, Android, launched in 2008, has given Google an 80 percent share of the smartphone market. Google claims that over a billion Android devices have registered themselves, at a rate now of more than a million new devices a day. See "Q1 2014 Smartphone OS Results: Android Dominates High Growth Developing Markets," *ABIresearch*, 6 May 2014, [archive.today/cTeRY](#).

See also "Android, the world's most popular mobile platform," on the Android Developers website: [archive.today/5y8oe](#).

Through Android, Google controls devices people carry on their daily routine and use to connect to the internet. Each device feeds back usage statistics, location, and other data to Google. This gives the company unprecedented power to surveil and influence the activities of its user base, both over the network and as they go about their lives. Other Google projects such as "Project Glass" and "Project Tango" aim to build on Android's ubiquity, extending Google's surveillance capabilities farther into the space around their users. See Jay Yarow, "This Chart Shows Google's Incredible Domination Of The World's Computing Platforms," *Business Insider*, 28 March 2014, [archive.today/BTDJJ](#).

See also Yasha Levine, "Surveillance Valley has put a billion bugs in a billion pockets," *Pando Daily*, 7 February 2014, [archive.today/TA7sq](#).

See also Jacob Kastrenakes, "Google announces Project Tango, a smartphone that can map the world around it," *Verge*, 20 February 2014, [archive.today/XLLvc](#).

See also Edward Champion, "Thirty-Five Arguments Against Google Glass," *Reluctant Habits*, 14 March 2013, [archive.today/UUJ4n](#).

Google is also aiming to become an internet access provider. Google's "Project Loon" aims to provide internet access to populations in the global south using wireless access points mounted on fleets of high-altitude balloons and aerial drones, having acquired the drone companies Titan

Aerospace and Makani Power. Facebook, which bid against Google for Titan Aerospace, has similar aspirations, having acquired the UK-based aerial drone company Ascenta. See Adi Robertson, "Google X 'moonshots lab' buys flying wind turbine company Makani Power," *Verge*, 22 May 2013, archive.today/gsnio.

See also the Project Loon website: archive.today/4ok7L.

See also Sean Hollister, "Google nabs drone company Facebook allegedly wanted to buy," *Verge*, 14 April 2014, archive.today/hc0kr.

⁷¹ For an example of European concern, see Mathias Döpfner, "Why we fear Google," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 17 April 2014, archive.today/LTL6l.