

Lobby firm goes to war

Oliver Morgan, September 10, 2005

The first private company to provide psychological warfare services, or 'psyops', to the military, will be launched this week at a global arms fair in London.

Strategic Communication Laboratories, a UK firm that was a political communications consultancy, is to relaunch as a psyops operator at the Defence Systems and Equipment International exhibition. The firm, chaired by former Conservative defence minister Sir Geoffrey Pattie, and with working capital of more than £11m, has 20 fulltime staff and can deploy 100-strong teams.

It believes armies are prepared to buy such services from a private provider and maintains that psyops can shorten conflicts. Chief executive Nigel Oakes points to the surrender of nearly 90,000 troops in the first Gulf conflict, attributed to psyops.

He said: 'We used to be in the business of mindbending for political purposes, but now we are in the business of saving lives.'

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