



Operational Analysis
National Security Criminal Investigations
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT REPORT: Freeman on the Land (FOTL)

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KEY FINDINGS:

- The Canadian Common Corps of Peace Officers (C3PO), a Freeman on the Land militia (FOTL), potentially poses a substantial threat to officer safety.
- FOTL
- Interaction with Sovereign Citizens from the United States, who tend to gravitate to more violent means, may influence Canadian FOTL proponents to a higher level and frequency of violence than what has been seen to date.
- A variety of groups who support a number of single issue platforms have found common ground in the FOTL ideology. The versatility of this platform could intersect with a number of additional groups providing an avenue for expansion.
- The FOTL movement is not currently a national security issue but should the proponents continue with current trends, this assessment may need to be revisited.

Background

In recent years law-enforcement in Canada has noted a dramatic increase in the number of incidents of individuals purporting to be Freeman on the Land (FOTL). The FOTL movement finds its origins in the Posse Comitatus movement originating in the United States in the 1970s. It believed that the lowest level of government was the only legitimate one, as it was the level that most closely represents the citizenry. It was from the Posse Comitatus that many of the FOTL ideals and tactics were developed.

The fundamental philosophy of the FOTL movement is based on a legal interpretation and, logic stemming from that interpretation. It is the position of FOTL proponents that they have divined loopholes in the legal system and others are too blinded by their own indoctrination in society to be able to perceive their true nature as "flesh and blood human beings" that allows them to refuse to be governed by legal authorities.

The FOTL ideological framework is based on the assumption that most people enter into contractual relationships with the Government of Canada, which it considers to be little more than a corporation. Some FOTL proponents believe issuance of a birth certificate or statement of live birth is the beginning of this corporate/client relationship. The beginning of this relationship marks a process whereby individuals enter into subservience through a constructed identity identified by a person's legal name. As an individual realizes the nature of their involvement in society, they can opt to renegotiate their relationship and can claim the right to refuse any authority over them. This right of refusal seems to be based on the FOTL assumption that individuals provide authority to government, so it is within the power of that same individual to dictate their relationship with the state. As a result the individual has the ability to refuse to be governed, can either adopt additional authorities themselves, or delegate authority and provide direction to representatives of government who they nominate to work on their behalf.

The motivation of the FOTL tends to be personal gain or self-gratification, as opposed to a desire to fundamentally alter society to reflect an ideological perspective. Generally speaking, these individuals attempt to claim monies from government for their own personal use, or to exert claims to rights that self-gratify, including the right to possess and use firearms or explosives to defend themselves, or the right to cultivate and use illegal drugs.

According to the FOTL ideology there is a common-law right to travel "on the land". There is a distinction within the ideology between a "driver", who is someone using a vehicle as part of their occupation, and someone using a vehicle for personal reasons. If the use of the vehicle is for personal reasons, FOTL believe there is no requirement for either the vehicle, or the operator, to be registered, insured or licensed. Should a person be travelling on the land, they are not governed by laws related to operation of a motor vehicle.

Generally, the FOTL tend to be loosely organized into decentralized groups predicated on familial or pre-existing social and, sometimes, criminal relationships. Only irregularly, where the pre-existing relationship has established a higher order of organization, do they exhibit more than very basic affiliations. Through these pre-existing structures, the FOTL ideology can propagate itself.

The use of the Internet for the FOTL movement is extremely important. Open source research reveals that information related to the FOTL ideology and activities is readily accessible through a variety of websites.

C3PO represents an attempt to build a militia which enforces Freeman ideology, which may attempt to "arrest" individuals it sees as infringing on the rights of FOTL proponents and bring them to a FOTL court for trial called a "de jure court".

FOTL proponents, generally, do not seek a high level of organization, but instead seek to work independently or in small groups for personal gratification.

Limitations

This assessment was completed based on information extracted from the RCMP's Secure Criminal Information System (SCIS), Police Reporting Occurrence System (PROS), and the Secure Police Reporting Occurrence System (SPROS) databases. Assessments and information from partnered agencies were also considered.

While there is a great deal of historical data on this topic contained in these systems and assessments, this national assessment was restricted to a review of information accumulated over the last five years. The intent of this product is to provide an indication of the current trends within the movement. Through a review of available information, it became apparent that the data accumulated over the last five years is sufficient to satisfy this goal.

Methodology

As mentioned previously, this assessment is based primarily on operational files contained in SPROS, PROS, and SCIS files for the last five years. Information and intelligence products on the subject acquired from internal partners have been used to identify additional PROS files that have a FOTL nexus. Where external partners have provided information which has been incorporated into operational files, the database file number has been referenced. Additional information provided by partners that has not been included under a file has also been included and is cited.

Intelligence gaps

It is suspected that proponents of the FOTL movement do not all subscribe to

It is believed that there are other individuals with their own FOTL worldview however, this cannot be corroborated at this time.

The FOTL's lack of recognition of law enforcement authority has likely resulted in thousands of occurrences documented by RCMP jurisdictions in contract provinces. This activity would be captured in the PROS data base. This review does not constitute a complete audit of all PROS database files, as the system does not support a full text search capability, making the collation of information impractical.

Law enforcement and security intelligence holdings that exist outside the RCMP may, because of third party challenges, not be available in whole, or in part, for this assessment.

While interaction between U.S. Sovereign Citizens and Canadian FOTL entities is demonstrable, it is not possible to assess the level at which the inherent violence characterizing the U.S. domestic situation has impacted their Canadian associates.

Indicators of the Threat Groups

Through the analysis of the information pertaining to individuals associated to the FOTL movement, three threat groups have been designated for this assessment.

Group 1: Paper Terrorism – Letter campaigns

The first threat group represents individuals who engage in "paper terrorism". Paper terrorism, a tactic derived from the Posse Comitatus, includes activities initiated through the legal system intended to bog down institutions through the time and effort required to address them. The most prevalent action is the inundation of bogus documents. FOTL often send these, often long-winded, letters to law enforcement, government departments and agencies. These tactics are little more than a nuisance and a waste of resources required to process these assertions. The letters are attempts to have authority figures recognize, or at least address, assertions made by FOTL proponents. Paper terrorism includes activities where individuals forward letters such as "Claim of Right" or other, often nonsensical, documentation. Other activities that have been included in this category include FOTL proponents placing easements or liens or laying of false information against authority figures, usually law-enforcement.

There are several common themes or indicators that can be used to identify a document as having a FOTL origin.

FOTL adherents typically refuse to recognize their legal names, or at least the generally accepted naming convention. FOTL followers will instead choose a naming convention that places the first name, followed by a colon, followed by the last name (First Name: Last Name) or will insist on being addressed by their first name while referring to the surname as "of the Family Last Name". Regularly FOTL proponents will refer to themselves or others as "Humans or Flesh and Blood human-beings" in an attempt to differentiate themselves from the legal version of their name, which they feel is a symbol of the artificial person created by society. In the case of a government representative, they will refer to the human being, acting as a position, instead of a title.

Forms of documentation produced by FOTL that are forwarded include "Claim of Right", "Notice of Increase of Mandate" or "Notice of Right to act as Teller".

A "Claim of Right" is a document drafted by FOTL proponents to identify themselves to authorities. These documents generally claim a right to refuse authority of lawful officials or institutions, to possess and use firearms or explosives in the defense of their beliefs, property or families, or to possess and produce illegal drugs. Almost uniformly the "Claim of Right" will include a fee schedule that an FOTL will charge authorities for interaction or detention. The fees that will be claimed are varied, but can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars per hour, and are always without legal merit.

"Notice of Increase in Mandate" is a document presented by FOTL adherents to an official to provide the authority to comply with, usually economic, demands made by the FOTL. FOTL proponents believe that, through their sovereign nature, they have the ability to delegate financial authority as they see fit.

The "Notice to Act as Teller" is a document that is provided to the Bank of Canada indicating a FOTL follower wishes to assume the ability to withdraw government funds for their personal use. Often these documents will provide an option to provide a "trained teller" in the local area of the FOTL follower to perform these functions.

Many FOTL proponents believe, erroneously, that anyone with a birth certificate is a shareholder/creditor for the "corporation of Canada" and that they can, by entering the "96 remittance" financial code on any invoice or fine, have that invoice or fine paid through an internal transfer of government funds.

Usually, FOTL documents will have diary dates on the stated demands, requiring any dispute in content be addressed by the recipient. The diary dates are usually so short that responding would be difficult, even if a response was warranted. Integral to these diary dates is the belief that a failure to respond constitutes agreement or acceptance on the part of the recipient.

Of note is the language that is used in the production of Claims of Rights or other FOTL documents. It is clear that the creators of these documents wish to lend credibility to their correspondence by couching it in attempted legalese. Further, FOTL proponents seek to augment this attempt at credibility by having the document notarized by a notary public, or witnessed by a number of associates.

The signature block on documentation produced by FOTL followers also provides potential indicators. The indicators that may be present include a red thumb print along with the signature. The document may conclude with a statement such as "without ill will, malice, frivolity or vexation" or some combination of terms. Lastly, the name itself, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, will likely conform to the FOTL naming convention.

Group 2: Criminal/Non-violent

The second threat group includes those individuals who have identified themselves explicitly as FOTL to either law-enforcement or during court proceedings, and who have engaged in non-violent crime. Often these individuals have come to the attention of the authorities through issues with traffic violations, drug production or possession, public drunkenness, smuggling, theft, trespass, fraud, tax-evasion or other criminal activity.

Indicators which will forewarn authorities that a piece of property or a residence may have a FOTL connection may include signage that indicates an anti-government bent, or that forbids government personnel to enter the property. As well, signs that use FOTL terminology or that advertise websites for the movement, such as thinkfree.ca, fotl.com, worldfreemansociety.org etcetera may indicate a presence.

FOTL proponents may attach fraudulent license plates or registration stickers on their vehicles. Driver's licenses carried and displayed to law-enforcement might also be fraudulent. References to the Washitaw Nation, Freeman, being on the land, sovereign, patriot, flesh and blood human beings, or common law rights should alert first responders to the fact that they might be dealing with a member of this movement.

When law enforcement or other government officials encounter FOTL proponents they may refuse to identify themselves, replying that they are a Flesh and Blood Human Being, or as a free man or woman travelling on the land. They may try to deny knowing their date of birth, insisting that they do not remember that far back. A FOTL proponent may engage in semantic arguments based on definitions that are common only to the individual. For example they may request that an authority figure acknowledge them as a "flesh and blood human being" and not the "fictive" person identified on their government documentation. Another tactic that has been reported is refusing to acknowledge simple terminology. For example, when asked the question "Do you understand?" a FOTL adherent may respond "no" on the basis that they do not agree with the word "understand". These are attempts to lure the authority figure into a semantic argument that is defined by the FOTL ideology, and to thus obstruct the legitimate purpose of the discussion. Another method that might be used to confuse the issue may include a Freeman providing copious bogus documents relating to their supposed state of being a Freeman sometimes titled "Notice of Understanding" or "Traffic Stop Lawful Notice". These documents may include reams of paper containing the same absurd legalese that is described above and is simply intended to distract officials.

As the FOTL adherents refuse to recognize the authorities within Canadian society, followers may demand unreasonable identification from law enforcement, or may demand to know what oaths they have taken or under what legal authority they are operating. Even when FOTL proponents are shown the appropriate identification by recognized authorities, they may still obstinately refuse to recognize them. This tactic is an attempt at being unco-operative and at obstructing authorities in the performance of their duties.

An obvious indicator that the encountered person is a FOTL follower is if they threaten to charge officials under their fee schedule for the interaction or detention. As described above, a fee schedule is a list of charges that a FOTL proponent may claim they can levy against officials for the time expended being questioned or detained.

Often, when FOTL proponents are encountered they may overtly or covertly, attempt to record the interaction. This activity can be done by the FOTL proponent taking notes, but electronic devices might also be used.

Group 3: Officer Safety

The FOTL movement contains a violent element within the group that represents a distinct threat to officer safety. These individuals have expressed either implicitly or explicitly, that they intend to react violently to any attempt by law enforcement to question or detain them. FOTL proponents have indicated they have the right to possess and use firearms for their own protection. Many of the indicators and tactics described above apply within this section as well, but the potential violent intent of some FOTL may take advantage of obstructionist or diversionary tactics used by non-violent FOTL for a more nefarious purpose. Distractions resulting from the tactics of FOTL proponents could provide opportunity for action to be taken against officers in contact with a FOTL proponent.

While many FOTL proponents indicate that they are prepared to engage in what they see as defense of their beliefs through violence, this could be seen as a reactionary posture that is triggered by "interference" from societal authority. While this is of concern, there is a trend within the FOTL movement that warrants even greater attention. In recent years the FOTL movement has spawned a

group called the Canadian Common Corps of Peace Officers (C3PO) which may take action against authorities for perceived transgressions against their FOTL ideas.

FOTL proponents generally do not aim their protest at the general public, but they may be caught inadvertently in altercations with government representatives.

The RCMP assesses that the emergence of Canadian Common Corps of Peace Officers is a growing trend that poses a threat not only to officer safety, but to the safety of their families and the general public.

Intersections

It would be a misconception to assert that FOTL proponents can be associated to any specific identifiable characteristic or background. The FOTL movement provides an ideological platform that has proven to be applicable to a variety of groups with disparate identities, with a number of intersections between similar but unassociated issues and FOTL ideals.

The Moors of the Washitaw Nation are proponents of the FOTL movement who resemble members of the Black Power movement. Sovran Indians/Signatory Indians are members of Metis or Aboriginal Groups across the country that have adopted the FOTL ideology and have adapted it to aboriginal issues. The De-tax movement, led by Eldon WARMAN, is an anti-government, anti-taxation aspect of the FOTL movement that is convinced they have discerned ways of avoiding paying tax within Canada. The De-Tax movement has been the source of a large number of threats made against Canadian Revenue Agency personnel. The Ecclesiastical Church in Esterhazy, Sask., Church of Ecumenical Redemption International and Regalia of Jesus Christ on the Father's Land Church in Verdun, Que., are examples of religious groups who claim the word of God supersedes Canadian law, and who have adopted the FOTL ideology.

It is also conceivable that other extremist groups, which to date have not been recorded as incorporating Freeman ideas, could easily be attracted by this. Considering the anti-government perspective of the FOTL movement, one could see how intersections with separatist movements or anarchists could form. The rationale provided by the FOTL Christian religious groups could also apply to other religious groups who wish to hold their religious precepts above the law of Canada.

The versatile nature of the Freeman philosophy allows the movement of members not only into the FOTL movement, but also facilitates movement to other groups. Recently the RCMP received information that other groups, such as Neo-Nazis, may have recruited from the Freeman.

Conclusions

In short, the FOTL movement does not pose a threat to the general public but there is an increasing trend, noted by law-enforcement, which may indicate an evolving threat to officer safety.

This would pose a significant threat to the safety of the representatives of a number of government agencies and departments, including law-enforcement.

Proponents from the United States' Sovereign Citizen Movement are in contact with Canadian FOTL followers. It is not clear at this time what, if any, impact this contact is having on the predisposition toward violent resistance on the Canadian FOTL movement, but the threat from this contact cannot be dismissed outright. One thing is clear; the number of incidents being noted by law-enforcement has increased.

The flexibility of the FOTL ideology provides a platform that is used by a number of single-issue extremist groups. That same flexibility is capable of being adapted to a great number of additional issues providing an avenue for growth for the ideology in Canada.

While the FOTL movement is not currently a national security issue the proponents have the ability to propel this movement into that arena.

Potentially, individual proponents of the FOTL ideology may be prepared to take violent action against Canadian critical infrastructure or internationally protected persons, if they believe their beliefs are being infringed and this would qualify them as a national security issue.

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Appendix A - Resources reviewed

Criminal Intelligence Services Alberta - Special Bulletin - Freeman Extremism in Alberta, dated 2011-03-30

Federal Bureau of Investigation Counter Terrorism Analysis Section - Intelligence Bulletin: Weak Leadership and indecision fail to mitigate violent potential of Sovereign Citizen group Republic for the united States of America (RuSA), dated 2011-04-14

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Memphis Division - Situational Information Report, Criminal Tradecraft Alert: Tactics used by self-proclaimed Sovereign Citizen to counter traffic violations in Jackson, Tennessee, dated 2011-04-04

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Salt Lake City Field Office - Criminal Activity Alert: Sovereign Citizen Extremist Criminal Activity, dated 2011-03-31

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Memphis Division - Tennessee Fusion Center joint Situational Information Report - Criminal Reporting Highlights: Increased aggression by Sovereign Citizens against Tennessee law enforcement during traffic stops, dated 2011-03-23

Security and Internal Affairs Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency: Information provided by email 2011-05-03

Integrated Threat Assessment Centre - Laser: Freeman on the Land: A growing concern in Ontario

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, F Division Criminal Analytical Section/Criminal Intelligence Services Saskatchewan - Intelligence Bulletin, Extremism in Saskatchewan, dated 2010-12-16

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, D Division - East District Intelligence Alert, dated 2010-10-08

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police, D Division – East District Monthly Bulletin, dated October, 2010

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, D Division – East District Briefing Note to CROPS on Freeman on the Land/Sovereign Citizen Movement in D Division, dated 2011-01-11

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, J Division NSES – Report on the Freeman on the Land in NB, dated 2011-02-04

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, NSCI – Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Team – Intelligence Brief: Freeman on the Land

Washington Regional Threat and Analysis Center – Officer Safety and Criminal Intelligence Issues, Vol 5, issue 3, dated 2011-03-31

Appendix B – A brief list of Freeman on the Land Websites

<http://sedm.org/>

<http://www.thinkfree.ca/>

<http://www.fmotl.com/>

<http://freemanontheland.com>

<http://www.stoptherobbery.com/Videos.html>

<http://freekeene.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=204120883656&ref=ts>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=100130304015&ref=search&sid=671658131.4163484589..1>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&ref=ts&gid=106380324837>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=184977768745&ref=search&sid=671658131.4163484589..1>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=213573609392&ref=search&sid=671658131.4163484589..1>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=249341287828&ref=search&sid=671658131.4163484589..1>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=109923281650&ref=mf>

http://www.facebook.com/posted.php?id=243615501971&share_id=477711395270&comments=1#s477711395270

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=67377089084&ref=mf>

<http://www.freewebs.com/debtreesovereign/>

<http://c3po.ca>

<http://worldfreemansociety.org>

<http://www.embassyofheaven.com/>

<http://www.detaxcanada.org/>

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<http://www.sovsquamishgov.org/>

<http://www.duhaime.org/>

<http://www.pivotlegal.org/>

<http://www.lawunion.ca/about>

<http://www.freedomnessemporium.com>

<http://www.bebo.com/Profile.jsp?MemberId=8558150170>

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