

SINCE SPYING TO BENEFIT MONSANTO IS NOT INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE, IT'S OKAY

One of the examples I often raise to show how our government likely uses SIGINT to advantage specific businesses is the way the government helps Monsanto budge into markets uninterested in its products.

One WikiLeaks cable showed the US embassy in Paris planned a “military-style trade war” to benefit Monsanto.

I pointed out that WikiLeaks had revealed that our diplomats had proposed a “military-style trade war” to force Europeans to adopt Monsanto’s controversial products.

The US embassy in Paris advised Washington to start a military-style trade war against any European Union country which opposed genetically modified (GM) crops, newly released WikiLeaks cables show.

In response to moves by France to ban a Monsanto GM corn variety in late 2007, the ambassador, Craig Stapleton, a friend and business partner of former US president George Bush, asked Washington to penalise the EU and particularly countries which did not support the use of GM crops.

“Country team Paris recommends that we calibrate a target retaliation list that causes some pain across the EU since this is a collective

responsibility, but that also focuses in part on the worst culprits.

“The list should be measured rather than vicious and must be sustainable over the long term, since we should not expect an early victory. Moving to retaliation will make clear that the current path has real costs to EU interests and could help strengthen European pro-biotech voices,” said Stapleton, who with Bush co-owned the St Louis-based Texas Rangers baseball team in the 1990s.

I have suggested these diplomatic warriors for Monsanto likely relied on intelligence collected by the NSA.

Which is apparently what this 2004 document – described in Laura Poitras and James Risen’s latest describing spying on American law firms – seems to suggest.

Other documents obtained from Mr. Snowden reveal that the N.S.A. shares reports from its surveillance widely among civilian agencies. A 2004 N.S.A. document, for example, describes how the agency’s intelligence gathering was critical to the Agriculture Department in international trade negotiations.

“The U.S.D.A. is involved in trade operations to protect and secure a large segment of the U.S. economy,” that document states. Top agency officials “often rely on SIGINT” – short for the signals intelligence that the N.S.A. eavesdropping collects – “to support their negotiations.”

If they’re using SIGINT for “negotiations,” then

they'd surely use it for "military-style" campaigns to "target retaliation" against countries trying to resist a product, wouldn't they?