

NEW AND IMPROVED OUTSOURCED DOMESTIC SPYING

Back when Nixon was spying on his enemies, he used the agencies of the US government. He was using civil servants subject to congressional oversight to do his dirty work. But the newfangled Republican party learned in Iran-Contra that, if you outsource the dirty work far enough, you're more likely to avoid the oversight that will lead to discovery.

Walter Pincus (via Laura Rozen) has a story out today that describes how they've outsourced their domestic spying.

At a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on May 2, John Gannon, a former CIA deputy director for intelligence and later the first staff director of the House Homeland Security Committee, joined others who have raised questions about the growth of contracting and its possible negative effects.

The House intelligence panel said one trigger for its study was the disclosure that CIFA "failed to follow policies regarding the collection and retention of information about U.S. persons." It noted that CIFA, in its classified database of 13,000 records of threats to defense facilities, had included 260 records that "improperly contained information relating to U.S. persons." The Defense Department has ordered "refresher training" for those collecting such files, and the committee requested that the Pentagon's inspector general submit a report on the CIFA records by next Feb. 1.

[snip]

The post-Sept. 11 restructuring of the intelligence community under legislation in 2004 “unintentionally encouraged the stretching of scarce analytic resources literally to the breaking point, the dispersal of valuable expertise, and an unprecedented reliance on the contracting community for analytic staffing, workforce management, and training,” said Gannon, who spent 24 years at the CIA and now is a vice president for global analysis of BAE Systems Information Technology.

Last year, contractors were “a significant majority” of analysts working at the new National Counterterroism Center (NCTC), which has primary responsibility for providing the White House and others with analysis based on foreign and domestic information, Gannon said. The proportion is even greater at CIFA, the Pentagon’s new agency coordinating “force protection” at Defense Department facilities. CIFA officials have told The Washington Post that 70 percent of their workers are contractors

CIFA has, among its other targets of study, Jesus’ General and Quaker peace groups. And both CIFA and NCTC are partially staffed by Mitchell Wade’s contractors. In fact, Pincus reveals that Wade’s company continues to increase its business in this area, even as it becomes clear that he got the contracts through bribery.

According to an internal document made available to The Post, Athena reported in January it has maintained two CIFA contracts that could add 43 jobs to its payroll. Calls to Athena’s press spokesman for comment were not returned. The Pentagon’s U.S. Central Command (Centcom) is advertising for contract employees to work on intelligence, including some jobs in Iraq.

So let me connect the dots here. Republican legislators have set up this nifty scheme, whereby their buddies ply them with golf trips, swank real estate deals, and prostitutes. In exchange for that booty, they give their buddies contracts at Defense or Homeland Security or CIA. Spying contracts. Under those spying contracts, the buddies spy on American citizens, even funny bloggers and peaceniks. And although it is known that these buddies are a little sloppy with the way they spy on American citizens, they continue to get more work.

The whores must be good.