

STEPHEN CAMBONE COLLECTS ON HIS HANDIWORK WITH CIFA

I've long suspected that the GOP has used the Counter-Intelligence Field Activity (CIFA) as a way to spy on domestic enemies even while making their friends rich. CIFA is the organization that collected information on both Jesus' General and Quakers, then stuck it into a database without following requisite privacy protections. And then, when Congress and the Carol Lam started focusing on CIFA, its database on private citizens got quickly disappeared.

70% of its staff are contractors. And one of the early CIFA contractors was the company of Mitch Wade—Duke Cunningham's briber—MZM.

Which is why I noted, back in May 2006, that CIFA seemed like a huge improvement (from a Republican perspective) on Nixon-era 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.

[snip]

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.

Now, as I said, back in 2006, as the whole Cunningham scandal was erupting, all of a sudden people decided it might be good to start exercising some oversight over CIFA. The Cunningham investigation extended to Wade's contracting on CIFA. Congress held some hearings. More interestingly, Stephen Cambone claimed to lead an inquiry.

Undersecretary of Defense Stephen A. Cambone has ordered an internal study of how funding earmarked in a bill by then-Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-Calif.) led to contracts for MZM Inc. to do work for the Pentagon's newest intelligence agency, the Counterintelligence Field Activity, a Defense Department spokesman said.

[snip]

Cmdr. Greg Hicks, a Pentagon spokesman, confirmed yesterday that Cambone has ordered an internal inquiry. Hicks said he was "unable to comment on MZM contracts or related matters since they are the subject of ongoing investigations by the appropriate organizations in the department and the U.S. government."

Hicks added that Cambone's request to CIFA focused on the undersecretary's "desire to understand the temporal relationship between the congressional earmark and contract actions taken by the department."

But oversight over CIFA hasn't gotten any better. Significantly, CIFA is one of the DOD

agencies that insists its budget cannot be made public in the new USASpending.gov.

Several defense intelligence agencies will withhold unclassified information about their contracts from a new public database of government spending.

The new database at USASpending.gov is intended to provide increased transparency regarding most government contracts.

But when it comes to intelligence spending, there will actually be a net loss of public information because categories of intelligence contracting data that were previously disclosed will now be withheld.

The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), and the Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA) argued that online disclosure of their unclassified contracts could present an operational security vulnerability.

"I appreciate your concerns that reporting these actions to the publicly accessible website could provide unacceptable risk of insight to your individual missions and budgets," wrote Shay D. Assad of the Under Secretary of Defense in a December 7 memorandum (pdf).

Which makes it all the more interesting that Stephen Cambone—the guy who feigned concern over the contracting habits of CIFA and launched an apparently bogus DOD inquiry—just scored a new contract with CIFA.

On January 7, QinetiQ (pronounced "kinetic") North America (QNA), a major British-owned defense and intelligence contractor based in McLean, Virginia,

announced that its Mission Solutions Group, formerly Analex Corporation, had just signed a five-year, \$30 million contract to provide a range of unspecified “security services” to the Pentagon’s Counter-Intelligence Field Activity office, known as CIFA.

[snip]

The new CIFA contract with QinetiQ expands work that Analex has provided CIFA and its various directorates since 2003. Under its first contract, according to the QinetiQ website, Analex staffers were sifting through information “from traditional to non-traditional providers, ranging from unclassified through top secret classification using sophisticated information technologies and systems specifically designed by CIFA analysts.”

The CIFA contract was awarded just two months after QinetiQ hired Stephen Cambone, the former undersecretary of defense for intelligence and a longtime Rumsfeld aide, as its vice president for strategy. Cambone is the most senior of a savvy group of former high-ranking Pentagon and intelligence officials hired by QinetiQ to manage its expansion in the U.S. market. (See boxes.)

While he was at the Pentagon, Cambone oversaw CIFA and was deeply involved in the Pentagon’s most controversial intelligence programs. [my emphasis]

So now we’ve got GOP cronies, in the employ of foreign companies, winning contracts from agencies they set up themselves.

Agencies that spy on American people.