

# PENTAGON “CLOSING” CIFA

You all remember CIFA, don't you? It's the Pentagon's very own counter-intelligence organization, one with the added benefit that, like all things Pentagon, it can serve as the source of contracting bounty for corrupt Republican cronies (up to and including Stephen Cambone, who created the damn organization). CIFA has spied on, among other things, the Quakers and Jesus' General. You know, because peaceniks and DFH satirical bloggers are apparently the biggest threat to our military...

I've long suspected that CIFA was a clever plot, on the part of the Republicans, to outsource their Nixonian domestic spying, so as to hide it from oversight better than Nixon managed to. That suspicion only hardened when I learned that the CIFA database (including its records on the Quakers and Jesus' General) went “poof” one day, remarkably enough at the same time as Carol Lam was closing in on the Mitch Wade subcontractor associated with CIFA, MZM (the same organization that had a contract with OVP to do **something** with emails).

It's a real treasure trove of civil liberties atrocities, CIFA is.

Well, as luck would have it, on the very same day that the Pentagon released documents to the ACLU revealing that CIFA had abused National Security Letters to (among other things) collect information on a few Pentagon employees, the Pentagon has announced it is shutting down CIFA.

The Pentagon is expected to shut a controversial intelligence office that has drawn fire from lawmakers and civil liberties groups who charge that it was part of an effort by the Defense Department to expand into domestic spying.

[snip]

The intelligence unit, called the Counterintelligence Field Activity office, was created by Mr. Rumsfeld after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks as part of an effort to counter the operations of foreign intelligence services and terror groups inside the United States and abroad.

Yet the office, whose size and budget is classified, came under fierce criticism in 2005 after it was disclosed that it was managing a database that included information about antiwar protests planned at churches, schools and Quaker meeting halls.

The Pentagon's senior intelligence official, James R. Clapper, has recommended to Mr. Gates that the counterintelligence field office be dismantled and that some of its operations be placed under the authority of the Defense Intelligence Agency, the officials said.

The NYT presents advocates saying the closure is a great thing and others suggesting this is just a cover-up—that the domestic spying will get buried deep in the Pentagon where we'll have to ferret it out again. Me, I'm in the latter category.

But since the NSL documents turned over to ACLU are apparently significant enough to cause the Pentagon to take this face-saving gesture (or at least say they're going to make the gesture), I suspect those documents are rather interesting, don't you?

I'm headed to bed, so those documents are going to have to wait until tomorrow. But for those who can't wait, here's a snippet of what the ACLU has found so far:

The Defense Department documents uncovered today contain numerous revelations of potential abuses of the

NSL power and suggest a serious lack of oversight of the military's use of NSLs:

- *Documents show the Defense Department may be flouting the law and, by asking the FBI to issue the NSLs on their behalf, accessing documents it is not entitled to receive. (See document 72)*
- *A newly unredacted copy of the results and recommendations of an internal program review prompted after the New York Times reported potential abuses of the military's NSL power shows that:*
  - *The Navy's use of NSLs to demand domestic records has increased significantly since September 11; (See document 68)*
  - *Contrary to prior claims by the military, its NSL use is not limited to investigating only DoD employees; (See*

document 72)

- *The Defense Department has issued NSLs without providing any real training or guidance; (See documents 56, 57, & 72)*
- *The Defense Department does not keep track of how many NSLs the military issues or what information is obtained through these orders. (See documents 56, 57, & 72)*

I don't know how I'll occupy my time until I find where they're going to hide CIFA.