

PREVIEW: BOOK SALON ON SPIES FOR HIRE

✖ I wanted to give you all a heads up to a mid-week book salon I'll be hosting today at 3PM ET over at the mother ship: Tim Shorrock's *Spies for Hire: The Secret World of Intelligence Outsourcing*. I pushed to include Shorrock on the schedule because (as you'll see in my post at 3) his book offers some key insights on FISA—and we seem to be gearing up for another FISA fight.

But there's more than FISA that might interest you about the book (and about chatting with Shorrock). He gives the corporate back-story to:

- Rick Renzi's corruption
- The domestic spying Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA)
- CACI, the company whose contractors directed the torture at Abu Ghraib
- Total Information Awareness
- The domestic satellite surveillance Chertoff wants to use with DHS

Shorrock wraps that background story in a discussion both of the ideology behind the privatization of our intelligence function:

...as we've seen, money and profits are not the sole motivators for the corporations and executives who populate the Intelligence Industrial Complex. Because so many top executives are former intelligence officers themselves, many of their companies are motivated by politics as well. For CACI's CEO, Jack London, that translates into a desire to "disseminate vital intelligence" for the fight against "Islamofascists." For

ManTech CEO George Pederson, it's a yearning for his company to be "on the battlefield," whether in Iraq, South Korea, or the Philippines. For the senior vice presidents of the big prime contractors, Booz Allen Hamilton and Science Applications International Corporation, it involves power, either as a way to influence future policy or make changes in the way the Intelligence Community is organized.

And a discussion of the subservience of public to private interest in such an Intelligence-Industrial Complex.

In the past, [former NSA Director Kenneth] Minihan said, contractors "used to support military operations; now we participate [in them]. We're inextricably tied to the success of their operations." This new situation, he argued, presents corporations with "interesting opportunities" to create technologies that governments can take advantage of, "with all the complexities that exist in merging the interests of the private and public sector in the intelligence apparatus."

Merging the interests of the private and public sector. That astonishing phrase, which is now the mantra of the intelligence contracting industry, suggests the creation of a new mode of capitalism that specifically serves the needs of government and its "intelligence apparatus." The implications are staggering: once private and public interests are merged, then the need for oversight disappears, along with regulation and other institutions designed to act as a brake on unbridled capitalist development or as watchdogs against corruption. Indeed, with 70 percent of the U.S. intelligence budget now going to private sector

contractors, we may have already reached the point of no return. [emphasis and second brackets original; first brackets mine]

Under the leadership of Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell, the Bush Administration has handed over the keys to our privacy to these companies that believe in profit and the fight against Islamofascists.

Want to find out more? Join Tim Shorrock and me at 3PM ET.