

DISESTABLISHMENTARIANISM, CIFA VERSION

Remember that word? As a kid you probably proudly claimed to have learned its opposite, antidisestablishmentarianism, not long after you learned how to spell M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I. You may vaguely remember that the word pertains directly to state sanctioning—or unsanctioning—of religion.

According to Warren Strobel, the Pentagon has decided to use the term "disestablished" to refer to the closure of the CIFA program.

Today comes the news, not unexpected, that Defense Secretary Robert Gates has shuttered—the official euphemism is "disestablished"—the Counterintelligence Field Activity, or CIFA.

[snip]

CIFA's resources and responsibilities are being transferred to the Defense Intelligence Agency, under a new unit called the Defense Counterintelligence (CI) and Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Center.

And on the issue of the Pentagon's choice to use a word with religious connotations to refer to the reorganization of its domestic spying program, Strobel adds this:

Or, more specifically, will the Defense Department continue to have an expanded role in domestic intelligence-gathering and surveillance?

No clear answer on that question. Today's Pentagon press release did note: "CIFA's designation as a law enforcement activity did not transfer to DIA. The new center will have no law enforcement function."

I'm not sure about how the Pentagon distinguishes between its law enforcement religion and its intelligence religion, but I am reminded that when DOD's IG did a report trying to cover up the TALON debacle, it excused DOD spying on Americans this way:

The TALON reports were generated for law enforcement and force protection purposes. We found no evidence that the U.S. person information for organizations and individuals that were not affiliated with the DoD resulted from an intelligence collection operation. Therefore, the TALON reports were maintained as law enforcement information and were subject to DoD Directive 5200.27, "Acquisition of Information Concerning Persons and Organizations Not Affiliated with the Department of Defense," January 7, 1980.

DoD Gathering U.S. Person Information for Law Enforcement and Force Protection Purposes. DoD Directive 5200.27 establishes general policy for collecting, processing, storing, and disseminating information on persons not affiliated with DoD. DoD Components are authorized to gather information that is essential for protecting DoD functions and property, personnel security, and operations related to civil disturbance. It specifies that nothing in the directive should be interpreted as prohibiting prompt reporting to law enforcement agencies of any information that might threaten life or property, or violate law, or prohibit keeping a record of such a report. The directive specifically prohibits:

- *gathering U.S. person information on organizations or individuals not*

affiliated with the DoD beyond that which is essential to accomplish assigned DoD missions;

- *gathering information on U.S. persons solely because they oppose Government policy;*
- *covert or deceptive surveillance or penetration of civilian organizations unless specifically authorized; and*
- *assigning DoD personnel to attend public or private meetings, demonstrations, or other similar activities for the purpose of gathering information.*

That is, DOD made it okay to spy on Americans by pretending that it was only spying on Quakers and bloggers because they posed a real threat to DOD facilities—though, at the same time, they at least claimed they weren't doing things like attending Quaker meetings.

Call me crazy, but I understand all this to suggest that the Pentagon just withdrew state sanction of collecting information on US citizens in the guise of protecting DOD facilities, but continued to sanction the collecting of information on US citizens in the guise of collecting intelligence on them. Perhaps the functional equivalent of disestablishing the Anglican Church in favor of an arch-conservative Evangelical Christian

faith; it's still state sanction of "religion"
and it's not entirely clear which will get you
to Heaven more quickly.