

THE RETURN OF CIFA. NOW, WITH INTERROGATION CAPABILITIES!

Jeff Stein notes that the Defense Intelligence Agency has plans to set up a new records center for its counterintelligence operation.

The Defense Intelligence Agency wants to open a new repository for information about individuals and groups in what appears to be a successor to a controversial counterintelligence program that was disbanded in 2008.

The new Foreign Intelligence and Counterintelligence Operation Records section will be housed in DIA's Defense Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Center, or DCHC, formed after the demise of the Counterintelligence Field Activity, or CIFA, according to an announcement that appeared Tuesday in the Federal Register.

As Stein notes, DCHC replaced CIFA, the DOD organization that got caught spying on Quakers and the blogger Jesus' General. And now, they apparently want to set up a system that will be subject to the Privacy Act.

The Defense Intelligence Agency proposes to add a system of records to its inventory of record systems subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, (5 U.S.C. 552a), as amended.

Which I presume means they've got records of Americans in there.

Two points on this. First, as Mark Ambinder recently reported, the organization that took

over CIFA's activities, DCHC, is also the organization running our black site prison in Afghanistan.

It has been previously reported that the facility, beige on the outside with a green gate, was operated by members of a Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) group, allegedly outside of Harward's jurisdiction. But JSOC, a component command made up of highly secret special mission units and task forces, does not operate the facility.

Instead, it is manned by intelligence operatives and interrogators who work for the DIA's Defense Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Center (DCHC). They perform interrogations for a sub-unit of Task Force 714, an elite counter-terrorism brigade.

[snip]

The DCHC is a relatively new organization. It has several branches and has absorbed staff from the the now largely disbanded Strategic Support Branch, which provided CIA-like intelligence services to ground combat units. The DCHC also performs some of the work that the Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA), which was accused of spying on American political groups, used to do. Many of the staff, civilian and military, as well as many contractors, previously worked with CIFA.

How efficient, huh? They've now got the allegedly abusive interrogations being performed by the same folks with an expanding DOD database of information on Americans. Cheney never managed to centralize his favorite activities under one entity, but Obama apparently has done so.

Also note that Stein muses that maybe they kept the old records of CIFA after all.

The “activity” was disbanded, but evidently not its records database, which seems to be headed to the new unit.

But that isn’t—or at least it **shouldn’t**—be right. DOD’s Inspector General told us years ago that the records collected under CIFA in the TALON database had just poof! disappeared in June 2006 just as the Cunningham investigation was getting close to MZM, a company tied to the bribery.

Holy Shit. Remember TALON and CIFA? Here’s a description I wrote in April:

It was designed to gather intelligence on threats to defense installments in the United States—to try to collect information (in the TALON database) on threatening people scoping out domestic bases. But it ended up focusing on peace activists and the lefty blogosphere’s own Jesus’ General.

Well, here are the three conclusions of a DOD IG report just released on the program:

- *TALON reports were generated for law enforcement and force protection purposes as permitted by DoD Directive 5200.27,1 and not as a result of an intelligence collection operation; therefore,*

no violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act occurred.

- The Counterintelligence Field Activity did not comply with the 90 day retention review policy required by DoD Directive 5200.27. We could not determine whether the U.S. Northern Command complied with the policy requirement because all TALON reports were deleted from their database in June 2006 with no archives.
- The Cornerstone database that the Counterintelligence Field Activity used to maintain TALON reports did not have the capability to identify TALON reports with U.S. person information, to identify reports requiring a 90-day retention review, or to allow analysts to edit or delete the TALON reports.

In other words, DOD at least claims to have

destroyed these records in 2006. I guess they could get a pretty sizeable new collection in the interim 4 years. But if they've got the old records—the ones on the Quakers and on bloggers—then they pulled a fast one with those materials in 2006, when they said they destroyed them.