

## Increase in Contracting Intelligence Jobs Raises Concerns

By [Walter Pincus](#)

Washington Post Staff Writer

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AllWorld Language Consultants Inc., a Rockville firm, is seeking experienced military interrogators to work in Iraq for \$153,500 a year plus bonuses, with proficiency in Arabic "preferred but not required," according to Yahoo's Hot Jobs listings.

The U.S. Army element of the Multi-National Force-Iraq is looking for a private contractor to provide airborne surveillance over that country that will "provide situational awareness of the entire area of operations," according to another Web announcement.

Lockheed Martin Corp. is seeking a counterintelligence analyst to work for the Pentagon's newest intelligence agency, the Counterintelligence Field Activity (CIFA), in its Colorado Springs facility to "create and deliver briefings, write reports, and represent Counterintelligence Field Activity," according to a Web classified ad.

These positions and thousands like them are part of a growing trend at the Pentagon to contract out intelligence jobs that were formerly done primarily by service personnel and civil service employees.

But, by using contract employees, government agencies lose control over those doing this sensitive work and an element of profit is inserted into what is being done. Also, as investigations have revealed, politics and corruption may be introduced into the process.

The office of Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte has quietly begun to study the contracting issue because "it already is a problem," a senior intelligence official said in a recent interview.

A related concern for intelligence agencies inside and outside the Pentagon is that the government is training people and getting them security clearances, but they then leave for better pay offered by contractors, sometimes to do the same work.

"Once cleared, they can get a higher salary outside and they are gone," the official said. "We're leasing back our former employees."

The phenomenon is partly the result of Congress's approving large funding increases for intelligence activities but not increasing the limit on the number of full-time persons that agencies can hire. "We don't have the billets," the official said, so the surge is taken care of by contracting out the jobs.

Retired Maj. Gen. Paul D. Eaton, who ran Iraqi military training from 2003 to 2004, describes the hiring of civilians to do jobs previously done by the military as a "shell game" created by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld to keep the "force strength static on paper." In an op-ed piece in yesterday's New York Times, Eaton wrote, "This tactic may help for a bit, but it will likely fall apart in the next budget cycle with those positions swiftly eliminated."

"The Pentagon ramped up so fast, it had to turn to contract personnel to have continuity," said another former senior intelligence official who now does contract work. He pointed out that some jobs are so complex, military personnel on three-year rotations are facing reassignment just as they master their jobs.

The trend toward contracting for intelligence analysts will hurt the ability of the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency to retain and keep high-quality people, said a former senior intelligence official who helped supervise the rebuilding of the CIA's case officer and analyst corps. "It takes time to get the young up to snuff, and you need 10 to 20 years to get the value for that investment," this former official said, asking for anonymity because of his past role in government.

John O. Brennan, the longtime CIA official who started up and headed the National Counterterrorism Center before his retirement, said contract personnel "bring on recognized expertise that exists outside government" and "often are needed as new [intelligence] systems are being built."

Now a contractor himself, Brennan said it should come as no surprise that many younger military and government-trained intelligence personnel, who have top security clearances, are resigning to take jobs in the private sector.

The CIA's contracting has generally been limited to technical support, but almost two years ago a "spy drain" was described in a column by intelligence expert James Bamford, who warned, "Private contractors are taking over jobs once reserved for highly trained agency employees." Because of the rush to expand activities, Bamford said some newly hired former CIA officers said that "their talents are being wasted on unsophisticated tasks."

Attention has also been focused on the rapid growth of Pentagon intelligence contracting because of recent guilty pleas by former representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-Calif.) and contractor Mitchell J. Wade, who used contributions and job offers to get his former company, MZM Inc., more than \$100 million in mostly intelligence contracts between 2002 and 2004. In one case, according to court papers, Wade drafted and gave Cunningham an outline of the work that CIFA then contracted with MZM to perform.

Federal investigators are reviewing CIFA's contracts, according to a government prosecutor involved in the inquiry. CIFA Director David A. Burt II said in a recent interview that 70 percent of his agency's work is handled by contractors.

Brennan said that contract employees frequently cost less for government agencies when they are needed for short durations while new agencies get fully staffed. Thereafter, higher pay given to



John Brennan, a former CIA official, said contracting out intelligence jobs "needs to be watched." (Lawrence Jackson - AP)

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contract employees over government employees can be justified only in part because contractors offer less job security than the government does.

Brennan said he introduced a rule at the National Counterterrorism Center that personnel cannot resign and return to do the same job with a contractor until a certain amount of time had elapsed.

The contracting for intelligence personnel is "neither black nor white," according to Brennan, but it "needs to be watched."

The Arabic-speaking interrogators that AllWorld Languages is seeking must be U.S. citizens, have security clearances, and be willing to start immediately and deploy to any city in Iraq. AllWorld is a subcontractor of L-3 Communications Holdings Inc., a multibillion-dollar defense contractor that recently got a six-month, \$420 million extension to its no-bid Army contract for translators. About 80 percent of the 5,000 translators L-3 employs for the Army are working in Iraq.

William Golden, who runs IntelligenceCareers Inc., maintains a Web site listing thousands of jobs, including senior posts within the intelligence community. In a slide presentation on his site, Golden points out that as the number of contract positions in the intelligence field increases, the number of candidates for such jobs decreases -- in part because the number of people leaving military and government service in the intelligence field is less than the number of jobs being opened up to contract employees.

In a recent presentation, Golden said 65 to 70 percent of new contract employees who took contract jobs after they left government with security clearances came from the military. Less than 15 percent earned their clearances while working for contractors. One reason for the difference is that it takes a year or more to get a top-secret clearance; meanwhile, an employee is waiting to be hired or is hired and doing a non-cleared job. Those who had clearances just need to have them updated, which takes far less time.

As a result, someone with a top secret and special compartmented information clearance, meaning access to electronic intercepted data, can get as much as 35 percent more pay than others with lesser clearances or no clearances, according to Golden. Brennan, who now runs his own intelligence consulting concern, the Analysis Corp., agreed that "a security clearance in the Washington area means money."

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