

Total Information Awareness

--Protests of the Proposed Total Information Awareness Program. --

BACKGROUND:

Tucked away in the outer reaches of the Defense Department, brandishing an eerie and cryptic logo -- an all-seeing eye atop a pyramid and the slogan "Scientia Est Potentia" ("Knowledge Is Power") -- "Information Awareness Office" is headed by retired Rear Adm. John M. Poindexter, the Reagan administration official who was convicted after the Iran-contra scandal of five felony counts of lying to Congress, destroying official documents and obstructing the congressional inquiry into the affair. The Pentagon program would create an infrastructure for what the government hopes will become the most extensive electronic surveillance in history.



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The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Pentagon's cradle of emerging technologies, began awarding contracts this month for development of a prototype "Total Information Awareness" system -- a kind of vast global electronic dragnet. The system would use statistical techniques known as data mining to look for threatening patterns among everyday transactions. It would link commercial and governmental databases in the United States and overseas, presumably including everything from student report cards to mental-health histories; much like a more extensive consumer profiling that many companies do today.

The IAO's Web site says terrorism is the most serious asymmetric threat facing the United States. This threat is characterized by groups of

people loosely organized in shadowy networks, which are difficult to identify and define. The IAO plans to develop technology that will allow understanding of the intent of these networks and their plans, and will potentially define opportunities for disrupting or eliminating the threats, according to the agency. To carry this out, the research must promote "sharing, collaborating, and reasoning to convert nebulous data to knowledge and actionable options," says an agency statement.

The IAO intends to build a prototype using a number of technologies. Among the technologies being tapped are collaboration, foreign language machine translation and speech recognition, physical profiling, pattern matching, and human network analysis and behavior model building engines.

Military and investigative agencies are exploring a number of creative ways to identify security threats. For example, the CIA has helped fund work by a company called Systems Research and Development, which developed a database that uses fuzzy logic to identify unapparent relationships between people. A version of the technology is employed by casinos that try to detect relationships between staff and known cheaters. The same approach could help identify potential terrorists or supporters, investigators say.

In the first related contract, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc. of Falls Church, Virginia, has been awarded \$1.5 million worth of work on a planned \$62.9 million contract, the Army said last week. Work under the contract is expected to be wrapped up by Nov. 7, 2007, the Army said.

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STORY:

The American Civil Liberties Union today called on President Bush to disavow a new system being developed at the Pentagon that would be able to track every American's activities.

"Smile, you're on virtual candid camera," said Laura W. Murphy, Director of the ACLU's Washington National Office. "If the Pentagon has its way, every American - from the Nebraskan farmer to the Wall Street banker - will find themselves under the accusatory cyber-stare of an all-powerful national security apparatus."

These concerns are similar to vocal conservative columnist William Safire in *The New York Times*. If the act isn't amended, Safire wrote, it will let the government collect data on "every purchase you make with a credit card, every magazine subscription you buy and medical prescription you fill, every Web site you visit and e-mail you send or receive, every bank deposit you make, every trip you book and every event you attend." Most civil libertarians, although worried about the legislation, say Safire's going a bit too far. But they fear that the Homeland Security Act could be the first step toward that Orwellian future.

"These things are not going to happen, but they could later on down the road," says Mark Rothenberg, executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center

Safire and others point with alarm at a Defense Department program headed by Iran-Contra figure Admr. John Poindexter called the Information Awareness Office. According to its Web site, the IAO seeks to use rapidly developing information-gathering technology to increase "information coverage by an order of magnitude" in the effort to stop terrorists.

One of the IAO's programs, known as "Total Information Awareness," would link "transactional data" — data coming from categories that include finances, travel, education, medical, communications and more — with "corporate memory," government agencies and

biometric data — fingerprints, facial recognition programs and other high-tech identification tools.

It is that stated goal, along with provisions in the Homeland Security Act that could make it a reality, which civil libertarians find alarming.

Up until now, data kept on file by the FBI has remained separate from data held by the CIA or the IRS or the Immigration Department, for example. But the Homeland Security Act creates an office that would link all this data together in a concentration of information on private Americans that is without precedent.

Few people doubt that there is an urgent need for better protection, especially after a renewed flurry of terrorist "chatter" threatening new attacks, a series of deadly terror attacks overseas, and an apparently new message from Osama bin Laden praising those attacks. But is Total Information Awareness going too far?

SIGNIFICANCE:

"We have to be very wary. Because of this crisis people are saying, 'Give us security,' and no one wants to leave any stone unturned," says Jerry Berman, from the Center for Democracy and Technology. "So there's a tendency to want to collect, wiretap, share, gather, all this information. But in the past, when our FBI or any intelligence agency has been panicked by a Red Scare or war into that kind of mentality, they've gone overboard and they've ended up not hitting their target in terms of national security, but violating the privacy Americans."

"If you start with the hypothesis that there are clandestine terror cells in North America today — and possibly including another suicide equivalent to the ones that carried out 9/11 — then you want to find out everything possible that could lead to their identification, discovery, and arrest," said Vince Cannistraro, an ABCNEWS consultant and former CIA counterterrorism director. "Data mining in a U.S. context could help," he said. "The problem is how do you configure that and still protect privacy under our laws."

And at least one perceived earlier infringement on privacy proposed by the government has so far fared poorly with the public. When the Justice Department launched a program that asked postal employees, utility workers and truck drivers to phone a hotline when they thought they saw someone suspicious, members of Congress objected, and some workers dubbed it a snitch program.

Privacy, however, is only one of the concerns critics have about the Homeland Security Act. They also note that it loaded down with projects that look suspiciously like old-fashioned pork-barrel politics, while it's missing provisions that would seem to be vital to public safety.

The bill no longer contains \$1.2 billion to improve security for the 65,000 commuters who ride trains every day, much to the frustration of Democrats like Sen. Joseph Biden, who commutes by train and says railroad tunnels are vulnerable to terrorist attack.

New provisions were tucked in at the last minute. Congressional sources say one of these may give legal protection to pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly, developer of a controversial vaccine ingredient. It's clear what that added legal protection has to do with homeland security, says Sen. Hillary Clinton: "In the midst of trying to protect ourselves," she said, "we are going to protect our pharmaceutical industries."

There are also new restrictions on lawsuits against producers of smallpox vaccines and makers of equipment such as luggage-screening machines.

Nevertheless, many Senate Democrats are expected to hold their noses and vote for the bill's passage. Some think complaining about the fine points of homeland security legislation hurt them in the last election and they are determined to put it behind them and move on.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.aclu.org>
www.darpa.mil/iao

Boxer Ali in Afghanistan as U.N. Messenger

--Muhammad Ali arrived in Kabul on Sunday to draw global attention to war-ravaged Afghanistan. --

BACKGROUND:

Afghanistan's refugee situation dates back more than 20 years. But despite decades of civil war and foreign occupation, it was largely forgotten by the world until the events of September 11, 2001 refocused the world's attention on this war-ravaged country.

Today, relative peace has returned to the country and Afghans are heading home in record numbers. In less than five months from the start of the Afghan Transitional Authority/UNHCR-assisted repatriation from Pakistan and Iran on March 1, more than 1.3 million Afghan refugees had opted to go home, while 200,000 Afghans spontaneously repatriated following the fall of the Taliban. Over the same period, another some 200,000 internally displaced people also returned with the help of UNHCR and its partners.

Each of the families returning under the joint program receives a package of food and basic household items. Internally displaced Afghans returning home with the help of the UN refugee agency and its partners also receive transport back to their home regions, while those coming home from outside the country receive travel assistance.

UNHCR's registration and screening staff provide Afghans with information about security and conditions in their home areas, as well as training in mine awareness, crucial in a country littered with unexploded bombs and landmines and with some areas still experiencing only fragile security.

Halfway through the year, the UN refugee agency had spent \$158 million on its Afghan repatriation program, and aims to spend another

\$100 million before the year is out. Other funds are spent caring for some of the millions of refugees in Pakistan, Iran and the Central Asian states, where UNHCR plans to carry out assistance programs until the moment has arrived when all of Afghanistan's refugees can finally return home.

STORY:

Boxing legend Muhammad Ali arrived in Kabul on Sunday as a messenger of peace from the U.N Children's Fund and the World Food Program to draw global attention to war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Ali, dressed in a black suit, disembarked from a U.N. plane at the airport in the Afghan capital under the tight security of Afghan and foreign security forces.

"He is seeking to focus greater international attention on the ongoing needs of Afghanistan," the United Nations said in a statement about his two-day visit.



Ali met President Hamid Karzai at the heavily-fortified presidential palace soon after his arrival and was due to meet representatives of international donors to Afghanistan.

"You have the strength in you still...I wish you could stay forever with us. Afghanistan would have been delighted to have you here, to have the champion of the century here," Karzai told Ali, who is also due to visit a girls school and a bakery run by women, as well as a sports club for young athletes.

The U.N. statement said Ali, a three-time world heavyweight champ, had been a leading figure in humanitarian affairs for many years with a particular interest in the welfare of children and vulnerable communities.

Ali's trip to Afghanistan, devastated by 23 years of occupation and internecine war, is his first. International donors last year pledged to provide some \$4.5 billion for rebuilding the country in five years.

Ali, 60, is regarded by many Afghans as the "Father of Boxing" for his long success in the game. Ali's portraits hang in many boxing clubs in the country.

"I would die to see him. I wish I could. He is the best boxer," one Afghan athlete said after he was unable to see Ali on his arrival, kept deliberately low-key for security reasons.

Ali won an unprecedented three world heavyweight titles. He last won the "richest prize in sports" 14 years after first taking it from Sonny Liston in 1964. In 1982, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, a degenerative disorder.

SIGNIFICANCE:

The World Food Program was scheduled to go into operation in 1963 as a three-year experimental program. Iran had been shaken after an earthquake hit in September 1962. Thailand had been devastated by a hurricane in October, 1962. Newly independent Algeria was resettling 5 million refugees. Food aid was urgently needed and WFP supplied it. It has never stopped.

WFP's works for a world in which everyone has access at all times to the food they need for a full-life. It believes that the issue of hunger belongs at the top of the international agenda. Since 1963, the Rome-based organization has invested US \$27.8 billion and more than 43 million metric tons of food to combat hunger, promote economic and social development and provide relief assistance in emergencies throughout the world.

1963-2001: WFP investment in a hunger free world	
Sub-Saharan Africa	12.5 billion
South / East Asia	8.1 billion
North Africa / Middle East	3.0 billion
Latin America / Caribbean	2.2 billion
Europe / CIS	2.0 billion

ENTERTAINMENT:



Birdsong

By Sebastian Faulkes



Review:

The intertwined stories of a First World War soldier and his modern grand-daughter, this book should be listed as essential reading for all High School students and anybody who doesn't appreciate the sacrifices of 1st World War veterans.

It starts off as a simple love story (but don't let that put you off) and quickly evolves into a very accurate account of what it was like to be a soldier in the Battle of the Somme.

If you were bored by history lessons at school and wanted to know what it was really like to be there in the trenches then this book will tell you all that and more.

Words cannot describe the emotions that this book will rouse in you and the renewed respect you will have for the men who fought in that war. This book will teach you more about the First World War than all your school lessons and will also entertain you more than all your lessons rolled into one. You never knew what war could be like.

This book has an illuminating, emotional, educational, and enjoyable story that will make you laugh, cry and learn in equal measure. This book is simply a classic that demands to be read.

Read it, as a matter of urgency.

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to see the featured
Book of the Month:
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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY:

November 18, 1916

Haig Ends Battle of Somme

Douglas Haig, commander of the British Expeditionary Force in World War I, calls off the Battle of the Somme in France after nearly five months of mass slaughter.

The massive Allied offensive began at 7:30 a.m. on July 1, 1916, when 100,000 British soldiers poured out of their trenches and into no-man's-land. During the preceding week, 250,000 Allied shells had pounded German positions near the Somme River, and the British expected to find the way cleared for them. However, scores of heavy German machine guns had survived the artillery onslaught, and the invading infantry were massacred. By the end of the day, 20,000 British soldiers were dead and 40,000 wounded. It was the single heaviest day of casualties in British military history.

After the initial disaster, Haig resigned himself to smaller but equally ineffectual advances, and more than 1,000 Allied lives were extinguished for every 100 yards gained on the Germans. Even Britain's September 15 introduction of tanks into warfare for the first time in history failed to break the deadlock in the Battle of the Somme. In October, heavy rains turned the battlefield into a sea of mud, and on November 18 Haig called off the Somme offensive.

Except for its effect of diverting German troops from the Battle of Verdun, the offensive was a miserable disaster. It amounted to a total gain of just 125 square miles for the Allies, with more than 600,000 British and French soldiers killed, wounded, or missing in action. German casualties were more than 650,000. Although Haig was severely criticized for the costly battle, his willingness to commit massive amounts of men and resources to the stalemate along the western front eventually contributed to the collapse of an exhausted Germany in 1918.

WHO YOU NEED TO KNOW:**Sir Douglas Haig**

Sir Douglas Haig (1861-1928), the most controversial of the war generals, was born in Edinburgh on June 19, 1861. He studied first at Brasenose College, Oxford, and then in 1884 at the Royal Military Academy (Sandhurst). After school, he joined the 7th (Queens Own) Hussars. He served there as a cavalry officer for the following nine years, chiefly in India.



Haig took part in the Omdurman campaign of 1897-1898, and in the Second Boer War of 1899-1902. In 1906 Haig became Director of Military Training at the war office. Part of Haig's responsibility during this time included the construction of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) for deployment in the eventuality of war with Germany.

In 1909 Haig was made Chief of Staff of the Indian army. And by August 1914 - the start of the First World War - Haig commanded within the BEF as Lieutenant General.

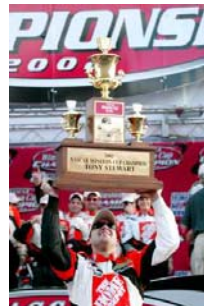
By the close of 1915 it was clear that French was ill-suited to the nature of the campaign, often depressed and pessimistic about the chances for success. Consequently Haig was appointed Commander in Chief of the BEF.

The Somme offensive with which Haig's name is most often associated (along with Third Ypres, also known as Passchendaele), began on July 1, 1916. It was thought that by committing large British forces on the Somme, the Germans would divert troops from Verdun. Day One, the British Army suffered the highest number of men down in its history: 60,000. The offensive was ended by Haig in November 1916, technically "a British victory."

In 1918 Haig oversaw the successful British advances on the Western Front which led to victory for the Allies in November.

Haig has been criticized by many over the years for his tactics, which it is argued were deeply flawed. The wartime Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, was one such critic. He wrote that he sometimes wondered whether he should have resigned on more than one occasion rather than permit Haig to continue with his strategy. On the other hand, it is suggested that Haig's hand was largely forced by the pressure placed by the French for constant relief on the Western Front, on the Somme in 1916 and at Passchendaele in 1917.

After the armistice Haig served as Commander in Chief of the British Home Forces until 1921, the year of his retirement. He was made an earl in 1919 and then Baron Haig of Bemersyde in 1921. Haig dedicated the remainder of his life to service in the Royal British Legion (which he helped to establish), caring for the welfare of the troops who served under him during the war. He died on January 28, 1928.

SPORTS:**Stewart Wins NASCAR Title**

Tony Stewart won the Winston Cup championship Sunday with an 18th-place finish in the Ford 400. It wasn't the way the 31-year-old wanted to win his first stock car title, but it worked.

Stewart came into the race knowing he needed only to finish 22nd or better to beat Mark Martin in their championship duel. Martin gave it a game try, finishing fourth but was 38 points shy.

"Unbelievable!" Stewart said as he got out of his car and thrust his arms skyward. Stewart, who has undergone anger management sessions for his fiery temper that has led to fines and probation, then hugged his crew chief, Greg Zipadelli.

Kurt Busch won the race for his third victory in the last five events.

FEATURE:

Review: WWI

World War I, from 1914 to 1918, began as a local European war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, and eventually became a global war involving 32 nations. Twenty-eight nations, known as the Allies and the Associated Powers, including Britain, France, Russia, Italy, and the United States, opposed the coalition known as the Central Powers, consisting of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria. The immediate cause of the war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia was the 1914 assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian and Hungarian thrones, by a Serb nationalist. Within days, Russia, Germany, France, and Britain were drawn into the war by treaty obligations.

1914-1915: Military operations began on three major European fronts: the western, or Franco-Belgian; the eastern, or Russian; and the southern, or Serbian. A swift German incursion into Belgium overwhelmed the Belgian Army and forced the Allied line to retreat. The fall of Paris seemed imminent until the French, in the First Battle of the Marne, pushed the Germans back to the Aisne River in northern France. The French failed to dislodge the Germans from the Aisne, and the two sides then raced to the North Sea, aiming to capture the channel ports.

By the end of 1914 both sides had established entrenched lines on the western front extending from Switzerland to the North Sea. These lines remained almost stationary for the next three years. The fighting on this front consisted largely of trench warfare, in which each side laid siege to the other's trenches and tried from time to time to break through the lines.

On the eastern front, a German army decisively defeated a Russian invasion of East Prussia at the Battle of Tannenberg in August. Turkey joined the Central Powers and invaded the Russian Caucasus region. In response, Allied troops landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in

Turkey. Strong resistance by Turkish troops and poor Allied leadership resulted in the failure of the Gallipoli Campaign. After Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary in 1915, a static front developed between these two powers in SW Europe.

1916: In February 1916 the Germans attacked the French in the Battle of Verdun. Although the Germans had some successes, they failed to capture Verdun. That summer and fall the Allies attempted a massive offensive along the Somme River. Both sides paid a tremendous cost in lives but failed to break through enemy lines.

On the eastern front, several disastrous offensives by the Russians resulted in the loss of approximately 1 million soldiers by September 1916, leaving the army in a demoralized state.

1917: Beginning in 1916, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson attempted to mediate a peace between the belligerents. However, in early 1917 Germany announced that it would engage in unrestricted submarine warfare against all shipping to Britain. The United States, which had already expressed its opposition to unrestricted submarine warfare, declared war on Germany.

The Bolshevik Party seized power in November and offered the German government an armistice. The year also witnessed the beginning of the brilliant leadership of British Colonel T. E. Lawrence, known as Lawrence of Arabia, in leading the Arab revolt against Turkey.

1918: On the Balkan front, 1918 proved disastrous for the Central Powers, losing ground in Serbia, Romania, Italy, Palestine and Turkey. And the Germans were in rapid retreat on the entire western front. The German fleet mutinied, an uprising took place in Bavaria, and Emperor William II abdicated, fleeing to the Netherlands. On November 11, an armistice was signed between the new German republic and the Allies.

1918: The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the war, provided that interned German warships become the property of the Allies (the Germans scuttled their ships).

Casualties amounted to more than 37 million, and war costs to about \$186 billion.

Quote of the Week:

We are not contemptuous of gunfire, but we have lost the power to be afraid.

-Sabastian Faulkes, *Birdsong*

Fact of the Week:

800 people go to bed hungry every night.

Word of the Week:

Scientia Est Potentia, saying: "Knowledge Is Power"

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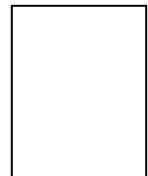
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