

The strange career of “Homeland Security”

By Margie Burns

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June 29, 2002—The Institute for Homeland Security was formed in the northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, DC, in October 1999.

The institute’s mission, stated in www.homelandsecurity.org, is “To provide executive education and public awareness of the challenges to homeland security in the 21st century.” A “nonprofit public-service research organization examining a new set of national security challenges,” it produces workshops, programs for executive-level policy makers, a weekly Homeland Security newsletter, a Homeland Security opinion poll on its web site, and the Journal of Homeland Security, established October 2000 and featuring “articles by senior government leaders and leading homeland security experts.”

This amply supported entity is part of ANSER, Incorporated, also known as Analytic Services, Inc., headquartered in Arlington, Va., with “field offices and operating locations throughout the world,” according to its 1999 annual report.

Analytic Services, Inc., was a research center for the Air Force, but closed as a federal entity in 1977, and has garnered federal contracts and patents ever since. In Fiscal Year (FY) 1998, the Department of Defense ranked ANSER 58th on its “Alphabetical Listing of the Top 100 DOD Prime Contractors for Research, Test, Intelligence, and Evaluation Work.” In FY 1999, company contracts included a \$56 million increase to an existing contract with the Air Force, to provide analytical and technical services through December 2000. Its federal awards for FY 2000 are listed as \$74,456,395. As of March 2002, the federal government listed ANSER as a “cognizant agency”: “Any State, Local, or Non-Profit agency expending more then [sic] \$25,000,000 in total federal awards in a single Fiscal year” (based on FY 2000).

The Washington Times in 1993 listed ANSER’s business areas as aerospace systems, civil systems, defense acquisition, information technology, military operations and special operations. It has had awards from and agreements with NASA, the Air Force Air Combat Command, the Russian Central Aero-Hydrodynamics Institute, the Russian Space Agency, and the Russian Academy of Sciences. ANSER also has cooperative agreements with the National Institute of Justice regarding “intelligent search agent” software in law enforcement. Interestingly, it also received \$1.7 million from the COPS law enforcement discretionary fund, for “face recognition and intelligent software development,” under the Virginia Office of Justice programs.

ANSER has also been offering online programs in cooperation with American Military University in Manassas, Va., leading to certificates in Homeland Defense, Forecasting Terrorism, Intelligence, and Homeland Security. A course called “Homeland Security,”

conducted by the Institute's Director Colonel Randall Larsen, was geared up to begin fall 2001 at the National War College, with the first lecture coincidentally scheduled for September 11.

The Institute for Homeland Security also helped to put together a "Dark Winter" simulation exercise in June 2001, duly featured in articles published in the Washington Times and Insight Magazine.

Although funded and initiated in October 1999, the institute was formally established only in April 2001, following a month of high-tech and heavy-hitter-security-type buzz assisted by its ties to the military and to the intelligence community. On March 13, a mini-symposium entitled "homeland security" was held by the Military Operations Research Society (Alexandria, Va.), at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab in Laurel, Md.

Also on March 13, by coincidence, George W. Bush released his first National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD), expanding the National Security Council and adding 11 new coordinating committees.

Bush's first NSPD also specifies that the deputy national security adviser shall attend all National Security Council Principals Committee meetings and that he shall serve as executive secretary of the NSC/PC. Bush's appointee as deputy national security adviser under Condoleezza Rice is Stephen J. Hadley, formerly with the National Institute for Public Policy, cited in sources like the National Review and the Washington Times. A partner in the law firm of Shea & Gardner, Hadley is a former member of ANSER's Board of Trustees.

Interestingly—given today's emphasis on "coordinating" and "information sharing"—the directive also stated that "The existing system of Interagency Working Groups is abolished."

Something about the history of the past three years suggests that information under both the Clinton and the Bush administrations, or at least intelligence information, tends to get shared with private companies foremost. Several of ANSER's officers are members of the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals. CIA should be spelled CEO.

The talk at the Women's History Month annual luncheon at Mays Landing, NJ, on March 21, 2001, was given by Dr. Ruth A. David, president and CEO of ANSER; topic, "the nation's changing security strategy." Dr. David's impressive biography includes a master's degree and PhD in electrical engineering from Stanford; she came to ANSER in October 1998 following three years as Deputy Director for Science and Technology at the CIA. Her professional career began with managerial positions at Sandia National Laboratories; she serves on the National Security Administration Scientific Advisory Board among others; and her honors include the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal, the Director of NSA Distinguished Service Medal, and the Defense Intelligence Director's Award.

Perhaps as part of the same push last March, a now-gone web page from the Institute for Homeland Security answers a question posed on March 30, 2002, by Mark Bower of the Air National Guard: why "homeland?" The organization, evidently recognizing that the bizarre

exhumation of “homeland” as a catch phrase might require some of what in the higher education business is called “re-contextualizing,” answers the question thus:

“While the concept of ‘defending the homeland’ is an idea dating back through the better part of human history, the term ‘homeland defense’ only recently entered the lexicon of public discourse. To the best of our knowledge, the first American use of the term homeland defense was made in a report submitted by the National Defense Panel in 1997. The report, titled ‘Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century,’ argued that this new focus on guarding the homeland was essential . . .”

“But regardless of the permutations, the idea of the ‘homeland’ has in a brief few years, become almost universally accepted by policy makers and first responders . . .” (author, Homeland Security Analyst John Wohlfarth).

News reports have credited the term to Defense Panel member Richard L. Armitage, former CIA officer and now Deputy Director of State, who has demurred.

(The report, linked at www.homelandsecurity.org, does not contain the phrase “homeland security” but does refer to “homeland defense” and to “security of the homeland.”)

In spite of the institute, the phrase “homeland security” was little seen before last September (in this country). Aside from some specialized journals and think tanks, only the Reverend Sun Myung Moon’s Washington Times newspaper, Insight Magazine, and UPI boosted the Institute and its central catch phrase with any frequency, before last fall.

Cross-pollination between Moon entities and the Institute for Homeland Security has been going on since the institute’s inception. Senior ANSER Policy Analyst Dr. Joshua Sinai has published frequently in the Washington Times on homeland defense and terrorism (including April 2, July 18, and December 10, 2000; specifically re “homeland security” on July 15, 2001). UPI (October 12, 2001) and Middle East Insight Magazine have also run Dr. Sinai’s articles. Mark DeMier, the institute’s Deputy Director for Operations and also editor of the Homeland Security Journal, has also published in the Washington Times. (N.b.: In October 2001, DeMier proposed a centralized national clearinghouse for any university research potentially useful to defense, and more monitoring of foreign university students in the United States. Less has been said, generally, about whether private-sector students in corporate online programs should be similarly monitored, or those being trained at U.S. military installations.)

Senior writer for Insight Magazine J. Michael Waller, Vice President of the American Foreign Policy Council, also publishes in the Washington Times—naturally—citing ANSER and its personnel; he gave emphatically good ink to ANSER, its expertise, and “homeland security” in a flamboyant Insight article titled “Preparing for the Next Pearl Harbor” in May 2001.

Immediately after September 11, the Washington Times was foremost in aggressively touting and defending—indeed, insisting on—instant adoption of “homeland” as the term of the hour, in articles published on September 16, 22, 30, and October 3, also citing ANSER. Predictably, the institute’s web site also references articles from the Washington Times.

No wonder this creepy name looks like something dreamed up by spooks, with a little help from the Moonies.

One would think the nexus—only briefly sketched here—of federal funding, corporate contracts and patents, intelligence entities, and public-opinion manipulations by the dubiously tax-exempt Moon businesses would have been investigated by skeptical journalists, especially in the nation's capital, and especially in the shadow of unprecedented attacks on American soil that make profiteering inevitable. A “Homeland Security Investment Forum” was held March 14, 2002, in Washington, featuring Dr. Helena Wisniewski, former ANSER Vice President for Information Technology and current Chairman and CEO of Aurora Biometrics.

Perhaps the Washington Post could have done some investigating, had the Washington Post Company not engaged in its own joint venture with ANSER. According to the company's 1998 annual report, “Legi-Slate, a subsidiary of the Washington Post Company . . . and ANSER . . . [April 15] announced a partnership to provide ANSER's summaries of congressional hearings on defense acquisition and readiness on Legi-Slate's online service . . . The summaries, prepared by ANSER's defense experts who attend Capitol Hill hearings, provide concise . . .” [etc]. The Post Company “disposed of substantially all” its Legi-Slate assets in 1999 (and seems to have begun paying big bucks for registered lobbyists mainly since then). But every article on ANSER in the Post newspaper has been favorable (e.g. “ANSER to the Call for Help; Software that Seeks to Aid Disaster Relief Efforts,” April 27, 1997).

In a recent article on the new homeland security department, the Washington Post omitted the part played by the institute and ANSER.

Instead, following Bush's June 6 “surprise” announcement of the new cabinet office, the Post ran an article titled “Bush Plan's Underground Architects: In Silence and Stealth, Group Drafted Huge Security Overhaul” (June 9, 2002). Given the emphasis and prominence of ANSER and its Institute for Homeland Security in boosting this issue, the Post's alternative history is worth quoting at length:

“According to Card and other sources, the work of the PEOC group [from their underground meeting space, the Presidential Emergency Operations Center] can be traced back to Bush's presidential campaign, when he and his opponent, then-Vice President Al Gore, agreed on the need to bolster the country against terror. This subject intrigued Cheney, who ‘did a deep dive’ into the available research and theories, Card said.”

“Aided by a small staff, Cheney examined security proposals from commissions headed by former Virginia Governor James S. Gilmore III, by former senators Gary Hart (D-CO) and Warren B. Rudman (R-NH), ‘and others, going back a ways,’ Card said in an interview Friday.”

“When terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon, Cheney's work became the basis for Bush's announcement nine days after the attacks that he was creating the Office of Homeland Security, led by Pennsylvania Gov. Ridge . . .”

Does anyone really believe that Vice President Cheney, a guy from Wyoming whose wife has a doctorate in English literature, came up with a phrase like ‘homeland security’? Clearly, Bush’s actual “basis” for his announcement was that the future office was already gearing up before Cheney was vice president. Unquestionably, the institute and its boosters have been engaged in a partly-public, partly-quiet campaign to put a “homeland security department,” “second Pearl Harbor” package in place, well before the attacks of September 11. Further information on the whole campaign is easily available through the company’s web site and publications, as well as through public records. The same information was easily available to the Washington Post.

The Post has been eerily quiescent on the whole instantaneous vocabulary shift conveyed in “homeland security.”

The same quiescence has characterized most of the Washington press, at least in public. One could charitably hypothesize, perhaps, that no prominent reporter or commentator in Washington is aware that past associations with the word “homeland” have been vicious, like the Orwellian “homelands” established for blacks in South Africa under apartheid. (Conversely, all drafts of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promised, not a “homeland,” but a “home,” for the Jewish people, as did the British White Paper of 1922 and the League of Nations Palestine Mandate of 1922.) At best, past associations for “homeland” have been forlorn. “Homelands,” in this country, have always been those lost places torn from people who then sought asylum here—*specifically because* we don’t have things called “Department of Homeland Security,” just as we don’t have secret police, political prosecution, and indefinite detention.

Perhaps it can be plausibly assumed that writers and television experts with a few centuries of combined journalistic experience in foreign affairs have a collective tin ear; that they’re honestly unable to pick up on the chilling and spiteful tone of this new RustyNailFileAbteilung. Perhaps a more respectable term like “domestic security” simply did not occur to them.

It looks worse than that, though. This whole campaign to shove “homeland security” as a catch phrase down the throat of the body politic looks at best like an unwittingly disheartening thrust against any spirit of confidence or trust, or control, among the general public. The phrase “shadow government” is too dignified to be fully appropriate, but for the past three years, there has been a shadow coalition of military, intelligence and justice entities, and political candidates and their handlers, bolstered with only too much support and assistance from think tanks and publications—including the corporate press—and with too little scrutiny from the public, all working together to put in place an “anti-terror” package that has done far more to transfer public money than to—in case you missed last September—prevent attacks.

The dizzying banquet of high-tech, high-stakes, state-of-the-art government contracts, grants, and “cooperative agreements” lushly available in the military and intelligence sectors is physically visible throughout northern Virginia, where Rosslyn, Crystal City, and Fairfax teem in homage to the Coruscant school of architecture. Given the stakes, the expertise, the drive and the funding on one hand, and effectively no public scrutiny on the other, odds are overwhelming that somewhere in this giant push to develop “anti-terror” capabilities are some missed chances to have prevented the events of last September. The spinning wheels deflect anything like genuine investigation. In this super-charged atmosphere of “asymmetric threat” goodies, neither the

government nor the press has thought to interview any of the innumerable security personnel hired over the past 30 years to protect American companies in the Middle East. You'd think they would be a treasure trove of information, security-wise.

In the interests of coordinating, the CIA should be abolished. But more immediately, it is essential to prohibit the CIA from "starting fires" that other people have to put out—fomenting anti-democratic "rebellions," instigating hijackings and kidnappings, supporting political imprisonment, torture and assassinations—to retrieve anything like public safety or public health from the overheated (and undereducated) games-playing sector. Let the agency's members indulge in what is known in AA circles as the "thirteenth step," if they really want to feel their oats.

Meanwhile, what's going on here, among other things, is a para-rational dominance tactic. It may be as inane as President Gerald Ford's WIN buttons, but it's still a move to smother thought as well as speech with a loyalty-oath atmosphere of intimidation, comparable in U.S. history only to the weird, stupid, but grievous insistence on "naming names" during the heyday of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

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