

Big Brother: Radio frequency (RF) “Geolocation” of “Opponents” of the New World Order

'Tying the room together': DARPA's Project Gandalf

By [Tom Burghardt](#)

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In the 1998 Coen brothers cult film *The Big Lebowski*, southern California slacker Jeffrey Lebowski aka “The Dude,” bemoans the desecration of his living room rug by criminals out to collect a debt in a hilariously absurd case of mistaken identity. After the thugs urinate on his prized possession, The Dude is crestfallen because that rug “really tied the room together.”

Fast forward to 2008, only there's no mistaking either the identities or what's being “tied together” here. [DARPA's](#) Information Processing Techniques Office ([IPTO](#)) is seeking solicitations for “[Project Gandalf](#),” according to an October 7 “Industry Day” announcement on the Federal Business Opportunities [website](#).

In a bid to “tie the room together,” DARPA is developing a [demonstration project](#) that will provide “counterterrorist” special operators and spies, aka state terrorists, with

solutions to ... radio frequency (RF) geolocation and emitter identification using specific emitter identification (SEI) for specific signals of interest. The ultimate goal of the Gandalf program is to enable a set of handheld devices to be utilized to perform RF geolocation and SEI on RF signals of interest to the Gandalf program. The specific goals and performance objectives associated with RF geolocation and SEI for the Gandalf system are classified. (“Gandalf Program, DARPA Industry Day Announcement,” Federal Business Opportunities, October 7, 2008)

That's right, a hand-held cell phone tracking device that will enable security operatives to locate and take out opponents of the capitalist “new order” in global South or “hardened” *heimat* cities.

Sounds like a seamless way to “tie together” information culled by NSA trolls or the Justice Department's Terrorist Identity Datamart Environment (TIDE), the “master list” from which all other federal agencies derive their own dubious watch lists.

The Gandalf Program is classified Secret/NOFORN, meaning only American firms whose personnel hold coveted U.S. Department of Defense “secret clearances or higher” need apply. The October 28, 2008 Industry Day will be held at the Rosslyn, Virginia headquarters of the [Scitor Corporation](#). An appropriate venue if ever there were one.

Deriving its name from a Latin word meaning “to seek to know,” Scitor’s website has little in the way of useful information for the researcher, aside that is, from the usual banalities about “excellence” and “solving customer needs.”

However, a profile on [Yahoo! Finance](#) reveals that Scitor “hopes to aid you in your search for technological knowledge and harmony.” (!) There we also learn that the firm “offers a wide range of professional and technological services, including consulting work, risk management, software development and systems engineering.” Unsurprisingly, “Scitor works primarily for U.S. government agencies, including the Department of Defense.”

Founded in 1979, the company was acquired in 2007 by the private equity firm [Leonard Green & Partners LLP](#). With \$421.9 million in revenue in 2007, the company employs some 1,100 people with top secret and above security clearances. Their main competitors according to Yahoo’s profile are Lockheed Martin Information Systems & Global Services, Northrop Grumman Information Technology and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

But as investigative journalist Tim Shorrock revealed in his essential book [Spies For Hire](#),

...Scitor, a CIA and defense contractor company...has become a \$300 million company without creating a single ripple in the media. “It’s the biggest company you never heard of,” said a former NSA officer who knows the company well.

Scitor is a technology company that does extensive work for the U.S. Air Force in aerospace communications and satellite support services. The privately held company is also an important contractor for the CIA’s Directorate of Science and Technology... Within that directorate, two sources said, it is used primarily by the Office of Technical Services, the secretive unit that develops the gadgets, weapons and disguises used by spies. ...

A Scitor contract with the General Services Administration posted on the GSA’s Web site lists the CIA among the company’s clients. It states that Scitor helps government agencies manage “major acquisitions and cradle-to-grave programs that are vital to national defense.” Those agencies include the National Reconnaissance Office, the National Security Agency, the NSA [National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency], the CIA and the Pentagon. (Tim Shorrock, *Spies For Hire: The Secret World of Intelligence Outsourcing*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008, pp. 141, 142)

Clearly, DARPA’s cell phone tracking proposal falls well within the parameters of Scitor’s spooky brief.

While the “specific goals and performance objectives associated with RF geolocation and SEI for the Gandalf system are classified,” it doesn’t take a rocket scientist-or securocrat-to realize there’s real money to be made here.

Former Royal Navy officer Lew Page who unearthed the project for the U.K. online tech publication *The Register*, [reports](#) that “Project Gandalf” will supplement work “already done by surveillance aircrafts and/or drones.” The “new wrinkle” according to Page, “is being able to do it using handheld devices” at close quarters. Page writes,

So it would appear that a group of undercover operatives or special-forces troops dispersed near a target (perhaps a specific cell or satellite phone) might carry portable gadgets, presumably networked. The netted devices would be able to pick out the phone, radio or whatever they were after and track it. ...

As far as the technology goes, the idea sounds feasible. Commercial pico/microcell gear, for instance—with all the capabilities needed to ID and locate cell phones—is already easily down to briefcase size. Satellite phones would be harder, of course. (Lew Page, “DARPA to Begin Mysterious ‘Project Gandalf’,” *The Register*, October 8, 2008)

As I [wrote](#) in “Niche Telecom Providers Assisting NSA Spy Operations,” enterprising capitalist grifters in the telecom industry are already “providing security agencies with real-time cell phone tracking capabilities.” What makes this research so insidious are the workarounds supplied—at a premium price—by under-the-radar companies to [NSA](#) or the U.K.’s Government Communications Headquarters ([GCHQ](#)) not covered by *any* law.

Project Gandalf clearly travels along the same repressive continuum but with a twist. If the program pans out it will give security agents an “up close and personal” capacity, let’s just call it for the sake of argument, that real-world intel *touch* required to disrupt meetings or smash an organizing drive even as they’re taking place. Now that’s *real* progress!

Industry Day Goals at the upcoming October 28 meet and greet are threefold:

1) to familiarize participants with DARPA’s interest in RF geolocation and SEI technologies, 2) to identify potential offerors and promote understanding of the BAA proposal requirements, and 3) to promote discussion of synergistic capabilities among potential program participants. Information on the Gandalf solicitation will be available at: http://www.darpa.mil/ipto/solicit/solicit_open.asp following the publication of the BAA in FedBizOpps. Following the Industry Day, the web site will contain the unclassified Gandalf Frequently Asked Questions, unclassified presentations from the Industry Day, and information on how to obtain the classified briefings and Q&A.

As the European watchdog group [Quintessenz](#) has [revealed](#), digital and telephonic privacy invasions represent a fundamental assault on “freedom of information, the right to personal privacy and data integrity, the right to communicate freely.”

With information on Thales “Autonomous facility for IP Monitoring,” aka [IP Tr@pper](#), the Siemens [Intelligence Platform](#), Force10 Networks “10 Gigabit Packet Filtering” [presentation](#) to the NSA “for high speed government surveillance,” to the Verint (formerly Comverse Infosys) “[STAR-GATE interception system](#),” the Quintessenz project “ties the room together” on state and corporate assaults on our fundamental right to free speech and privacy.

As *Antifascist Calling* has previously [reported](#) (see: “America’s Cyborg Warriors,” July 23, 2008) such “technophilic” moves arise during a period when “restless natives”—on the contested, resource rich terrain of the global South and increasingly, within the Western “homeland” itself—are challenging the economic, political and social hegemony of “actually existing capitalism.” As Durham University geographer Stephen Graham [wrote](#),

Here, attention should fall in particular on the ways in which biopolitical stipulations of the worth-or lack of worth-of human subjects are, quite literally, cast into the software code that operates increasingly automated and multi-scale surveillance, targeting and killing systems. Thus, the new technoscience of the urbanized RMA [Revolution in Military Affairs] concentrates on distinguishing 'normal' urban space-times and ecologies in the global north, so that the apparatus of an increasingly militarized police state can be used to discipline those deemed 'abnormal'. (Stephen Graham, "Surveillance, urbanization, and the 'Revolution in Military Affairs'," in D. Lyon, *Theorizing Surveillance*, Uffculme, Devon: Willan Publishing, 2006, p. 264)

And as we have seen in recent surveillance scandals in the U.S. and elsewhere, those deemed "abnormal" include: union organizers, antiwar activists, socialist parties, antiglobalization campaigners, environmentalists, animal rights activists, civil liberties and human rights organizations, the list goes on and on. Indeed, from the point of view of state security agencies and their outsourced corporate partners, potentially "abnormal" or at least politically "suspect" individuals encompass the vast majority of citizens.

Finally, as the West's "terrorism industry" continues to grow at a rate directly proportional to capitalism's economic decline, we can expect that enterprising corporate grifters will flood DARPA with proposals to make "Project Gandalf" a reality.

Tom Burghardt is a researcher and activist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to publishing in Covert Action Quarterly and [Global Research](#), an independent research and media group of writers, scholars, journalists and activists based in Montreal, his articles can be read on [Dissident Voice](#) and [The Intelligence Daily](#). He is the editor of Police State America: U.S. Military "Civil Disturbance" Planning, distributed by [AK Press](#).

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