

(b)(6)

From: Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2009 9:54 PM
To: (b)(6) Morrell, Geoff Mr OSD PA; (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: fun times

I do know about it.

The Rendon Group does analysis for some of our commands. It is my understanding that in the past (up until about 4-5 months ago) some have used the info to determine whether a reporter will get embedded or not.

It is also my understanding that we have told them to cease such activities and they have complied.

Price

----- Original Message -----

From: (b)(6)
To: Morrell, Geoff Mr OSD PA; (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)

Floyd, Price B Mr OSD PA
Sent: Mon Aug 24 21:40:11 2009
Subject: RE: fun times

News to me. And if accurate, not good news. Price, know anything about this?

-----Original Message-----

From: Morrell, Geoff Mr OSD PA
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2009 8:45 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Whitman, Bryan Mr OSD PA
Subject: Re: fun times

I just asked Bryan the same thing. I think he has some knowledge.

Geoff Morrell
 Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
 Pentagon Press Secretary

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) Morrell, Geoff Mr OSD PA
Cc: (b)(6)
Sent: Mon Aug 24 20:27:27 2009
Subject: FW: fun times

Hi, (b)(6) and Geoff,

Do you all know the 411 on this?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2009 8:06 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: fun times

Story on DoD and the Rendon Group.

Pentagon Hires Controversial Firm To Screen Whether Embedded Reporters Wrote 'Positive' Stories
<<http://thinkprogress.org/2009/08/24/rendon-embeds/>>

johnrendonStars and Stripes reports that the Pentagon has hired The Rendon Group <<http://www.rendon.com/>> to screen journalists seeking to embed with U.S. forces. Specifically, the contractor will examine whether these reporters gave "positive" coverage <<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=64348>> to the military's work in the past:

Rendon examines individual reporters' recent work and determines whether the coverage was "positive," "negative" or "neutral" compared to mission objectives, according to Rendon officials. It conducts similar analysis of general reporting trends about the war for the military and has been contracted for such work since 2005, according to the company. [...]

The backgrounders are part of a wide scope of work Rendon does for the Defense Department under its current \$1.5 million "news analysis and media assessment" contract, according to military and company officials.

Public affairs officer Air Force Capt. Elizabeth Mathias insists that they "have not denied access to anyone because of what may or may not come out of their biography." However, last month, the military barred a Stars and Stripes

reporter from embedding <<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=63426>> with a unit in Iraq because he had "refused to highlight" good news. The military was also unhappy that the reporter "would not answer questions about stories he was writing."

What is particularly troubling about this story is The Rendon Group's history. The contractor has received millions from the U.S. government since 9/11 (at one point, taxpayers were paying CEO John Rendon \$311.26/hour <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/_/id/8798997/?pageid=rs.PoliticsArchive&pageregion=mainRegion&rnd=1132258732457&has-player=false>). The "secretive <<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0511130330nov13,1,4083882.story>> " firm personally set up the Iraqi National Congress and helped install Ahmad Chalabi as leader <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/8798997/the_man_who_sold_the_war/> , whose main goal — "pressure the United States to attack Iraq and overthrow Saddam Hussein" — Rendon helped facilitate.

Professional journalism organizations are decrying the military's contract with The Rendon Group. Ron Martz, president of the Military Reporters and Editors association, said that the "whole concept of doing profiles on reporters who are going to embed with the military is alarming <<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=64348>> ." Amy Mitchell, deputy director for Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, said that the government is "doing things to put out the message they want to hear and that's not the way journalism is meant to work in this country."

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2009 8:03 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: fun times

I don't understand this.