

America's "Insider Threat Program and Personnel Security Reform": 100,000 Military, Civilian and Contractor Personnel under Surveillance

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The Department of Defense "is moving forward with the development of its insider threat and personnel security reform efforts," wrote Michael G. Vickers, then-Under Secretary of Defense (Intelligence) in an [April 2015 report to Congress](#) that was released last month under the Freedom of Information Act. "The Department recognizes the magnitude and complexity of these challenges, the need for multi-agency solutions, and is marshalling needed resources," he wrote.

An insider threat is [defined](#) as someone who uses his or her authorized access to damage the national security of the United States, whether through espionage, terrorism, unauthorized disclosures of classified information, or other harmful actions.

The Department of Defense "is directing multiple pilots and concept demonstrations using both 'push' and 'pull' capabilities to conduct CE [continuous evaluation] on approximately 100,000 military, civilian and contractor personnel" in an effort to identify potential insider threats, [the April 2015 DoD report](#) to Congress said.

The overall, government-wide insider threat program is advancing rather slowly, judging by [the program's latest Quarterly Report](#) (for the 4th quarter of FY 2015) that was just published. Several anticipated program milestones have been missed or deferred, the [Report](#) indicates.

The most effective way to limit the insider threat may be to reduce the number of "insiders." If so, substantial progress has been made in that direction, with the elimination of 800,000 security clearances at the Department of Defense between FY2013 and the 3rd quarter of FY 2015, according to the [Report](#). (The very latest security clearance totals have not yet been published.)

The 2016 Omnibus Appropriations bill passed by Congress last month included a provision requiring expanded reinvestigations of security clearance holders, *Federal News Radio* reported last week (["Agencies directed to use social media in security clearance reviews"](#) by Nicole Ogrysko, December 28).

"The enhanced personnel security program of an agency shall integrate relevant and appropriate information from various sources, including government, publicly available and commercial data sources, consumer reporting agencies, social media and such other sources as determined by the Director of National Intelligence," the legislation instructed.

Numerous advocacy and whistleblower defense organizations this week wrote to the Intelligence Community Inspector General [urging him to investigate](#) whether the insider threat program “has been improperly used to target or identify whistleblowers. Additionally, we ask that you lead the initiative to properly distinguish between whistleblowing and insider threats.”

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