

## Big Brother: Illegally Spy on Americans ... Win Fabulous Prizes!

By [Tom Burghardt](#)

Global Research, May 17, 2008

[Antifascist Calling...](#) 17 May 2008

Region: [USA](#)

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Fingered by whistleblower's [Mark Klein](#) and [Babak Pashar](#) for their role in illegally spying on Americans, AT&T and Verizon were awarded a major contract by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), *Washington Technology* [reports](#).

According to David Hubler and Alice Lipowicz,

Verizon Business will perform the lion's share of the work on the Homeland Security Department's OneNet telecommunications contract with support from AT&T Government Solutions.

The OneNet award, under the General Services Administration's Network Universal contract vehicle, has a maximum value of \$970 million through March 2017, DHS spokesman Larry Orluskie said. ("Verizon to Lead DHS OneNet Award," *Washington Technology*, May 15, 2008)

Carolyn Duffy Marsan [avers](#),

"The Department of Homeland Security is looking for a partner to help them build, manage and secure their global network for...22 agencies," says Marlin Forbes, regional vice president for Verizon Business' Federal Defense & International Services. "There's a huge legacy...from what they were doing in the past as separate agencies before they were part of DHS. We think this deal goes right to Verizon's sweet spot." ("Verizon snares \$678 million federal network deal," *IDG News Service*, May 15, 2008)

"Sweet spot," indeed! That's a lot of boodle however you slice it, for trampling on our civil liberties. But no matter, since the House seems poised to pass "compromise" legislation that would grant "limited immunity" (read, "get-out-of-jail-free cards") to enterprising telecom giants like AT&T and Verizon.

Under cover of granting the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court the power to determine whether anti-surveillance cases can go forward, the House undoubtedly will join their Senate colleagues in gutting constitutional guarantees not to be spied upon by "outsourced" corporate spooks in league with the national security state.

It's a "win-win" all around—for [lobby-ensnared](#) congressional leaders, the Bush administration and scandal-averse [telecom executives](#)—given that it's right-wing Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, a Bushist sycophant, who gets to pick who sits on the

secret FISA court. Sounds like another “slam dunk” defense of civil liberties by “opposition” Democrats.

In March, AT&T won a \$20 million contract for DHS’ Customs and Border Protection agency. Under terms of the 10-year deal, AT&T “will be the primary provider of network voice services to Customs and Border Protection’s 47,000 employees around the country,” *Washington Technology* explains.

Meanwhile, under terms of the closed-door deal with Verizon, the dodgy wireless carrier that “partnered” with the FBI on its illegal data-sucking “[Quantico circuit](#),” Verizon Business will “help combine the multiple, separate WANs at DHS’ 22 agencies into one common, secure IP network,” and “manage and secure more than 5,000 agency sites worldwide and create a Security Operations Center for DHS,” Hubler and Lipowicz report.

And considering all the hard work DHS does to “secure the homeland,” safeguarding America’s borders from “threats” posed by poverty-stricken migrants escaping one or another “free trade” deal struck by the Clinton or Bush administrations, it sounds like money well spent. Unless that is, you’re an “illegal” immigrant on the receiving end of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) “professionalism.”

On Wednesday, [The Washington Post](#) reported that the U.S. government “has injected hundreds of foreigners it has deported with dangerous psychotropic drugs against their will to keep them sedated during the trip back to their home country, according to medical records, internal documents and interviews with people who have been drugged.”

That’s right, the state’s forced use of antipsychotic drugs on defenseless people unable to resist their deportation was repeated some 250 times, explained *Post* reporters who examined ICE records and court depositions in their excellent, though highly-disturbing report.

According to psychoanalyst [Stephen Soldz](#),

These drugs, especially Haldol are extremely powerful and are almost never utilized in individuals not diagnosed as actively psychotic. They can be extremely uncomfortable, especially if first administered in high doses and can disorient an individual for days. ... The use of drugs by ICE is, unfortunately, part of a pattern by the Bush administration of the misuse of the health professions for non-therapeutic purposes. I and others have written extensively about the role of psychologists in aiding national security interrogations, interrogations that often cross the line into torture. ... It is beginning to look as if there is a pattern of inappropriate use of psychopharmacological agents for overcoming resistances of various types. (Stephen Soldz, “Involuntary Drugging of Detainees,” CounterPunch, May 16, 2008)

Needless to say, AT&T and Verizon Business care not a whit for the incalculable harm done in the name of the American people by their DHS “partners” (in crime).

These days, corporate America’s “little Eichmanns” may not have many trains to “run on time,” but from GuantÃ;namo Bay to an ICE holding cell, and from the NSA’s “Terrorist Surveillance Program” to the FBI’s “Quantico circuit” one can easily discern the same seamless web of corporatist greed and corruption.

After all, \$970 million buys a great deal of complicity—and silence.

*Tom Burghardt is a researcher and activist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to publishing in Covert Action Quarterly, Love & Rage and Antifa Forum, he is the editor of Police State America: U.S. Military “Civil Disturbance” Planning, distributed by **AK Press**.*

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