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## EXCLUSIVE: CIA Nominee Hayden Linked to MZM

By Justin Rood - May 8, 2006, 11:33 AM

While director of the National Security Agency, Gen. Michael V. Hayden contracted the services of a top executive at the company at the center of the Cunningham bribery scandal, according to two former employees of the company.



Hayden, President Bush's pick to replace Porter Goss as head of the CIA, contracted with MZM Inc. for the services of Lt. Gen. James C. King, then a senior vice president of the company, the sources say. MZM was owned and operated by Mitchell Wade, who has admitted to bribing former Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham with \$1.4 million in money and gifts. Wade has also reportedly told investigators he helped arrange for prostitutes to entertain the disgraced lawmaker, and he continues to cooperate with a federal inquiry into the matter.

King has not been implicated in the growing scandal around Wade's illegal activities. However, federal records show he contributed to some of Wade's favored lawmakers, including \$6000 to Rep. Virgil Goode (R-VA) and \$4000

to Rep. Katherine Harris (R-FL).

Before joining MZM in December 2001, King served under Hayden as the NSA's associate deputy director for operations, and as head of the National Imagery and Mapping Agency.

King worked at NSA Headquarters in Ft. Meade, Maryland, in 2004 and 2005, both sources told me. "King was out there working on same floor as Hayden," one former employee with firsthand knowledge of the arrangement said. "He was doing special projects for Hayden as an MZM employee." Neither former employee knew details of King's work for Hayden; one said he thought he was doing "special projects" for the director, while the other speculated it was "high-ranking advisory work."

The NSA did not immediately respond to my request for comment. Hayden left the NSA in April 2005 to take the post of Deputy Director of National Intelligence. The DNI office referred my call on the matter to the NSA.

As an MZM employee, King was involved in a number of controversial projects. In 2002, he was a key adviser to the team creating CIFA, the Pentagon's domestic surveillance operation. In 2004, he was one of three MZM staffers who worked on the White House Robb-Silberman Commission, which recommended expanding CIFA's powers.

NSA is home to its own controversial project, of course -- the post-9/11 warrantless domestic wiretapping operation known as the "terrorist surveillance program." There is no indication that King has been involved in that project.

"I don't see anything nefarious" about King's work for Hayden, one employee told me, although he conceded he did not know what projects King worked on. "I think Hayden needed help."

King became president of MZM when Wade left the company in June 2005, following revelations he bribed Cunningham to win lucrative federal contracts. The company has since been sold and renamed Athena Innovative Solutions. It did not return my call for comment.

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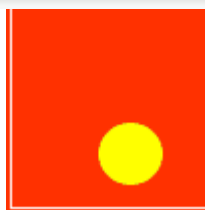
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