

Blackwater brass forms intelligence company

By BILL SIZEMORE, The Virginian-Pilot

© February 21, 2007

Last updated: 12:12 AM



**Blackwater
Vice
Chairman
Cofer Black**

Cofer Black, vice chairman of Blackwater USA, announced Tuesday the formation of a new CIA-type private company to provide intelligence services to commercial clients.

The executive roster for the new venture, Total Intelligence Solutions, is loaded with veterans of U.S. intelligence agencies, including two other Blackwater officials.

A spokeswoman for Total Intelligence said there is no corporate affiliation with Blackwater, the Moyock, N.C.-based private military company, but the new firm clearly has a Blackwater stamp.

Among the key personnel and their positions at Total Intelligence, which will be based in Alexandria:

- Black, chairman. He joined Blackwater two years ago after three decades in the CIA and State Department. He was director of the CIA's Counterterrorist Center and the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, a job with ambassador rank.
- Robert Richer, chief executive officer. He is vice president for intelligence at Blackwater and retired from the CIA in November 2005 as associate deputy director for operations.
- Enrique "Ric" Prado, chief operating officer. He is vice president of special government programs at Blackwater and a 24-year veteran of the CIA's Directorate of Operations, including 10 years with the agency's paramilitary Special Operations Group. In his last overt job with the CIA, Prado worked under Black as chief of operations for the Counterterrorist Center.

Blackwater's primary specialties are tactical training and security, but it is no stranger to the intelligence world. The 10-year-old company's first security contract, awarded in 2002, was for a classified operation. In his book "Licensed to Kill: Hired Guns in the War on Terror," author Robert Young Pelton identified the company's client as the CIA.

The concept of marketing intelligence services to commercial clients is not new, Pelton said Tuesday, but the new venture represents "a continuing evolution in what Blackwater's doing."

"Total Intel brings the intelligence gathering methodology and analytical skills traditionally honed by CIA operatives directly to the board room," Black said in a statement Tuesday. "With a service like this, CEOs and their security personnel will be able to respond to threats quickly and confidently - whether it's determining which city is safest to open a new plant in or working to keep employees out of harm's way after a terrorist attack."

The statement said the company will operate a "24/7 intelligence fusion and warning center" that will monitor civil unrest, terrorism, economic stability, environmental and health concerns, and information technology security around the world.

Among other top executives of the new company are:

- Matthew Devost, president. He is an information security consultant and founding director of the Terrorism Research Center.
- Caleb "Cal" Temple, senior vice president for intelligence and analysis. A former FBI intelligence specialist, he was most recently chief of the Office of Intelligence Operations in the Defense Intelligence Agency.
- Reach Bill Sizemore at (757) 446-2276 or bill.sizemore@pilotonline.com.