



Contractors in Top Secret Programs May Pose a Major Challenge for Insourcing Proponents

By Phil Piemonte Jul 20, 2010

The explosive series of news articles currently running in *The Washington Post*—“[Top Secret America](#)”—is bound to add weight to the case against outsourcing.

According to the reports (based on a two-year investigation by the newspaper), of the 854,000 Americans with top secret clearances working for government, 31 percent—or 265,000 individuals—are contractors.

And while those contractors are not supposed to perform “inherently governmental functions,” the paper said its investigation showed that “they do, all the time and in every intelligence and counterterrorism agency.”

In fact, the paper said that contractors now are so woven into the fabric of intelligence, security and counterterrorism agencies—often at cost significantly above what it would cost to use federal employees—that many their programs simply could not function without those contractors.

The *Post* report is bound to fire up the anti-outsourcing fervor of labor groups, which have found the Obama administration sympathetic to their concerns. But even though the administration has stated its intention to bring more federal work back in house, we suspect that disentangling contractors from these top secret operations will make its insourcing efforts elsewhere in the federal government look like child’s play.