

Air Force Suspends Three Contractors

Written by Nick Sanders

Thursday, 12 January 2012 00:00

In early November 2011, [Washington Technology reported](#) that the US Air Force had suspended three IT contractors “after they left their work unfinished on two buildings at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland and have been unwilling to provide information on source-code data so officials can fix their work.” The Air Force was considering debarring the three contractors from any future government work.

Who are this miscreant contractors? Washington Technology reported—

The suspended companies are Advanced C4 Solutions, Inc., a Florida-based company, which was the prime contractor, and two subcontractors, Superior Communications Solutions Inc., [SCSI] based on Georgia, and Iron Bow Technologies, based in Virginia.

Reportedly, a review of the three companies’ work “discovered 14 critical findings, 19 major findings and seven minor findings that affected the overall security and the access to the technology systems.” In addition, WT quoted the Air Force as stating, “There were also more than 145 customer-generated trouble tickets, identifying incorrectly configured network equipment, bad installation work, and a disregard for regulations on critical network security and information protection.”

Yeah, that’s not too good. But that’s not the end of the story.

WT reported that, “There was also a conflict of interest among the companies. Executives from the three companies assisted in developing requirements and cost estimates for the project. They participated in conducting market research.”

Despite all of that, the companies stopped their work and left the job site without finishing the job. Since then, they have been unwilling to provide operational manuals or source-code data, so Air Force officials can begin to fix the work. For example, the audio-visual and teleconference systems are not working because of the IT installation work isn’t done ... “

The Air Force summed the situation up thusly: ““Even though [the companies] improperly developed their own contract requirements, the subjects failed to meet their own requirements.”

Our “frenemies” at the Project on Government Oversight (POGO) [reported other issues](#) with the situation. They reported—

There’s also the possibility that John Wilkerson’s dual role as majority owner of SCSI and employee of Iron Bow posed another kind of conflict of interest. According to the memo, Iron

Air Force Suspends Three Contractors

Written by Nick Sanders

Thursday, 12 January 2012 00:00

Bow, which was a subcontractor to Advanced C4 Solutions, also received multiple orders to provide audio-visual equipment and furnishings and then subcontracted with SCSi to provide material and furnishings. Did this arrangement allow Wilkerson to double-dip or, at the very least, flout [regulations](#) designed to cut down on the excessive use of subcontractors?

We rather doubt that the incestuous contracting relationship between SCSi and Iron Bow, described by POGO above, violated the Excessive Pass-Through Charge rules. But we do agree with POGO that the relationship, which appears to be other than arms-length, should be investigated further. In particular, we wonder whether the prime (Advanced C4 Solutions) knew and understood the relationship between its two subcontractors.

Regardless of POGO's concerns, the suspension was lifted on November 28, 2011, [according to this report](#)

. Details regarding the Air Force's change of heart were not reported. Nonetheless, we wouldn't want to see the past performance ratings of the three contractors in question.