

Report Says Pentagon Paid PR Firm for Phony al-Qaeda Videos in Iraq



Washington, October 11 (RHC)-- A new report from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism says the Pentagon gave the controversial U.K. PR firm Bell Pottinger over a half-billion dollars to run a top-secret propaganda program in Iraq.

Former Bell Pottinger video editor Martin Wells says the company would produce phony al-Qaeda videos, and then U.S. Marines would plant the videos on compact discs during house raids, and anyone watching the videos later would have their IP address logged and their location recorded.

Wells says Bell Pottinger employees also produced fake TV news reports that were designed to look as though they were made by Arab reporters rather than by a British PR firm.

Martin Wells told reporters: "The kind of stories: A bomb would go off. A car bomb would go off. People would die. We would have people out there filming it. It would come back. We would then edit it into stories that would then go out on various channels within the region. And we were to make it, as best we could, look as if it was made locally, which it is shot locally and is edited locally. It was more to make it look like it was Arabic."

Wells said his Bell Pottinger's content was signed off on by David Petraeus, then commander of the coalition forces in Iraq, and occasionally by the White House.

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