

# Is the NSA riddled with Tofflerism?

by Edward Spannaus

It is well known that large chunks of U.S. military agencies are permeated with New Age kookery, and one of the worst cases would seem to be the National Security Agency—the U.S. military cryptological agency responsible for monitoring international telecommunications.

In a speech in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 16, Lt. Gen. Kenneth A. Minihan, the current director of the NSA who previously headed the Defense Intelligence Agency, opened his remarks with the New-Age comment: “We’re transitioning into a new century.” Minihan went on: “I like the way Alvin and Heidi Toffler talk about the future,” saying it’s appropriate to think about “those three waves.” Just as control of industrial technology was critical in the past, during these next two centuries, control of information technology will be critical, he emphasized.

The bulk of Minihan’s remarks, delivered to a meeting of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Law and National Security, were about the “national security implications of America’s journey into cyberspace,” which he described as information defense. Since information is the lifeblood of our knowledge-based society, he said, we have to build up the immunity of the Information Infrastructure (the “II”) from attack. Otherwise, he warned, we cannot use the II with confidence.

Our strategic sanctuary is threatened, Minihan said, from foreign governments and hackers, cyber-criminals, and narco-traffickers—all of whom have the tools to disrupt our II. Conflict in the “Information Age” is very different and complex, he emphasized, noting that it is difficult to know if we are under attack, and by whom. America has the most to lose in information warfare, he said, because of our well-developed II.

Now, while there is a serious aspect to this subject—which has to do with the security of military command and control, and the growing dependence of the entire economy on telecommunications—this serious side of the issue is heavily interlarded with kookiness, especially in the Air Force and in the NSA. According to knowledgeable military sources, the Tofflers’ theories are a major component of the training curriculum at the NSA.

That the outlook of Alvin and Heidi Toffler might in any way influence the thinking of our national defense establish-

ment should send shivers up the spine of any right-thinking American, because the Tofflers are pledged to destroy what our Armed Forces are intended to defend and protect.

Throughout their writings, the Tofflers profess that industrial capitalism is the enemy, and the institutions of our society—from the nuclear family to constitutional government—are outmoded and need to be replaced. Don’t take our word for it; listen to the Tofflers themselves, writing in their 1994 book *Creating a New Civilization*:

“It has belatedly begun to dawn on people that industrial civilization is coming to an end.” The main conflict we face, they stress, is not between Islam and the West, as suggested by Samuel Huntington; nor is it the case that America is in decline, as Paul Kennedy declares, nor is it that we are at the “end of history” as Francis Fukuyama believes. The bitter struggle of today, the Tofflers instruct us, is the one now raging “between those who seek to preserve industrialism and those who seek to supplant it.”

## Industrial capitalism called the enemy

The problem with existing political parties and institutions, we are told, is that they are all basically committed to preserving “the dying industrial order.” This includes a misguided and ill-fated commitment “to preserving the core institutions of industrial mass society,” among which the Tofflers include the nuclear family, mass public education, big corporations, big trade unions, and the nation-state.

But, many would protest: we can accept what the Tofflers say about “Information Age,” without buying into their more kooky side.

No such separation can be made. What attracts many military thinkers and others to the Tofflerian notion of “the three waves”—the explanation of post-industrial, “Information Age” society, is, per se, what makes them so dangerous.

“Information,” or the “Information Infrastructure,” can never replace our industrial infrastructure, at least not if we wish to survive as a nation. Unless the maxim that “an army travels on its belly” has been replaced by the idea that an army travels on its computers, a modern army still needs tanks, ships, planes, and armaments, not to mention warm clothes and boots and food. To use the analogy of business and industry, information-processing is nothing but overhead—a society can’t live in it, wear it, drive it, or eat it. As any competent industrial manager knows, if your administrative overhead overtakes your productive output, your firm is sunk. Information can never replace industry, nor can it replace the industrial depth which is the fundamental basis of any competent military establishment.

One could hope, as General Minihan indicated at one point while answering questions following his speech, that he was only focussing so much on information warfare and the Information Infrastructure, because almost everything else that NSA does is classified and cannot be discussed in a public forum.