

Cognos Inc.

Cognos, which bills itself as “the leading global provider of business intelligence solutions,” is the main supplier of such products to Boeing, the world’s top prime contractor for “missile defense” weapons. Cognos, a “global corporation” with 3,300 staff in 22 countries, has its headquarters in Ottawa.¹

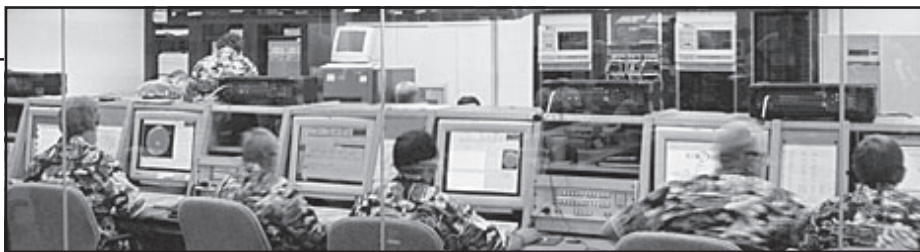
A major deal between Boeing and Cognos was announced on October 22, 2001. Cognos software was chosen by Boeing for use at its engineering, management and manufacturing facilities in California, Colorado and Alabama. Boeing will also use Cognos products at the Vandenberg Air Force Base’s missile-launching facilities in Lompoc, California.²

Boeing consistently refers to itself as “the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense.”³ As such, it is responsible for supervising and coordinating hundreds of military subcontractors that produce components for many key “missile defense” weapons systems. Because Boeing is designing, developing and testing many of these new weapons, it faces the most complex business planning and management challenge in world history. To help in this Herculean task of juggling several multi-billion dollar weapons programs, Boeing relies on the “business intelligence” software from Cognos.

Cognos is fully aware that its products are used in “missile defense” efforts. As their media release notes, Boeing Space and Communications is “a \$10-billion enterprise ... involved in ...overseeing the United States’ missile defense and reconnaissance systems.”⁴

The Cognos contract is essential to this whole process. As Jon Emery, Division Director of Business Management for Boeing’s Expendable Launch Systems, has said:

“We plan to use Cognos business intelligence for reporting and analysis of information spanning all aspects of our financial and manufacturing opera-



The Boeing Co., which oversees the “missile defense” program, uses Cognos “business intelligence” products for “cost management, financial planning, staffing and factory management.”

tions, including indirect and direct cost management, financial planning, staffing and factory management.”⁵

So, Cognos’ role goes beyond handling the financial complexities of juggling a myriad of subcontractors. By Boeing’s admission, Cognos products are instrumental in “all aspects” of their work, including “manufacturing operations” such as managing personnel and whole factories that are churning out “missile defense” weapons systems.

Cognos explains to its clients that they can use its “business intelligence” products to

“improve operational effectiveness and determine how well your supply chain is performing while increasing the linkage and throughput of your entire system. Discover how you can turn information into real performance benchmarks to strategically measure your suppliers.”⁶

Despite this important role in helping to manage Boeing’s production lines for “missile defense” systems, there are those who will argue that because Cognos itself is not actually producing any weapons, it is not *really* contributing to the weapons program. In response to such apologists, we would do well to consider an analogy: the role of International Business Machines (IBM) during World War II.

The IBM Analogy

IBM’s German subsidiary, Hollerith, supplied data processing equipment to the Nazi regime. Although IBM’s punch cards and sorting machines are considered primitive by today’s standards, they were the most advanced business

intelligence and information management systems of their day. These precursors to computers were inarguably

of tremendous importance to the Nazis. Without IBM, they could not have handled the huge volumes of data needed to identify Jews, communists, Roma and others, so they could be targeted, transported and exterminated so efficiently.⁷

So, although IBM did not actually produce any weapons or poisons used in mass exterminations, its “business management solutions” helped engineer the Holocaust. In fact, Edwin Black, author of *IBM and the Holocaust*, has said that “The whole war effort was organized on Hollerith machines from 1933 to 1945.”⁸

Likewise, although Cognos does not produce “missile defense” weaponry, it is most certainly aiding and abetting Boeing’s role as the top corporate facilitator of the most expensive and advanced weapons production program in world history. Many see this collaboration as an indispensable, contribution to a dangerous and destabilizing weapons development program. Although we do not yet know how Boeing’s many new weapons systems will be used in future wars, we do know that Cognos is playing a crucial role in facilitating their production.

References

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