

Pentagon aims to buy up book

By Peter Finn and Greg Miller
Washington Post Staff Writers
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The [Defense Department](#) is attempting to buy the entire first printing - 10,000 copies - of a memoir by a controversial former Defense Intelligence Agency officer so that the book can be destroyed, according to military and other sources.

"Operation Dark Heart," which was scheduled to be published this month by St. Martin's Press, recounts the adventures and frustrations of an Army reservist, Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer, who served in Afghanistan in 2003, a moment when the attention of Washington and the military had shifted to Iraq.

Shaffer, who is now a senior fellow at the Center for Advanced Defense Studies in Washington, describes a number of planned covert operations, including an aborted cross-border surveillance operation using sophisticated eavesdropping technology that targeted high-level al-Qaeda operatives based in the tribal areas of Pakistan.

The operation was shut down by military officials concerned about offending Pakistan, according to Shaffer's account.

Shaffer's book was reviewed and cleared in writing by the Army Reserve earlier this year, but this summer the Defense Intelligence Agency objected to the use of the names of American intelligence officers, among other issues.

A senior Pentagon official said that the DIA obtained a copy of the manuscript in mid-July, adding that the agency "did a quick review" and found "some issues we were very concerned with." The agency then referred the matter to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, which distributed the manuscript to other agencies, presumably including the CIA, "all of whom had major objections to things in the book," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official said the Defense Department "sent up a team to talk with the publisher some time ago," and has been negotiating an agreement that might allow the Pentagon to purchase already printed copies of the book and permit a subsequent version to go forward as long as it complies with U.S. government requests.

Both sides now appear to have agreed on the contents of the second printing, but negotiations are focused on what to do with the 10,000 copies already published.

The Pentagon is now negotiating with Shaffer's publisher to buy the entire first print run, according to a source familiar with the negotiations. The Pentagon's plan to destroy all 10,000 copies of the initial printing was first reported Thursday night by the New York Times.

A new print run, without the disputed passages, is being prepared by the publisher. Meanwhile, the first printing is sitting in a warehouse in Virginia. Several dozen review copies of the first edition have already been circulated to media outlets, including The Washington Post.

"Tony proceeded through the proper review process and his manuscript was approved for release," said Shaffer's attorney, Mark Zaid. "Months later, other agencies informed us otherwise and that led to us to cooperate fully with the Defense Department to eliminate any concerns they have. There are certain things outside of our control, however. We do not control the publisher. And we do not control the fact that copies were disseminated prior to that second review process."

Pentagon officials said the books should have been submitted to the Pentagon in the first place. "It had never been submitted for a full review," the senior Defense official said, adding that Shaffer had shown the manuscript only to his unit.

The Pentagon said in a statement that the "manuscript did not undergo a pre-publication information security review as required by DoD regulation. This became known to the Department only recently, and after the manuscript was printed by the publisher. DoD has been working closely and cooperatively with the publisher, LTC Shaffer and his counsel to address the problem and any potential issues involving classified information."

Shaffer was previously known for alleging before the 9/11 Commission and Congress that a covert Pentagon task force called "Able Danger" had identified Mohamed Atta, the lead hijacker in the Sept. 11 attacks, before the assaults on New York and the Pentagon. Shaffer's claim was later rejected by congressional investigators, among others. But he repeats the assertion in the book.

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Staff writer Greg Jaffe contributed to this report.

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