

Ilankai Tamil Sangam
Association of Tamils of Sri Lanka in the USA
Published by Sangam.org

Steve Jobs (1955-2011)

A Smartly Hidden Angle

by Sachi Sri Kantha, October 22, 2011

Can anyone argue that Steve Jobs was working with Pentagon to support Mother Teresa's life work as objectives? Pentagon's current budget request for fiscal year 2012 is a whopping \$671 billion, as Pentagon is seeking mini-weapons for new age of warfare, according to W.J. Hennigan [*Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 2011]. By omission, the main stream media's scribes have smartly hidden Steve Jobs's penchant as bomb designer.

Since the death of computer industry tycoon Steve Jobs on October 5, hundreds of headlines, editorials, cover stories and eulogies have appeared. Mine will be different. I provide a critical angle which these sob stories have completely omitted or muted. So, I play the devil's advocate here.



Not a single item over ten representative samples from leading print media icons that I have read about Jobs's career profile [see below the sources I cite] provide information about how much of Pentagon funds landed into Apple company's research programs for mini weapons, since Sept.11, 2001. Mind you that these mini weapons are Pentagon's play toys for death, injury and property destruction. I like this euphemistic four-word cliché which two American presidents have been using for the past ten years: 'Bring him (them) to justice', which literally means 'to kill'(not only Saddam Husseins and Osama bin Ladens). This is a blanket clause to kill hundreds of thousands of human lives as collateral damage, courtesy the bombs and accessories designed from Jobs's computers and other secretly contracted weapons.

CIA was a niche customer for the NeXT computer

There is no question that Jobs was a designer par excellence. By all accounts, he was 'addicted' to secrecy. I also read one of the biographies of Steve Jobs; that of Leander Kahney entitled '*Inside Steve's Brain*'(2008). In the blurb, Leander Kahney is introduced as a news editor

for Wired.com, and "as a reporter and editor, Kahney has covered Apple for more than a dozen years". In it, there is a passing mention in one sentence of the introduction, that the NeXT computer which Jobs made after he was fired from the Apple in 1985, had the CIA as one its niche customers!

And I also quote two paragraphs from this book, which alludes to CIA style obsession to secrecy. Again, CIA is passingly mentioned.

"Jobs's Apple is obsessively secretive. It's almost as secretive as a covert government agency. Like CIA operatives, Apple employees won't talk about what they do, even with their closest confidants: wives, boyfriends, parents. Employees certainly will not discuss their work with outsiders. Many won't even refer to the company by name. Like superstitious theater folk who call *Macbeth* the 'Scottish play', some Apple employees call it 'the fruit company'.

Talking out of school is a firing offense. But many employees don't know anything anyway. Apple staffers are given information on a strictly need-to-know basis. Programmers write software for products they've never seen. One group of engineers designs a power supply for a new product, while another group works on the screen. Neither group gets to see the final design. The company has a cell structure, each group isolated from the other, like a spy agency or a terrorist organization." (pp. 140-141).

By design or accident, the CIA is not mentioned in the index of this book. Now, will you care to fill in the dots: secrecy, designer in chief and CIA/Pentagon contracts. I'd claim that going by President Barack Obama's high-octane public eulogy, Steve Jobs was also a bomb designer. My clinching proof: the Apple Company was buffeted by lofty work contracts with Uncle Sam's Pentagon.

Apple's links to the Pentagon

For those who had missed this item, I provide below in entirety, what I located in the web: a news item by Bryan Chaffin (Executive Vice President), dated March 24, 2010, with the caption 'U.S. Army visits Apple HQ to discuss military devices' from *The Mac Observer* site.

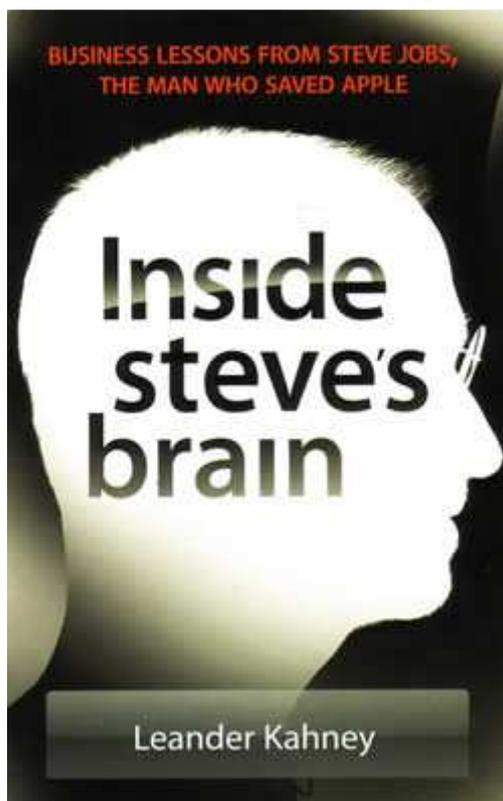
[http://www.macobserver.com/tmo/article/u.s._army_visits_apple_hq_to_discuss_military_devices/]

"The U.S. Army sent representative officers to Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, CA to, "discuss the use of Apple products in Army business and battlefield operations." According to a [post at the Army's Web site](#), the military respects Apple's technology and products, and is looking to find ways to leverage commercially available technology for its soldiers in the battlefield.

"Apple technologies offer unique and proven solutions with intuitive designs that allow users to learn quickly without a training manual," Ron Szymanski, CERDEC's lead computer scientist for the [U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command](#) (RDECOM), said in a statement. "The Army would like to leverage Apple's experience when designing military applications." More specifically, the Army said it was evaluating the use of the iPad, iPhone, iPod, iMac, and MacBook platforms in a military capacity.

"The Army is moving away from big-green-box solutions and toward those that will adapt along with our warfighters on the battlefield," Maj. Gen. Nick Justice of RDECOM said. "We're continuing to leverage commercial technology for battlefield uses; we can't ignore that kind of existing knowledge. Our job, as stewards of the taxpayer's dollar, is to adopt and adapt appropriate commercial technology and offer the best possible solution to the warfighter."

More praise was sent Apple's way by Dr. Gerardo J. Melendez, director of Command and Control Directorate (CERDEC), a division within RDECOM, who said, "As we push to develop more commercial capabilities to meet Army information and knowledge management needs, it's important that we engage companies such as Apple because we stand to benefit just as much from their lessons learned and best practices." He added that the Army could realize cost savings by not always re-inventing the wheel by turning to some of the advanced commercial technology being developed by American technology companies.



An attorney contacted by The Mac Observer noted that above and beyond the potential for Apple to secure lucrative contracts with the U.S. military for developing devices or specializing existing devices for the military's use, offers other possible benefits to Apple. "If Apple can secure a military contract and the military declares Apple's device to be essential to U.S. security, the DOJ [could choose to] intervene in the Nokia v. Apple case as an interested party and move the court to stay any adverse ruling against Apple that adversely affects national security and/or move for an order directing Nokia to license the essential technologies on what would be essentially Fair, Reasonable and Non Discriminatory (FRAND) terms, at least for the military's mobile devices." All of which may be putting the horse before the cart, as this was just one meeting between the Army and Apple that is being discussed. That said, the Army added that the meeting ended with plans for future technical discussions between the two organizations."

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Stever Jobs - a Secular Prophet ?

I found it somewhat disappointing and discomfoting, while reading Andy Crouch's 'in depth' feature entitled 'The Secular Prophet'. In it, he had compared Jobs's philosophy of life to that of Socrates, Buddha and Emerson, based on Jobs's commencement address to the Stanford University students in 2005. *Merde*, I'd say. I quote the relevant excerpt:

"No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it. And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true. Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become.'

This is the gospel of a secular age...Mr.Jobs was by no means the first person to articulate this vision of a meaningful life – Socrates, the Buddha and Emerson come to mind..."

Hey, the life stories of Socrates and Buddha that I read don't synch with the half-baked interpretation provided by Andy Crouch on Jobs's life! Socrates **wanted to die, to prove that his tormentors were wrong**. That's why he took hemlock voluntarily in 399 BC. But, Steve Jobs preached to the Stanford Students in 2005 that 'No one wants to die...'Blah! Blah! That death is the ultimate destination is no new stuff either. If Steve Jobs had sacrificed his life like Socrates, rather than undergoing liver transplant, then I'd have applauded him as a worthy successor of Socrates. Unlike Steve Jobs, Socrates never bothered to capture the world market in digital electronics to become rich. Lord Buddha, **renounced everything (his kingdom, family, and material wealth) to preach his Gospel**. Did Steve Jobs renounce his family and material wealth to preach his Gospel?

The Magician

The *Economist* magazine [Oct.8, 2011] featured Steve Jobs on its cover with the caption 'The magician'. In its original sense of the word, a magician creates illusions. Thus, I agree with this adjective. Jobs had the uncanny ability to pick the pockets of American taxpayers directly and indirectly; directly, by his designed end products Apple computers, ipods, itunes, iphones, ipads etc.: indirectly, by landing lofty work contracts from Pentagon, which gets its funds solely from American taxpayer. But, I'm not so naive to tag him with superlatives such as 'visionary', 'genius', 'prophet' etc. Of course, there are other Pentagon contractors. But they don't sell helicopters, nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers to average John and Jane. In sum, Steve Jobs was a sweet talking, smart entrepreneur of illusions.

What rankles me is that there is a fine line which separates a bomb designer and a terrorist. The mainstream international media and the pundits of U.S. State Department tagged Velupillai Prabhakaran as a terrorist, merely because he 'designed' suicide bombs. So, how about Steve Jobs? Available public evidence indicates that he also was a bomb designer in a figurative sense. So, why he is not tagged as a 'terrorist'?

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