

WE'RE IN THE ARMY NOW

By the Graduate Faculty Student Senate

For a school founded by pacifists, we're certainly doing our bit for the military-industrial complex. We found out recently that Parsons Institute for Information Mapping (PIIM) in 2002 signed a 6 million dollar contract with the Department of Defense to develop an application that can map flows of open source information on the Internet. The Geospace & Media Tool (GMT) will be able to search through reams of unstructured information for keywords, and locate them on an interactive map to show areas of concentrated activity, along with demographic information. Far more sophisticated than Google, the GMT can impute meaning and relevance to search terms based on a statistical analysis of related keywords. And while it is currently being developed to use only on open source

information, PIIM's executive director, William Bevington, admits that, once released, it could be redesigned to analyze classified information as well.

President Bob Kerrey told Inprint, Eugene Lang's newspaper, that the rationale behind the GMT is to help public officials learn about issues they might not know much about. Like all technological innovations, the GMT could have a wide variety of applications, and one rather worrying possibility is that it could be used to keep track of the activities of political groups. But what is particularly alarming about this project is that the funding for it comes from the Department of Defense. One wonders what they plan to use it for.

Even more alarming is the fact that this was not publicized within the

