In-Q-Tel, the CIA venture capital arm, reaches 800th spy investment

By Vaughn Cockayne -

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In-Q-Tel, the venture capital firm of U.S. intelligence agencies, announced its 800th investment this week, a major milestone for the organization to spy on the public via social media.

This week, In-Q-Tel released details on its massive portfolio, including the organization's latest investment focuses. The company called the 800th investment milestone a "monumental achievement" for the VC firm. "For 26 years, IQT has been a critical bridge, connecting the cutting-edge capabilities of the private sector with the ever-evolving needs of our intelligence and defense communities," the company said in a statement.

In-Q-Tel is a CIA-chartered, private, nonprofit, venture capital fund that invests in emerging information, cybersecurity and intelligence technology for use by U.S. intelligence personnel. The organization receives some federal funding through Congress.

The company's latest investment numbers are a marked increase from eight years ago, when the group announced it had passed 325 investments. While most of In-Q-Tel's investments are public, hundreds are kept secret due to national security concerns.

Notable investments in In-Q-Tel's latest round include Cerabyte, a German company that builds ceramic-based storage systems designed to enhance data storage sustainability.

The company is also investing in GetReal Security, a California-based firm developing anti-AI screening systems that help detect deepfakes and other deceptive methods.

In-Q-Tel said it believes its investments in emerging technologies improve U.S. innovation in aerospace, defense and cybersecurity. Those investments, In-Q-Tel's leadership said, are even more necessary in a world where America's rivals are catching up.

"The United States needs to stay at the cutting edge of those technologies in order to remain the preeminent economic and security power," In-Q-Tel President and CEO Steve Bowsher told Threat Status last year.