

CURRENT NEWS

EARLY BIRD

October 12, 2012

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Item numbers indicate order of appearance only.

CYBER SECURITY

1. **Panetta Warns Of Dire Threat Of Cyberattack On U.S.**
(*New York Times*)...Elisabeth Bumiller and Thom Shanker
Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta warned Thursday that the United States was facing the possibility of a “cyber-Pearl Harbor” and was increasingly vulnerable to foreign computer hackers who could dismantle the nation’s power grid, transportation system, financial networks and government.
2. **U.S. Readies Cyberdefense**
(*Wall Street Journal*)...Julian E. Barnes and Siobhan Gorman
Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Thursday a series of recent electronic attacks that have been tied to Iran, both in the U.S. and abroad, herald a "significant escalation in the cyberthreat," and warned the U.S. would aggressively pursue the perpetrators, in what cybersecurity experts called a veiled warning to Tehran.
3. **Private-Sector Cyberattack In Mideast Was Worst Ever**
(*Washington Post*)...Ellen Nakashima
A computer virus that wiped crucial business data from tens of thousands of computers at Middle Eastern energy companies over the summer marked the most destructive cyberattack on the private sector to date, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said Thursday night in a major speech intended to warn of the growing perils in cyberspace.
4. **Panetta Sounds Alarm On Cyber-War Threat**
(*Battleland (Time.com)*)...Mark Thompson
Defense Secretary Leon Panetta issued what he said is a “clarion call” Thursday for Americans to wake up to the growing threat posed by cyber war. “The whole point of this is that we simply don’t just sit back and wait for a goddamn crisis to happen,” Panetta told Time. “In this country we tend to do that, and that’s a concern.”
5. **U.S. Defense Chief Says Pre-Emptive Action Possible Over Cyber Threat**
(*Reuters.com*)...Phil Stewart, Reuters
The U.S. military could act pre-emptively if it detects an imminent threat of cyber attack, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Thursday, urging stronger action to bolster America’s defenses against such plots.
6. **Official: US Blames Iran Hackers For Cyberattacks**
(*Yahoo.com*)...Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press
A former U.S. government official says American authorities firmly believe that Iranian hackers, likely supported by the Tehran government, were responsible for recent cyberattacks against oil and gas companies in the Persian Gulf and that they appeared to be in retaliation for the latest round of U.S. sanctions against the country.

AFGHANISTAN

7. **Report: Contract Fraud Puts U.S. Troops At Risk Of IEDs**
(*USA Today*)....Tom Vanden Brook
Afghan contractors responsible for preventing culverts from being used to hide roadside bombs on a major highway have falsely reported completing the work, putting American troops at risk, U.S. investigators revealed Thursday.
8. **US Soldiers Say Still Focused On Afghan Mission**
(*Agence France-Presse*)....Joe Sinclair, Agence France-Presse
...After 11 years of war, 2,135 US soldiers dead, their Afghan colleagues turning on them, and widespread predictions the conflict will end in failure, coalition forces could be forgiven for suffering a dip in morale. But commanders and soldiers on the ground insist the challenges are bringing them closer together, even if the outcome of the war is uncertain and the perception of what constitutes success has changed.

PAKISTAN

9. **Pakistan: Drone Strike Kills 18**
(*New York Times*)....Ismail Khan
An American drone fired missiles into a compound in the Orakzai tribal region on Thursday, killing 18 Afghans and wounding 4, a senior local official in the area said. Drone strikes are rare in Orakzai, which lies to the west of the regional capital, Peshawar. Most strikes in the C.I.A.-directed drone campaign occur along the border with Afghanistan, concentrated in North and South Waziristan.
10. **Taliban Unrepentant After Attack On Pakistani Teen**
(*USA Today*)....Hani Yousuf and Janelle Dumalaon
The Taliban is threatening to finish off a 14-year-old Pakistani girl whom it shot for helping other girls go to school -- if she survives a wounding that has made her a hero to many Pakistanis.

MIDEAST

11. **Syrian Jet Held Russian Arms, Turkey Claims**
(*Washington Post*)....Liz Sly
Turkey claimed Thursday that it had found Russian munitions aboard a Syrian passenger jet forced to land in its capital, Ankara, drawing Moscow into the spiraling Syrian-Turkish tensions that are threatening to erupt into regional war.
12. **Jordan: U.S. Forces Help Plan Shield**
(*Miami Herald*)....Jamal Halaby, Associated Press
From the edge of a steep mountain overlooking a desert compound built into an old rock quarry, machine gunfire echoes just outside hangars where U.S. special operations forces are training Jordanian commandos.
13. **Yemeni Officer At U.S. Embassy In Sana Is Shot Dead**
(*New York Times*)....Nasser Arrabyee
A senior Yemeni officer working in the United States Embassy in Sana was killed here in the capital on Thursday in an attack that security sources said bore the hallmarks of the regional franchise of Al Qaeda. The killing comes amid sharp American scrutiny of security at foreign diplomatic posts in the wake of the militant assault one month ago on the United States Mission in Benghazi, Libya, which killed Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other diplomatic personnel members.
14. **The West's Stalwart Ally In The War On Drugs: Iran (Yes, That Iran)**
(*New York Times*)....Thomas Erdbrink
Sitting next to the half-open door of a Russian-made Mi-17 transport helicopter, the general who leads the Islamic Republic's antinarcotics department pointed toward the rugged landscape of Iran's volatile southeast, where its border meets those of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

ASIA/PACIFIC

15. **Japan: US Pact Deters Clash With China Over Isles**
(Yahoo.com)....Matthew Pennington, Associated Press
 Japan said Thursday its security alliance with the U.S. is an important deterrent against conflict breaking out between China and Japan over disputed islands.

AFRICA

16. **U.S. Looks For Solution To Mali Crisis**
(Washington Post)....Anne Gearan and Craig Whitlock
 The Obama administration is contemplating broad military, political and humanitarian intervention to stop a slide toward chaos and Islamic extremism in Mali, the top State Department diplomat for Africa said Thursday.
17. **White House Appoints Veteran Retired Diplomat To Serve As Senior Envoy In Libya**
(New York Times)....Michael R. Gordon
 The Obama administration said on Thursday that it had recalled a veteran diplomat, Laurence Pope, who retired from the Foreign Service 12 years ago, to serve as the senior American envoy in Libya.

DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

18. **Intelligence Chief Hints At New Spy Satellites; Biggest Change In 30 Years**
(AOL Defense (defense.aol.com))....Colin Clark
 The United States has boosted into orbit new spy satellites that mark "the most significant change to our overhead architecture in at least three decades," said the head of military intelligence, Mike Vickers. Vickers also said these National Reconnaissance Office's satellites comprise "a truly integrated system of systems for the first time."

ARMY

19. **DoD Pushes Forward On Critical U.S. Army Radio Program**
(DefenseNews.com)....Paul McLeary
 The Pentagon's chief acquisition officer has signed off on an order for 3,726 battlefield networking radios from General Dynamics, company officials told Defense News. The first 800 radios will be shipped to the U.S. Army by the end of this month, they said.
20. **Women Fight For Combat Roles**
(Los Angeles Times)....David Zucchino
 Two female soldiers sue the Pentagon, saying that excluding them from battle posts is unconstitutional.
21. **Fort Hood Suspect's Beard Raises Bias Questions**
(Yahoo.com)....David Dishneau, Associated Press
 An Army appeals court on Thursday questioned whether a military judge exceeded his authority in ordering the suspect in the 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, to remove his beard or be forcibly shaved.

NAVY

22. **CNO: 2 Carriers In 5th Fleet Through March**
(NavyTimes.com)....Sam Fellman
 The Navy's top officer said Thursday that the service will continue stationing two aircraft carriers in 5th Fleet through March, a standing requirement that has pushed the fleet's pace and one that officials are tracking closely.

AIR FORCE

23. **U.S. Air Force Probing Glitch With Launch Of GPS Satellite**
(Reuters.com)....Irene Klotz, Reuters

The U.S. Air Force on Thursday launched an investigation into a glitch with the flight of an unmanned Delta 4 rocket that carried a GPS navigational satellite into orbit last week.

MARINE CORPS

24. USMC Emphasizing Special Ops And Cyber

(*Aerospace Daily & Defense Report*)....Michael Fabey

While the U.S. Marine Corps is drawing down its force levels to reflect the nation's pullback from overseas military operations, the service also is shifting focus to more covert or cyber-based operations, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus says.

DETAINEES

25. Lawmakers Fret Anew About Gitmo Detainees

(*Washington Times*)....Kristina Wong

Trial transfers to U.S. at issue as suspects in Cole bombing, 9/11 attacks remain incarcerated.

26. Senate Democrat Launches New Study On 'Housing Gitmo Detainees In The U.S.'

(*Danger Room (Wired.com)*)....Noah Shachtman and Spencer Ackerman

The idea of closing down Guantanamo Bay and transferring its detainee population to the United States was supposed to be dead. But someone forgot to tell Congress' independent research agency. At the behest of a powerful senator, it's exploring "the ability to house Guantanamo detainees in the U.S.," according to an internal document acquired by Danger Room. The results are slated for publication eight days after the presidential election.

POLITICS

27. Romney Would Boost Pentagon Spending, Cut Civilian Workers: Advisers

(*Reuters.com*)....Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters

Republican Mitt Romney would accelerate spending on new Navy warships, cut the Pentagon's civilian workforce and speed up development of new weapons systems if he wins the 2012 presidential election, two advisers said on Thursday.

28. For Brown, Politics And Military Entwine

(*Boston Globe*)....Glen Johnson

Guard duty adds to opportunities.

BUSINESS

29. KBR Gets Army Logistics Contract

(*Yahoo.com*)....Associated Press

Defense contractor KBR Inc. said Thursday that it has been picked as one of the main contractors on a project that gets Army equipment ready for deployment.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

30. Security, Intelligence Workers Get Whistleblower Protection

(*Washington Post*)....Joe Davidson

President Obama has done what Congress has not — extend whistleblower protections to national security and intelligence employees.

COMMENTARY

31. Not All That It Can Be

(*ForeignPolicy.com*)....Winslow Wheeler

The myth of American military superiority.

32. **Turkey's Dangerous Assad Dilemma**

(Wall Street Journal)....Fouad Ajami

As Turkish forces along the Syrian border exchange fire with the army of Bashar Assad, and Syrian refugees pour into Turkey, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a proud Islamist, might better appreciate the wisdom of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The secular founder of modern Turkey advised his countrymen: Look West, leave the old lands of the Ottoman Empire to their feuds and backwardness.

33. **The Taliban's Latest Target: A 14-Year-Old Girl**

(Wall Street Journal)....Sadanand Dhume

Too many Pakistanis claim that terrorism is America's problem. The brutal assault on Malala Yousafzai may force them to face the truth.

34. **Why Iran Can't Follow China's Lead**

(New York Times)....Ray Takeyh

IRAN is undergoing one of its most momentous changes since the 1979 revolution as the aging Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, strives to ensure that the Islamic republic's revolutionary precepts will survive him. China presents a cautionary tale for the ayatollah; it proves that it is possible for an authoritarian political system to survive long after its ideological claims have faded from the scene.

35. **A President Shying From War**

(Washington Post)....Michael Gerson

...The problem revealed in Libya is not only incompetence or deception. It is also a wartime president who refuses to be a wartime leader.

36. **Marine Mammals And The Navy's 5-Year Plan**

(New York Times)....Editorial

Between 2014 and 2019, the United States Navy hopes to conduct testing and training exercises in the Atlantic and the Pacific that will involve sonars and explosives of many different kinds.

New York Times
October 12, 2012
Pg. 1

1. Panetta Warns Of Dire Threat Of Cyberattack On U.S.

By Elisabeth Bumiller and
Thom Shanker

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta warned Thursday that the United States was facing the possibility of a “cyber-Pearl Harbor” and was increasingly vulnerable to foreign computer hackers who could dismantle the nation’s power grid, transportation system, financial networks and government.

In a speech at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York, Mr. Panetta painted a dire picture of how such an attack on the United States might unfold. He said he was reacting to increasing aggressiveness and technological advances by the nation’s adversaries, which officials identified as China, Russia, Iran and militant groups.

“An aggressor nation or extremist group could use these kinds of cyber tools to gain control of critical switches,” Mr. Panetta said. “They could derail passenger trains, or even more dangerous, derail passenger trains loaded with lethal chemicals. They could contaminate the water supply in major cities, or shut down the power grid across large parts of the country.”

Defense officials insisted that Mr. Panetta’s words were not hyperbole, and that he was responding to a recent wave of cyberattacks on large American financial institutions. He also cited an attack in August on the state oil company Saudi Aramco, which infected and made useless more than 30,000 computers.

But Pentagon officials acknowledged that Mr. Panetta was also pushing for legislation

on Capitol Hill. It would require new standards at critical private-sector infrastructure facilities — like power plants, water treatment facilities and gas pipelines — where a computer breach could cause significant casualties or economic damage.

In August, a cybersecurity bill that had been one of the administration’s national security priorities was blocked by a group of Republicans, led by Senator John McCain of Arizona, who took the side of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and said it would be too burdensome for corporations.

The most destructive possibilities, Mr. Panetta said, involve “cyber-actors launching several attacks on our critical infrastructure at one time, in combination with a physical attack.” He described the collective result as a “cyber-Pearl Harbor that would cause physical destruction and the loss of life, an attack that would paralyze and shock the nation and create a profound new sense of vulnerability.”

Mr. Panetta also argued against the idea that new legislation would be costly for business. “The fact is that to fully provide the necessary protection in our democracy, cybersecurity must be passed by the Congress,” he told his audience, Business Executives for National Security. “Without it, we are and we will be vulnerable.”

With the legislation stalled, Mr. Panetta said President Obama was weighing the option of issuing an executive order that would promote information sharing on cybersecurity between government and private industry. But Mr. Panetta made clear that he saw it as a stopgap measure and that private companies, which are typically reluctant to share internal information with the

government, would cooperate fully only if required to by law.

“We’re not interested in looking at e-mail, we’re not interested in looking at information in computers, I’m not interested in violating rights or liberties of people,” Mr. Panetta told editors and reporters at The New York Times earlier on Thursday. “But if there is a code, if there’s a worm that’s being inserted, we need to know when that’s happening.”

He said that with an executive order making cooperation by the private sector only voluntary, “I’m not sure they’re going to volunteer if they don’t feel that they’re protected legally in terms of sharing information.”

“So our hope is that ultimately we can get Congress to adopt that kind of legislation,” he added.

Mr. Panetta’s comments, his most extensive to date on cyberwarfare, also sought to increase the level of public debate about the Defense Department’s growing capacity not only to defend but also to carry out attacks over computer networks. Even so, he carefully avoided using the words “offense” or “offensive” in the context of American cyberwarfare, instead defining the Pentagon’s capabilities as “action to defend the nation.”

The United States has nonetheless engaged in its own cyberattacks against adversaries, although it has never publicly admitted it. From his first months in office, Mr. Obama ordered sophisticated attacks on the computer systems that run Iran’s main nuclear enrichment plants, according to participants in the program. He decided to accelerate the attacks, which were begun in the Bush administration and code-named Olympic Games, even after an element of the

program accidentally became public in the summer of 2010.

In a part of the speech notable for carefully chosen words, Mr. Panetta warned that the United States “won’t succeed in preventing a cyberattack through improved defenses alone.”

“If we detect an imminent threat of attack that will cause significant physical destruction in the United States or kill American citizens, we need to have the option to take action against those who would attack us, to defend this nation when directed by the president,” Mr. Panetta said. “For these kinds of scenarios, the department has developed the capability to conduct effective operations to counter threats to our national interests in cyberspace.”

The comments indicated that the United States might redefine defense in cyberspace as requiring the capacity to reach forward over computer networks if an attack was detected or anticipated, and take pre-emptive action. These same offensive measures also could be used in a punishing retaliation for a first-strike cyberattack on an American target, senior officials said.

Senior Pentagon officials declined to describe specifics of what offensive cyberwarfare abilities the Defense Department has fielded or is developing. And while Mr. Panetta avoided labeling them as “offensive,” other senior military and Pentagon officials have recently begun acknowledging their growing focus on these tools.

The Defense Department is finalizing “rules of engagement” that would put the Pentagon’s cyberweapons into play only in case of an attack on American targets that rose to some still unspecified but significant levels. Short of that, the Pentagon shares intelligence

and offers technical assistance to the F.B.I. and other agencies.

Elisabeth Bumiller reported from New York, and Thom Shanker from Washington.

Wall Street Journal
October 12, 2012
Pg. 5

2. U.S. Readies Cyberdefense

By Julian E. Barnes and Siobhan Gorman

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Thursday a series of recent electronic attacks that have been tied to Iran, both in the U.S. and abroad, herald a "significant escalation in the cyberthreat," and warned the U.S. would aggressively pursue the perpetrators, in what cybersecurity experts called a veiled warning to Tehran.

The attacks, which have targeted U.S. and foreign banks, demonstrate the need for a more aggressive military role to defend U.S. networks and to retaliate against organized groups or hostile governments, Mr. Panetta said. That is especially the case if electric grids, water systems, transportation networks and other critical functions are targeted, he said.

"This is a pre-9/11 moment," he said in a speech in New York. "The attackers are plotting."

Mr. Panetta's comments represent his most urgent warning to date concerning the security threats, and provide new details about military planning to counter what he and others see as a growing threat in a call-to-arms over the computer-security issue, the first such call from a U.S. defense secretary.

Mr. Panetta didn't name Iran as a perpetrator of any particular plot, but identified Iran, along with China and

Russia, as countries active in cyberspace. His address notably included information that had been declassified for his remarks, delivered to the Business Executives for National Security, a trade group.

The declassified material included description of attacks that have taken place, including efforts to disable the websites of U.S. banks, which have affected about 10 banks in the past few weeks. The impact has varied, from slowing website response to disabling websites used for personal and business banking.

The defense secretary also noted a July attack against Saudi Arabia's state oil company, Aramco, in which a virus called Shamoon erased critical files on some 30,000 computers, replacing them with images of burning American flags.

U.S. officials have connected all these attacks to individuals in Iran. Based on these people's capabilities, U.S. agencies suspect they are connected to the Iranian government, according to former officials briefed on the matter. A senior defense official confirmed the U.S. has identified those responsible for the attacks.

Among the declassified information were descriptions of a variety of threats against critical infrastructure in the U.S. Mr. Panetta said the U.S. had learned that intruders gained access to computer control systems that "operate chemical, electricity and water plants and those that guide transportation throughout the country." Officials didn't say whether they had identified who was responsible for those intrusions, and Mr. Panetta didn't indicate there had been any consequences.

Mr. Panetta's public remarks were also more expansive than any other

U.S. official's to date on the Pentagon's development of cyberweapons. While defense officials were reluctant to call them "offensive weapons," He said the U.S. had developed capabilities to conduct cyberoperations. "If we detect an imminent threat of attack that will cause significant physical destruction or kill American citizens, we need to have the option to take action to defend the nation when directed by the president," he said.

The speech by Mr. Panetta comes as the U.S. is trying to forge new rules of engagement in cyberspace and create a level of deterrence by talking more openly about America's own capabilities—and showing a willingness to use them.

The Pentagon is spending \$3 billion annually to develop cybercapabilities, and officials have said they are trying to build a core of military service members who are adept at defending against cyberattacks and wielding cyberweapons.

"Just as DoD developed the world's finest counterterrorism force over the past decade, we need to build and maintain the finest cyber operators," Mr. Panetta said.

Cybersecurity experts said that while the speech didn't explicitly connect Iran to the attacks, the Iranians will understand that the U.S. is suspicious.

The effect of the speech is a veiled warning to Iran to back off, said James Lewis, a cybersecurity specialist with the Center for Strategic and International Studies who frequently advises the Obama administration. "The purpose is to signal to the Iranians: naughty, naughty," he said.

Defense officials said Mr. Panetta's speech was meant to be a call to arms, and was aimed at deterring others.

"One of the effects of talking about cyber more openly is that we are making clear to anyone who would try to do harm to the nation that we are paying attention and we are not going to take this sitting down," said a U.S. official.

Kristin Lord, an expert at the Center for a New American Security, applauded Mr. Panetta's discussion of cyberweapons and deterrence. But his remarks described the gravest attack Americans might face, not the most likely, she said.

"On 9/11, more than 3,000 people died in a couple hours," she said. "I think that is an unlikely scenario for a cyberthreat. It's not impossible. But it is unlikely, in the near term."

Washington Post
October 12, 2012
Pg. 5

3. Private-Sector Cyberattack In Mideast Was Worst Ever

Speech by Panetta is first official mention of strike on energy firms

By Ellen Nakashima

A computer virus that wiped crucial business data from tens of thousands of computers at Middle Eastern energy companies over the summer marked the most destructive cyberattack on the private sector to date, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said Thursday night in a major speech intended to warn of the growing perils in cyberspace.

Panetta did not say who was believed to be behind the so-called Shamoon virus. But he said the malware, which rendered permanently inoperable more than 30,000 computers at the Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco and did similar damage to the systems of Ras

Gas in Qatar, represented a “significant escalation of the cyberthreat.”

Such attacks have “renewed concerns about still more destructive scenarios that could unfold” against the United States, he said in an address to business executives in New York. He asked them to “imagine the impact an attack like this would have on your company.”

Panetta’s remarks on the Middle East incidents were the first from any administration official acknowledging them. In the attack on Aramco, the virus replaced crucial system files with an image of a burning U.S. flag, he said. It also overwrote the files with “garbage” data, he said.

The Middle East cyber-incidents have prompted great concern inside national security agencies, with the military’s Cyber Command adding personnel to monitor for the possibility of follow-on attacks. U.S. intelligence and Middle Eastern diplomats have said they believe Iran carried out those attacks in retaliation for a Western oil embargo against Tehran, but other experts have expressed skepticism.

“It’s clear a number of state actors have grown their cyber-capabilities in recent years,” said a senior defense official who was not authorized to speak for the record. “We’re concerned about Russia and China, and we’re concerned about growing Iranian capabilities as well.”

Although there has been debate over the roles of various government agencies in cyberspace, Panetta made clear that it would be the Defense Department’s responsibility to defend the nation in that realm.

Under new rules of engagement for cyberwarfare, he said, the Pentagon’s role would extend to defending

private-sector computers against a major attack. The conditions under which the rules would trigger a response are stringent, and must rise to the level of an “armed attack” that threatens significant physical destruction or loss of life, senior defense officials said.

Those cyber-rules, which represent the most comprehensive revision in seven years, are being finalized now, Panetta said. For the first time, military cyber-specialists would be able to immediately block malware outside the Pentagon’s networks in an effort to defend the private sector against an imminent, significant physical attack, The Post has reported. At present, such action requires special permission from the president.

Panetta said that “foreign cyber-actors are probing America’s critical infrastructure networks. They are targeting the computer control systems that operate chemical, electricity and water plants” and transportation systems. He said the government knows of “specific instances where intruders have successfully gained access to these control systems” and that the intruders are trying to create advanced tools to attack the systems to cause panic, destruction and death.

Panetta outlined destructive scenarios that worry U.S. officials: an aggressor nation or extremist group gaining control of critical switches in order to derail trains loaded with passengers or lethal chemicals; contamination of the water supply, or a shutdown of the power grid across large parts of the country.

The most destructive attack, he said, would be one launched against several critical systems at once in combination

with a physical attack on the country.

“The collective result,” he said, “could be a ‘cyber-Pearl Harbor’: an attack that would cause physical destruction and loss of life, paralyze and shock the nation, and create a profound new sense of vulnerability.”

Panetta also issued a warning to would-be attackers, saying the Pentagon is better able now to identify who is behind an attack. “Potential aggressors should be aware that the United States has the capacity to locate them and hold them accountable for actions that harm America or its interests,” he said.

The department has also developed the capability to conduct operations to counter threats to national security in cyberspace, he said, and would do so in accordance with international law.

Taking offensive action would be the role of the Cyber Command, launched in 2010. Panetta noted that the Pentagon is looking at ways to strengthen the organization, including streamlining its chain of command. A recommendation by senior military leaders to elevate it to full unified command status is under review, officials said.

Panetta, addressing the Business Executives for National Security, said cyber is now a major topic in nearly all his bilateral meetings with foreign counterparts, including in China a few weeks ago. China, which the United States has accused of being a top actor in cyber-economic espionage, is rapidly improving its capabilities, he said.

He reiterated the administration’s call for legislation to establish routine cyber-information sharing between the public and private

sectors, and to set security standards for companies.

“This is a pre-9/11 moment,” Panetta said, in a somber reference to missed signs of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. “The attackers are plotting.” He appealed to Congress and the private sector to join the government in improving the nation’s defenses to prevent a catastrophic cyber attack.

Battleland (Time.com)

October 12, 2012

Battleland: Where military intelligence is not a contradiction in terms

4. Panetta Sounds Alarm On Cyber-War Threat

By Mark Thompson

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta issued what he said is a “clarion call” Thursday for Americans to wake up to the growing threat posed by cyber war.

“The whole point of this is that we simply don’t just sit back and wait for a goddamn crisis to happen,” Panetta told Time. “In this country we tend to do that, and that’s a concern.”

Panetta came to the nation’s financial hub – New York City – to issue his battle cry. The city is the brightest bulls-eye on the American target for foes wishing to cripple the U.S. economy with computerized “worms” and “malware.”

“It is the kind of capability that can basically take down a power grid, take down a water system, take down a transportation system, take down a financial system,” he told Time editors. “We are now in a world in which countries are developing the capability to engage in the kind of attacks that can virtually paralyze a country.”

Aware his alarm might be drowned out by Thursday night's vice presidential debate, Panetta stopped by the magazine's midtown offices Thursday afternoon to detail his concerns to a Time editorial board gathering.

"Everybody knows what their iPhone can do, everybody knows what their computer can do, but I think there are too few people out there who understand the potential for the kind of attack that could cripple this country," Panetta said. "The American people just have to be made aware of that."

Panetta highlighted a series of attacks against U.S. companies, and also cited the so-called "Shamoon" virus attack on the Saudi Arabian state oil company, Aramco, that wiped out 30,000 of the companies computers two months ago. It created the image of a burning U.S. flag on the infected computers and "it basically burned them up," Panetta said. It marked, he said, a significant escalation in cyber warfare.

In the hour-long session with the magazine's editors, he also said:

– "We are facing the threat of a new arena in warfare that could be every bit as destructive as 9/11 — the American people need to know that. We can't hide this from the American people any more than we should have hidden the terrorism-attack threat from the American people."

– "The three potential adversaries out there that are developing the greatest capabilities are Russia, China, Iran."

– "Out of a scale of 10, we're probably 8. [But potential foes] are moving up on the scale — probably the others are about a 3, somewhere in that vicinity, but they're beginning to move up."

He also said the U.S. military is stepping up its offensive cyber war capability:

– "It has to be both. I think we have to develop the ability to conduct counter-operations against a country we know, or anticipate, that they're going to launch that kind of attack. So we have to have both defensive and offensive capabilities."

Beyond merely shutting down enemy systems, the U.S. military is crafting a witch's brew of stealth, manipulation and falsehoods designed to lure the enemy into believing he is in charge of his forces when, in fact, they have been secretly enlisted as allies of the U.S. military. The U.S. already has deployed such technology against Iran's nuclear program, the *New York Times* has reported.

Panetta said "potential aggressors" are already probing for weaknesses in U.S. cyber defenses. "They're beginning to exploit transportation systems, power systems, energy systems," he said. "Our concern is that in doing that kind of exploration, they're doing it for purposes of determining how could they attack."

The defense chief added that the Pentagon's still-fuzzy rules of engagement for waging war in cyber space are being tightened, and will allow the Pentagon to defend other U.S. networks, in and out of government, from such attacks. Major defense contractors see cyber defense as the next post-9/11 money pot — annual cyber spending is about \$12 billion.

In his speech Thursday night before Business Executives for National Security from the hangar deck of the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, Panetta warned of cyber terrorists derailing U.S. passenger trains — as well as trains laden with lethal

chemicals. He told Time's editors that both Congress and U.S. businesses have been hesitant to pass legislation — and make the investments necessary — to defend the nation's critical cyber infrastructure from attack. Part of the reason for speaking out, he said, is to generate public pressure on lawmakers to act.

That's one reason President Obama designated October as National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Private-sector companies seem willing to wait for an "electronic Pearl Harbor" to justify the investments they would need to make to protect their info-infrastructure. But Panetta and others fear that could be too late.

"Government depends on these networks to defend this country," Army General Keith Alexander, chief of U.S. Cyber Command, told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Oct. 4. "And it depends on the power grid to operate. So we have a vested interest in making sure that that works."

Panetta said his prior job — running the CIA — gave him a close-up look at the damage a cagey cyber warrior could do to the U.S. "I can tell you from my old job, the level of expertise that I saw — and I don't consider myself to be schooled in the art of knowing what the hell cyber systems [do] and how it all works — I'm not close to being there — but I saw people that are extremely bright, extremely able. They can develop the kind of malware that has tremendous potential to bring down systems very effectively," he said, making clear the U.S. is exploring offensive cyber weapons. "Frankly, in my past capacity, having seen that potential — and now, as secretary of defense, I'm now beginning to see how that is beginning to get in to the arena of other countries that

are saying: 'Whoa, this has got some great potential.'"

Reuters.com

October 11, 2012

5. U.S. Defense Chief Says Pre-Emptive Action Possible Over Cyber Threat

By Phil Stewart, Reuters

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. military could act pre-emptively if it detects an imminent threat of cyber attack, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Thursday, urging stronger action to bolster America's defenses against such plots.

In what was described by U.S. officials as the first major policy speech on cyber security by a defense secretary, Panetta lamented under-investment by America's private sector and political gridlock in Washington that he said stymied cyber security legislation. He said a presidential executive order was being considered "while we wait for Congress to act."

Addressing a gathering of business leaders in New York, Panetta warned that unnamed foreign actors were targeting computer control systems that operate chemical, electricity and water plants and those that guide transportation.

"We know of specific instances where intruders have successfully gained access to these control systems. We also know that they are seeking to create advanced tools to attack these systems and cause panic, and destruction, and even the loss of life," Panetta said.

Aggressors could derail passenger trains, contaminate the water supply or shut down the power grid in much of the country, he said.

Still, he cautioned the gathering of the Business Executives for

National Security that although awareness of the threat in America's private sector had grown, "the reality is that too few companies have invested in even basic cyber security."

To underscore the degree of concern, Panetta pointed to the August cyber attack on Saudi Arabian state oil company, ARAMCO, blamed on the "Shamoon" virus, and a similar one days later that struck Qatar's natural gas firm, Rasgas.

"All told, the Shamoon virus was probably the most destructive attack that the private sector has seen to date," he said.

Panetta called the "Shamoon" virus sophisticated and noted that in Saudi Arabia it replaced crucial system files with an image of a burning U.S. flag.

"More than 30,000 computers that it infected (at ARAMCO) were rendered useless, and had to be replaced," he said.

He also pointed to recent denial-of-service attacks on major U.S. banks, which delayed or disrupted services on customer websites.

One U.S. official, briefing reporters before the speech on condition of anonymity, said the United States knew who carried out the attacks cited in Panetta's speech, but declined to disclose that information.

The United States has long been concerned about cyber warfare capabilities in China, Russia and increasingly from Iran. But one problem has been the difficulty in knowing with certainty where a cyber attack hails from - making potential retaliation difficult.

Panetta said the United States had made significant investments in cyber forensics to address that problem "and we are seeing returns on those investments."

"Potential aggressors should be aware that the United States has the capacity to locate them and to hold them accountable for actions that may try to harm America," Panetta said, adding the Pentagon was finalizing the most comprehensive change to the rules of engagement in cyberspace in seven years.

He said that the Department of Defense had a mission to defend the country and would be ready to respond to attacks - or even the emergence of a concrete threat. Such pre-emptive action would occur only under certain, dire scenarios, he said.

"If we detect an imminent threat of attack that will cause significant physical destruction in the United States or kill American citizens, we need to have the option to take action against those who would attack us," he said.

Additional reporting by Andrea Shalal-Esa.

Yahoo.com

October 11, 2012

6. Official: US Blames Iran Hackers For Cyberattacks

By Lolita C. Baldor,
Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- A former U.S. government official says American authorities firmly believe that Iranian hackers, likely supported by the Tehran government, were responsible for recent cyberattacks against oil and gas companies in the Persian Gulf and that they appeared to be in retaliation for the latest round of U.S. sanctions against the country.

The former official spoke to The Associated Press shortly before Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, in a speech to business leaders in New York City Thursday night, became the

first U.S. official to publicly acknowledge the computer-based assaults. He called them probably the most destructive cyberattacks the private sector has seen to date.

And while Panetta did not directly link Iran to the Gulf attacks, he made it clear that the U.S. has developed advanced techniques to identify cyberattackers and is prepared to take action against them.

A U.S. official said the Obama administration knows who launched the cyberattacks against the Gulf companies and that it was a government entity.

U.S. agencies have been assisting in the Gulf investigation and concluded that the level of resources needed to conduct the attack showed there was some degree of involvement by a nation state, said the former official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is classified as secret.

"Potential aggressors should be aware that the United States has the capacity to locate them and hold them accountable for their actions that may try to harm America," Panetta said in a speech to the Business Executives for National Security. He later noted that Iran has "undertaken a concerted effort to use cyberspace to its advantage."

While Panetta chose his words carefully, one cybersecurity expert said the Pentagon chief's message to Iran in the speech was evident.

"It's not something where people are throwing down the gauntlet, but I think Panetta comes pretty close to sending a clear warning (to Iran): We know who it was, maybe you want to think twice before you do it again," said cybersecurity expert James Lewis, who is with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "I think

the Iranians will put two and two together and realize he's sending them a message."

He said Panetta's remarks were an important step by the U.S. because the Iranian cyberthreat "is a new dimension in 30 years of intermittent conflict with Iran for which we are ill-prepared. It's really important to put them on notice."

The cyberattacks hit Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco and Qatari natural gas producer RasGas using a virus, known as Shamoon, which can spread through networked computers and ultimately wipes out files by overwriting them.

Senior defense officials said the information was declassified so that Panetta could make the public remarks. The officials added that the Pentagon is particularly concerned about the growing Iranian cyber capabilities, as well as the often discussed threats from China and Russia. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the cyberthreats publicly.

In his speech, Panetta said the Shamoon virus replaced crucial system files at Aramco with the image of a burning U.S. flag, and also overwrote all data on the machine, rendering more than 30,000 computers useless and forcing them to be replaced. He said the Qatar attack was similar.

Panetta offered no new details on the Pentagon's growing cyber capabilities or the military rules of engagement the department is developing to guide its use of computer-based attacks when the U.S. is threatened.

He said the department is investing more than \$3 billion a year in cybersecurity to beef up its ability to defend against and counter cyberthreats, including

investment in U.S. Cyber Command. And the Pentagon is honing its policies so that any actions comply with the law of armed conflict.

"Our mission is to defend the nation. We defend. We deter. And if called upon, we take decisive action to protect our citizens," he said.

He added, however, that the department will not monitor American citizen's personal computers, or provide for the day-to-day security of private or commercial networks.

Panetta used the Persian Gulf attacks in his remarks as a warning to business community that it must embrace stalled legislation that would encourage companies to meet certain cybersecurity standards. And he is endorsing a planned move by President Barack Obama to use his executive powers to put some of those programs, including voluntary standards, in place until Congress is able to act.

"These attacks mark a significant escalation of the cyber threat," Panetta said. "And they have renewed concerns about still more destructive scenarios that could unfold."

U.S. authorities have repeatedly warned that foreign Internet hackers are probing U.S. critical infrastructure networks, including those that control utility plants, transportation systems and financial networks.

"We know of specific instances where intruders have successfully gained access to these control systems," Panetta told the business group. "We also know that they are seeking to create advanced tools to attack these systems and cause panic and destruction, and even the loss of life."

Business leaders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, were opposed

to the legislations, arguing it would expand the federal government's regulatory authority companies already struggling in the tough economy. The bill also encourages more information sharing between the government and private companies.

Panetta pressed the group to support the stronger cybersecurity measures, warning that failure to do so could have catastrophic consequences.

"Before September 11, 2001 the warning signs were there. We weren't organized. We weren't ready. And we suffered terribly for that lack of attention," said Panetta. "We cannot let that happen again. This is a pre-9/11 moment."

USA Today

October 12, 2012

Pg. 7

7. Report: Contract Fraud Puts U.S. Troops At Risk Of IEDs

Work to prevent hidden IEDs wasn't done

By Tom Vanden Brook, USA Today

WASHINGTON -- Afghan contractors responsible for preventing culverts from being used to hide roadside bombs on a major highway have falsely reported completing the work, putting American troops at risk, U.S. investigators revealed Thursday.

It's unclear if any U.S. troops have been killed or wounded because of the potential fraud, and a criminal investigation is underway. The announcement comes as U.S. troops have increasingly been targeted for attack by Afghan security forces.

"We've heard this tune again and again for the last 10 years," said Peter Singer, director of the 21st

Century Defense Initiative at the Brookings Institution. "Another sad illustration of how corruption in the realm of contracting not only led to lost taxpayer money but also potential lost lives."

A Navy contract officer first reported potential fraud involving work on the culverts, the U.S. command in Kabul said in a statement. The contractors were paid \$361,680 to place 125 metal grates over culverts to prevent insurgents from packing them with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the top cause of American casualties in Afghanistan.

"Given the increased risk of IED attack against U.S. forces resulting from the missing or defective culvert denial systems, we are providing this information to you for immediate action and dissemination to all relevant personnel," John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, wrote in a letter to Marine Gen. James Mattis, the head of U.S. Central Command, which oversees U.S. troops in the country.

Lt. Gen. Michael Barbero, director of the Pentagon's Joint IED Defeat Organization, said there "are obvious concerns with IEDs hidden in culverts" and several of the culvert-protection systems have been effective. "While JIEDDO was not involved in the funding or acquisition of these specific culvert protection systems in question, we remain concerned for the security of our troops from any IED threat."

The problem was first reported in August in one region of the country. That location was redacted in the letter released Thursday.

"However, we are concerned that this problem may be more widely spread

throughout Afghanistan," Sopko told Mattis in the letter.

Makeshift bombs account for 60% of deaths and injuries in Afghanistan, according to JIEDDO. From July through September, insurgents in Afghanistan, planted 4,346 bombs, a decline of 12% for the same period last year, it says.

The bombs killed or wounded 669 U.S. troops during that period, down from 1,356 a year ago. One reason for the decline is the rate at which troops find bombs before they explode. Last year, troops riding in vehicles detected just over half the bombs before they blew up. Now they are finding two-thirds. Troops on foot do even better: finding nearly four in five bombs before they detonate, a slight improvement over last year's rate.

Agence France-Presse

October 12, 2012

8. US Soldiers Say Still Focused On Afghan Mission

By Joe Sinclair, Agence France-Presse

As the US soldiers returned fire during an insurgent attack, an old man walked towards the platoon.

According to initial reports, one of the soldiers put a hand on his shoulder to encourage him to move to safety. At that point there was a massive explosion -- the old man had been wearing a suicide vest.

After 11 years of war, 2,135 US soldiers dead, their Afghan colleagues turning on them, and widespread predictions the conflict will end in failure, coalition forces could be forgiven for suffering a dip in morale.

But commanders and soldiers on the ground insist the challenges are bringing them closer together, even if the outcome of the war is

uncertain and the perception of what constitutes success has changed.

On September 26, the elderly suicide bomber killed Staff Sergeant Orion Sparks, 29, and Sergeant Jonathan Gollnitz, 28, near Puli Alam in Logar province, bordering the south side of Kabul, two more deaths in a mounting toll.

Their colleagues said the incident pulled the platoon together and after time to grieve and a memorial service, they were refocusing on the job in hand.

"Your platoon becomes like a family," said Sergeant Jesse Housby, 27, from Kansas, who was there when his two friends were killed.

"There are a lot of people around for you. You talk it over. You talk over what happened. You try to remember the good times you had, the people as they were. You want to be there for everybody else. You can't just quit on them."

He spoke softly on what was an emotional day -- after a memorial service at Forward Operating Base Shank, not far from where the incident took place.

The service was attended by about 300 men from 1st Squadron (Airborne), 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

Squadron Chaplain Captain Luke Sprinkle, 28, said that training hard and playing hard bound the men together.

"When you lose one of those guys, the family is torn apart, so the guys grieve," he said.

"In the past guys weren't given that opportunity to grieve. It was 'get over it, push forward harder, go faster'. But that's not how we handle it nowadays. It's important to make sure we are disciplined in the way we honour our fallen heroes."

The war effort itself has come under increasing fire this year, with predictions that the country will descend into civil war when coalition combat troops withdraw in 2014.

More than 50 NATO soldiers have been killed by their Afghan colleagues in so-called green-on-blue or insider attacks and controversies have raged over the burning of Korans and images showing US soldiers urinating on Taliban bodies.

Suicides in the US Army rose sharply in July, with 26 soldiers on active duty taking their own lives, the highest for any single month since monthly records began in 2009.

But Colonel Andrew Rohling, commander of 173rd, said the men were still up for the fight.

"I think as an organisation you have to believe in the mission. If you don't believe in the mission you shouldn't be here," he said.

"I think the role of our leadership for the brigade is to explain to the soldiers why this is still important and why we're still moving forward and this is not a lost cause.

"We are still in a position, regardless of green-on-blue, regardless of the Koran burnings, regardless of the videos of people urinating on dead bodies, we are still in a position by 2014 to give the Afghans a choice in how they want their future to be."

While once commanders talked of "winning" the war against the insurgency, now the emphasis is on doing as much as possible to enable the Afghans to take on the enemy by themselves, including the training up of a 352,000-strong Afghan army and police force.

But the partnership between NATO and Afghan troops has been hit by the surge in insider attacks and, on a more

mundane level, US soldiers often express frustration at the Afghans' willingness and ability to turn themselves into a professional force.

In some bases there is clearly a good relationship, but there are also concerns this is being put under strain as the US withdraws troops and resources, leaving the Afghans to fight more independently.

"I can't tell what's going to happen after 2014. Afghans have to choose that on their own," said Rohling.

"But we can put them in a position where they can make a choice that will lead them to long term stability. The question is will there be political will."

At the memorial, Housby said politics and wider issues did not have much of an impact for the men on the front line.

"Most of the time you're cut off from that kind of stuff. The bottom line is you don't really worry about that, you worry about the situation around you and keep your eye on the ball," he said.

New York Times
October 12, 2012

9. Pakistan: Drone Strike Kills 18

By Ismail Khan

An American drone fired missiles into a compound in the Orakzai tribal region on Thursday, killing 18 Afghans and wounding 4, a senior local official in the area said. Drone strikes are rare in Orakzai, which lies to the west of the regional capital, Peshawar. Most strikes in the C.I.A.-directed drone campaign occur along the border with Afghanistan, concentrated in North and South Waziristan.

USA Today
October 12, 2012
Pg. 7

10. Taliban Unrepentant After Attack On Pakistani Teen

Vows to kill young activist -- if she survives

By Hani Yousuf and Janelle Dumalaon, Special for USA Today

KARACHI, Pakistan -- The Taliban is threatening to finish off a 14-year-old Pakistani girl whom it shot for helping other girls go to school -- if she survives a wounding that has made her a hero to many Pakistanis.

Schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the head and neck, was airlifted Thursday to a military hospital for her own protection and remains in critical condition after the attack that also injured two of her friends.

Pakistanis in government and media have expressed outrage over the shooting that happened Tuesday as the girls were boarding a school bus for home. Malala was targeted for speaking out about girls' education in Swat Valley in northwestern Pakistan, an area where Islamists who oppose schools for girls have much control.

The Taliban admitted to the shooting and authorities have offered a reward of \$100,000 for the capture of the assailant. The Taliban says it's not done with Malala, according to Pakistan's *Dawn* newspaper, and has threatened her family and vowed to kill her.

The newspaper reported that Malala was unconscious and had been breathing with the help of a respirator for two days.

"It's absolutely devastating," said Ayesha Siddiqi, a social scientist and defense analyst in Islamabad.

In 2009, Malala wrote a blog under a pseudonym about living under Taliban rule for the BBC in the Urdu language â??

winning a national peace prize for her efforts.

"I realized the importance of education when it was banned in Swat," Malala said in an August interview with Black Box Sounds, a production company in Pakistan. "I wanted to be able to attend school again. I wished for peace in Swat and that I could go to school."

Until 2007, when the Taliban came to power in the Swat Valley, it had been a haven for honeymooners and was known as the Switzerland of Pakistan for its beautiful, mountainous landscape. But the group's hold over the region instilled fear in the population and made it dangerous for young girls to get an education: The Taliban burned down hundreds of schools for girls and threatened teachers and female students.

The terror organization was largely driven out of the region in a Pakistani military operation in 2009 — bringing relative safety to its residents.

"Since they were driven out of Swat, the Taliban has not been able to launch large-scale attacks on schools," said Anatol Lieven, professor at the war studies department of King's College London. "This was a one-off assassination (attempt).

"This proves that they have a presence in the Swat Valley and can carry out individual attacks. But the level of violence is nothing like it was before 2009."

Analysts said that they believed that the attack on Malala was the Taliban trying to show it still wields control in the area.

"The Taliban is clearly asserting themselves, saying A, we have not been eliminated, B, we can still target what we consider symbolic targets, and the message is that the government is not in control of the area," said Frederic Grare,

South Asia Program director at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a non-profit organization promoting international cooperation.

"Whether this is true or not is a different matter," Grare said. "But that's the message that they are trying to convey."

Analysts said that regardless of the revulsion over the attack, it won't lessen Taliban support in the short run.

"The news their supporters get is probably filtered through the Taliban sources so in some sense this girl may have been made out to be a monster or a sort of a Western agent," said S. Athar Hussain, director of the Asia Research Center at the London School of Economics. "At the same time, it was a show of force (by the Taliban) to say they can control people and for even a small disagreement with them, they can take revenge. It was demonstrating to the government and the public how powerful they are."

"Unfortunately, they are quite powerful right now," he added. "The fact that they can walk in and shoot the girl with impunity serves notice to everyone else that if you disagree you might meet the same treatment."

Peace activist Saeeda Diep, of the Institute for Peace and Secular Studies in Lahore, said that the government would protect people like Malala and her father -- who has also been threatened -- but that it was not a solution.

"The government needs to take action to get rid of extremists," she said. "She (Malala) was fortunate that she got the peace prize and people know her, but there are many victims like her. We can relate Malala to 100,000 girls in the country."

Still, in her August interview, Malala showed hope

in her country — a hope that Pakistanis want to preserve.

"When I see the current situation here, I thank God for the peace that prevails and that girls can attend school," she said. "My purpose is to serve humanity and fight for their rights."

Dumalaon reported from Berlin

Washington Post
October 12, 2012
Pg. 13

11. Syrian Jet Held Russian Arms, Turkey Claims

*Interception of airliner draws
Moscow deeper into escalating
crisis*

By Liz Sly

BEIRUT — Turkey claimed Thursday that it had found Russian munitions aboard a Syrian passenger jet forced to land in its capital, Ankara, drawing Moscow into the spiraling Syrian-Turkish tensions that are threatening to erupt into regional war.

Russia demanded an explanation from Turkey for the interception of the Syrian Air plane, which was escorted to the civilian airport in Ankara by Turkish F-16s on Wednesday and detained for nearly eight hours before being allowed to continue on its way without its cargo.

At a news conference Thursday evening, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that the cargo included unspecified "munitions," adding that an investigation was continuing.

"This was munitions from the Russian equivalent of our Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation being sent to the Syrian Defense Ministry," Erdogan told reporters in Ankara, in a reference to the state-

run manufacturer that supplies Turkey's military.

Turkish news reports indicated that the equipment included electronic communications devices, but a Turkish official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject declined to elaborate on what exactly was found, other than to describe it as "military equipment."

Syria denied that there was any improper cargo aboard the plane and accused Turkey of an act of "air piracy." All the items on board the plane had been properly registered, Syria's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "The cargo did not include any types of weapons or prohibited goods," it said.

The interception followed a week of sky-high tensions between Syria and Turkey that began with the deaths of five civilians in a Syrian mortar strike against a Turkish village. Turkey fired back, triggering five days of mortar exchanges that raised fears that a full-blown war could be imminent.

Although the artillery fire has ceased, the interception of the Airbus plane points to Turkey's growing frustration with the crisis unfolding along its borders as Syrian government forces battle rebels seeking to topple President Bashar al-Assad. Turkey has been inundated with nearly 100,000 Syrian refugees fleeing the violence, and stray shells had crashed into the Turkish side of the border several times in recent months, without causing casualties.

Turkish officials suspect, however, that though those earlier strikes apparently involved errant shells fired by Assad's security forces struggling to hold ground against rebel advances across northern Syria, last week's deadly strike was different

because six shells fired simultaneously landed in the same village, and the mortar rounds continued even after Turkey retaliated.

Erdogan criticized at home

Meanwhile, Erdogan's government has come under growing domestic criticism for a policy that has aggressively supported the Syrian opposition without demonstrating any discernible benefit for Turkey or, seemingly, accelerating Assad's departure.

"Turkey's Syria policy is on the verge of proving to be a complete fiasco," columnist Emre Uslu wrote in the Today's Zaman newspaper last week.

Turkey has hosted the leadership of the opposition Free Syrian Army in a camp near the border and has allowed rebel fighters to freely traverse its borders with weapons and funds. It has also called for a no-fly zone in northern Syria, similar to the one imposed over Libya last year, to provide a haven for refugees, deter them from entering Turkey and protect rebel gains in the area.

The Free Syrian Army continues to make advances, albeit slowly, against government forces in the north, and this week it claimed to have captured the key town of Maarat al-Numan in the northern province of Idlib. Battles are continuing there, but if the rebels prevail, they will have severed a vital supply route between the capital, Damascus, and the city of Aleppo, a strategic prize in the rebel effort to carve out a swath of liberated territory.

Yet Turkey's NATO allies have shown little appetite for any form of military intervention in volatile Syria, despite repeated assertions of support for Turkey and strenuous calls for Assad to depart. And Assad clings

to power in Damascus despite nearly 19 months of increasingly violent challenges to his rule, shored up by the unwavering support of Russia, Iran, the Shiite Hezbollah-led government in Lebanon and the Shiite-led government in Iraq.

In a reminder of the risk that the tensions emanating from the Syria crisis could provoke a regional conflagration, Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah asserted responsibility for dispatching a spy drone over Israel that was shot down by Israeli jets on Saturday. "This was not the first time and will not be the last," he said in a televised address broadcast in Lebanon on Thursday night.

It was, however, the first time that such a drone has penetrated Israeli airspace since 2006, when Israel and Hezbollah fought a brief, bloody but inconclusive war that many Lebanese fear could recur as the region polarizes over the Syria crisis. Israel said it was considering its response.

Interception angers Kremlin

Russia responded angrily to the challenge to the Syrian flight, which departed from Moscow, saying Turkey had endangered the lives of 17 Russians among the about 30 passengers aboard.

"Russia insists that the Turkish authorities explain their conduct regarding Russian citizens and prevent similar incidents in the future," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said Thursday. His statement did not address the contents of the cargo seized aboard the plane.

Russia does not deny that it is supplying weapons to Assad's government, but it also routinely notes that such supplies are not forbidden under international law. Russia, along with China, has repeatedly

blocked efforts at the United Nations to impose tougher sanctions against Syria that would prohibit arms transfers.

"Russia has delivered weapons — and this happened on the basis of long-existing contracts — to the legitimate, internationally recognized government of Syria," Vladimir Yakunin, an aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin, said in an interview Thursday with Germany's Der Spiegel.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said that the United States supports Turkey's decision to inspect the plane but that she did not have details about what was found.

"We would be concerned by any effort to supply military equipment to the Assad regime because it's clearly being used by the regime against their own people," she said.

Will Englund in Moscow and Ahmed Ramadan in Beirut contributed to this report.

Miami Herald
October 12, 2012
Pg. 11

12. Jordan: U.S. Forces Help Plan Shield

By Jamal Halaby, Associated Press

RUSSEIFEH, Jordan — From the edge of a steep mountain overlooking a desert compound built into an old rock quarry, machine gunfire echoes just outside hangars where U.S. special operations forces are training Jordanian commandos.

The Americans, who arrived in the kingdom a few weeks ago at the request of the Jordanians, are helping them develop techniques to protect civilians in case of a chemical attack from neighboring Syria, according to Jordanian officials.

On the Syrian border farther north, British military

officers recently assessed the dangers of rockets constantly falling on the kingdom and ways to shield the Jordanian population and Syrian refugees as President Bashar Assad widens his military offensive against rebel enclaves in the vicinity, according to Jordan-based Western diplomats.

Jordan's King Abdullah II has repeatedly discussed plans for reinforcing security along the Syrian border and expressed concern over Syria's chemical stockpiles in meetings with visiting Western allies, according to the two diplomats, who monitor Syria from their base.

They said it is believed that Abdullah has also been shopping around for an anti-missile defense system to shield his densely populated capital, Amman — home to nearly half of Jordan's population.

There is also talk of contingency plans for a quick preemptive strike if Assad loses control over his stock of chemical weapons in the civil war. The fear is that those weapons might otherwise fall into the hands of al-Qaida or Lebanon's Islamic militant group Hezbollah.

"There are dangers involved, and we have to ensure the safety of our country and the well-being of our citizens," a senior government official said in the first public Jordanian confirmation of the presence of foreign military personnel here. "We are benefiting from the experience of our allies as we prepare for the worst scenarios."

The presence of some 150 Americans at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center northeast of the capital is a clear message to Assad that Jordan's longtime Western allies stand ready to defend the country if it is dragged into the 19-month Syria conflict.

New York Times
October 12, 2012

13. Yemeni Officer At U.S. Embassy In Sana Is Shot Dead

By Nasser Arrabyee

SANA, Yemen — A senior Yemeni officer working in the United States Embassy in Sana was killed here in the capital on Thursday in an attack that security sources said bore the hallmarks of the regional franchise of Al Qaeda. The killing comes amid sharp American scrutiny of security at foreign diplomatic posts in the wake of the militant assault one month ago on the United States Mission in Benghazi, Libya, which killed Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other diplomatic personnel members.

Witnesses said that two men on a motorcycle drove up alongside the car of the embassy employee, Qassim M. Aklan, and one of them opened fire, killing him. Mr. Aklan was in the west of the city; the embassy is in the eastern part. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but militants have attacked official targets in Yemen in response to the government's campaign against cells of the regional franchise, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which American counterterrorism officials have called the terrorist network's most active affiliate.

The State Department condemned the killing as "vicious." Victoria Nuland, the department spokeswoman, said in a briefing: "He was a dedicated professional, and he will be greatly missed. We're coordinating closely with the Yemeni authorities to investigate this attack and help bring those responsible to justice."

But she said there was no certain information yet on whether he had been killed "for

reasons that had something to do with his job or reasons that had nothing to do with his job."

Mr. Aklan had worked at the embassy for 11 years, she said, and was out with a family member when he was shot. In his most recent position at the embassy, he was employed as a security investigator and liaison, a fairly common position in American embassies that means he could have been doing work that involved background checks or coordinating with the local police.

Ms. Nuland denied earlier reports from officials in Yemen that Mr. Aklan had been helping to look into the episode last month in which protesters, furious over a video produced in the United States that mocked the Prophet Muhammad, breached the compound's outer security perimeter. The demonstrations were part of wider regional unrest over the video that started in Cairo and spread to nearly 20 countries across the Middle East and beyond. It was during the start of that unrest that militants overran the Benghazi mission.

Asked at the briefing whether the State Department interpreted the timing of the killing — one month after the Benghazi attack — as significant, she said, "We just don't know."

Separately, the headless bodies of three soldiers were found Thursday near Marib, a city to the east, local security sources said.

Local residents said suspected operatives of the Al Qaeda's regional branch kidnapped the soldiers on Wednesday from the same checkpoint and returned their bodies there on Thursday morning after beheading them. Earlier in the week, Al Qaeda claimed responsibility for beheading three men whom

the group accused of spying for Yemeni intelligence while posing as Qaeda operatives. Their bodies were dumped in Marib.

New York Times
October 12, 2012

14. The West's Stalwart Ally In The War On Drugs: Iran (Yes, That Iran)

By Thomas Erdbrink

HIRMAN, Iran — Sitting next to the half-open door of a Russian-made Mi-17 transport helicopter, the general who leads the Islamic Republic's antinarcotics department pointed toward the rugged landscape of Iran's volatile southeast, where its border meets those of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"This is where the drug convoys for years crossed into our country, almost with impunity," Brig. Gen. Ali Moayedhi said in Persian. Below him, sharp-edged mountains gave way to desert lands scarred for mile after mile by trenches nearly 15 feet deep and concrete walls reaching a height of 10 feet.

The earthworks were built by his men in recent years in a determined effort to stop the most prolific flow of drugs in the world, a flood of heroin and opium bound for the Persian Gulf and Europe. Iran, as the first link in that long and lucrative smuggling chain, has for decades fought a lonely battle against drugs that its leaders see as religiously inspired, saying it is their Islamic duty to prevent drug abuse.

Nearly a decade ago Sistan va Baluchestan Province was an active battlefield, where more than 3,900 Iranian border police officers lost their lives fighting often better-equipped Afghan and Pakistani drug

gangs along nearly 600 miles of Iran's eastern border. In those days, smugglers with night-vision equipment would roll over the border in all-terrain vehicles with heavy weapons, actively engaging Iranian law enforcement forces wherever they found them. Security forces were at times dying by the dozen each day.

Now, the country has made a huge turnaround. Its forces are seizing the highest amounts of opiates and heroin worldwide, according to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which has advised Iran through out the period.

Tehran has long been shy about inviting reporters to these borderlands, particularly during the difficult years when the police were dying in droves. But now, with the prospect of negotiations with the West over Iran's disputed nuclear enrichment program, experts say, Iran's leaders are eager to grab credit for their efforts. During previous negotiations Iranian diplomats often pointed at Iran's high human costs from trying to stop the drug trade, and one influential political adviser, Hamid Reza Taraghi, said that Iran expected to be politically "rewarded" for its efforts.

Up in the air, General Moayedhi pointed to the Pakistani-Afghan side of the border, which he said once crawled with smugglers. "Do you see?" he exclaimed, pointing through one of the round windows of the helicopter. "There is nothing there!"

White watchtowers stood like chess pieces at mile intervals along the Iranian side of the border, facing the complete emptiness of Afghanistan and Pakistan. "The smugglers still can come all the way to Iran; nobody stops them on their side," Mr. Moayedhi said as his aviator

sunglasses reflected the intense sun. "But we have made it nearly impossible for them to enter our country."

Squeezed between a tall plainclothes officer and General Moayed's personal bodyguard, Antonino de Leo, the Italian representative for the United Nations drug office in Tehran, showered the Iranians with praise — "because they really deserve it," he said.

Mr. De Leo, in mountaineering shoes and backpack but remaining true to his stylish Italian background with a white flannel scarf around his neck, is very different from his uniformed Iranian counterparts. But, he said, "I need these people and they need me."

At the same time that the Iranians were netting eight times more opium and three times more heroin than all the other countries in the world combined, Mr. De Leo said, his office was the smallest in the region and he had to cut back some programs, like drug sniffer dog training, because Western nations had cut back on financing.

"These men are fighting their version of the Colombian war on drugs, but they are not funded with billions of U.S. dollars and are battling against drugs coming from another country," Mr. De Leo said.

While his colleagues in Afghanistan received \$40 million a year in direct aid for counternarcotics programs, he said, they treated 100 addicts last year while Iran was treating hundreds of thousands. His budget was barely \$13 million stretched over four years. "It's all politics," he said.

When the helicopter landed here at a fort in this desolate landscape it was too close to a party tent, blowing off its roof and setting off panic among the soldiers who had spent four

days preparing for the V.I.P. visit.

Zahra, the 11-year-old daughter of one of the 3,900 policemen killed on border duty, welcomed the general, saying she missed her father but was happy that he was with God. Her mother, dressed in a black chador, nodded approvingly.

Armed soldiers stood guard as General Moayed and Mr. De Leo inspected intercepted packages of opium, heroin and morphine. "There are 100,000 NATO troops based in Afghanistan," the general said. "Why are they not stopping the flow of drugs into our country?"

He gestured at the latest models of pickup trucks, used to patrol the long straight roads along the fortified walls, and said Iran could easily fend for itself. "But as others sleep comfortably in other countries, my men are here during the hot desert days and cold nights, trying to intercept drugs that would otherwise end up in the West. We are making a sacrifice."

Mr. De Leo, who is one of the very few Westerners in Iran in direct, daily contact with top law enforcement officials, said his office was under pressure from Western activist groups like Human Rights Watch, which have expressed alarm over the sharp increase in hangings of convicted drug dealers.

Hundreds have been executed in recent years, making Iran the second leading country in the world in death sentences, after China. Mr. De Leo said that he, too, was bothered by the increase in executions, but that the punishments were meted out by Iran's judiciary, not by its police force.

And though Iran routinely puts drug dealers to death, it also has a range of modern

drug rehabilitation programs for its hard-core addicts, who number 1.2 million by official count. The addicts are treated as patients and given methadone and other treatments rather than prison sentences, Iranian families of addicts and foreign diplomats say.

General Moayed said that he did not concern himself with politics, and that in any case he considered the fight against drugs to be a religious duty.

"But," he said, "imagine if we just let all those drugs flow freely through our country, toward the West. I guess then the world would understand what we have been doing here for all these years."

Yahoo.com

October 11, 2012

15. Japan: US Pact Deters Clash With China Over Isles

By Matthew Pennington, Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- Japan said Thursday its security alliance with the U.S. is an important deterrent against conflict breaking out between China and Japan over disputed islands.

Tensions between the Asian powers have spiked since Japan last month nationalized some of the tiny islands in waters between the two countries. Japan's ambassador to Washington Ichiro Fujisaki said that he trusts the leaders of China and Japan will avoid a war.

Fujisaki said the issue should be dealt with calmly and without resorting to force or coercion, or allowing nationalist sentiment to get out of control.

"It's important that we should not make an emotional issue out of this. We should calmly discuss where we can on these issues and always should

respect law," the ambassador told the Brookings Institution think tank. He reiterated Japan's stance that the sovereignty of the island is not in dispute.

The dispute over the uninhabited islands, called Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China, set off violent protests in China that targeted Japanese-owned businesses. A widespread call in China to boycott Japanese goods threatens its economic recovery after last year's devastating earthquake.

Fujisaki acknowledged China had controlled the unrest, but said the dispute should not prompt "business or economic action by one country against another."

The U.S. has called for "cooler heads" to prevail in the dispute. It has nearly 50,000 forces based in Japan. Washington takes no position over the islands' sovereignty but says they are covered by a 1960 security treaty requiring the U.S. to aid Japan if attacked.

Fujisaki said the security arrangements constitute "an important deterrence."

Washington Post

October 12, 2012

Pg. 13

16. U.S. Looks For Solution To Mali Crisis

International effort in Somalia could serve as model, official says

By Anne Gearan and Craig Whitlock

The Obama administration is contemplating broad military, political and humanitarian intervention to stop a slide toward chaos and Islamic extremism in Mali, the top State Department diplomat for Africa said Thursday.

The international but largely U.S.-funded effort to expunge al-Qaeda-linked militants and restore political

order in Somalia could present a model for Mali, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Johnnie Carson said.

Since 2007, the United States has spent more than \$550 million to help train and supply an African proxy force of about 18,000 soldiers in Somalia, which has brought a measure of stability to the war-torn country for the first time in two decades.

Although the United States has not committed to replicating that approach in Mali, Carson and others are holding up the routing of the al-Shabab militia and conducting of elections in Somalia as a template for actions elsewhere.

"It's a model that should be reviewed and looked at as an element for what might be effective in that part of the world," Carson said in an interview, "but it's not there yet."

The Somalia comparison offers the clearest view yet of U.S. thinking about the growing terrorism threat from Mali, a landlocked West African country the size of Texas that has imploded politically since a military coup in March.

As in Somalia, the threat to the United States and other countries from Mali is wrapped in a larger problem of lawlessness, poverty, tribal friction and weak governance.

Somalia adopted a provisional constitution in August, and a new federal government was formed after years of chaos that had fueled terrorism, piracy and famine. Security has slowly improved under the proxy force, which is led by the African Union but bankrolled and trained by the United States, European Union and United Nations.

Carson said the internationally backed plan for Somalia's political reconstruction was working

because the country's neighbors, the United States, E.U. and United Nations had subscribed to a common set of goals.

He cautioned that a regional and international consensus would be required for the approach to work in Mali. "There needs to be that kind of a clear understanding there as well," he said.

Mali's military quickly lost control of the country after the March coup, which was led by a U.S.-trained army captain. Since then, Islamist militias affiliated with al-Qaeda have imposed strict Sharia law in northern Mali and, along with Tuareg rebels, declared an independent state. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have fled their homes.

Last week, the remnants of Mali's central government, France and west African nations led calls at the United Nations for the creation of an African-led force to help Mali confront the militants.

The Economic Community of West African States has said it is willing to send about 3,300 troops to Mali if it gets the backing of the United Nations and Western countries.

The United States has been leery of a French-backed proposal for quick deployment of an internationally backed African force in Mali, preferring a more comprehensive plan that addresses underlying political problems and tribal divisions.

"We want to make sure that it is an African-led international response, and also be very clear that whatever is done out there should in fact be well planned, well organized and well financed," Carson said.

The U.S. diplomat has also said that it is important to enlist support from Mali's northern neighbors, especially Algeria and Mauritania, which share a long border with the troubled

country and have also fought their own long-running Islamist insurgencies.

U.S. officials have ruled out sending American combat troops to Mali but have said the Obama administration could help train, equip and transport an intervention force drawn from other African countries.

"There will be a need for some type of security response," Carson said, adding that the United States could support one if it is drawn up correctly.

New York Times
October 12, 2012

17. White House Appoints Veteran Retired Diplomat To Serve As Senior Envoy In Libya

By Michael R. Gordon

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration said on Thursday that it had recalled a veteran diplomat, Laurence Pope, who retired from the Foreign Service 12 years ago, to serve as the senior American envoy in Libya.

Mr. Pope has been appointed as the chargé d'affaires, and arrived in Tripoli, Libya's capital, on Thursday. His appointment comes one month after the death of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens in an attack on the American diplomatic compound in Benghazi. The White House has yet to nominate a new ambassador, and Mr. Pope will be the top ranking American diplomat in Libya until that post is filled.

"It was very clear that we needed to get a senior leader to Libya on an urgent basis in advance of the White House having an opportunity to nominate a permanent successor for Chris," a State Department official said, referring to Mr. Stevens. The

move, the official said, would send a signal that the United States was still committed to a strong relationship with Libya.

With the presidential election approaching, the White House was not expected to rush to nominate a new ambassador, a move that would lead to confirmation hearings that might re-energize an already politicized debate over the United States mission in Libya and the security of American personnel there.

The decision to recall Mr. Pope from retirement also reflects the fact that there is a shortage of senior Arabists in the State Department. In 31 years as a diplomat, Mr. Pope served as the ambassador to Chad and as the political adviser to Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, the head of the Central Command, the American military headquarters that oversees operations in the Middle East.

General Zinni, who is now retired from the military, said Thursday that Mr. Pope is fluent in Arabic, knows the Middle East and Africa well, and is "extremely respected out there by the leadership."

Mr. Pope, 67, is known not only for his diplomatic career but also for how it ended.

In a move that provoked the ire of Congressional conservatives, General Zinni voiced his skepticism in 2000 about legislation that called for aiding the Iraqi opposition in its quest to topple Iraq's president, Saddam Hussein. The general warned that encouraging Ahmad Chalabi and other members of the Iraqi opposition to take military action against the Iraqi leader would lead to a "Bay of Goats," a play on the disastrous invasion attempt by Cuban exiles in 1961.

When the Clinton administration later nominated

Mr. Pope to serve as ambassador to Kuwait, his years advising General Zinni became an issue for Senator Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican who was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Pope noted in a blunt article he later wrote titled "Advice and Contempt."

Mr. Pope recalled in the article that he had been confronted by an aide on the committee, Danielle Pletka, who argued that he must either have agreed with General Zinni about the inadvisability of arming the Iraqi opposition or was an ineffective adviser. "In the latter case," he recalled, "there was a chance of salvaging the nomination if I would provide the committee with written evidence of my opposition to Zinni's position."

"As Faustian bargains go, this one wasn't hard to resist," Mr. Pope wrote. "I told her that I would testify about my own views until the cows come home, but I wouldn't talk about my advice to General Zinni."

After being told by committee staff members that the panel would not support his nomination, he wrote, he decided to retire from the Foreign Service in 2000.

Ms. Pletka, who is now vice president of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative policy research group, dismissed the episode. "I have very little recollection of Mr. Pope," she said Thursday. "It must have been his choice to leave the Foreign Service."

Mr. Pope's new job does not require Senate confirmation.

AOL Defense
(defense.aol.com)
October 11, 2012

18. Intelligence Chief Hints At New Spy

Satellites; Biggest Change In 30 Years

By Colin Clark

ORLANDO: The United States has boosted into orbit new spy satellites that mark "the most significant change to our overhead architecture in at least three decades," said the head of military intelligence, Mike Vickers.

Vickers also said these National Reconnaissance Office's satellites comprise "a truly integrated system of systems for the first time." Sadly for you, dear reader, the well-known leader of the first war in Afghanistan – the one against the Soviets – did not share any other details. Instead, he delivered his speech and left the conference at speed.

I exchanged emails with a Pentagon source who offered this additional bit of information: "He was speaking about a new, but classified, overhead architecture that will provide greater persistence than ever before."

For those who don't speak intelligence-speak, that means the satellites can see more because they can look at an area for a longer period of time. Another source well versed in national security space issues was somewhat stumped by Vickers' comments but offered this insight:

Perhaps, the source said, this is a reference to the new practice of sending aloft sensors and other instruments that share a ride on a satellite, known as hosted payloads. The classified sensors would go up on a commercial or on a government satellite. In the case of the NRO, the sensors would probably be highly classified electro-optical sensors (ones that take pictures an analyst can look at), very sensitive radars, or sensors that collect data from cell phones, telephones and radios, known as signals intelligence (SIGINT).

This practice allows the NRO to place sensors in orbits it might not otherwise gain access to and lets it hide sensors in places a prospective enemy might not take into account.

(Some folks will know about this because Bety Sap, the new director of the NRO, will present a highly classified briefing on the topic Friday, Vickers said.)

In addition to the improvements in the NRO's spy satellites, Vickers told Geoint attendees that there's increasing work on machine-to-machine intelligence tracking. For example, a sensor surveys an area for a target and automatically notifies another sensor when the target is apparently spotted. A human is notified, confirms that the machine has found the target and tells the machine to automatically track. It does and, given the order, kills the target. In the intelligence world this bears the wonderful rubric of "activity-based intelligence."

Couple ABI with recent comments by former NRO Director Bruce Carlson that signals intelligence collection has gotten so refined and is now so fast that if a suspect cell phone or radio is found it can be tracked and is accurate enough that it can be used for targeting. Call your mistress, Sheikh al Qaeda, and if intelligence can confirm it's you with a high probability, then they might find you, track you and kill you with much of the work done by sensors and computers.

Vickers went on to make an apparent reference to what most people call Long Range Strike (aka America's new strategic bomber), which he called "the operational manifestation" of the strategic shift to the Pacific.

Senior Air Force officials say the bomber will be manned, but capable of flying unmanned. And LRS will probably include

UAVs as part of its system. That UAV may be what Vickers envisioned when he said the US will develop and field "robust and resilient ISR capabilities" that can operate in so-called A2AD areas (anti-access/active denial), namely areas where the enemy has anti-aircraft weapons and the ability to jam.

That would mean a major shift from today's Predator, Global Hawk and other UAVs (Remotely Piloted Aircraft for Air Force folks), which cannot operate in denied airspace because they can be jammed and pretty easily shot down. But, as Vickers didn't offer many details, we are just trying to fill in the holes.

DefenseNews.com
October 11, 2012

19. DoD Pushes Forward On Critical U.S. Army Radio Program

By Paul McLeary

The Pentagon's chief acquisition officer has signed off on an order for 3,726 battlefield networking radios from General Dynamics, company officials told Defense News. The first 800 radios will be shipped to the U.S. Army by the end of this month, they said.

The low-rate initial production order for the AN/PRC-155 two-channel Manpack will be in excess of \$250 million when completed, according to Chris Marzilli, president of General Dynamics C4 Systems.

The decision to move ahead with the program comes just months after a scathing report by the Pentagon's director of operational test and evaluation identified a host of issues with the radio, calling it "not operationally effective" when using a common communications waveform.

After the radios were evaluated at the White Sands Missile Range in May, Michael Gilmore, Pentagon director of operational test and evaluation, wrote that the system had issues running the Single Channel Ground Airborne Radio Systems (SINCGARS) waveform. The memo also stated that the radios running SINCGARS suffered from "poor, garbled, and unintelligible" voice quality and were able to transmit data "at less than half the range achieved by legacy SINCGARS radios."

In response to the report, the Defense Acquisition Board pushed the low-rate procurement decision from July until October to allow the Army and the contractor time to make fixes and conduct further evaluations at the electronic proving ground at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

Those evaluations concluded on Oct. 3, and Marzilli said that when it came to SINCGARS range performance, "we more than exceeded the 10-kilometer requirement [for vehicle-mounted]. In fact, they were getting a maximum of 36 kilometers" when the radio was mounted in a vehicle.

At White Sands, Army evaluators were only able to reach about five kilometers, something Marzilli chalks up to the electronic "noise" at the test range, which interferes with signals.

Tests at Fort Huachuca further proved that Manpack was capable of sending information up to 26 kilometers for dismounted soldiers, "which blows away the requirement of five kilometers," Marzilli added. Furthermore, the Manpack was achieving SINCGARS call completion rates of about 94 percent, with Soldier Radio Waveform

completion rates in excess of 95 percent. The radio was also able to achieve operational availability rates that exceeded the 96 percent requirement.

The radios are part of the troubled, multibillion dollar Joint Tactical Radio System family of radios, which is envisioned as a way to network the battlefield from the dismounted soldier up to distant division headquarters. The radios are a key component of the Army's Capability Set program, which has already shipped packages of radios, sensors and communications devices to two brigade combat teams from the 10th Mountain Division slated to deploy to Afghanistan in 2013.

The two-channel Manpack radios were originally scheduled to deploy with the brigades, but radios made by Harris will take their place in the first two brigades, with the General Dynamics radio currently scheduled to be shipped to the third brigade in June 2013 and backfill the previous brigades when enough General Dynamics systems are ready.

Los Angeles Times
October 12, 2012

Pg. 8

20. Women Fight For Combat Roles

Two female soldiers sue the Pentagon, saying that excluding them from battle posts is unconstitutional.

By David Zucchino

BRISTOW, VA. -- Last year, Army Col. Ellen Haring thought she was finally getting her dream job. She was selected to supervise female soldiers who search and interview Afghan women in combat zones for special operations units.

Haring spent three months training at Ft. Bragg, N.C. Then, just before she was to

deploy to Afghanistan, she got a phone call from a staff officer. "Ma'am, we don't think you're qualified," she recalled him saying.

The job went to a lower-ranking male officer. Haring was outraged. "How could I not be qualified?" she said. "I'd already been thoroughly vetted just to get to Ft. Bragg."

No one would give her a reason, she said. But she believed it was her lack of experience in combat, denied because she's a woman.

In May, Haring -- West Point graduate, career officer, wife of an Army colonel, doctoral student -- and another female Army Reserve soldier sued the military. The lawsuit says the Pentagon's exclusion of women from most combat positions is unconstitutional.

It alleges that the policy restricts women's earnings, promotions and retirement benefits. The suit asks that all assignment and training decisions be made without regard to gender.

Women make up 14.5% of 1.4 million active-duty personnel. Earlier this year, the Pentagon opened 14,000 jobs to women, including the positions of tank mechanic and artillery crew member. But the vast majority -- 150,000 positions -- remain closed.

The Pentagon says it is trying to overcome what it calls "physical challenges" to ending the exclusion policy. Among them: personal privacy, the cost of separate facilities for women and combat's physical demands.

"The department is committed to removing barriers that prevent service members from rising to their highest potential, based on each person's ability and not constrained by gender-restrictive policies," said Lt. Col. Todd Breasseale, a Pentagon spokesman.

On Sept. 13, the Pentagon filed a motion to dismiss the suit. It said the president and Congress "are entitled to substantial deference" in areas of military expertise.

Elizabeth Hillman, president of the National Institute of Military Justice, said the suit was well-drafted, with strong plaintiffs. But it faces "a steep hill" because federal courts have been reluctant to challenge long-standing military policies, she said.

Haring contends that with no front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, women have essentially been serving in combat for years. More than 140 have been killed and 800 wounded.

Haring, 50, contacted the University of Virginia about its Molly Pitcher Project -- named after a woman said to have served in the Revolutionary War -- after learning it was seeking plaintiffs for the first suit challenging the ground combat exclusion. Ultimately, the project selected Haring and Command Sgt. Maj. Jane Baldwin of Florida, who contends she didn't get two positions as a result of the policy.

Haring and Baldwin are decorated, high-ranking soldiers who could demonstrate that they were denied promotions and opportunities, said Ann Coughlin, who directs the project.

Haring weighed the potential costs. "I know you just have to be brave enough to face the criticism, to challenge authority, to face down the stigma of being a social outcast," she said recently at her home in Bristow, Va.

Haring, a mother of three, served 13 years on active duty, including stints as an executive officer, brigade commander and instructor at a prestigious

officer training school. Since 1992, she has served in the Army Reserve, reporting for regular duties while pursuing a doctorate in conflict analysis and resolution at George Mason University.

Throughout her 28-year career, the lawsuit alleges, "the career options available to Col. Haring, as compared to a man who graduated in her [West Point] class, have been limited." The exclusion policy "institutionalizes the unequal treatment of women," said the suit, filed pro bono by a Washington law firm.

That discrimination culminated for Haring with the special operations job, she says.

"There was this open acknowledgment that they knew they were violating the combat exclusion policy," Haring said of her training at Ft. Bragg. "It was decided, well, we're going to support this program and not worry about the exclusion policy."

In "a cruel and potentially deadly irony," the lawsuit says, women on the cultural teams were blocked from combat arms training designed to help protect them in battle. The lawsuit also says the military circumvents the exclusion policy with semantics by "assigning" women to combat units rather than "attaching" them.

Haring challenges a Pentagon contention that women are not able to carry a wounded 200-pound man off the battlefield. She said her husband and son, a weightlifter, both said that neither would be able to accomplish that feat.

"We're being held to standards that most men can't meet," she said.

Relaxing in her living room, Haring sighed when asked how long it might take the military to open all combat slots to women.

"I think eventually we'll remove all barriers," she said. "But it may be a long time coming if we don't put our foot down and demand it right now."

Yahoo.com

October 11, 2012

21. Fort Hood Suspect's Beard Raises Bias Questions

By David Dishneau,
Associated Press

FORT BELVOIR, Va. -- An Army appeals court on Thursday questioned whether a military judge exceeded his authority in ordering the suspect in the 2009 shooting rampage at Fort Hood, Texas, to remove his beard or be forcibly shaved.

Judges on the U.S. Army Court of Criminal Appeals in northern Virginia also delved into a claim by Maj. Nidal Hasan's lawyers that the military judge who issued the order is biased and should be replaced. The American-born Muslim psychiatrist claims he grew his beard for religious reasons.

Hasan's murder trial in Texas is on hold while his lawyers pursue the appeal. Hasan, 42, faces the death penalty or life in prison without parole if convicted in the Nov. 5, 2009, attack that killed 13 people and wounded more than two dozen others at the Army post about 130 miles southwest of Dallas.

Hasan's attorneys also want the appeals court to overturn six contempt-of-court rulings Col. Gregory Gross issued against Hasan for having a beard at pretrial hearings this past summer, when he first showed up in court with facial hair.

Army grooming standards prohibit beards but allow for religious exceptions. Gross denied Hasan's request for such an exception. He found that Hasan's claims of religious

sincerity did not outweigh prosecutor's arguments that Hasan grew the beard just before his August trial date so witnesses wouldn't be able to identify him in court.

Six of the seven judges on the appeals court questioned lawyers for both sides Thursday, mainly about the limits of Gross' authority and the perception of impartiality.

Defense attorney Capt. Kristin McGrory said military judges have no authority to order forcible shaving. She said military regulations authorize it for inmates only for safety and health reasons.

She also disputed Gross' assertion that the beard would be a disruption during Hasan's trial.

"The fact that he's wearing a beard does not materially interfere with the course of the trial," McGrory told the panel.

Chief Judge Col. William Kern repeatedly asked government attorney Capt. Kenneth Borgnino whether Gross had put his impartiality in question by issuing the order instead of leaving it up to Hasan's chain of command. Hasan hasn't been charged with a grooming violation.

Judge Col. Steven Haight asked Borgnino: "Is it appropriate for the command to virtually punt the forcible shaving issue over to the military judge?"

Borgnino said Gross was merely controlling his courtroom. He said a bearded Hasan at trial would be as offensive to the judge and jury as an obscene signboard.

"This isn't a situation where he's missing a button off his uniform," Borgnino said. Allowing the beard, he said, "would be to cede control of the courtroom to the whims of the accused."

It's unclear when the court will make a decision, which

could be appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

The Fort Hood rampage was the worst mass shooting ever at a U.S. military installation. Hasan remains jailed.

Angela K. Brown in Fort Worth, Texas, contributed to this report.

NavyTimes.com

October 11, 2012

22. CNO: 2 Carriers In 5th Fleet Through March

By Sam Fellman, Staff writer

The Navy's top officer said Thursday that the service will continue stationing two aircraft carriers in 5th Fleet through March, a standing requirement that has pushed the fleet's pace and one that officials are tracking closely.

"Our country needs us and we are ready to respond," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert said in response to a sailor's question in as part of a virtual all-hands call. The average carrier strike group deployment will be eight to 8½ months long, Greenert said.

"The ships that have responded up to date have been in their deployment or sustainment phase," Greenert said. "For deployments past March, we'll look very closely on where those ships stand in their training and maintenance cycles. The [operational tempo] of ships and individual sailors will be significant factors as we look at this."

Greenert's comments came during an online q-and-a session co-hosted by Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens two days before the Navy's 237th birthday. Sailors' questions, submitted via email and online chat, addressed issues ranging from long deployments and increased

op tempo to uniforms and manpower policies.

In response to one question, Greenert said the Navy plans to ask Congress for further authority to use 15-year retirements — which were granted to sailors separated via enlisted retention boards earlier this year — but that the service had no plans to use the authority.

“I want that tool in the tool bag to balance the force as necessary, but I don’t think we need it right now,” Greenert said, adding that efforts like the ERBs and Perform-to-Serve had successfully reduced the number of overmanned ratings, boosting promotion rates.

On the subject of uniforms, Stevens moved to squelch speculation that the Navy may dump the blue-and-gray version of the Navy Working Uniform, an idea first put forward by a uniform board member in a Navy Times cover story.

“We have no plan to discontinue the NWU Type 1 uniform,” Stevens said. “We understand these are not perfect uniforms in all situations, but the plan is to continue to wear the NWU and become experts in where and how we wear it.”

Reuters.com
October 11, 2012

23. U.S. Air Force Probing Glitch With Launch Of GPS Satellite

By Irene Klotz, Reuters

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida -- The U.S. Air Force on Thursday launched an investigation into a glitch with the flight of an unmanned Delta 4 rocket that carried a GPS navigational satellite into orbit last week.

The Global Positioning System 2F spacecraft reached its intended orbit despite a problem with the rocket’s upper-stage engine, which is built by

Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, a unit of United Technologies Corp that is being sold to GenCorp.

Future flights of the Delta 4 rocket are on hold, pending results of the investigation, the Air Force said. The Delta 4 rocket is built by United Launch Alliance, a joint venture of Boeing Co and Lockheed Martin Corp.

General William Shelton, who heads Air Force Space Command, said the Air Force planned a rigorous investigation to determine the root cause of the anomaly with the upper-stage engine.

The Delta 4’s second-stage RL10 engine unexpectedly reduced its thrust during the Oct. 4 launch, United Launch Alliance reported after the liftoff from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.

“The onboard inertial guidance and flight control systems compensated for the lower thrust conditions and the Delta second stage delivered the satellite to the proper orbit,” ULA said in a statement.

ULA and Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne are also investigating the incident.

The probe could also affect launches involving ULA’s Atlas 5 rockets, which use a similar RL10 second-stage engine. An Atlas 5 is scheduled to launch around Oct. 25 with the military’s X-37B spacecraft, a robotic miniature space shuttle that has made two prior flights.

Aerospace Daily & Defense Report
October 12, 2012
Pg. 4

24. USMC Emphasizing Special Ops And Cyber

While the U.S. Marine Corps is drawing down its force levels to reflect the nation’s pullback from overseas military operations, the service also is

shifting focus to more covert or cyber-based operations, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus says.

“As the Marine Corps is getting smaller, there are two areas in which it is bigger,” Mabus said Oct. 9 during a luncheon hosted by the National Aeronautic Association. “One is special operations and the other is cyber.”

The importance of cyber and electronic warfare (EW) operations to the Marine Corps is becoming increasingly apparent.

One document — the recently declassified and released fiscal 2010 budget justification for military intelligence programs that was provided to Congress — underscores the importance of other Marine Corps EW efforts, such as the Radio Reconnaissance Equipment Program (RREP).

RREP “identifies and acquires low-cost, lightweight, man-packable, signals intelligence/electronic warfare nondevelopmental items/ Commercial-Off-The-Shelf equipment for the Marine Radio Battalions’ Radio Reconnaissance Teams (RRT) and signals intelligence elements of Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (Marsoc).

“The RREP suite of equipment provides RRTs and Marsoc the ability to conduct environmental survey and categorization of signals without operator input while conducting a patrol,” the document says.

The document also highlights the importance of developing an overall Navy strategy for unmanned systems, and gives a nod to Marine Corps UAV systems such as the RQ-14 Dragon Eye, RQ-11 B Raven B UAS, ScanEagle and the RQ-7 Shadow.

Like the Marine Corps, the Navy also is looking for ways to boost its cyber capabilities, Mabus says. “We are very serious about that,” he says. “We are a networked organization.”

He acknowledges the Navy and the rest of the U.S. military have been outpaced in the cyber realm by commercial and other interests. “We started out a little behind,” he says. “But we are catching up.”

-- Michael Fabey

Washington Times
October 12, 2012
Pg. 5

25. Lawmakers Fret Anew About Gitmo Detainees

Trial transfers to U.S. at issue as suspects in Cole bombing, 9/11 attacks remain incarcerated

By Kristina Wong, The Washington Times

Twelve years ago Friday, the USS Cole was the target of a suicide-bomb attack that killed 17 sailors while the warship was moored in the Gulf of Aden.

Today, the victims' families and friends still await justice, as the accused mastermind of the attack - Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri - awaits trial at the U.S. military detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Next week, al-Nashiri's case and that of the alleged 9/11 attack planners will inch toward trial, with another round of pretrial hearings that will determine how the eventual trials will be deliberated.

In the meantime, congressional Republicans have expressed suspicions that the Obama administration intends to move Guantanamo detainees to the Thomson Correctional Center, a currently unused detention facility in northwest Illinois.

Congress blocked a 2009 effort to make such a transfer by the administration, which had tried to close the Guantanamo center and have its detainees tried in civilian court.

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said Oct. 2 that the Thomson facility would house U.S. inmates, not Guantanamo detainees.

But in an Oct. 4 letter to President Obama, Rep. Peter T. King, New York Republican, said recent Justice Department proceedings in Illinois "clearly tips your Administration's hand that it intends to proceed with a reckless plan of transferring terrorist detainees to the U.S. Homeland."

Rep. Harold Rogers, Kentucky Republican and chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said in an Oct. 2 statement: "The Obama administration has been trying for years to open Thomson prison in order to transfer terrorists from Guantanamo Bay into the United States. Congress has vehemently denied this request and has refused funding for the prison at every step of the way. ...

"This back door move by the Obama administration to open Thomson and reject the will of Congress and the American people is dangerously irresponsible, and will be met with the full and unfettered opposition of the Appropriations Committee."

Justice Department spokeswoman Tracy Schmalzer confirmed that the administration is reprogramming funds to purchase Thomson, but said it is a low-cost solution to alleviate overcrowding in existing federal prisons and that federal law prevents the transfer of Guantanamo detainees.

"Specifically, it will be used for administrative

maximum-security inmates and others who have proven difficult to manage in high-security institutions," she said Thursday in an email to The Washington Times.

Pretrial motions hearings at Guantanamo have been beset by delays to accommodate the detainees' observance of Ramadan, and by unforeseen events such as Tropical Storm Isaac, which forced the postponement of August's motions hearing until this month.

Many more rounds of pretrial hearings are expected for USS Cole and 9/11 cases before they go to trial due to the number of court motions filed - the majority of them by the defense.

In general, defense attorneys in both cases argue that the military commissions system - under which the detainees are prosecuted, judged and sentenced by military officials - is biased toward the government and ensures the trials will end in convictions.

Human rights groups, which also have filed motions, argue that the system is illegitimate and that defendants should be tried in federal court under civilian rules of law.

Prosecutors argue that the military commissions system is better suited to handle terrorism cases than federal courts, in part due to the amount of classified material involved in the cases.

There are 166 detainees at Guantanamo - 34 of whom have been designated for prosecution, including those accused in USS Cole and 9/11 attacks, and 46 who could be detained indefinitely. Eighty-six have been cleared for release by a task force consisting of CIA, Defense Department, Justice Department and FBI officials.

Danger Room (Wired.com)

October 11, 2012

Danger Room: What's Next In National Security

26. Senate Democrat Launches New Study On 'Housing Gitmo Detainees In The U.S.'

By Noah Shachtman and Spencer Ackerman

The idea of closing down Guantanamo Bay and transferring its detainee population to the United States was supposed to be dead. But someone forgot to tell Congress' independent research agency. At the behest of a powerful senator, it's exploring "the ability to house Guantanamo detainees in the U.S.," according to an internal document acquired by Danger Room. The results are slated for publication eight days after the presidential election.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is working on a report identifying "policies, plans and procedures" for transferring detainees from Guantanamo Bay and exploring Defense and Justice Department "facilities in the United States that are most likely to meet the requirements for housing Guantanamo Bay detainees." The study seeks to detail "the characteristics and capacity of U.S. correctional and detention facilities" as well as "potential challenges that could affect the transfer of the Guantanamo Bay detainees to facilities within the U.S."

President Obama's efforts to close Guantanamo Bay ran into a buzzsaw of congressional opposition early in his administration. Funding bills for a host of applicable federal agencies, since signed into law by Obama, forbid transferring detainees from Guantanamo into any prison or detention center inside the United States. Congress has also blocked cash for

an administration proposal to purchase a maximum-security prison in Illinois to house the detainees (although last week, the Justice Department quietly purchased that very prison).

"These are similar questions to the ones we asked back in 2008 and 2009," a former U.S. official tells Danger Room. "Maybe with different leadership and different times come different answers."

All of which makes it more notable that Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the California Democrat who chairs the influential Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, requested the GAO study. Feinstein prompted the agency, apparently as far back as September 2008, to ask about the technical requirements for keeping the suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay detained and whether "existing facilities" inside the U.S. have the "capacity to hold the current Guantanamo Bay population." The report, Feinstein's office confirms, is slated for completion in November, although it would not substantively comment further.

"We do have work underway on Guantanamo and alternative detention options, but it is not complete. We expect to be done by mid-November. That work will need to undergo a classification review, so it is unclear when it might be publicly available, if at all," GAO spokesman Ned Griffith tells Danger Room.

The fact that GAO is conducting the study points to the biggest obstacle to closing Guantanamo: Congress. But conducting a study and getting recalcitrant legislators to actually embrace shuttering the detention center are two very, very different things. "There's no plausible way to close Guantanamo without bringing

at least some, and maybe many, detainees from there into the United States, and Congress has blocked off that option," says Matthew Waxman, a former detainee policy official at the Pentagon.

Guantanamo Bay is simultaneously a unique facility and a technologically derivative one. It's unique in the sense that no U.S. detention facility outside the battlefield of Afghanistan exists solely to house people suspected of terrorism. Relatedly, no U.S. facility outside of a warzone detains anyone without charging them with a crime, as Guantanamo does, although Guantanamo Bay also hosts military tribunals for the relatively few detainees whom the Defense Department has charged with violations of the laws of war.

Technologically speaking, however, Guantanamo Bay *isn't* unique. Two of its most recent pseudo-jailhouses ("jail" is for convicted felons, which Gitmo detainees aren't) are modeled on federal maximum-security prisons inside the United States. The camera suites, remotely operated doors and cell structure of the highest-security Guantanamo "camps," as they're known, aren't fundamentally different from those of federal prisons. There are also lower-security detention lodgings, such as Camp 4, where docile detainees live communally, rather than in single cells, although even their workouts are constantly monitored.

What makes Guantanamo Bay unique is politics. President Obama signed an executive order during his first days in office pledging to close the facility within a year. Those plans foundered after meeting sustained opposition from legislators wary of bringing suspected terrorists to

prisons inside the United States, particularly to the Thomson Correction Center, an Illinois maximum-security prison that the administration proposed to purchase and transform into what critics dubbed "Gitmo North." Most significantly, legislators — sparked by an aborted plan to try 9/11 conspirators in federal court — wrote provisions into funding bills for the Defense and Justice Departments stipulating that no cash could go to moving any Guantanamo detainees onto American soil.

Nearly 800 people have been detained at Gitmo. Of those, only 166 remain. Which raises issues about how low the detainee population can go before it's no longer worth holding the suspects in Cuba. "Many people recognize it's an unsustainable thing, having a 2,000-person task force taking care of a dwindling number of detainees," says one former U.S. official. "You wind up with a Rudolf Hess problem," referring to the former Nazi who spent decades as the sole inmate of Berlin's Spandau Prison.

Waxman adds, "We're further from closing Guantanamo than we were a few years ago, in that although the number of detainees there has declined, there are new legislative restrictions that make it legally and politically harder."

U.S. military officials have improvised with the few detainees they've collected since Obama took office, such as sticking a Somali suspected terrorist in the hold of the *USS Boxer* for several weeks in 2011. Last year, Adm. William McRaven, the overall commander of U.S. special operations forces, urged Congress to come up with a permanent system for what to do with terrorism detainees.

Without either a clear plan for closing Guantanamo or for opening an alternative detention facility, U.S. forces have basically given up on trying to hold terror suspects long-term — unless they're picked up in Afghanistan. It's one of the major reasons why the Obama White House has embraced drone strikes; there's no place to put a live detainee. A former U.S. official speculates that may be part of the push for this new GAO report. "If you're not going to open up Guantanamo to new transfers, then what's the capacity in DOJ or DOD to handle new detainees?" he asks.

The Justice Department actually went through with purchasing Thomson for \$165 million earlier this month. But its rationale for the purchase has nothing to do with Guantanamo Bay. "No Guantanamo detainees will be moved to Thomson," says Justice spokeswoman Tracy Schmalzer. "Acquiring Thomson is being done in the interest of public safety to help alleviate the critical problem of overcrowding in our federal prisons."

It's unclear what impact the GAO study can have on the debate over Guantanamo. A Feinstein aide declined to explain his boss' motivations for seeking the review. While Guantanamo hasn't come up very much in the presidential campaign, GOP nominee Mitt Romney gave Obama a sarcastic compliment last year after Obama "finally reversed himself on Guantanamo and terrorist trials." Romney said in his previous presidential bid that "We ought to double Guantanamo."

Matt Lechrich, a White House spokesman, declined to speculate on the prospects for actually closing Guantanamo. "But our position that it

should be closed because it's in America's national security interest is unchanged," Lechrich says. It might take more than a GAO study to convince Congress, though.

Reuters.com

October 11, 2012

27. Romney Would Boost Pentagon Spending, Cut Civilian Workers: Advisers

By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters
WASHINGTON --

Republican Mitt Romney would accelerate spending on new Navy warships, cut the Pentagon's civilian workforce and speed up development of new weapons systems if he wins the 2012 presidential election, two advisers said on Thursday.

Dov Zakheim, who was Pentagon comptroller under President George W. Bush, and his son, Roger Zakheim, who is on leave as deputy staff director of the House Armed Services Committee, sketched out Romney's priorities at a meeting with reporters.

They said he would fund 15 warships a year -- up from nine in the latest request from the Obama administration -- as early as 2015; focus on development of a new bomber, and continue work on the Lockheed Martin Corp F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Romney insisted during the first presidential debate with President Barack Obama that he would increase military spending, but big weapons makers like Lockheed, Boeing Co, and Northrop Grumman Corp are anxiously awaiting details.

Defense stocks could get a short-term boost if Romney wins the election, said Byron Callan, an analyst with Capital Alpha. But he said even a Republican president would have to deal with the

widening federal deficit and conservatives who are more concerned about cutting deficits than expanding defense.

"I don't know if I'd start a business model that starts to think about industry growth just yet," Callan said.

Romney has vowed to halt \$500 billion in defense budget cuts due to start taking effect on January 2, reductions that would come on top of \$487 billion in cuts to proposed spending that are already slated to take effect over the next decade.

The White House also opposes the cuts, but says it is up to Congress to find other ways to cut the deficit.

The advisers said Romney would dedicate 4 percent of U.S. gross domestic product to the Pentagon's base budget.

They also challenged Democratic estimates that Romney planned a \$2 trillion buildup in military spending. "We're not going to come with this massive supplemental," Dov Zakheim said, noting that current military spending was about 4.2 percent, including funding for the war in Afghanistan.

Dov Zakheim identified two of Romney's closest advisers on defense as former Navy Secretary John Lehman and former Missouri Senator Jim Talent, both of whom have advocated for increased military spending. But he said Romney was someone who gathered a lot of disparate opinions before making up his own mind.

"If you look at the debate, look at the speeches, this is a guy that you can't pin down," he said, noting that Romney was not closely identified with neo-conservatives who opposed modest defense cuts proposed by former Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

He said the former governor of Massachusetts

also interacted with two of the biggest U.S. defense contractors, Raytheon Co, which is based in Waltham, and BAE Systems, which employs many Massachusetts residents at its Nashua, New Hampshire plant, Zakheim said.

Both advisers said Romney would bring his business expertise to running the Pentagon, increasing competition, accelerating development efforts that often drag on for a decade or more, and using larger orders to lower unit costs.

For instance, they said, he plans to fund three Virginia-class submarines a year instead of two, a move that would be welcomed by shipbuilders General Dynamics Corp and Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc.

They said a growing economy would help fund the extra spending, and said Romney would also shift money out of "entitlement" programs in favor of defense.

At the same time, they said Romney would give companies more "predictability" by halting cuts in defense programs, cutting the Pentagon's expanding civilian workforce and what he has described as its "bloated bureaucracy," while also tackling rising military health care costs.

Boston Globe
October 12, 2012
Pg. 1

28. For Brown, Politics And Military Entwine

Guard duty adds to opportunities

By Glen Johnson, Globe Staff

Tanned, his hair cropped closely on the sides, and dressed in fatigues, Senator Scott Brown looked every bit the dashing soldier coming home from war when he

returned from National Guard duty in Afghanistan a year ago.

His wife, Gail Huff, raced to meet him in a crowded terminal at Logan International Airport. Photographers captured their kiss and long embrace.

The scene has played out across Massachusetts countless times during the past decade as Guard units have returned from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Brown, though, returned not as a veteran of a protracted period of duty but after a 14-day Army National Guard assignment he requested. During that span, he spent seven days in Afghanistan itself.

While there, he participated in training exercises with the troops, but he also spent considerable time meeting with generals, ambassadors, and other leaders, an experience more akin to his role as US senator.

A picture of his reunion with Huff subsequently appeared in Brown's reelection announcement video and reappeared in a television ad and web video.

And during his latest debate with Democratic challenger Elizabeth Warren Wednesday night, Brown noted that he "served in Afghanistan" as he protested potential cuts in military spending.

During his 32 years of Guard service, which started long before he entered the halls of government, Brown has established a strong record bolstered by consistently high officer evaluations.

But since being elected to the Senate in 2010, his service has taken on a political patina, with the Guard providing him unusual opportunities that he has used as fodder for his campaign, as well as the flexibility necessary to participate in one of the

country's most hotly contested elections.

As citizen-soldiers, all Guardsmen are required to serve one weekend a month and two weeks each summer.

In 2011, Brown was granted a request to fulfill his summer training commitment in Afghanistan, sending him to a combat zone for the first time in his military career just as his reelection campaign was ramping up.

This year, with the election in full gear, Brown was in a position to serve his summer duty in a piecemeal fashion, in single days spread beyond just the summer months, allowing him to avoid an extended absence from the campaign trail.

The two days he was known to have served in August coincided with the start of the Republican National Convention, the type of overtly partisan event he has avoided as he runs against Warren in what remains heavily Democratic Massachusetts.

In the past two years, the senator has also won a much-coveted promotion to colonel, one notch below general.

He secured it after a surprising transfer to the Maryland National Guard. Veteran observers of the Maryland Guard say it is the first time the state's main judge advocate general corps, the military's equivalent of a law firm, has had four colonels attached to it. Military manning documents authorize it for one.

At the same time, Brown -began working out of the Pentagon, as assistant to the chief legal counsel for the National Guard Bureau, serving in the same office complex as the top general overseeing the Guard. These are the same people and the same agency Brown helps oversee as the ranking member, or

top Republican, on the Senate Armed Services subcommittee with jurisdiction over the National Guard.

Brown's dual roles and transfer have created a rare phenomenon: a US senator from Massachusetts sworn as a military officer to uphold the constitution of Maryland and, should the need arise, to take orders from Governor Martin O'Malley of Maryland.

Brown's uniform bears a Guard emblem for Maryland, a state where he does not live, work, or fulfill his duty.

A central theme

Since his upset victory in a January 2010 special election to fill the seat that had been held by the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Brown has made it clear how central his Guard service has been both to his legislative agenda and reelection efforts.

The day the senator returned from Afghanistan, he called on Congress to support his legislation making it easier for US officials to break contracts with businesses caught funneling taxpayer resources to US enemies.

He also has organized job fairs for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, and filed what was known as the Stolen Valor Act to penalize those who might lie about their military records.

During his reelection campaign, Brown has released radio ads talking about his duty in Afghanistan and the ways it has made him a more informed senator. He has run another ad showing him in uniform, along with a picture of his airport reunion with Huff.

Brown declined to be interviewed for this article, instead saying he would let his officer evaluations speak for themselves.

Those documents were released by the military in

January after a May 2011 public records request by the Globe. He also wrote extensively about his Guard duty in his 2011 memoir, "Against All Odds."

Brown initially enlisted in 1979, after being inspired by the example of local soldiers rescuing stranded motorists in the Blizzard of '78.

"I wanted to serve," he wrote in his memoir. "Here were men whom I could admire, men whose job it was to protect others as the normal course of their lives."

Brown rose from the infantry to an Airborne-qualified soldier and his current assignment as a judge advocate general officer, the military version of an attorney.

Early on, he helped soldiers heading off to war prepare their wills and powers of attorney. He then became the military's top defense lawyer in New England, handling cases involving soldiers who got in trouble with civilian authorities or were going to be kicked out of the military for having drugs, for example.

"I got the reputation as the lawyer to seek out if there was a problem, because I always tried to go the extra mile for my clients, the soldiers," Brown wrote.

Today, Brown spends his time in the Pentagon, up to 39 days a year, focused on legislative matters and working on policy coordination between Guard units in each of the 50 states.

Lawmaker role noted

As his political career progressed from the Wrentham Board of Assessors to the Massachusetts Legislature and on to the US Senate, his military evaluations and promotional and award recommendations also began to note his dual role as a lawmaker.

"LTC Brown demonstrated consummate professionalism

and selfless dedication to duty by putting aside his weighty senatorial obligations to serve the needs of the Army," wrote a captain who recommended him for a medal for a speech Brown delivered in 2010.

While Brown twice had Guard assignments overseas -- to Paraguay for a week in 2005 for a judicial awareness program, and to Kazakhstan for about two weeks in 2007 for an emergency preparedness exercise. He has never been deployed for combat duty.

Brown was once assigned to an infantry brigade but transferred out in the mid-1990s. "By then, I was married with two kids," he wrote in his memoir. "It was becoming less enticing to spend weekends in the woods."

From 2006 to 2009, amid the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, Brown was assigned to another brigade that could have been ordered into combat. But in March 2009, while still a state senator, Brown transferred, taking a nondeployable headquarters position at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Milford.

His former brigade was called to active duty and deployed to Afghanistan in February 2010.

If Brown had still been in the unit, it is not certain that he would have been deployed. Slots for specific skills such as those possessed by JAG officers are filled as demands warrant.

Since 1991, in Operation Desert Storm, five JAG officers from Massachusetts have deployed to a combat zone, including one to Iraq from 2007 to 2008 and four to Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012.

Such military attorneys do everything from handling questions about the rules of engagement to drafting contracts with local civilian suppliers.

Sought active duty

In his memoir, Brown said that he has served where - ordered.

"For myself, and for other friends in the Guard, there's a feeling of somehow not doing our part because we have not been called to extended active duty," he wrote. "For years, I've wished that I, too, could go over and serve, but, like all soldiers, I go where I am ordered."

In 2010, the first year Brown was both a US senator and member of the Guard, he requested to serve his summer duty in Afghanistan during the August congressional recess.

"Doing so will help me better understand our ongoing mission in that country and provide me firsthand experience for my duties on the Senate Armed Services, Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs committees," the senator said in the statement.

He was gone for two weeks, but spent part of that time in predeployment training and traveling to and from Afghanistan.

His emotional airport reunion with his wife earned him the headline in the Boston Herald, "Love & War."

Brown told reporters at Logan that the soldiers he visited were worried about the pace of President Obama's troop drawdown in Afghanistan. He spoke of the 116-degree heat as he ate with the troops while dressed in full body armor.

An attack in Kabul

About seven months later, Brown also wrote, for a seven-page afterword attached to the paperback edition of his memoir, about enduring a mortar attack while at Bagram Airfield near Kabul.

"Another blast came, this one maybe 700 or 800 meters away, close enough to glimpse the bright flash of light," Brown said. "A bunch of us took off

at a dead run toward a nearby bunker. Three hours later, my flight was in the sky."

This past February, Brown's Guard career took a swift turn, when he transferred to the Maryland Guard and simultaneously landed a plum job at the Pentagon.

Brown could have gotten the same job as a member of the Massachusetts Guard, where he had served for more than three decades, but he said he decided to leave the state because of political meddling by Democrats and scrutiny by local news media. He once accused the Patrick administration of asking Guard officials about his ability to serve as a soldier while a federal elected official.

"I didn't want to politicize my record," the senator told the Globe at the time. "I wanted to go to a place where I would be treated on the merits. ...I didn't want any reference that, 'Scott got special preference.'"

The Pentagon job, Brown said, came about after he saw a posting while browsing the National Guard website. The job requirements meshed almost perfectly with his position in the Senate and the workweek schedule it requires in the capital.

"Stature in community should be such as to enhance the capability to represent the NGB at the highest civilian levels," the job posting said.

The posting required the rank of colonel, which Brown had not yet attained, but spokesmen explained that JAG officers are often allowed to work one rank above or below their current grade because of the uniqueness of their skill and the relatively few people available to perform it.

Brown won the job and executed the transfer quickly, by either military or civilian standards.

The job was posted Feb. 1, and the application period closed Feb. 20. By Feb. 22, Brown had transferred to the Maryland Guard and beaten out five other applicants to become assistant to the National Guard Bureau's chief counsel, Colonel Christian Rofrano.

The 5,000-person bureau coordinates policies between Guard branches in each state and works from offices in Arlington, Va. About 50 bureau members are JAG officers, and 13 of them, including Rofrano and Brown, are stationed at the nation's military nerve center, the Pentagon.

Brown's posting has placed him in the upper echelons of the military, where his duty sometimes intersects with his budgetary and oversight roles as a senator.

For ease of communication, a spokeswoman said, the Pentagon office in which he works is near that of General Frank Grass, who oversees the National Guard and serves on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

On July 19, Grass was called to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee because he needed to be promoted from lieutenant general to four-star general, the rank assigned to the head of the National Guard Bureau.

During that hearing, Brown, as senator, lobbied against possible cuts in pay that he, as a Guardsman, receives.

"I would just ask you to look long and hard at that because ... I think [it] will be a deterrent for our Guard and Reserve to serve," Brown told Grass and two other generals also awaiting promotion. "So, I just want you to be aware of that. It is something I am aware of, and I would ask you to take a look at it."

The senator concluded his statement by saying, "I look

forward to being honored to vote for all of you."

A week later, Grass moved up in rank as the Senate gave unanimous consent to a bevy of promotions. Among the more than 800 other officers also getting promoted in the same vote was Brown himself.

Once Brown had landed his new job in the Pentagon, he resumed a promotional process through the Maryland Guard that he started in Massachusetts.

"As a soldier, I'm privileged to serve alongside the very best men and women our nation has to offer," Brown said in a statement announcing his promotion to colonel.

He is now paid a salary of \$22,171 annually. That is based on \$16,892 for weekend duty and \$5,279 for summer duty.

Promoted in August

Brown's promotion came at the beginning of August, a month in which he has typically fulfilled his annual summer training commitment.

But based on Brown's role with Rofrano, his commander, he now fulfills both his weekend and summer training duty as the colonel decides, not necessarily confined either to weekends or the summer months.

Brown's staff declined to say which days he served either this summer or during other times of the year, except to say he is current on his commitments. In September, he held two campaign fundraisers in Washington after one of his duty days at the Pentagon.

A review of Brown's senatorial and campaign schedule shows just five days in August when he did not have campaign events in Massachusetts or when the Senate was not in session in Washington.

Brown himself publicly declared he was performing Guard duty on just two days, Aug. 28 and Aug. 29,

which coincided with the start of the Republican National Convention.

When he skipped all but the convention's final day, it prompted questions about whether he was ducking an event where some of his party's more extreme elements were on public display.

His supporters had a ready retort.

"As I understand it, he has to serve his nation in the National Guard," said former lieutenant governor Kerry Healey, who was cochairwoman of the Massachusetts convention delegation.

When Brown finally arrived in Tampa, the senator also cited his Guard obligations as among the reasons he had to turn down a request to play a more prominent role in the proceedings.

"I have my own race, and I have my own life, as you know," Brown told reporters. "There's only so many days in the year to be a dad and a husband and a soldier and a senator and then run for reelection."

Yahoo.com

October 11, 2012

29. KBR Gets Army Logistics Contract

HOUSTON (AP) — Defense contractor KBR Inc. said Thursday that it has been picked as one of the main contractors on a project that gets Army equipment ready for deployment.

KBR said the work will be done at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Ala., and in Afghanistan and Kuwait. The first task orders are expected after Oct. 15, the company said.

KBR said that as the prime contractor, it will be able to bid on individual task orders from the Army. The contract replaces another Army contract

and consolidates several other supply and logistics contracts for the Army. The ceiling for the whole program is \$23.5 billion over five years.

KBR does engineering and construction work and provides services for defense as well as government and utility customers.

Shares of KBR Inc. rose 29 cents to close at \$29.92 on Thursday.

Washington Post
October 12, 2012
Pg. B4

Federal Diary

30. Security, Intelligence Workers Get Whistleblower Protection

By Joe Davidson

President Obama has done what Congress has not — extend whistleblower protections to national security and intelligence employees.

A Presidential Policy Directive issued Wednesday says employees “who are eligible for access to classified information can effectively report waste, fraud, and abuse while protecting classified national security information. It prohibits retaliation against employees for reporting waste, fraud, and abuse.”

With this directive, Obama hands national security and intelligence community whistleblowers and their advocates an important victory in their frequently frustrating efforts to expand protection against retaliation for federal employees who expose agency misconduct.

Protection for intelligence and national security workers was not included, as advocates had hoped, in the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act that passed the House last month and now awaits action

in the Senate. Retaliation can come in different forms, including dismissals, assignments or revocation of security clearances.

Obama instructed agencies, including the CIA, to establish a review process, within 270 days, that allows employees to appeal actions in conflict with the directive that affect their access to classified information.

Angela Canterbury, director of public policy for the Project on Government Oversight, an advocacy group, said in an e-mail that “this unprecedented Presidential Policy Directive is leveled at the endemic culture of secrecy in the intelligence community (IC) and the dearth of accountability it fosters. The directive prohibits retaliation for protected disclosures by IC employees; prohibits retaliatory actions related to security clearances and eligibility for access to classified information and directs agencies to create a review process for related reprisal claims; mandates that each intelligence agency create a review process for claims of retaliation consistent with the policies and procedures in the Whistleblower Protection Act (WPA); provides significant remedies where retaliation is substantiated, including reinstatement and compensatory damages; and creates a review board of Inspectors General (IGs) where IC whistleblowers can appeal agency decisions.”

Advocates say these measures not only protect free-speech rights but also make unauthorized leaks of sensitive information less likely by creating a proper avenue for whistleblowers.

But for all it does, the directive “only is a landmark breakthrough in principle,” according to another

organization, the Government Accountability Project (GAP).

“Until agencies adopt implementing regulations, no one whose new rights are violated will have any due process to enforce them,” said Tom Devine, GAP’s legal director. “Further, there are only false due process teeth on the horizon.” Regulations to enforce whistleblower rights will be written by the same agencies that routinely are the defendants in whistleblower retaliation lawsuits, according to GAP.

Both Canterbury and Devine praised Obama’s action, while calling on Congress to make his order the law.

“President Obama has kept his promise to national security whistleblowers . . .,” Devine said in an e-mail. “This law is no substitute for congressional action to make the rights permanent, comprehensive and enforceable through due process teeth.”

Obama’s promise was in the administration’s September 2011 “National Action Plan” for transparency and open government. It said “if Congress remains deadlocked, the Administration will explore options for utilizing executive branch authority to strengthen and expand whistleblower protections.”

National security whistleblower protections are not in the legislation now before Congress because the Republican leadership of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) opposed them.

Committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) “dragged his feet, never held a hearing, and never fully explained his concerns,” Canterbury said. “This put the House co-sponsors in a tough spot. They ultimately removed all of the intelligence-related provisions

so that Rogers would relinquish his hold and they could move the bill.”

Under Rogers, according to Devine, “for two years HPSCI has refused to engage in serious discussions on national security whistleblower rights, either with the public or even Republican offices seeking a consensus.”

Rogers’s committee staff did not respond to requests for comment.

Though happy about Obama’s directive, whistleblower advocates are not totally pleased with the way the administration has, in some cases, treated whistleblowers. Canterbury said she is “truly gratified and grateful” for the directive, but noted “we also have been critical of this Administration’s prosecutions of so-called leakers under the Espionage Act. We have raised concerns about the possible infringement of rights and the chilling effect on would-be whistleblowers of the aggressive prosecutions and certain post-WikiLeaks policies.”

Obama’s directive does a lot to balance those concerns. At the same time, Canterbury, Devine and other advocates will continue to push Congress to follow the president’s lead by approving legislation with national security whistleblower protections.

“The President has done his share with this landmark breakthrough,” Devine said. “Congress needs to finish what he started.”

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31. Not All That It Can Be

The myth of American military superiority.

By Winslow Wheeler

You hear it routinely during congressional events involving defense issues, when a defense secretary wants to protect his budget (or his legacy), and when candidate Barack Obama or his operatives defend the administration's national security record: The American armed forces are "the best in the world." It has become such an unremarkable bit of conventional wisdom that the comment is usually prologue to some other point the speaker wants to make.

Many think that because the United States spends multiples of any conceivable opponent or even combinations of them, has the largest modern navy and air force, and can operate all over the world, there is no conceivable enemy or enemies that can take on America successfully. The history of warfare is full of this kind of arrogance before the fall; it has occurred from the beginnings of recorded warfare until today. Consider Xerxes and Darius against Greece in antiquity, the British in America in 1775, the Russians before their war with Japan in 1904, and the United States in 1964 facing Vietnam.

History has recorded these and numerous other conflicts when the "wrong" side won the war, and there are still more examples from campaigns and individual battles. If spending or the size and breadth of forces were the sole determinants of success, the British and French would have won in 1940, the Russians would have repelled the Germans in 1941, the British would have won in Malaysia in 1942, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan would not have been the disasters they are.

When I have suggested that America's military might not be "the best," the inevitable question is, "Against whom? Name an opponent who can

beat us." History is not kind to those who are so sure they know the future, and in today's vapid culture the confident prediction of supremacy is articulated in the absence of anything beyond a superficial bean count of forces and hardware -- sometimes not even that.

There are far more subtle and supremely powerful forces at play in deciding who wins in warfare than the stuff that occupies the hollow defense debates in the American political spectrum. As a nation, Americans mostly ignore those deciding elements. As American strategist John Boyd explained cogently, material elements come in a poor third in deciding which side wins in conflict -- after moral and mental factors.

Instead, in the debate that today dominates the American political-military system on both sides of the political spectrum, two main props sustain the "we are the best" advocates. The first is America's spectacular performance on the battlefield when, even after the post-Cold War budget reductions of George H.W. Bush's and Bill Clinton's administrations, U.S. armed forces "used Saddam Hussein as a speed bump" in 2003. The second, they say, is America's vastly superior military technology, which, while expensive, gives the country the essential winning edge that no one can match.

The example of America's victory over Saddam is particularly inapt. Iraq's armed forces were a speed bump: Their leadership was hopelessly politicized and grossly incompetent, and their uniformed combat personnel were demoralized and unwilling to fight even before the first bombs were dropped. They were assessed as literally the worst in the world by the Center

for Strategic and International Studies, and as some have noted, the performance of the U.S. military leadership -- even at the field-command level -- in that war was an embarrassment.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. forces often showed real guts and skill at the tactical level, but the heroism of soldiers and Marines notwithstanding, it should be remembered that they have fought enemies with no air force or navy and not much infantry equipment beyond home-built road mines, AK-47 rifles, and rocket-propelled grenades.

We also heard a lot of bombast after the first war with Iraq, Operation Desert Storm in 1991; then, the technologists declared a "revolution in military affairs." The Government Accountability Office (GAO) spent two years looking at that: The air campaign should more accurately be characterized as bombing a tethered goat led by a military jackass, and even then, the air campaign did not live up to the hype. The high-cost "silver bullet" of the war, the F-117 stealth light bomber, badly underperformed its puffery. For example, in contrast to claims that "alone and unafraid" it destroyed Saddam's air defense system in the first hours of the first night, the F-117s actually had help from 167 non-stealthy aircraft and were confirmed by the Defense Intelligence Agency's bomb-damage assessments to have effectively destroyed only two of the 15 air defense targets assigned to them that first night. Overall, the GAO found that effectiveness did not correlate with cost and that on many dimensions the ultralow-cost A-10 close-combat attack aircraft was the top performer.

Nothing is changed today; the bluster is as frequent and hollow. Typical examples are

unmanned drones, such as the MQ-9 Reaper and the Air Force's F-22 fighter.

The real-world performance of the MQ-9 Reaper is actually rather pathetic. With a tiny payload of an extremely limited selection of weapons and very poor ability to find targets to which it is not precisely shepherded, the Reaper is incapable of defending itself, and it is several times more expensive than manned aircraft that are more effective, such as the A-10. Also, it crashes so routinely that the Air Force appears to not even report all "mishaps" on the appropriate website. Yet, such drones are slavishly characterized as a revolution in warfare, yet again, and technologists are talking proudly about future nuclear bombers that are "optionally manned."

The F-22 fighter is described by the Air Force as an "exponential leap in warfighting capabilities." A review of the data shows the F-22 to be more expensive and less impressive than the hype would have you believe. For one thing, the cost for each F-22 is not the \$143 million the Air Force asserts but rather a whopping \$412 million, according to the GAO. The plane was supposed to be less expensive to operate than the F-15C; instead, it is 50 percent more. For another, its radar-evading "stealth" capability is significantly limited, as we know from two F-117 "stealth" casualties in the 1999 Kosovo air war, and its ability to detect, identify, and engage enemy aircraft at very long range with radar-controlled missiles relies on a technology that has repeatedly failed in combat. Finally, the F-22 compares roughly in close-in air combat to early versions of the F-15 and F-16. This June, that unexceptional agility was on

display when German pilots flew Eurofighter Typhoons successfully against F-22s in mock dogfights.

Because the F-22 is so expensive to fly and difficult to maintain, its pilots get too few hours in the air to train -- half of what fighter pilots got in previous decades. Worse, a controversy has raged over how safe the F-22 is to its own pilots. Powerful toxins populate the areas where the F-22 derives its oxygen for the pilot, and despite an Air Force explanation that "contamination" has nothing to do with the physiological problems pilots have experienced, some observers are deeply skeptical that the Air Force is taking the proper care to protect F-22 pilots. Already two pilots have been killed in accidents in which those toxins are very possibly at play. Even though pilot skill is a dominating factor in air combat, the U.S. Air Force provides few in-air training hours and requires pilots to fly aircraft that are not free of potential poisons. These are not the signs of a first-rate military organization.

That it is people, not hardware, that provide the winning edge in warfare was clearly expressed at the end of the first Iraq war when the U.S. commander, Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, stated that had the two sides switched equipment, the United States still would have won its lopsided victory. There are many veterans of other wars who agree. Indeed, Napoleon said it succinctly 200 years ago: "The moral is to the physical as three to one."

Just as those F-22 pilots had difficulties against some highly skilled Typhoon aircrew, the United States can expect to encounter smart, skillful enemies in the future. The country has been surprised by

opponents it had assumed were inferior -- for example in the Vietnam War -- and by crude but highly effective technology it failed to anticipate, such as handmade road mines (decorously called improvised explosive devices) in Iraq and Afghanistan. The "we are the best in the world" foolishness is prologue to wars of choice making America pay dearly, just as the country discovered immediately after the arrogantly predicted "cakewalk" against Iraq -- a prediction that contemplated no "after."

Both sides of the American political spectrum persistently cheapen this debate.

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney spoke for the right when he attacked Obama for "deep and arbitrary" cuts in the defense budget (cuts that actually were neither deep nor arbitrary) at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) on Oct. 8. He also alleged that Obama is responsible for reducing the size of the U.S. Navy to a post-World War II low and for putting the Air Force "out of business." To fix all this, Romney will do things like spend more money and put the F-22 back into production. He ignores that Obama is spending on defense at a rate well above any other post-World War II president, and Romney doesn't mention that Obama inherited a U.S. Navy and an Air Force from George W. Bush that were already at post-World War II lows. Most significantly, Romney is oblivious to the fact that the shrinkage has been occurring as the non-war parts of the defense budget increased by a trillion dollars from 2001 to 2010.

Romney's proposal to put the very disappointing F-22 back into production is a classic example of "solving" the problem by making it worse: At many times the price of

the F-15 it replaces, the F-22 can only be bought in such small numbers -- at greatly increased total cost -- that the overall inventory shrinks and ages as the Pentagon is forced to retire as few ancient F-15s as possible. The disingenuousness of Romney's cheap shot on defense spending is exceeded only by the ignorance of his solution and silly pander to ill-informed conventional wisdom.

In his VMI speech, Romney also made a seemingly conscious attempt to walk his previously expressed adventurism into the closest; some hostile rhetorical flourishes aside, he sounded a lot like Obama. It remains entirely unclear, however, whether Romney is merely Etch-A-Sketching away the neoconservative premise that, with U.S. armed forces being the best in the world, the United States can and should use them in still more adventures, such as Iran. He may be asking for even more future trouble than does Obama.

Many on the left do not exactly distinguish themselves in the overall debate. While they are typically far more accurate in characterizing what increases or decreases have or have not occurred in the defense budget, most Democrats persist in the notion that Obama has husbanded a U.S. military that remains the best in the world. The shrinkage is OK because the newer -- even if preposterously expensive -- equipment is more capable, both individually and collectively. It has all the hallmarks of a political argument of convenience, and it ignores as much evidence as the right does when it asserts that the amount of money spent measures the health of overall U.S. forces.

Were Romney running for reelection to a second term,

he too would be crowing the "best in the world" rhetoric, and it would be in the face of still further shrinkage and aging despite the heaps of extra money he would strain to pile on to America's less-bang-for-more-bucks defenses.

The empty rhetoric that U.S. armed forces are the best masks serious problems that have been festering for decades. Obama tolerates the problems; candidate Romney would make them even worse. All of it will continue until leaders emerge who understand that more money has meant more decay, and less money can mean the start of reform.

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Pg. 13

32. Turkey's Dangerous Assad Dilemma

Forcing down a Syrian passenger plane suspected of carrying munitions is the latest chapter in a dangerous spat between neighbors.

By Fouad Ajami

As Turkish forces along the Syrian border exchange fire with the army of Bashar Assad, and Syrian refugees pour into Turkey, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a proud Islamist, might better appreciate the wisdom of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The secular founder of modern Turkey advised his countrymen: Look West, leave the old lands of the Ottoman

Empire to their feuds and backwardness.

For Mr. Erdogan, so near the Syrian killing fields in Aleppo and Idlib, there is now no easy way out of this entanglement. The conflict escalated on Oct. 3, when Syrian mortar shells hit a Turkish border town, killing five civilians—a woman and four children—and prompting Mr. Erdogan to warn: "We're not interested in war, but we're not far from it either."

Not far, indeed. In June, the Assad regime downed a Turkish F-4 fighter jet it claimed was over Syrian "territorial waters," causing outrage in Ankara. This week, Turkish jets forced down a Syrian passenger plane that Ankara suspected of transporting military equipment from Russia. Mr. Erdogan announced on Thursday that the plane was carrying ammunition and defense equipment bound for the Assad regime in violation of an arms embargo. NATO recently announced that it has drawn up plans to defend Turkey, a member since 1952, if necessary.

Damascus and Ankara have been at odds for some time. The rebellions that broke upon the Arab world in 2010-11 presented Mr. Erdogan with a grand temptation. Those countries that had risen in revolt had been old, Ottoman provinces. For centuries, until the end of World War I, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and even more so neighboring Syria had been ruled from Istanbul. Now the doctrines of Arab nationalism that had guided them have come undone.

For the Muslim Brotherhood in these Arab countries, the triumph of Turkey's Islamists at the ballot box in the past decade, Turkey's phenomenal economic success, the authority that Mr. Erdogan has carved out for himself on

the world stage—it was all a model to emulate. The Arab (read Sunni) street had been in search of a hero, and Mr. Erdogan was eager to play the part.

In truth, Mr. Erdogan, and the industrialists and business interests around him, were not indiscriminate enthusiasts of the Arab Spring. Mr. Erdogan had to be dragged into the fight against Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Turkey has substantial investments in Libya, and the prime minister was loath to sacrifice them. But he went along with the NATO campaign, and later went on a victory tour of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. To believers this was the second coming of the Ottoman sultanate.

Syria, though, was a case apart. Mr. Erdogan hoped against hope initially that the rebellion against the Assad regime would blow over. A shrewd politician, he understood that he could not be the flag-bearer of this Islamist awakening and an ally of Bashar Assad at the same time.

Mr. Erdogan and his foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, had proclaimed a foreign policy of "zero problems with neighbors." But they lived in a bad neighborhood. The tyrant in Damascus had hunkered down, and the rebellion against him would not die.

Assad's war on his own (mostly Sunni) citizens had triggered a larger sectarian war, a Sunni-Shiite schism. For those who love such images, it was a struggle between the "Shiite Crescent," stretching from Iran and Iraq to Syria and Hezbollah's reign in Beirut, versus a Sunni bloc from North Africa to the eastern Mediterranean, clustered around Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Syria is the prize, and the epicenter, of this contest. Hard as Mr. Erdogan would try to keep the struggle for Syria within tolerable bounds, the cruelty of the civil war there would overwhelm his policy. He had pledged himself to the removal of Assad, but the dictator had not obliged. Nor had Washington—particularly President Obama, obsessed with self-preservation—been the ally Mr. Erdogan had hoped for. As the fighting dragged on and the refugees came, the Turks discovered that it is never easy being a sanctuary for dispossessed people bent on retrieving what they've lost.

Mr. Erdogan is a dominant figure in his country, but democracy imposes its limits. When the prime minister went to the National Assembly for a vote authorizing strikes into Syrian territory after the recent mortar attacks, he was given what he sought. But this was no rubber-stamp parliament—the vote was 320 in favor and 129 against. The principal opposition, the Republican People's Party, and the Kurdish representatives, cast their votes against.

In our received history, we think of conquering Turkish soldiers forging an empire with the sword, knocking at the gates of Vienna, but this is now history. There is a dominant pacifism in the country. Opinion polls show that an overwhelming majority of Turks oppose unilateral military intervention in Syria. Two-thirds of the Turkish public want the traffic of Syrian refugees to be brought to a halt. In fairness, Turkey's decent treatment of the refugees puts to shame the way Syria's Arab neighbors have dealt with refugees.

"One has to be ready for war at every moment,

if it becomes necessary," the Turkish prime minister said recently. "If you are not ready, you are not a state and cannot be a nation." But Turkey is also a NATO member of long standing. The Turks' burden in Syria could be eased if NATO established a no-fly zone within Syria. But that would require strong U.S. leadership, which is sorely lacking of late.

On the face of it, the Turkish state will not be drawn into a war with the Syrian regime. The promise of Mr. Erdogan's order has been the provision of prosperity for his population. A war that would undermine Turkey's trade and tourism is anathema to the rulers in Ankara. But it could still come to war, especially if Assad grants the Kurdish terrorist organization, the PKK, sworn enemy of Ankara, free run in Syrian Kurdistan.

It didn't have to come to this terrible choice: a big war or acquiescence in the face of Assad's crimes. A resolute American policy could have toppled the Syrian regime, without boots on the ground. We might have spared the Turks this insoluble dilemma. We surely could have spared the Syrians the bloodletting—some 30,000 lives in 18 months—that wrecked and radicalized their country.

Mr. Ajami is a senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution and the author of "The Syrian Rebellion" (Hoover Institution Press, 2012).

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Pg. 11

33. The Taliban's Latest Target: A 14-Year-Old Girl

Too many Pakistanis claim that terrorism is America's problem. The brutal assault on

Malala Yousafzai may force them to face the truth.

By Sadanand Dhume

It's not every day that President Barack Obama and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon agree with the head of the Islamist group Jamaat-e-Islami. But Tuesday's Taliban attack on 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan's Swat Valley has attracted condemnation across countries and cultures.

A White House spokesman said Mr. Obama found the attack, which left Ms. Yousafzai unconscious after gunmen waylaid her school bus and shot her in the head and neck, "reprehensible and disgusting and tragic." Pakistanis, including many with Islamist sympathies, reacted with similar outrage.

Ms. Yousafzai, a precocious and telegenic campaigner for girls' rights to education, has become a symbol of raw courage in the face of implacable evil. As of Thursday evening, her condition was stable, but her prospects of recovering fully from the attack remain uncertain.

This attack is a crossroads for Pakistan. Will the country's most vocal politicians and intellectuals continue to pretend that its terrorism problem is made in America? Or will they finally come to terms with the truth: The men who shot Ms. Yousafzai, and promise to come back and finish the job should she survive, represent a homegrown ideology that threatens to drag the country back to the Middle Ages.

A Taliban spokesman justified the attack to a Pakistani newspaper by claiming Ms. Yousafzai was "secular-minded" and "pro-West." A statement released by the group accused her of "inviting Muslims to hate mujahideen," or holy warriors, and of advocating "so called

enlightened moderation." It ends with a threat whose menace to Pakistanis is no less clear for its mangled English: "Gain Conscious, Otherwise ..." The statement doesn't mention America.

Neither a cessation of U.S. drone strikes in the tribal areas near the border with Afghanistan, nor a Pakistani offer to negotiate in good faith with the Taliban, will assuage the terrorists. More likely it will embolden them to believe that their vision—of a society governed by harsh religious laws at odds with women's rights, minority rights and freedom of expression—is a step closer to becoming reality. If the U.S. disengages militarily from the region, as some Pakistani politicians demand, the result won't be peace but more murder and mayhem.

But Pakistan is a long way from gaining the consciousness it needs to defeat the barbarism in its midst. The populist politician Imran Khan made a beeline for Ms. Yousafzai's grief-stricken family and offered to foot her medical bills. But the former cricketer's entire political career is built on the premise that the struggle against Islamist terrorism is "America's war," not Pakistan's.

Two days before the attack, Mr. Khan led a procession to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province protesting U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal areas. He thundered about Guantanamo, Pakistan's alleged subservience to America, and politicians who have hurt the country "more than the Jews could."

On Wednesday, Army Chief Gen. Ashfaq Kayani visited the military hospital in Peshawar where Ms. Yousafzai was being treated and declared her "an icon of courage and hope." But the institution that Gen. Kayani heads has long

made a dangerous distinction between two wings of the Taliban movement. It opposes the Pakistani Taliban who attacked Ms. Yousafzai (and which often takes on the Pakistani army), but it is widely believed to back their Afghan cousins who target NATO forces and destabilize Afghanistan.

While nearly all Pakistanis find it easy to condemn a brutal attack on a girl whose only crime is an outspoken belief in school, a lot fewer are willing to condemn her assailants directly, without apologies and evasions. Fewer still focus on the infrastructure of hatred in their midst: militant madrassas, a spy service in bed with jihadists, and intellectuals who make excuses for their country rather than diagnose its ills. The brave few who go against the grain—mostly in the English press and sometimes from exile—risk being slandered as traitors.

If you're an optimist, though, an idealistic 14-year-old in a hospital bed may have the power finally to nudge Pakistan's conversation with itself toward sanity. Perhaps more people will begin to recognize the obvious—that in the end they must choose whether they want to live in the country of Ms. Yousafzai's dreams or the Taliban's.

This isn't America's war. It is Pakistan's.

Mr. Dhume is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a columnist for WSJ.com.

New York Times
October 12, 2012

34. Why Iran Can't Follow China's Lead

By Ray Takeyh

WASHINGTON -- IRAN is undergoing one of its most momentous changes since the 1979 revolution as the aging

Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, strives to ensure that the Islamic republic's revolutionary precepts will survive him. China presents a cautionary tale for the ayatollah; it proves that it is possible for an authoritarian political system to survive long after its ideological claims have faded from the scene.

China's leaders, beginning in the late 1970s, were able to transform themselves from devout Marxists into advocates of capitalist prosperity while still claiming they had the people's best interests at heart. They maintained their power while shedding communism (in all but name) by offering material well-being in exchange for freedom.

But in Iran, there is no such ideological fluidity. Religion—in the form of politicized Islam—is the foundation of the state and the sole source of clerical leaders' legitimacy. Without a rigid Islamist ideology, the ayatollahs would become irrelevant.

For Ayatollah Khamenei, China is a model to avoid and its journey from defiance to pragmatism a path to resist. He is therefore seeking to fully transform the Islamic Republic into a police state manned by reliable revolutionaries.

If the Soviet Union's collapse represented one fate for a revolutionary state, China embodies another model. Chinese radicals, led by Mao Zedong, overturned the existing social and economic order in 1949 and rejected prevailing global norms while preaching revolution. Foreign policy became an extension of domestic upheaval. But, over time, a new generation of leaders came to power. These reformers, led by Deng Xiaoping, first modified and then abandoned communist ideology. They purged Maoist

die-hards and opened China to the international community, trading their ideological inheritance for Western commerce. Today Mao is a largely symbolic relic.

There were once alternative paths to legitimacy for the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the early 1990s, pragmatic government officials, led by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, sought to emulate Chinese reformers. They believed that prolonging the government's rule was contingent on its economic performance. To accelerate economic growth, Mr. Rafsanjani sought to build strong institutions staffed with competent bureaucrats.

In the late 1990s, another model emerged. Reformers led by President Mohammad Khatami believed that faith and freedom could not only coexist, but also complement one another. They argued that the Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on consultation and consensus justified modern ideas like pluralism and a religious polity based on a popular mandate. In both cases, Ayatollah Khamenei successfully undermined and subverted their reform efforts.

Hard-line clerics like Ayatollah Khamenei still believe that Iranians must purify themselves and adhere uncritically to their leaders' ideological exhortations. Only then, these clerics believe, will Iranians be worthy subjects of their exalted republic.

Since 1989, when he succeeded Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei has not hesitated to use violence against his own citizens. The Green Revolt of 2009 was a sobering moment for Ayatollah Khamenei, who feared that the Islamic Republic, as constituted, was

too weak and its guardians too uncertain to perpetuate the 1979 revolution without his domineering presence. In a major speech in June, he preached that the revolution is "permanent" and "continuous."

He sees himself as defending principles as noble and lofty as his detractors'. In his own way, he is offering the Iranian citizenry a national compact, one that exchanges political freedom for religious salvation. He is determined to excise all unreliable forces from the body politic. So all would-be Dengs must be removed from the corridors of power.

Traditional police tactics have been complemented by purges that are devouring the old guard, the intelligentsia and the technocratic elite. A theocratic state that once featured a diversity of religious factions is being rapidly transformed into a totalitarian state.

And Ayatollah Khamenei and his allies don't mind being ostracized by the international community; they welcome the isolation. They fear the subversive impact of Western engagement, which helped foment the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe. They also know that China's integration into the global order came at the steep price of relinquishing its ideological patrimony.

For now the Islamic Republic endures like other autocracies in the Middle East. But the alienation of the population and the fragmentation of the elite will mean an uneasy future. With its politics so polarized, Iran cannot sustain its legitimacy on the basis of economic performance, backed by oil. The violence of 2009 severed an essential bond between the state and society.

The Islamic Republic will either hang on as an

autocratic theocracy or be transformed into a populist democracy. The irony is that Ayatollah Khamenei, by ruthlessly consolidating his power, might have ensured that the system he created will not easily endure without his steady hand.

Ray Takeyh is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Washington Post

October 12, 2012

Pg. 21

35. A President Shying From War

By Michael Gerson

The beginning of congressional hearings on the Benghazi debacle revealed an administration with much to explain and perhaps something to hide.

At a minimum, the State Department did not take adequate precautions in reaction to mounting threats after urgent requests by officials on the ground. This was a failure of judgment. It was followed by a failure of candor. Senior administration officials gave misleading accounts of the Sept. 11 attack for days — which was days after others in the Obama administration must have known those accounts were misleading.

It is impossible for me to imagine U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice or Secretary of State Hillary Clinton freelancing the false claim that the Benghazi attack was the spontaneous response to a YouTube video instead of being a terrorist attack. So who briefed them with bad information? And why? Those are the loose threads that need pulling.

But this is more than a scandal; it is a symptom. This is an administration that instinctively turns to any artifice — any desperate, dubious claim

— rather than talk about an ongoing, escalating global conflict with radical Islamist groups.

The likely involvement of al-Qaeda in the Libyan attack is part of a larger story. The threats arising from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen are familiar. But al-Qaeda is also rebuilding in Iraq, where it has doubled in size over the past year. Although al-Qaeda's organizational "core" has been weakened, its ideology and appeal are durable. Affiliates are adept at exploiting local grievances, particularly in unstable regions of Africa. Boko Haram conducts church attacks in Nigeria. Al-Shabab battles African Union troops in Somalia. Islamists associated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb now control much of Mali.

President Obama's response is, to put it mildly, paradoxical. He is perfectly willing to pull the trigger in a drone strike when he thinks it is useful. But he is strangely reluctant to describe in public the continuing terrorist threat. At their recent convention, Democrats danced a jig on Osama bin Laden's grave. But this was treated as an achievement of history — like the execution of Tojo — not as one victory in a continuing struggle. As a State Department official once put it, "The war on terror is over" since "we have killed most of al-Qaeda."

There are several possible explanations for this attitude, beginning with the rawest of politics. Obama wants to be seen as the ender of wars, not as the sponsor of an apparently endless one. So it is useful to assert that al-Qaeda is strategically defeated and that the tide of war is receding. Admitting that there are new fronts in the war on terror undermines this theory. So it

becomes attractive to blame an obscure, laughably crude movie for the Benghazi attack.

A related political calculation may also come into play. A portion of Obama's political base is near the limit of its patience over the drone war — a particularly aggressive form of global preemption. A more aggressive public stance in the war on terror could push more of the left into overt opposition.

It is possible that Obama and his team are ideologically uncomfortable with the war on terror that they are compelled to conduct. They took office trying to deliberately reframe that war as a much-reduced contingency operation against al-Qaeda. They have found, of course, that the threat of Islamist extremism is much broader than al-Qaeda and that al-Qaeda itself is often embedded in other movements. So Obama does what is necessary. But a man of the left may find what is necessary to be distasteful and morally tainted.

The most disturbing of possible explanations for Obama's lack of public leadership in the war on terror concerns Afghanistan. Playing down the strength of al-Qaeda, as well as the ties between al-Qaeda and the Taliban, helps make a precipitous U.S. retreat from Afghanistan easier to swallow. This is what CBS News correspondent Lara Logan recently called “a major lie.”

Whatever the reasons, the results are destructive. The unavoidable disorders of the Arab Spring and the power vacuums of Africa have created an atmosphere hospitable to terrorist threats. But the Obama administration finds this narrative inconvenient — which leaves the American people unprepared. The problem revealed in Libya is not only

incompetence or deception. It is also a wartime president who refuses to be a wartime leader.

New York Times

October 12, 2012

36. Marine Mammals And The Navy's 5-Year Plan

Between 2014 and 2019, the United States Navy hopes to conduct testing and training exercises in the Atlantic and the Pacific that will involve sonars and explosives of many different kinds.

Over the years, the Navy has been forced to acknowledge what science has clearly demonstrated: noise generated by sonar and underwater detonations can kill marine mammals, like whales and porpoises, and disturb their normal feeding, breeding and migration. In preparing for its upcoming exercises, the Navy has asked the National Marine Fisheries Service for approval to “take” a number of marine mammals — “take” being the broad term for everything from killing these creatures to disturbing their habits.

This all sounds as it should be, with the Navy requesting permission from the agency, as required by various laws protecting marine mammals and endangered species. But the numbers say something else. In its testing areas in the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific, the Navy estimates that between 2014 and 2019 it will “take” nearly 33 million marine mammals — everything from blue whales to elephant seals.

Most of these creatures will be disturbed in some way but not injured or killed. But the damage could still be considerable. Sound travels much faster through water than it does through air, magnifying its impact, and many of the sounds the Navy

plans to generate fall in the frequencies most damaging to marine mammals. More than five million of them may suffer ruptured eardrums and temporary hearing loss, in turn disrupting normal behavioral patterns. As many as 1,800 may be killed outright, either by testing or by ship strikes.

The Navy is proceeding on the basis of a 2008 Supreme Court decision, in which Chief Justice John Roberts Jr., writing for the majority, argued that the public interest in our military defense tipped the scales “strongly in favor of the Navy.” We disagree, and so do the environmental organizations that have sued the Navy in the past. Perhaps most alarming is the Navy's conclusion — after an exhaustive list of potential injuries and the uncertainties involved in estimating them — that “impacts on marine mammal species and stocks would be negligible.” This is wishful thinking, at best.

The Navy says the exercises are necessary to test its readiness and weapons systems, and it promises to make every effort to lessen the adverse consequences for marine mammals. But the sonic chaos the Navy plans to inflict on the oceans must be added to the long list of other threats facing these mammals, some of which, like the North Atlantic right whale, are on the endangered species list.

It is up to the National Marine Fisheries Service to send the Navy back to the drawing board. The damage it intends to do is simply unacceptable.