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At a Glance: A look at the business dealings of potential GOP presidential candidate Jeb Bush

The Associated Press

September 20, 2014 05:30 AM



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Within months of leaving office, he started a consulting firm, registered as a broker for Lehman Brothers and joined a number of corporate boards. He is on the boards of four companies, including Tenet Healthcare Corp. and Rayonier Inc., a real estate investment trust that owns large swaths of forestland.

In the past few years, Bush has started or invested in a variety of companies. A look at some of them.

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Dorian LPG Ltd.

In April, as first reported by Bloomberg, Britton Hill raised nearly \$26 million from 10 investors, including HNA Group of China, for a private equity fund that invested in Dorian LPG, a shipping startup specializing in transporting propane overseas.

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Bush is a partner in Three B Partners LLC, a venture he formed in 2013 along with Richard Brockway, a Florida entrepreneur, and Lawrence Burns, former vice-president of research and development for General Motors. According to its website, the company "develops dynamic business models to propel today's technological innovations into thriving first-mover businesses."

Maghicle Driverless LLC

Last year, Three B Partners formed a new entity called Maghicle Driverless that appears to be trying to develop a driverless-car service. The firm recently won initial approval from the federal government for a trademark for "on demand, driverless transportation of passengers and goods via shared vehicles."

Sources: Securities and Exchange Commission; Florida Department of State; U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

- See more at: <http://www.nanaimodailynews.com/business/at-a-glance-a-look-at-the-business-dealings-of-potential-gop-presidential-candidate-jeb-bush-1.1382458#sthash.FmHWQ8oS.dpuf>

At a Glance: the Business Dealings of Jeb Bush

Sep 20, 2014, 8:29 AM ET

By The Associated Press



FILE- In this Jan. 29, 2014 file photo, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush gestures as he speaks at a conference in Hollywood, Fla. Bush is tending to his growing business empire while other Republicans mulling the 2016 presidential race are laying the foundations of their potential campaigns. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee, File)

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2016 May Loom, but Jeb Bush Is Focused on Business

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Sep 20, 2014, 10:41 AM ET

By MICHAEL J. MISHAK and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press



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Published September 20, 2014

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By [MICHAEL J. MISHAK](#) and [STEVE PEOPLES](#)

— Sep. 20, 2014 10:41 AM EDT

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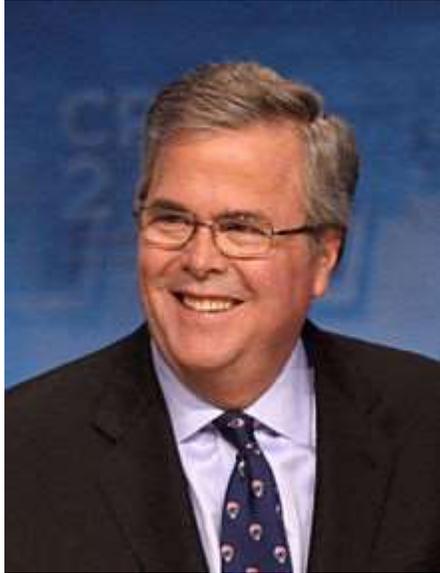
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Jeb Bush

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jeb Bush



Bush in 2013

[43rd Governor of Florida](#)

In office

January 5, 1999 – January 2, 2007

Lieutenant	Frank Brogan Toni Jennings
Preceded by	Buddy MacKay
Succeeded by	Charlie Crist

Personal details

Born	John Ellis Bush February 11, 1953 (age 61) Midland, Texas
Political party	Republican
Spouse(s)	Columba Bush
Relations	George H. W. Bush (father) Barbara Bush (mother) George W. Bush (brother) Prescott Bush (grandfather)

Children	George P. Bush Noelle Bush John Ellis Bush, Jr.
Residence	Coral Gables, Florida ^[1]
<u>Alma mater</u>	University of Texas (B.A.)
Profession	Businessman Real Estate Developer
Religion	Roman Catholicism <i>prev.</i> Episcopalian

John Ellis "Jeb" Bush (born February 11, 1953) served as the [43rd Governor](#) of [Florida](#) from 1999 to 2007. He is the second son of former [President George H. W. Bush](#) and former [First Lady Barbara Bush](#), and is the younger brother of former President [George W. Bush](#). Jeb Bush is the first and only [Republican](#) to serve two full four-year terms as Governor of Florida.

Bush grew up in [Houston, Texas](#). He attended the [University of Texas](#), where he earned a degree in Latin American affairs. Following his father's successful run for [Vice President in 1980](#), he moved to Florida. In 1986, Bush was named Florida's Secretary of Commerce, a position he held until resigning in 1988 to help his father's successful campaign for the Presidency.

In [1994](#), Bush made his first run for office, narrowly losing the election for governor by less than two percentage points to the incumbent [Lawton Chiles](#). Bush ran again in [1998](#) and beat Lieutenant Governor [Buddy MacKay](#) with 55 percent of the vote. He ran for reelection in [2002](#), and won with 56 percent, to become Florida's first two-term Republican Governor.^[2] During his eight years as governor, Bush was credited with initiating improvements in the economy, environment, and health care, as well as reforming the education system.^{[3][4]} He was also responsible for ending the [Florida high speed rail](#) initiative.^[5]

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Early years

Jeb Bush was born in [Midland, Texas](#). When he was six years old, the family relocated to [Houston, Texas](#).^[6] The origin of the name Jeb is his initials; Jeb is a direct pronunciation of J.E.B. (John Ellis Bush).^[7]

He initially attended Grady Elementary School in Houston.^[8] Following in the footsteps of older brother, George, Jeb attended high school at the prestigious Massachusetts boarding school, [Phillips Academy](#).^[9] At the age of 17, he taught English as a second language in [León, Guanajuato, Mexico](#), as part of Phillips Academy's student exchange program. While in Mexico, he met his future wife, [Columba Garnica Gallo](#).^[10]

In 1973, he graduated [Phi Beta Kappa](#) from the [University of Texas at Austin](#) with a [B.A.](#) in [Latin American Studies](#). He completed his coursework in two and a half years.^[11] He can speak fluent Spanish.^[12]

Early career

Business experience in Texas and abroad



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(May 2014)

Bush went to work in an entry level position in the international division of [Texas Commerce Bank](#), a job he received through [James Baker](#), a longtime family friend and chairman of the board of Texas Commerce Bank.^[13] Bush assisted in drafting communications for the company's chairman, Ben Love.

In November 1977, he was sent to the [Venezuelan](#) capital of [Caracas](#) to open a new operation for the bank. Bush spent about two years there, working in international finance. He eventually worked for the bank's executive program.

Bush returned to the United States to work without salary on his father's campaign for the Republican [presidential nomination in 1980](#), explaining:

I wasn't motivated for politics, I wasn't motivated because of [ideology](#) or anything. My dad's the greatest man I've ever met or will meet; I can predict that fairly confidently. It was payback time, simple as that.

His father ultimately lost the Republican nomination for President that year, but was chosen to be [Ronald Reagan](#)'s running mate. That fall, [George H.W. Bush](#) was elected [Vice President of the United States](#), and won reelection in 1984. In 1988, the elder Bush won both the Republican Party's presidential nomination and the election, becoming the nation's 41st president. In 1992 Bush's father was defeated for re-election by then-[Arkansas](#) Governor [Bill Clinton](#).

Business and lobbying experience in Miami

Following the 1980 presidential election, Bush and his family moved to [Miami-Dade County, Florida](#). He took a job in real estate with [Armando Codina](#), a 32-year-old [Cuban](#) immigrant and self-made American millionaire. Codina had made a fortune in a computer business, and then formed a new company, The Codina Group, to pursue opportunities in [real estate](#).^[14] In 1983, Jeb Bush explained his move from Houston to Miami this way: "On the personal side, my mother-in-law and sister-in-law were already living here", and on the professional side, "I want to be very wealthy, and I'll be glad to tell you when I've accomplished that goal."^[15]

During Bush's years in Miami, he was involved in many different [entrepreneurial](#) pursuits, including working for a mobile phone company, serving on the board of a [Norwegian](#)-owned company that sold fire equipment to the [Alaska oil pipeline](#), becoming a minority owner of the [Jacksonville Jaguars](#), buying a shoe company that sold footwear in [Panama](#), and getting involved in a project selling water pumps in [Nigeria](#).^[16]

Codina eventually made Bush his partner in a new development business, which quickly became one of South Florida's leading real estate development firms. As a partner, Bush received 40% of the firm's profits.^[16]

In 1990, Bush interceded with his father, the president, to pardon [Orlando Bosch](#), a Cuban exile who had been convicted of firing a rocket into a Polish ship which was on passage to Cuba. Bosch was released from prison and granted residency in the U.S.^[17]

Miguel Recarey, who ran International Medical Centres (IMC), employed Bush as a real estate consultant and paid him a \$75,000 fee for finding the company a new location, although the move never took place. Bush did, however, [lobby](#) the [Reagan administration](#) vigorously and successfully on behalf of Recarey and IMC.^[17]

Early campaigns

Bush got his start in Florida politics as the Chairman of the Dade County Republican Party.^[18] Dade County played an important role in the 1986 election of [Bob Martinez](#) to the Governor's office. In return, Martinez appointed Bush as Florida's Secretary of Commerce.^[18] He served in that role in 1987 and 1988, before resigning once again to work on his father's presidential campaign.

In 1989, he served as the campaign manager of [Ileana Ros-Lehtinen](#), the first Cuban-American to serve in Congress.^[19] He launched an unsuccessful bid for the Governor's office in 1994 against incumbent [Democratic](#) Governor [Lawton Chiles](#).^[19] Bush ran that year as a conservative ideologue, and a notable moment in this campaign was when Bush was asked what he would do for [African Americans](#) if he gets elected, responding: "It's time to strive for a society where there's equality of opportunity, not equality of results. So I'm going to answer your question by saying: probably nothing."^{[20][21]} Bush lost the election by only 63,940 votes out of 4,206,076 that were cast for the major party candidates (2,135,008; 50.8% to 2,071,068; 49.2%). In the same election year, his older brother, [George](#), was elected [Governor of Texas](#).

Governor of Florida (1999-2007)

1998 gubernatorial election



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(May 2014)

Main article: [Florida gubernatorial election, 1998](#)



An earlier portrait of Governor Jeb Bush.

In 1998, Bush defeated his Democratic opponent, Lieutenant Governor [Buddy MacKay](#), by over 418,000 votes (2,191,105; 55.3% to 1,773,054; 44.7%) to become [Governor of Florida](#). He portrayed himself as a "consensus-building pragmatist" and courted the state's moderate and [Hispanic](#) voters.^[21] Simultaneously, his brother, George W. Bush won a re-election victory for a second term as [Governor of Texas](#), and the Bush brothers became the first siblings to govern two states at the same time since [Nelson](#) and [Winthrop Rockefeller](#) governed [New York](#) and [Arkansas](#) from 1967 to 1971.

In the 1998 election, Bush garnered 61 percent of the Hispanic vote and 14 percent of the African American vote, a surprising showing for a Republican seeking statewide office. Four years earlier, he got 5 percent of the African American vote in a polarizing election against the popular Democratic incumbent Chiles, who was re-elected.^[citation needed]

Chiles' sudden death on 12 December 1998 meant that MacKay was sworn-in as his successor. He held the position of Governor for 23 days until Bush was sworn-in to replace the man he had beaten.

Education



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(May 2014)

Bush's administration was marked by a focus on public education reform. His "A+ Plan" placed a greater emphasis on standardized testing in Florida's public schools, eliminated social promotion for third grade students who scored the lowest achievement level on the state reading assessment,

and established a system of funding public schools based on a statewide grading system using the [FCAT](#) test, an assessment created under his predecessor, Governor Lawton Chiles. Bush has been a proponent of [school vouchers](#) and [charter schools](#), especially in areas of the state with failing public schools, although to date very few schools have received failing grades from the state. One program that has seen fruition is the [Florida Virtual School](#), a [distance-learning](#) program that allows students in rural areas of the state to take [Advanced Placement](#) classes for college credit. However, his policies have also been driven by a firm refusal to raise taxes for education, which led Bush to oppose a ballot initiative to amend the Florida Constitution to cap growing school class sizes. Bush said he had "a couple of devious plans if this thing passes".^{[22][23]} Despite his opposition, the amendment passed;^[24] Bush's subsequent suggestions that the amendment be repealed^[25] have contributed to criticisms that he has failed to implement it in good faith. A similar concern about new expenditures has led to controversy over whether Florida has provided adequate resources to implement a subsequent voter-approved state constitutional amendment that requires a universal state-financed pre-Kindergarten program.^[26]

In higher education, Bush approved three new medical schools during his tenure and also put forth the "One Florida" proposal, an initiative that effectively ended [affirmative action](#) admissions programs at state universities.^[27] These moves were among the influencing concerns that led to the faculty of the [University of Florida](#) to deny Bush an [honorary degree](#), while the University of Florida Alumni Association made him an [honorary alumnus](#). North Miami Beach Attorney Larry R. Fleurantin, then a UF law student, on April 1, 2001, wrote an article in the Gainesville Sun challenging Florida Governor Jeb Bush's Talented 20 Plan, the educational component of "One Florida." In response to Attorney Fleurantin's article, on April 7, 2001, Bush wrote a column in the Gainesville Sun defending his "One Florida" policy.^[28]

Fiscal

While Governor, Jeb Bush reduced taxes by \$19 billion, reduced the size of state government by 6.6 percent, vetoed \$2 billion in new spending, and presided over Florida receiving the highest possible bond rating.^[29]

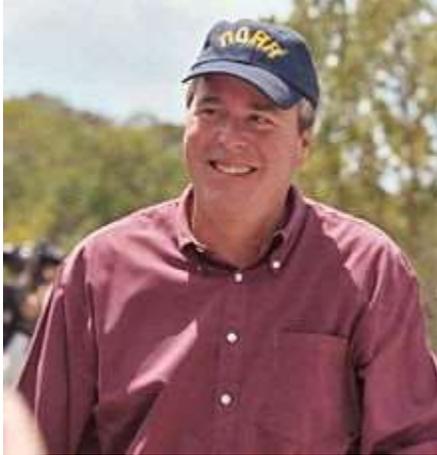
Libraries

In May 2006, as part of an unprecedented \$448.7-million [line-item veto](#) of state funding, Bush cut a total of \$5.8 million in grants to [public libraries](#), pilot projects for library homework help and web-based high-school texts, and funding for a joint-use library in Tampa.^[30]

Environment



This section **does not cite any [references or sources](#)**. Please help improve this section by [adding citations to reliable sources](#). Unsourced material may be challenged and [removed](#).
(May 2014)



Bush at Rookery Bay participating in Earth Day activities in 2004

Bush signed legislation to protect the [Everglades](#) and opposed federal plans to drill for [oil](#) off the coast of Florida. In early October 2005, Bush attempted to strike a compromise with fellow Republicans that would allow [offshore drilling](#) in an area that stretches 125 miles (201 km) off Florida's coastline and give the state legislature the power to permit drilling closer to the state's coastlines. The compromise was warmly received by some Florida Republicans and U.S. Congressmen, such as bill sponsor [Richard Pombo](#), but has yet to be agreed upon; others including Republican U.S. Senator [Mel Martinez](#), objected to any backtracking on the drilling moratorium.

Health policy issues

Bush was involved in the [Terri Schiavo case](#), involving a woman with massive [brain damage](#), who was on a feeding tube for over 15 years, and whose husband and legal guardian, [Michael Schiavo](#), wished to remove the tube. This move was opposed by Terri Schiavo's parents in the courts. Bush signed "[Terri's Law](#)," legislation passed by the Florida legislature that permitted the Governor to keep Schiavo on [life support](#).^{[[citation needed](#)]} The law was ruled unconstitutional by the [Florida Supreme Court](#) on September 23, 2004. That decision was [appealed](#) to the federal courts. On January 24, 2005, the [U.S. Supreme Court](#) declined to hear the case, thus allowing the Florida court's ruling to stand.^{[[citation needed](#)]}

After being vetoed by previous Governor [Lawton Chiles](#), [Choose Life](#), a [pro-life advocacy group](#) based in [Ocala, Florida](#), submitted a specialty license plate application, which passed both houses and Governor Bush signed it into law on June 8, 1999.^{[[31](#)][[32](#)]}

Bush [oversaw 21 executions as Governor](#)^{[[33](#)]} (more than [Graham](#), [Martinez](#) and [Chiles](#) while they were in office). Bush never agreed to commute any sentence.^{[[34](#)]}

Bush also presided over switching from [electric chair](#) (the only method of executions until 2000, now optional) to [lethal injection](#), after a botched electrocution of [Allen Lee Davis](#) (first inmate executed under his administration and last, to date, electrocuted in Florida). After two previous

botched executions ([Jesse Tafero](#) in 1990 and [Pedro Medina](#) in 1997) Governors Martinez and Chiles along with legislature declined to change methods.^[35]

While he is an advocate of capital punishment, Bush suspended all executions in Florida on December 15, 2006, after the execution of [Ángel Nieves Díaz](#) was seemingly botched. The execution took 37 minutes to complete, and required a second injection of the lethal chemicals.^[citation needed]

As Governor, Bush proposed and passed into law major reform to the medical liability system. The Florida Senate, a majority of which were Republican, sided with the trial lawyers against caps on non-economic damages. Bush insisted, and called the legislature into five special sessions. The contentious debate even included a senior Bush staffer calling for primary opposition to Republicans who disagreed with the Governor on the reforms. Eventually, the legislature agreed to the caps and Bush's reforms passed. Bush also passed a massive reform to Florida's Medicaid system. At the time, this reform was referred to as the most sweeping reform to Medicaid in its 45 year history. Also, Florida was the first state in the nation to publish hospital outcomes on the Internet, including cost and information on quality, infections and complications.^[citation needed]

International trade

Bush said one of the most important goals of his final two years as Governor was to secure the [Free Trade Area of the Americas](#) (FTAA) Secretariat for Miami.^[citation needed]

Vetoes

Florida High Speed Rail

In 1995, the Florida state legislature created the [High Speed Rail Authority](#) (HSRA) and came up with a progressive public-private partnership model. Government would build the system leveraging state dollars with federal funds and tax-free bonding. The private sector was to invest money in the project, help design and build the network, and be given the franchise to operate the trains (known as [design-build-maintain-operate, or DBOM](#)). Trains would be privately owned, similar to how the airline industry operates in a publicly financed airport.^[36]

The rail system and its planning was estimated to cost \$7–\$8 billion. The Florida HSRA and the [Florida Department of Transportation](#) (FDOT) reached an agreement with a consortium that included the [Fluor Corporation](#) and [Bombardier Transportation](#). The consortium agreed to invest \$300 million and utilize the DBOM functionality. The state of Florida would float state bonds, and FDOT would commit \$70 million annually (increasing three percent yearly to account for inflation) to service the bonds for the next thirty years. Federal monies would pay for the interest on the bonds, and the state monies would satisfy the principal. When the high-speed railroad was running, operating surpluses would also be applied to the debt.^[5]

The high-speed rail project nearly came to fruition until Bush became governor in 1999 and ended the project his second day in office.^[5] State legislators reacted by adding the project on the

2000 ballot as a constitutional amendment which was ultimately passed by voters. The amendment directed Bush and legislature to start building the railroad system by 2003. Bush vetoed funding for both the project and the board, and led a high-profile campaign to repeal the constitutional requirement that mandated the construction of the high-speed system.^{[51][36]} Voters repealed the constitutional amendment, the result of confusion over the ballot. Many who voted believed they were supporting the train, though in fact a "yes" vote was to approve the repeal.^[51]

FDOT spokesperson Nazih Haddah commented that "the rhetoric was inflammatory and misleading. It was really exaggerating tactics that were used to defeat this. The financing and the project were sound. It really squandered a great opportunity for this state."^[51]

Parenting Coordinators

Bush vetoed a 2004 bill about court-appointed [parenting coordinators](#) because of his concern that the bill would not adequately protect families as they try to resolve their conflicts.^[37]

2002 gubernatorial election

Main article: [Florida gubernatorial election, 2002](#)

Before Bush's re-election, no Republican in Florida had ever been re-elected to serve a second term as the state's Governor. In addition, there was likely no precedent for any Governor to be branded by the opposition as its "Number One Target" for removal from office, as Bush was ranked in 2002.^[citation needed] This was not merely a statewide effort to oust the Republican Governor, but a much-publicized goal of the [Democratic National Committee](#) (DNC) and its highest leadership during the 2002 election cycle.^[citation needed]

Results

In the closely watched Florida Governor's race that attracted national attention, Bush was re-elected in November 2002. He defeated Democratic challenger Bill McBride with 56% to 43%, a greater margin of victory than in Bush's 1998 campaign for Governor. Bush also increased the number of counties in his victory column, winning several Florida counties for the first time. He campaigned throughout North West Florida, in Pensacola and Milton.^[citation needed]

Bush won 80 percent of the Cuban vote in 2002 and 56 percent among non-Cuban [Hispanics](#) in 2002,^[citation needed] benefiting from long-term Cuban links.^{[38][39]} As a longtime supporter of [Israel](#),^[40] he was endorsed in his two winning Governor races by a national Jewish publication, and won 44 percent of the state's Jewish vote in the 2002 race.^[41] Bush also surprised critics by winning the white female vote in the swing-voting battleground of Central Florida's I-4 corridor.^[42] However, Bush wasn't able to replicate the same success with African American voters (like he had earlier in 1998), he won only 8 percent of the African American vote in which many analysts felt was due to the controversial One Florida policy abolishing affirmative action and the 2000 Florida voting controversy.^[citation needed]

In January 2007, Bush became the second Florida Governor to complete two full four-year terms in office, the first being Democrat [Reubin O'Donovan Askew](#).^[citation needed]

Political role after governorship



Bush in 2013

Due to [term limits](#) under state law, Bush was unable to seek a third term as Governor. Some speculated that Bush would run against Florida's Democratic senator, [Bill Nelson](#), in the [2006 U.S. Senate election](#), but he did not; the Republican candidate was [Katherine Harris](#), who lost to Nelson.

Impact on his political party

Bush's appeal to Florida's highly diverse group of voters, along with his success in expanding the "big tent" of the [Florida Republican Party](#) (GOP), appear to have propelled him into a commanding political position.^{[[according to whom?](#)]} Nationwide, American [conservatives](#) appear to be positive about Bush, seeing him as committed to upholding core conservative principles.^{[[43](#)]}

Outside of Florida, fellow Republican leaders throughout the country have sought Bush's aid both on and off the campaign trail. Bush's out-of-state campaign visits include [Kentucky](#), where Republican challenger [Ernie Fletcher](#) appeared with Bush and won that state's governorship in 2003,^{[[44](#)]} ending a 32-year streak of Democratic governors. In [California](#), after Democratic Governor [Gray Davis](#) was ousted in a [recall vote](#), Bush dispatched Florida's budget director^{[[45](#)]} to that state to lead an independent [audit](#) of California's budget, at the request of the state's newly elected Republican Governor, [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#).^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Bush publicly criticized the national Republican party for its adherence to ideology and partisanship on June 11, 2012. In provocative comments shared with [Bloomberg View](#), Bush suggested that former Republican Presidents [Ronald Reagan](#) and [George H. W. Bush](#) would "have had a hard time" finding support in the contemporary GOP.^{[[46](#)]}

Political interests and business activities

From 2004 to 2007, Bush served as a Board Member for the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB).^{[[47](#)]} Created by Congress, the board's purpose is to establish policy on reports examining K-12 students' academic progress in America's public and private schools. Since then

Bush's education foundation has advocated for the [Common Core State Standards Initiative](#).^[48] In October 2013, referring to opponents of the standards, Bush said that while "criticisms and conspiracy theories are easy attention grabbers", he instead wanted to hear their solutions to the problems in American education.^[49]

In April 2007, Bush joined [Tenet Healthcare](#)'s board of directors.^[50] The following August, Bush joined investment bank, [Lehman Brothers](#), as an adviser in its [private equity](#) group.^[51] Bush has also served on the board of [InnoVida](#), [Swisher Hygiene](#), and [Rayonier](#) and has served as an adviser to [Barclays](#).^[52]

As of 2014, Bush had received more than \$2 million from his work for Tenet, a company that expects to receive \$100 million in new earnings in 2014 because of the [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA) and that "aggressively encouraged Americans to sign up for insurance under the program...."^[52] Bush has reportedly objected to the ACA at company meetings, but has kept his personal views separate from what is best for Tenet.^[52]

In response to the congressional gridlock that had stalled the [Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013](#), Bush called for passage of immigration reform.^[53]

In April 2013, Bush authored a cover story for [Newsmax](#) magazine, arguing that America's entitlement system risked collapse unless there was a course correction in U.S. public policy. Bush touted a six-point plan to restore growth to the economy, including a key plank calling for more legal immigration. "A growth agenda is inextricably linked with a welcoming immigration policy", he wrote.^[54]

In April 2014, Bush called illegal immigration an "an act of love", "not a felony".^[55]

Bush as NFL commissioner

In May 2006, Bush was privately approached to become the next commissioner of the [National Football League](#).^[56] This is said to be an interest of his, but it was unknown whether he would take the position. The former commissioner, [Paul Tagliabue](#), announced that his tenure would soon be over and he was searching for replacements. "I'm flattered," Jeb Bush said May 24, 2006, of the NFL's interest, "but I'm Governor of the state of Florida and I intend to be Governor until I leave—which is January 2007. And I'm not going to consider any other options other than being Governor until I finish".^[57] [Roger Goodell](#) eventually became the new NFL commissioner.

Possible run for U.S. Senate, 2008

In 2008, Bush indicated that he was considering running in the [2010 U.S. Senate race](#) for the seat being vacated by [Mel Martinez](#), who announced that he would retire at the end of his term.^{[58][59][60][61][62]} But in January 2009, he announced that he would not run for the Senate.^[63] Instead, he supported [Marco Rubio](#) for the position.

2012 presidential election

Throughout 2009 and 2010, rumors abounded that Bush would attempt to win the Republican nomination for the [2012 presidential election](#); rumors that he strongly denied from the beginning.^[64] In February 2011, after renewed calls were made for him to run for president,^[65] Bush was asked whether the door remained closed on a Presidential run. "Yes", was his reply.^[66] In July 2011, he reiterated his position that he was not running, although he was heavily critical of the Obama administration.^[67] That month his son [George](#) urged him to join the 2012 primary.^[68]

2016 presidential election

Bush has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the 2016 presidential election.^[69] When publicly asked at the Marin Speaker Series on February 7, 2013, Bush replied, "We'll make the decision at the proper time – at least a year from now."

At an April 16, 2013, press conference at [Bluefield College](#), Bush said he is not considering a run now, and that he had not yet started a decision making process.^[70]

Family

In 1971 in León, Mexico, where he was teaching [English](#) as part of a [foreign exchange](#) program, Bush met [Columba Garnica Gallo](#). They were married on February 23, 1974, in [Austin, Texas](#).^{[71][72]}

They have three children:

[George Prescott Bush](#) (born April 24, 1976, in [Texas](#)), went to [Gulliver Preparatory School](#), studied at [Rice University](#), and earned a [Juris Doctor](#) degree from the [University of Texas School of Law](#). He is the Republican candidate for Commissioner of the [Texas General Land Office](#) in 2014.^[73]

Noelle Lucila Bush (born July 26, 1977, in Texas) graduated from [Tallahassee Community College](#) in 2000 and enrolled in [Florida State University](#) in 2001. In 2003 Noelle undertook a court-ordered drug treatment program,^[74] motivating her mother to be active in substance abuse programs.^[75]

John Ellis Bush, Jr. (born December 13, 1983, in Miami), works for a [Miami, Florida](#) commercial real estate firm. In October 2007, the younger son endorsed [Rudy Giuliani](#) for the 2008 Republican Presidential nomination, and supported the effort as chairman of "Florida Young Professionals for Rudy".^[76]

Jeb Bush tends to work overly hard, and may have overdone so during the 1994 campaign, but subsequently consciously commits time to his marriage and family life.^[77]

Religious affiliation

In 1995, Bush converted from [Anglicanism](#) to [Catholicism](#).^[78] For many years, he and his wife have attended the Church of the Epiphany, a Catholic [parish](#) located in Miami. Bush is a Third Degree [Knight of Columbus](#) according to an August 3, 2004, speech his brother, George W. Bush, made at the 122nd Knights of Columbus Convention in [Dallas, Texas](#): "I'm proud to say that my family has contributed to your ranks. A few years ago, Governor Jeb became a Knight. And he—yes—and he recently took his Third Degree. I'll see him this weekend. His son is getting married. I'll pass on the word, aim for the Fourth."^[79] In 2004, Jeb Bush (while still governor) was inducted into the Fourth Degree by Gary L. McLain at a ceremony held Nov. 1. Bush, a member of Father Hugon Council 3521 in Tallahassee, joined Father Hugon Assembly.^[citation needed]

Bush has said that, during his tenure as Florida governor, although there were "some instances" of controversy, he "tried to act on my faith as best as I could."^[80]

Civic and charitable activities

After narrowly losing a 1994 election for Governor of Florida against [Lawton Chiles](#), Bush pursued policy and charitable interests.^[citation needed] He started a [non-profit organization](#) called The Foundation For Florida's Future, a [think tank](#) that stated as its mission influencing [public policy](#) at the [grassroots](#) level.^[citation needed] Jeb met with Noel Serrano, a member of the Latin Chamber of Commerce in 1991. Noel states, "Jeb was always a dedicated Public Servant long before he became Governor" He also "volunteered time to assist the Miami Children's Hospital, the [United Way](#) of Dade County and the Dade County Homeless Trust".^[81]

Jeb Bush currently serves as co-chair of the [Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy](#), along with his sister [Doro Bush Koch](#). Jeb Bush has also worked with The [James Madison Institute](#), a [free market](#) public policy [think tank](#) based in [Tallahassee, FL](#). He helped the institute in numerous ways and still has his think tank working in conjunction with it. In June 2008, Jeb's institute, the [Foundation for Excellence in Education](#), partnered with JMI to hold a summit called "[Excellence in Action: A National Summit on Education Reform](#)".^[82]

In 1996, The Foundation For Florida's Future published a book that Bush had co-written, *Profiles in Character* ([ISBN 0-9650912-0-1](#)), a clear parallel to [John F. Kennedy](#)'s 1955 book *Profiles in Courage*. The foundation also published and distributed policy papers, such as "A New Lease on Learning: Florida's First Charter School", which Bush co-wrote.^[83] Bush subsequently wrote the foreword to another book, published by the [conservative Heritage Foundation](#) and written by Nina Shokrai Rees, *School Choice 2000: What's Happening in the States* ([ISBN 0-89195-089-3](#)).

Bush co-founded the first [charter school](#) in the State of Florida: Liberty City Charter School, a grades K-6 elementary school.^[84] The school was situated in Liberty City, a Miami neighborhood that was the site, in 1980, of the first major [race riot](#) since the [Civil Rights](#) era.^[85] The school's co-founder, working alongside Bush, was T. Willard Fair, a well-known local black

activist and head of the Greater Miami Urban League. The Liberty City Charter School was closed in 2008 after falling more than \$1 million in debt.^[86]

In 2000, Bush established the Points of Light program to recognize an "exemplary volunteer, organization, or person" such as Jimmy Rotonno of [Our Father's House Soup Kitchen](#) who won the award in 2003.^[87]

Electoral history

Florida Gubernatorial Election 1994				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
Democratic	Lawton Chiles (incumbent)	2,135,008	50.75	
Republican	Jeb Bush	2,071,068	49.23	
Florida Gubernatorial Election 1998				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
Republican	Jeb Bush	2,191,105	55.27	
Democratic	Buddy Mackay	1,773,054	44.72	
Florida Gubernatorial Election 2002				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±%
Republican	Jeb Bush (Incumbent)	2,856,845	56.01	
Democratic	Bill McBride	2,201,427	43.16	

Rogue cell towers discovered in Washington, D.C.



Credit: [CostaPPPR](#)

A simple drive with a CryptoPhone reveals fifteen new rogue sites

By [Steve Ragan](#) Sep 17, 2014

Towards the end of July, ESD America, the makers of the ultra-secure CryptoPhone, said that their engineers and customers had discovered more than a dozen rogue cell towers (also known as interceptors or IMSI catchers) around the U.S.

New information shows that the discovered towers might only represent a small fraction of the whole, and what's been discovered doesn't account for the mobile base stations that are only active on a limited basis.

Interceptors are a huge risk if used by a malicious actor. That's because once a device connects to them, the interceptor's operator can perform a number of tasks, including eavesdrop on calls or text messages, or in some cases push data (spyware for example) to the device. This is why they're [only supposed to be used by law enforcement](#) or the government.

[**Watch a [slideshow](#) of this story.**]

However, that doesn't mean that [the government](#) or [law enforcement](#) haven't found themselves in the hot seat for abusing an interceptor's functionality. The potential for abuse and wide

availability of the technology, including home-grown versions that work just as well as their commercial counterparts, means that the existence of unknown interceptors are a major concern.

In an interview [with Popular Science](#) last month, Les Goldsmith, the CEO of ESD America, said that it's suspicious many of the interceptors discovered in July were "on top of U.S. military bases."

"So we begin to wonder – are some of them U.S. government interceptors? Or are some of them Chinese interceptors? Whose interceptor is it? Who are they, that's listening to calls around military bases? Is it just the U.S. military, or are they foreign governments doing it? The point is: we don't really know whose they are."

The unknown is what prompted questions from Congress, who grilled the FCC on their plans to address the interceptor issue.

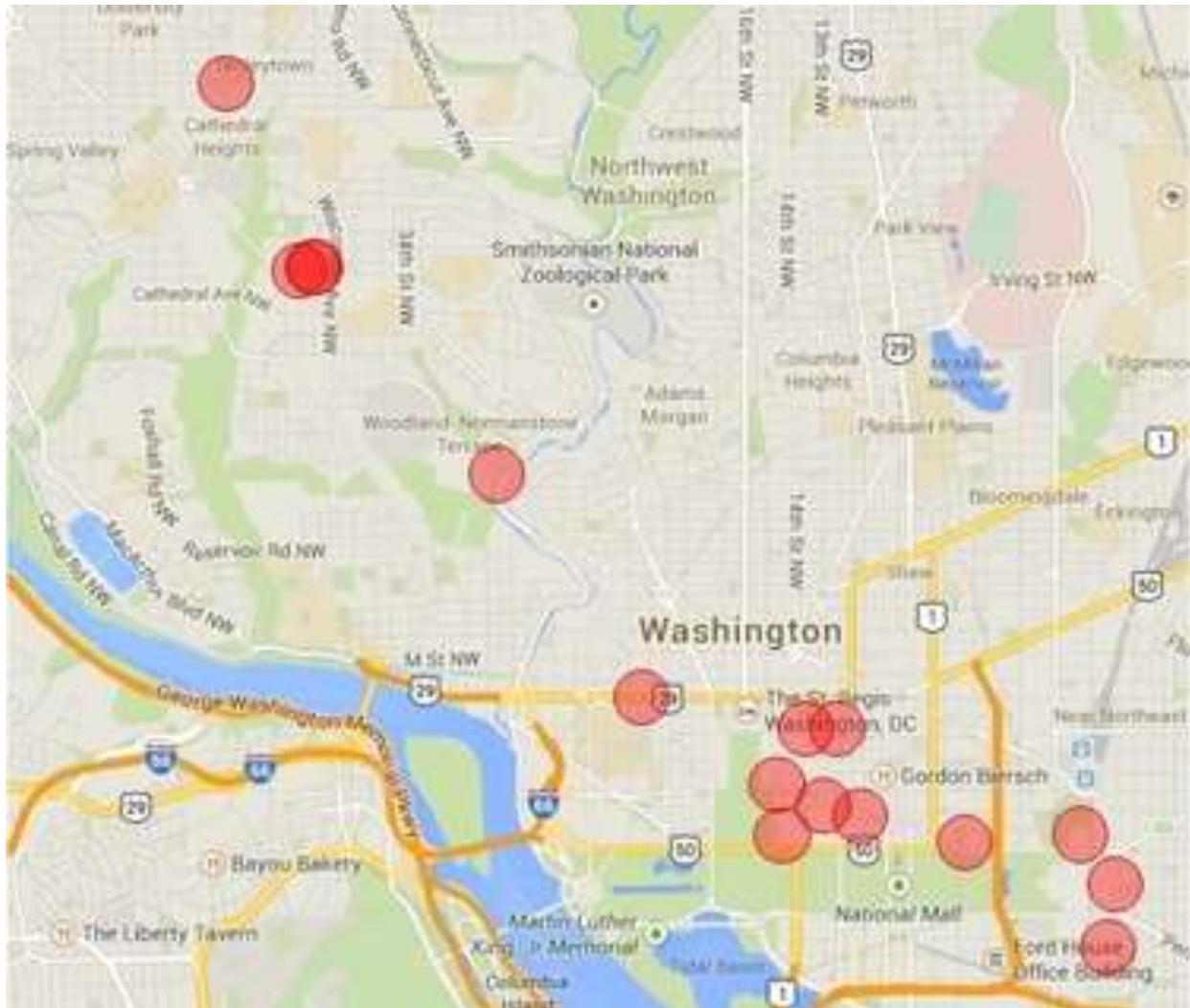
The agency, responding to Congress [in a letter dated Aug. 1](#), said that a task force had been created "in order to combat the illicit and unauthorized use of IMSI catchers."

"The mission of this task force is to develop concrete solutions to protect the cellular network systemically from similar unlawful intrusions and interceptions," the letter added.

On Tuesday, Aaron Turner, president of IntegriCell, along with Buzz Burner, director of applications at ESD America, and Goldsmith drove around Washington, D.C. in order to see if they could detect any interceptors.



The trip was a live test of sorts, as Turner's company plans to take the CryptoPhone and put it in the enterprise market. Using the CryptoPhone as a guide, the trio discovered 15 new interceptors, including three on Pennsylvania Avenue, arguably the most famous street in the district when it comes to tourism.



In the areas where the interceptors were discovered, they generated more than 40 alerts on the CryptoPhone.

[The Evolution and Impact of Hidden Mobile Threats: Why your Organization Needs a Multi-Level Security Solution](#)

While their most recent findings could raise alarm, this isn't a moment where the public should freak out, said Turner during an interview with CSO.

"This is a moment to say look, if you're a high value target, or if you have high-value information inside of your company, then you need to take precautions to protect your communications while you're on [cellular networks]."

Unfortunately, Turner added, not everyone can afford to go and buy a CryptoPhone, so an application-based solution could be a better fit. But details as to when IntegriCell would be releasing an enterprise version of the CryptoPhone base were not immediately available.

As mentioned, the problem of random interceptors existing on the cellular network is a major one. The FCC's task force is a step forward, but realistically, they might not be the best resource to deal with the issue.

This is because the FCC is not properly resourced to tackle the interceptor problem. If anything it would be up to the carriers (e.g. Verizon, AT&T, or T-Mobile) to maintain and secure the spectrum they're using.

"Unfortunately, right now, the carriers are focused on revenue and availability...With all technology decisions, you always have to balance between integrity, availability, and confidentiality, and in this case the carriers have defaulted to availability," Turner said.

Moreover, their promised task force still isn't up and running at full speed.

"From what we can gather right now, the task force isn't very operational yet. At least, at this point, what we're seeing is they're showing a keen interest in gathering whatever technology they can in order to further their assessment of these sites to see whether or not they can locate these devices close [in real-time]," said Goldsmith, when asked about expectations.

"They're taking some steps, hopefully in a positive direction. But even if the FCC does locate them [the interceptors], I don't know whether their enforcement arm is really the one that would be dealing with the perpetrators."

It's possible that if the FCC detects something, the issue would require the involvement of other federal agencies, like the FBI, in order to determine if the interceptor is related to economic or industrial espionage.

"It's not going to be just the FCC going out there and dealing with potentially a spy ring or something," Goldsmith added.

Tuesday's test was just the first of many. Based on the successful testing in Washington, D.C., there are now plans to conduct more concentrated testing in other parts of the country.

"We think we've uncovered the tip of the iceberg," said Turner.

"The solution is, people are going to have to protect themselves, the government's not going to come and protect you. They may, in some strange, crazy and massive breach situation, but the everyday enterprise, for the everyday high-value individual, this is something where they're going to have to be self-sufficient and protect themselves."

Beware of Int'l Financiers and Global Dirigisme

Submitted by [Bruno de Landevoisin](#) on 09/20/2014

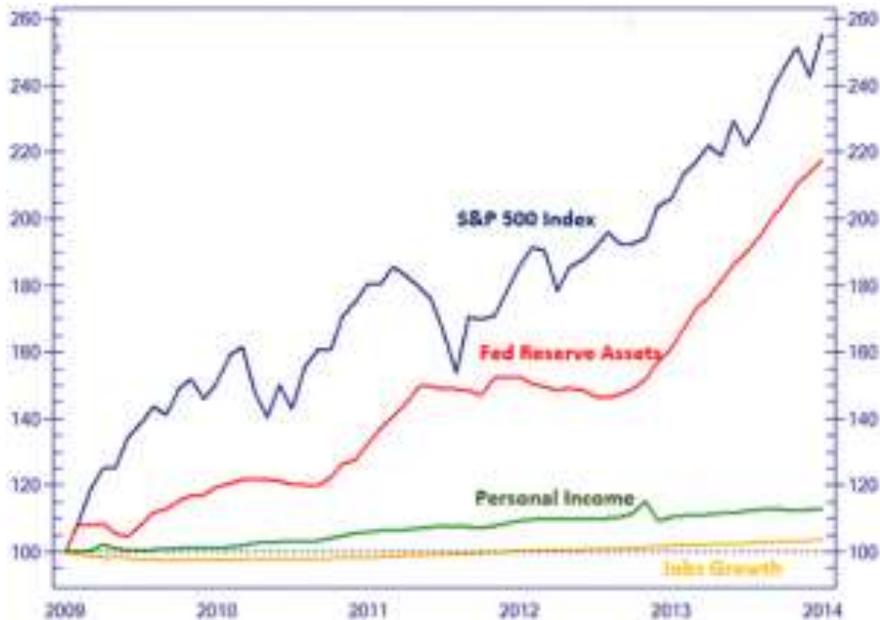


Like many of our readers, I clearly have a very hard time reconciling a U.S. stock market making new all-time-highs almost daily, especially in the face of what most economists consider to be a relatively weak domestic economy with negligible growth prospects. Moreover, when you layover the thoroughly stalled and certainly weaker overall global economic picture with the laargest economic bloc on the planet in a near depression, it's even harder to rationalize. Finally, throw into the mix the gravity of threatening geopolitical tensions between the U.S. and Russia, the two nations with the largest stockpiles of tactical nuclear weapons on earth, as well as the completely disintegrating Middle East mayhem, and the market actually welcomes it? Something simply does not add up here.

I know, I know, I know the economy is not the stock market. What are you some kind of a clueless moron? But, let's be honest with each other, the listed companies on the exchanges which make up the market in aggregate certainly should represent the country's economic condition at large. Thus, if the overall economy has poor growth prospects, it surely stands to reason that the markets, which are ostensibly forward looking, should indeed reflect equity values that intrinsically measure the future earnings of those companies, which, by the way, in large part, have offered less than encouraging forward guidance. Therefore, if the overall economy has poor growth prospects, it surely stands to reason that the equity values which intrinsically measure the future earnings of those companies should in point of fact reflect that future weakness. Yet, we continue to achieve new highs almost daily?

Some will tell you that it's not so much the underlying value of the companies that is driving the market to new highs, but rather the Fed QE policy, printing ever free flowing funds which relentlessly increase financial asset values as the currency is consistently devalued, causing higher and higher prices. Well, if that were truly the case, wouldn't rabid inflation be upon us in a general way, and thus reflected in all things cash buys? The debased money still seems to be holding its value against certain other goods, right? Not to mention that CPI is supposedly below 1% (rolls eyes). Still others will tell you that it's the astounding technology advances of our times driving the productivity gains which are behind these sensational stock valuations. This I

can partially buy into for several market sectors, at least where increased margins are concerned, but certainly not across the board. Moreover, during the past several quarters overall revenues have slowed, which has clearly been reflected in softer earnings growth for the majority of companies.



Yet, remarkably, the market continues making new highs, seeing nothing but clear skies above and continued smooth sailing ahead. Call me stubborn, but this obtuse idiot remains increasingly skeptical. FWIW, what I genuinely see here is an entirely captured market being indirectly inflated by a complicit FED through its multinational mega bank agents, whom also happen to be its board members, desperately trying to keep an impaired monetary and financial system afloat at all costs. They have reduced the market to nothing more than a bill board and degraded themselves into foolish financial cheerleaders dubiously relying on a wealth effect that has yet to materialize. They also are well aware of the fact that the Nation's monumental fiscal debt burden can't tolerate normalized interest rates. Additionally, both the public and private pension retirement income streams demand a minimum of 7% returns to maintain solvency, all of which absolutely petrifies them. Where are they gonna get those required returns? The eviscerated treasury market?

All these monetary wizards are doing is blowing yet another monumental asset bubble, just like all the previous ones they have blown since we entered into the obscene debt financed Bubbleconomics Millennium. All I see from their suspect efforts are nominal synthetic stock market gains, juiced by stock buy backs via zirp infested money, which is categorically not a productive conduit for economic growth. I mean really, all time highs with little to no median income growth and nearly 60 million Americans permanently on food stamps. To quote bare-faced U.S. Open Champion John McEnroe; "***You can't be serious!***"

Our degenerate Central Bankers have tossed up yet another asset air-ball into the debt financed Bubblenomics Millennium. The real question is why?

Even at this weekend's G20 these Financial Minister clowns are talking about another \$2 trillion worth of additional soap bubbles. Ask yourselves; Who always get their eager little paws on those funny foamy funds first?

If one dares to make the unfathomable hair-brained assumption that the market is quite possibly not reflecting and perhaps even blatantly misrepresenting economic reality, he is promptly derided as a unpatriotic pessimist or considered a simpleminded doomer who just doesn't get it. So, I ask again; what can really be going on here? What's really driving the ballistic buying binge? I realize that the momos and trendos among us don't give a damn, as they continue to rake in coin via a market seemingly tailor made to reward their systematic approach to capital market's trading, almost as if it were specifically designed to entice and encourage their fabulous feeding frenzy. Now that their original sugar daddy has been replaced by who's your Mommy, it seems reason enough to completely satisfy them. We, however, remain unconvinced, requiring more substantive fundamental answers to feel grounded in economic reality. What is really behind this seemingly illegitimate, and laughably ludicrous levitation? Well, open your mind to the matrix my friends, as we have an entirely spectacular answer for you all, which may well identify what is really operating behind the scenes. Brace yourselves, if it's even remotely accurate, it is truly terrifying.



Most of us will acknowledge that an International Banking Cabal is in full control of the major Central Banks which orchestrate the current monetary order that the globe's financial system runs on. Moreover, you would have to have been living under a rock to not have noticed that, ever since the financial crisis of 2008, the political authorities leading the developed Nation's of the world's are now willfully subservient to their respective central banks, that inturn take their marching orders form the TBTF multinational financial institutions which own them. The crony currency club cabal's overriding self serving interests are supposedly paramount to us all. Yet, this rapacious international banking cartel has no allegiance other then unto its own avarice.

Astonishingly, even the once revered ideal of national sovereignty itself has had its wings effectively clipped by this elite banking class. Perhaps the most obvious example of the abject subjugation is the European Union, with its ECB imposed EURO hand cuffs firmly casting an iron grip around previously magnificent autonomous nations such as Italy and Spain, rendering them to a sad sorry state of subordinate EU foot stoldom. How thoroughly we have permitted

the self seeking interests of those privileged few closest to the powerful money levers control over our collective destiny. I dare say, many of you here seem to have acquiesced, and now actually welcome the money drug dealers. Beware my dear friends, as the pusher soon owns the junkie.....



We are beginning to genuinely believe that there may well exist self appointed elites running the deep state, acting as demigod's directing our deferential dependency and counting on the deliberate demise of the U.S. dollar, nefariously orchestrating a bold and grand scheme to complete the outright capture of our entire universal monetary existence. It's our contention that all of this terrible tumult on the ground in Ukraine, is none other than the globalist inspired ongoing destabilization of the world's sovereign Nation states, designed to open the door for an IMF backed SDR new global monetary order. The well orchestrated intent of establishing total financial hegemony over the world, and the dominion of all its natural resources, including those that are human is very real.

These autocratic internationalists already have the European nation states right where they want them via their EU/ECB headlock stranglehold. They have rendered China entirely dependent on an export based / low wage economic growth model, as they have done with all the BRICS. They have destabilized MENA to disembowel OPEC. The next two chess pieces to fall will first be the once mighty Russian queen, followed by the indisputable king USA. The last move is to undermine the United States' Petro dollar reserve currency supremacy. This final checkmate will be achieved by initiating a disastrous energy war. They clearly desire and require a raging resource war to destabilize the USD. The covert opps and \$5 billion NGO supported destabilizing stratagem which manufactured and fomented riots in Kiev's Maiden square, pitting Ukraine against Russia, is yet another carefully crafted conflict zone.

The offensive supra-nationalists, who are beholden to the financial internationalists, have been relentlessly pressing Eastwards via US/EU/NATO expansionism with blatant encroachment, completely discarding the specific agreement between Reagan and Gorbachev, which stipulated that after the dissolution of WarPac in Eastern Europe, NATO would refrain from encroaching onto any buffer states situated on Russia's immediate borders. Additionally, overt economic warfare has now been clearly unleashed upon Russia by these mad men. Why? Due to the mere fact that mother Russia is simply safeguarding her considerable strategic and economic interests in a buffer region, a bordering a state with which they have long standing historical ties and

which holds significant ethnic Russian populations? This is a completely over the top act of destabilizing international adventurism and aggression. Who is really behind this folly and why?

Putin certainly realizes that the Western financial Globalist are intent on thwarting his nation's resource might by further imposing their monetary hegemony onto Russia's economy. The Kremlin sees it and clearly understand that this is an existential conflict for Mother Russia. They tried in Iraq and failed, they tried with Iran and failed, they tried with Libya and failed, they tried with Syria and failed. Undaunted, they are now determined to pursue their rapacious agenda via Ukraine.

Make no mistake these internationalists have co-opted the Wolfowitz doctrine which dictates the swift dispersal by all means necessary any substantive competitor whether friend or foe. These psychopaths have now targeted Russia as a preeminent resource and energy power which must be contained and degraded. The American people could quite possibly fall for this last scheme. The MSM has certainly been working overtime to paint that Putinator prick as a dreadfully dangerous despot intent on world domination. Pay attention America, the international bankers want war, same as it ever was.

The following piece written by *Brandon Smith* provides provocative historical evidence of the int'l banks' lust for war:

With the exception of a few revolutions, most wars are instigated and controlled by financial elites, manipulating governments on both sides of the game to produce a preconceived result. The rise of National Socialism in Germany, for instance, was largely funded by corporate entities based in the U.S., including Rockefeller giant Standard Oil, JPMorgan and even IBM, which built the collating machines specifically used to organize Nazi extermination camps, the same machines IBM representatives serviced on site at places like Auschwitz. As a public figure, Adolf Hitler was considered a joke by most people in German society, until, of course, the Nazi Party received incredible levels of corporate investment. This aid was most evident in what came to be known as the Keppler Fund created through the Keppler Circle, a group of interests with contacts largely based in the U.S.

George W. Bush's grandfather, Prescott Bush, used his position as director of the New York-based Union Banking Corporation to launder money for the Third Reich throughout the war. After being exposed and charged for trading with the enemy, the case against Bush magically disappeared in a puff of smoke, and the Bush family went on to become one of the most powerful political forces in America. Without the aid of international conglomerates and banks, the Third Reich would have never risen to power.

*The rise of communism in Russia through the Bolshevik Revolution was no different. As outlined in Professor Antony Sutton's book *Wall Street And The Bolshevik Revolution* with vast detail and irrefutable supporting*

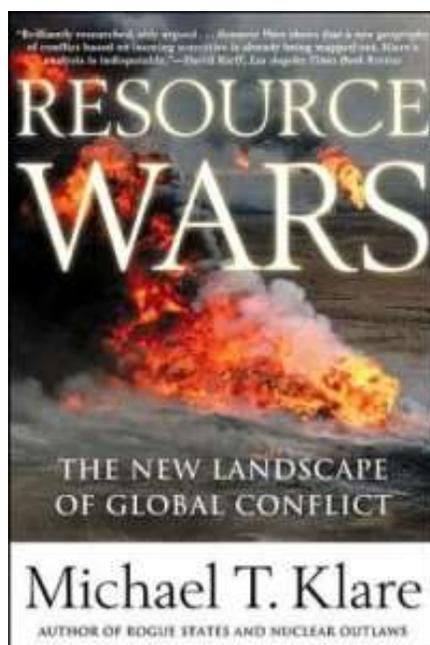
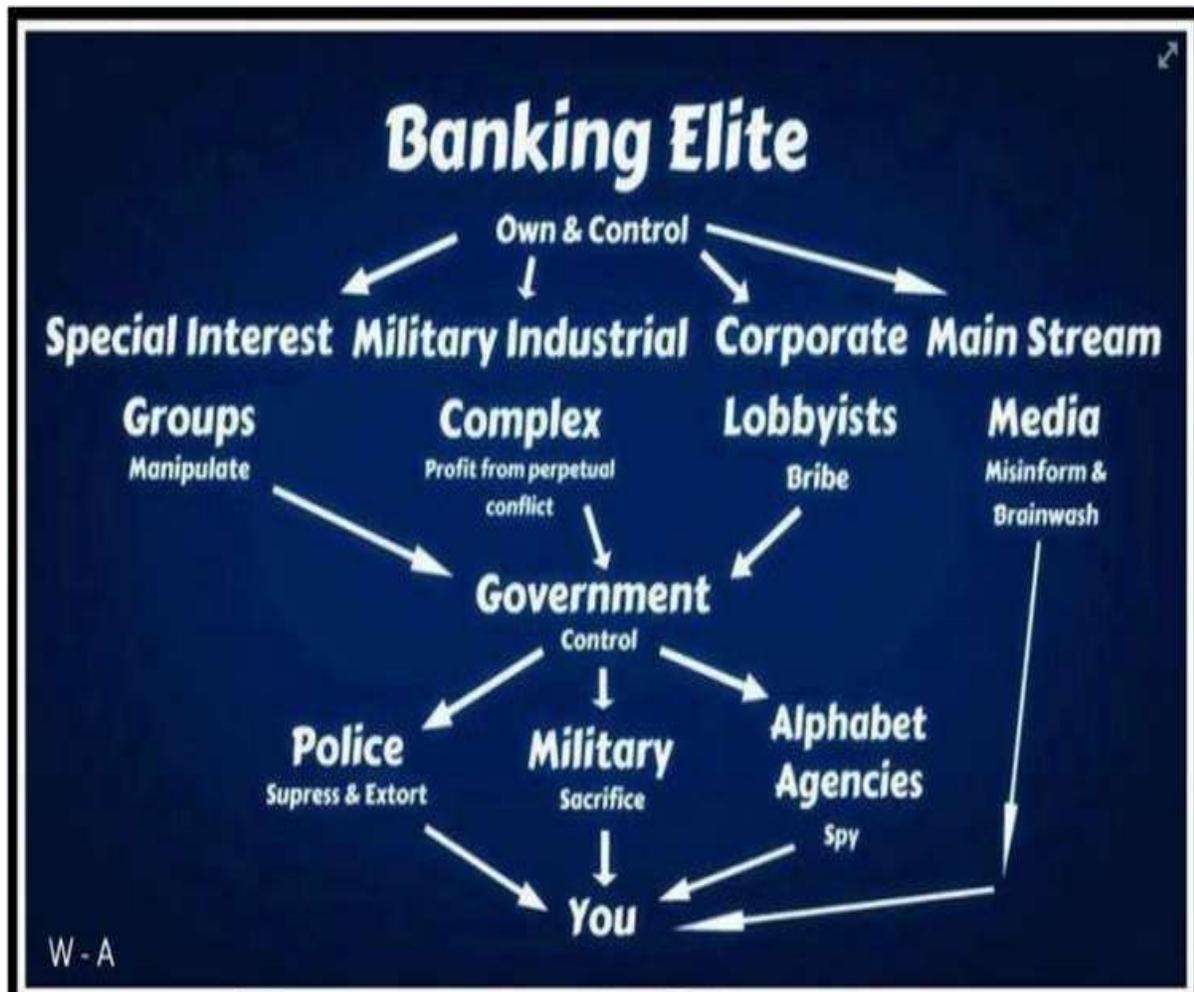
evidence, it was globalist financiers that created the social petri dish in which the communist takeover flourished. The same financiers that aided the Nazis...

The two sides, National Socialism and communism, were essentially identical despotic governmental structures conjured by the same group of elites. These two sides, these two fraudulent ideologies, were then pitted against each other in an engineered conflict that we now call World War II, resulting in an estimated 48 million casualties globally and the ultimate formation of the United Nations, a precursor to world government. Every major international crisis for the past century or more has ended with an even greater consolidation of world power into the hands of the few, and this is no accident.

Are the very same aspiring financial globalists synthetically pumping the U.S. Stock and Bond markets to precariously unstable all time highs, under very dubious circumstances, serving the same age old nefarious ambitions? Could this have been orchestrated in order to create the most economic havoc possible once the plug is pulled on all USD denominated financial assets? The devastating simultaneous detonation of both the U.S. debt and equity markets ultra bubbles would decimate the USD and what was left of the public's faith in the U.S. financial markets. Is this inconceivable idea really such a stretch? Could the conspiracy kooks actually be onto something?

Once the rabid globalist successfully provoke a major resource war, the oil market will shoot straight through the roof, interest rates will spike, and a US stock market crash of epic proportion will ensue. After the dreadfully disastrous devastating dollar fall out, the entire world will be on its knees begging and pleading for the financial internationalists at the IMF/BIS/WTO/WBG to come riding in to save the day. As a white knight of last resort, with their globally sponsored and pre-arranged SDR currency regime at the ready to reset an entirely fabricated monumental monetary meltdown. Beware the International Banksters, or they will promptly have us eating out of their filthy hands. Their masterful maniacal mission mercilessly accomplished.

Just so you all don't write me off as an off the hook conspiracy kook. The only reason I give some credence to the idea of a supra-nationalists agenda beholden to the financial internationalist interests is simply because I can't get my head around how incredibly shortsighted and self defeating the current leadership of the free world are in terms of both monetary policy and geopolitical stratagem. Their overall game plan is simply beyond the pale and so incredibly dangerous that it gives one pause as to what is really behind it all. These people just can't be this clueless by accident, can they? I know many reject the idea of globalist designs, but I simply can't find any other rational explanation for the astoundingly foolish and self-destructive decisions being made by current Western leadership, irrespective of whether it be from the left or the right. Who really is the Demopublican puppet master?



How the NSA Plans to Infect ‘Millions’ of Computers with Malware

By [Ryan Gallagher](#) and [Glenn Greenwald](#)

03/12/2014 6:19 AM

Top-secret documents reveal that the National Security Agency is dramatically expanding its ability to covertly hack into computers on a mass scale by using automated systems that reduce the level of human oversight in the process.

The classified files – provided previously by NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden – contain new details about groundbreaking surveillance technology the agency has developed to infect potentially millions of computers worldwide with malware “implants.” The clandestine initiative enables the NSA to break into targeted computers and to siphon out data from foreign Internet and phone networks.

The covert infrastructure that supports the hacking efforts operates from the agency’s headquarters in Fort Meade, Maryland, and from eavesdropping bases in the United Kingdom and Japan. GCHQ, the British intelligence agency, appears to have played an integral role in helping to develop the implants tactic.

In some cases the NSA has masqueraded as a fake Facebook server, using the social media site as a launching pad to infect a target’s computer and exfiltrate files from a hard drive. In others, it has sent out spam emails laced with the malware, which can be tailored to covertly record audio from a computer’s microphone and take snapshots with its webcam. The hacking systems have also enabled the NSA to launch cyberattacks by corrupting and disrupting file downloads or denying access to websites.

The implants being deployed were once reserved for a few hundred hard-to-reach targets, whose communications could not be monitored through traditional wiretaps. But the documents analyzed by *The Intercept* show how the NSA has aggressively accelerated its hacking initiatives in the past decade by computerizing some processes previously handled by humans. The automated system – codenamed TURBINE – is designed to “allow the current implant network to scale to large size (millions of implants) by creating a system that does automated control implants by groups instead of individually.”

In a top-secret presentation, dated August 2009, the NSA describes a pre-programmed part of the covert infrastructure called the “Expert System,” which is designed to operate “like the brain.” The system manages the applications and functions of the implants and “decides” what tools they need to best extract data from infected machines.

Mikko Hypponen, an expert in malware who serves as chief research officer at the Finnish security firm [F-Secure](#), calls the revelations “disturbing.” The NSA’s surveillance techniques, he warns, could inadvertently be undermining the security of the Internet.

“When they deploy malware on systems,” Hypponen says, “they potentially create new vulnerabilities in these systems, making them more vulnerable for attacks by third parties.”

Hypponen believes that governments could arguably justify using malware in a small number of targeted cases against adversaries. But millions of malware implants being deployed by the NSA as part of an automated process, he says, would be “out of control.”

“That would definitely not be proportionate,” Hypponen says. “It couldn’t possibly be targeted and named. It sounds like wholesale infection and wholesale surveillance.”

The NSA declined to answer questions about its deployment of implants, pointing to a new presidential policy directive announced by President Obama. “As the president made clear on 17 January,” the agency said in a statement, “signals intelligence shall be collected exclusively where there is a foreign intelligence or counterintelligence purpose to support national and departmental missions, and not for any other purposes.”

“Owning the Net”

The NSA began rapidly escalating its hacking efforts a decade ago. In 2004, according to secret [internal records](#), the agency was managing a small network of only 100 to 150 implants. But over the next six to eight years, as an elite unit called Tailored Access Operations (TAO) recruited new hackers and developed new malware tools, the number of implants soared to tens of thousands.

To penetrate foreign computer networks and monitor communications that it did not have access to through other means, the NSA wanted to go beyond the limits of traditional signals intelligence, or SIGINT, the agency’s term for the interception of electronic communications. Instead, it sought to broaden “active” surveillance methods – tactics designed to directly infiltrate a target’s computers or network devices.

In the documents, the agency describes such techniques as “a more aggressive approach to SIGINT” and says that the TAO unit’s mission is to “aggressively scale” these operations.

But the NSA recognized that managing a massive network of implants is too big a job for humans alone.

“One of the greatest challenges for active SIGINT/attack is scale,” explains the top-secret presentation from 2009. “Human ‘drivers’ limit ability for large-scale exploitation (humans tend to operate within their own environment, not taking into account the bigger picture).”

The agency’s solution was TURBINE. Developed as part of TAO unit, it is described in the leaked documents as an “intelligent command and control capability” that [enables](#) “industrial-scale exploitation.”

(TS//SI//REL) TURBINE manages the active implants that make up the Active SIGINT system.

Active SIGINT offers a more **aggressive** approach to SIGINT.

We retrieve data through intervention in our targets' computers or network devices. Extract data from machine. This is: Tailored Access Operations!

One of the greatest challenges for Active SIGINT/attack is **scale**. Human "drivers" limit ability for large-scale exploitation (humans tend to operate within their own environment, not taking into account the bigger picture)

The TURBINE infrastructure will allow the current implant network to scale to large size (millions of implants) by creating a system that does **automated control implants by groups** instead of individually.

Expert System (resource and operations manager) is like the **brain** it manages the applications and functions of implants.

Decides which tools should be provided to a given implant and executes the rules on how it should be used

Decisions of the expert system are passed to the **command and control modules**, which execute the decision against the appropriate set of implants.

Diode is a device that allows connectivity from the high side to the low side network without human intervention.

TURBINE was designed to make deploying malware much easier for the NSA's hackers by reducing their role in overseeing its functions. The system would "relieve the user from needing to know/care about the details," the NSA's Technology Directorate notes in [one secret document](#) from 2009. "For example, a user should be able to ask for 'all details about application X' and not need to know how and where the application keeps files, registry entries, user application data, etc."

In practice, this meant that TURBINE would automate crucial processes that previously had to be performed manually – including the configuration of the implants as well as surveillance collection, or "tasking," of data from infected systems. But automating these processes was about much more than a simple technicality. The move represented a major tactical shift within the NSA that was expected to have a profound impact – allowing the agency to push forward into a new frontier of surveillance operations.

The ramifications are starkly illustrated in one undated top-secret NSA document, which describes how the agency planned for TURBINE to "increase the current capability to deploy and manage hundreds of Computer Network Exploitation (CNE) and Computer Network Attack (CNA) implants to potentially millions of implants." (CNE mines intelligence from computers and networks; CNA seeks to disrupt, damage or destroy them.)

TURBINE (TS//SI//REL) A new intelligent command and control capability designed to manage a very large number of covert implants for active SIGINT and active Attack that reside on the GENIE covert infrastructure (for endpoint data extraction). It will increase the current capability to deploy and manage hundreds of Computer Network Exploitation (CNE) and Computer Network Attack (CAN) implants to potentially millions of implants.

Eventually, the secret files indicate, the NSA's plans for TURBINE came to fruition. The system has been operational in some capacity since at least July 2010, and its role has become increasingly central to NSA hacking operations.

[Earlier reports](#) based on the Snowden files indicate that the NSA has already deployed between 85,000 and 100,000 of its implants against computers and networks [across the world](#), with plans to keep on scaling up those numbers.

The intelligence community's top-secret "Black Budget" for 2013, obtained by Snowden, lists TURBINE as part of a broader NSA surveillance initiative named "Owning the Net."

The agency sought \$67.6 million in taxpayer funding for its Owning the Net program last year. Some of the money was earmarked for TURBINE, expanding the system to encompass “a wider variety” of networks and “enabling greater automation of computer network exploitation.”

Circumventing Encryption

The NSA has a diverse arsenal of malware tools, each highly sophisticated and customizable for different purposes.

One implant, codenamed UNITEDRAKE, can be used with a variety of “plug-ins” that enable the agency to gain total control of an infected computer.

An implant plug-in named CAPTIVATEDAUDIENCE, for example, is used to take over a targeted computer’s microphone and record conversations taking place near the device. Another, GUMFISH, can covertly take over a computer’s webcam and snap photographs. FOGGYBOTTOM records logs of Internet browsing histories and collects login details and passwords used to access websites and email accounts. GROK is used to log keystrokes. And SALVAGERABBIT exfiltrates data from removable flash drives that connect to an infected computer.

The implants can enable the NSA to circumvent privacy-enhancing encryption tools that are used to browse the Internet anonymously or scramble the contents of emails as they are being sent across networks. That’s because the NSA’s malware gives the agency unfettered access to a target’s computer before the user protects their communications with encryption.

It is unclear how many of the implants are being deployed on an annual basis or which variants of them are currently active in computer systems across the world.

Previous reports [have alleged](#) that the NSA worked with Israel to develop the Stuxnet malware, which was used to sabotage Iranian nuclear facilities. The agency also [reportedly](#) worked with Israel to deploy malware called Flame to infiltrate computers and spy on communications in countries across the Middle East.

According to the Snowden files, the technology has been used to seek out terror suspects as well as individuals regarded by the NSA as “extremist.” But the mandate of the NSA’s hackers is not limited to invading the systems of those who pose a threat to national security.

In one secret post on an internal message board, an operative from the NSA’s Signals Intelligence Directorate describes using malware attacks against systems administrators who work at foreign phone and Internet service providers. By hacking an administrator’s computer, the agency can gain covert access to communications that are processed by his company. “Sys admins are a means to an end,” the NSA operative writes.

The internal post – titled “I hunt sys admins” – makes clear that terrorists aren’t the only targets of such NSA attacks. Compromising a systems administrator, the operative notes, makes it easier

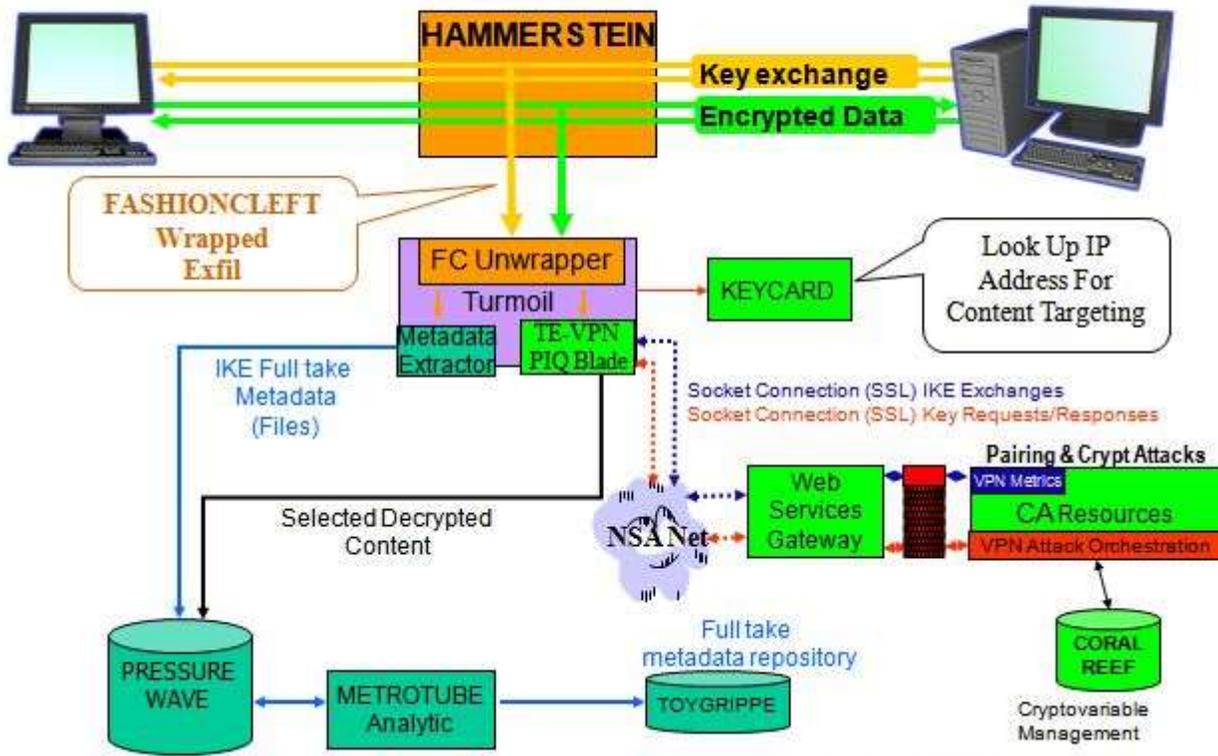
to get to other targets of interest, including any “government official that happens to be using the network some admin takes care of.”

Similar tactics have been adopted by Government Communications Headquarters, the NSA’s British counterpart. As the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* [reported](#) in September, GCHQ hacked computers belonging to network engineers at Belgacom, the Belgian telecommunications provider.

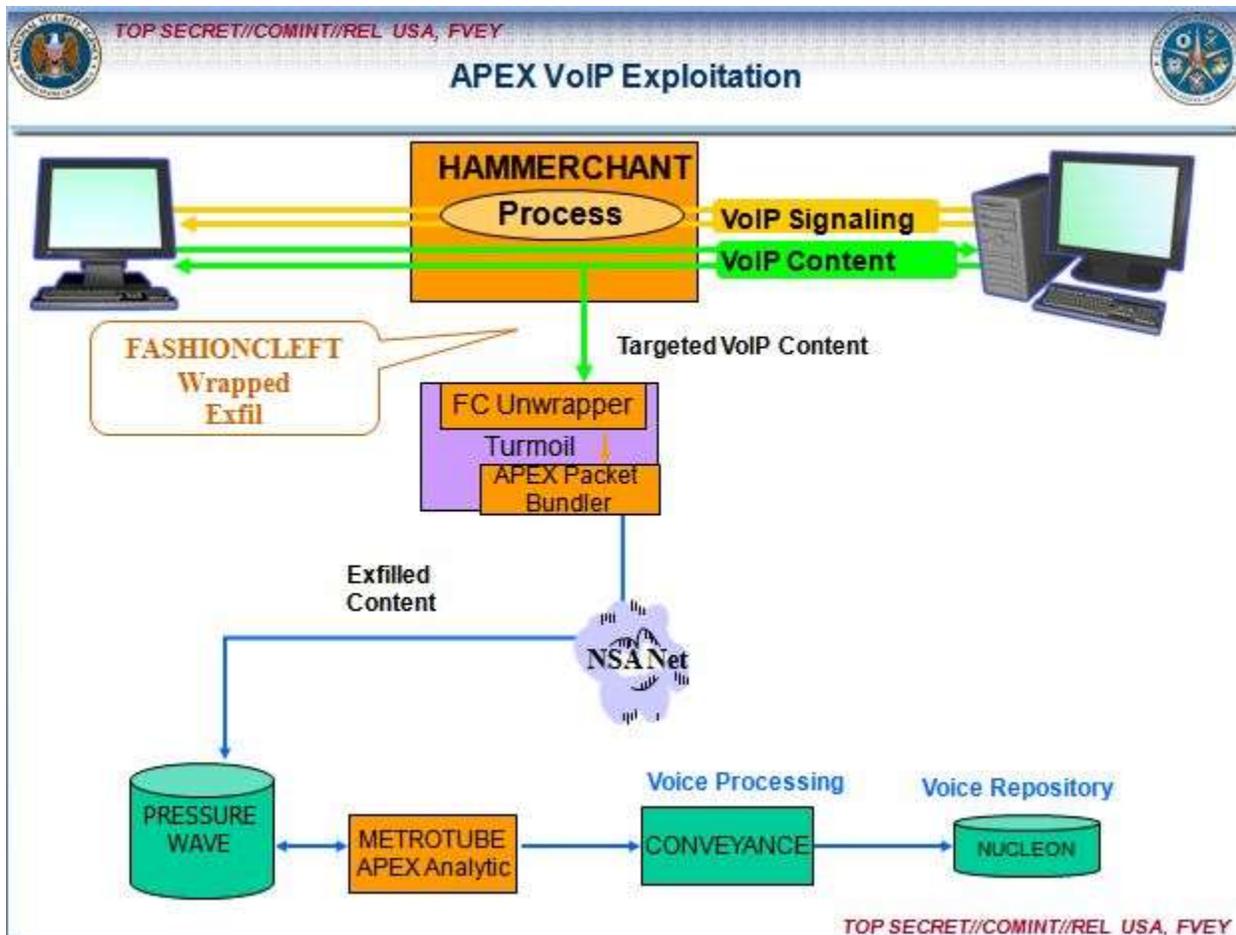
The mission, codenamed “Operation Socialist,” was designed to enable GCHQ to monitor mobile phones connected to Belgacom’s network. The secret files deem the mission a “success,” and indicate that the agency had the ability to covertly access Belgacom’s systems since at least 2010.

Infiltrating cellphone networks, however, is not all that the malware can be used to accomplish. The NSA has specifically tailored some of its implants to infect large-scale network routers used by Internet service providers in foreign countries. By compromising routers – the devices that connect computer networks and transport data packets across the Internet – the agency can gain covert access to monitor Internet traffic, record the browsing sessions of users, and intercept communications.

Two implants the NSA injects into network routers, HAMMERCHANT and HAMMERSTEIN, help the agency to intercept and perform “exploitation attacks” against data that is sent through a [Virtual Private Network](#), a tool that uses encrypted “tunnels” to enhance the security and privacy of an Internet session.



The implants also track phone calls sent across the network via Skype and other Voice Over IP software, revealing the username of the person making the call. If the audio of the VOIP conversation is sent over the Internet using unencrypted “Real-time Transport Protocol” packets, the implants can covertly record the audio data and then return it to the NSA for analysis.



But not all of the NSA's implants are used to gather intelligence, the secret files show. Sometimes, the agency's aim is disruption rather than surveillance. QUANTUMSKY, a piece of NSA malware developed in 2004, is used to block targets from accessing certain websites. QUANTUMCOPPER, first tested in 2008, corrupts a target's file downloads. These two "attack" techniques are revealed on [a classified list](#) that features nine NSA hacking tools, six of which are used for intelligence gathering. Just one is used for "defensive" purposes – to protect U.S. government networks against intrusions.

"Mass exploitation potential"

Before it can extract data from an implant or use it to attack a system, the NSA must first install the malware on a targeted computer or network.

According to [one top-secret document](#) from 2012, the agency can deploy malware by sending out spam emails that trick targets into clicking a malicious link. Once activated, a "back-door implant" infects their computers within eight seconds.

There's only one problem with this tactic, codenamed WILLOWVIXEN: According to the documents, the spam method has become less successful in recent years, as Internet users have become wary of unsolicited emails and less likely to click on anything that looks suspicious.

Consequently, the NSA has turned to new and more advanced hacking techniques. These include performing so-called “man-in-the-middle” and “man-on-the-side” attacks, which covertly force a user’s internet browser to route to NSA computer servers that try to infect them with an implant.

To perform a man-on-the-side attack, the NSA observes a target’s Internet traffic using its global network of covert “accesses” to data as it flows over fiber optic cables or satellites. When the target visits a website that the NSA is able to exploit, the agency’s surveillance sensors [alert the TURBINE system](#), which then “shoots” data packets at the targeted computer’s IP address within a fraction of a second.

In one man-on-the-side technique, codenamed QUANTUMHAND, the agency disguises itself as a fake Facebook server. When a target attempts to log in to the social media site, the NSA transmits malicious data packets that trick the target’s computer into thinking they are being sent from the real Facebook. By concealing its malware within what looks like an ordinary Facebook page, the NSA is able to hack into the targeted computer and covertly siphon out data from its hard drive. A top-secret animation demonstrates the tactic in action.

The documents show that QUANTUMHAND became operational in October 2010, after being successfully tested by the NSA against about a dozen targets.

According to Matt Blaze, a surveillance and cryptography expert at the University of Pennsylvania, it appears that the QUANTUMHAND technique is aimed at targeting specific individuals. But he expresses concerns about how it has been covertly integrated within Internet networks as part of the NSA’s automated TURBINE system.

“As soon as you put this capability in the backbone infrastructure, the software and security engineer in me says that’s terrifying,” Blaze says.

“Forget about how the NSA is intending to use it. How do we know it is working correctly and only targeting who the NSA wants? And even if it does work correctly, which is itself a really dubious assumption, how is it controlled?”

In an email statement to *The Intercept*, Facebook spokesman Jay Nancarrow said the company had “no evidence of this alleged activity.” He added that Facebook implemented HTTPS encryption for users last year, making browsing sessions less vulnerable to malware attacks.

Nancarrow also pointed out that other services besides Facebook could have been compromised by the NSA. “If government agencies indeed have privileged access to network service providers,” he said, “any site running only [unencrypted] HTTP could conceivably have its traffic misdirected.”

A man-in-the-middle attack is a similar but slightly more aggressive method that can be used by the NSA to deploy its malware. It refers to a hacking technique in which the agency covertly places itself between computers as they are communicating with each other.

This allows the NSA not only to observe and redirect browsing sessions, but to modify the content of data packets that are passing between computers.

The man-in-the-middle tactic can be used, for instance, to covertly change the content of a message as it is being sent between two people, without either knowing that any change has been made by a third party. The same technique is [sometimes used by criminal hackers](#) to defraud people.

A top-secret NSA presentation from 2012 reveals that the agency developed a man-in-the-middle capability called SECONDDATE to “influence real-time communications between client and server” and to “quietly redirect web-browsers” to NSA malware servers called FOXACID. In October, details about the FOXACID system were [reported by the *Guardian*](#), which revealed its links to attacks against users of the Internet anonymity service Tor.

But SECONDDATE is tailored not only for “surgical” surveillance attacks on individual suspects. It can also be used to launch bulk malware attacks against computers.

According to the 2012 presentation, the tactic has “mass exploitation potential for clients passing through network choke points.”

TOP SECRET//COMINT//NOFORN

SECONDDATE

- SECONDDATE is an exploitation technique that takes advantage of web-based protocols and man-in-the-middle (MitM) positioning.
- SECONDDATE influences real-time communications between client and server and can quietly redirect web-browsers to FA servers for individual client exploitation.
- This allows mass exploitation potential for clients passing through network choke points, but is configurable to provide surgical target selection as well.

TOP SECRET//COMINT//NOFORN

Blaze, the University of Pennsylvania surveillance expert, says the potential use of man-in-the-middle attacks on such a scale “seems very disturbing.” Such an approach would involve indiscriminately monitoring entire networks as opposed to targeting individual suspects.

“The thing that raises a red flag for me is the reference to ‘network choke points,’” he says. “That’s the last place that we should be allowing intelligence agencies to compromise the infrastructure – because that is by definition a mass surveillance technique.”

To deploy some of its malware implants, the NSA exploits security vulnerabilities in commonly used Internet browsers such as Mozilla Firefox and Internet Explorer.

The agency’s hackers also exploit security weaknesses in network routers and in popular software plugins such as Flash and Java to deliver malicious code onto targeted machines.

The implants can circumvent anti-virus programs, and the NSA has gone to extreme lengths to ensure that its clandestine technology is extremely difficult to detect. An implant named VALIDATOR, used by the NSA to upload and download data to and from an infected machine, can be set to self-destruct – deleting itself from an infected computer after a set time expires.

In many cases, firewalls and other security measures do not appear to pose much of an obstacle to the NSA. Indeed, the agency’s hackers appear confident in their ability to circumvent any security mechanism that stands between them and compromising a computer or network. “If we can get the target to visit us in some sort of web browser, we can probably own them,” an agency hacker boasts in one secret document. “The only limitation is the ‘how.’”

Covert Infrastructure

The TURBINE implants system does not operate in isolation.

It is linked to, and relies upon, a large network of clandestine surveillance “sensors” that the agency has [installed at locations across the world](#).



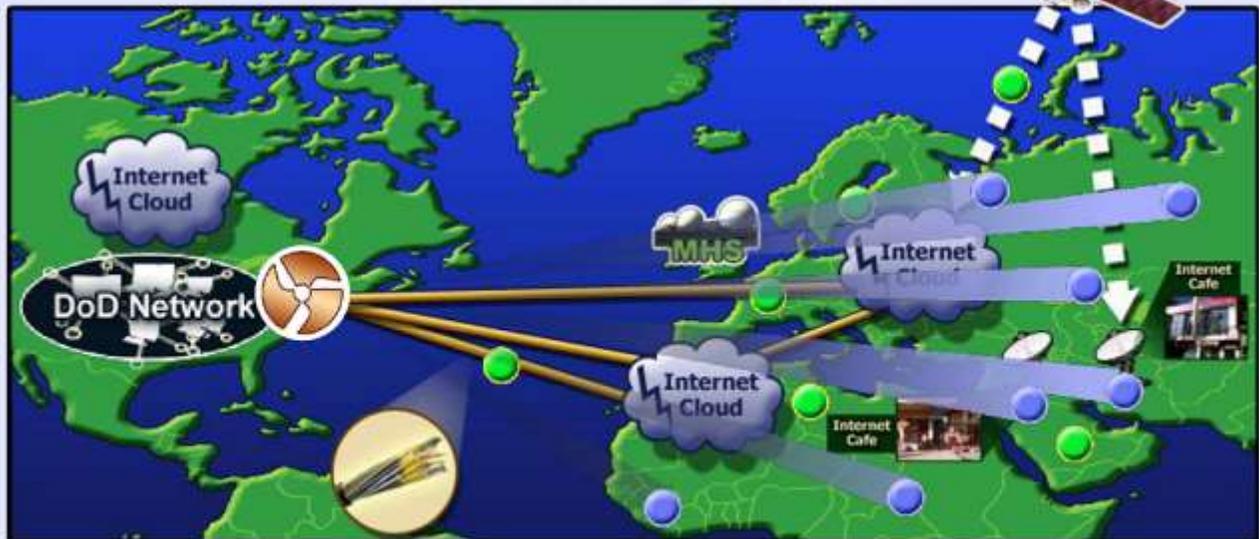
(U) Sensors: Active Mission Management

Accesses

- TURMOIL
- TUTELAGE
- Implants (TAO)



(TS//SI//REL) TURBINE enables the automated management and control of a large network of active implants



TOP SECRET//COMINT//REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL//20291123

2

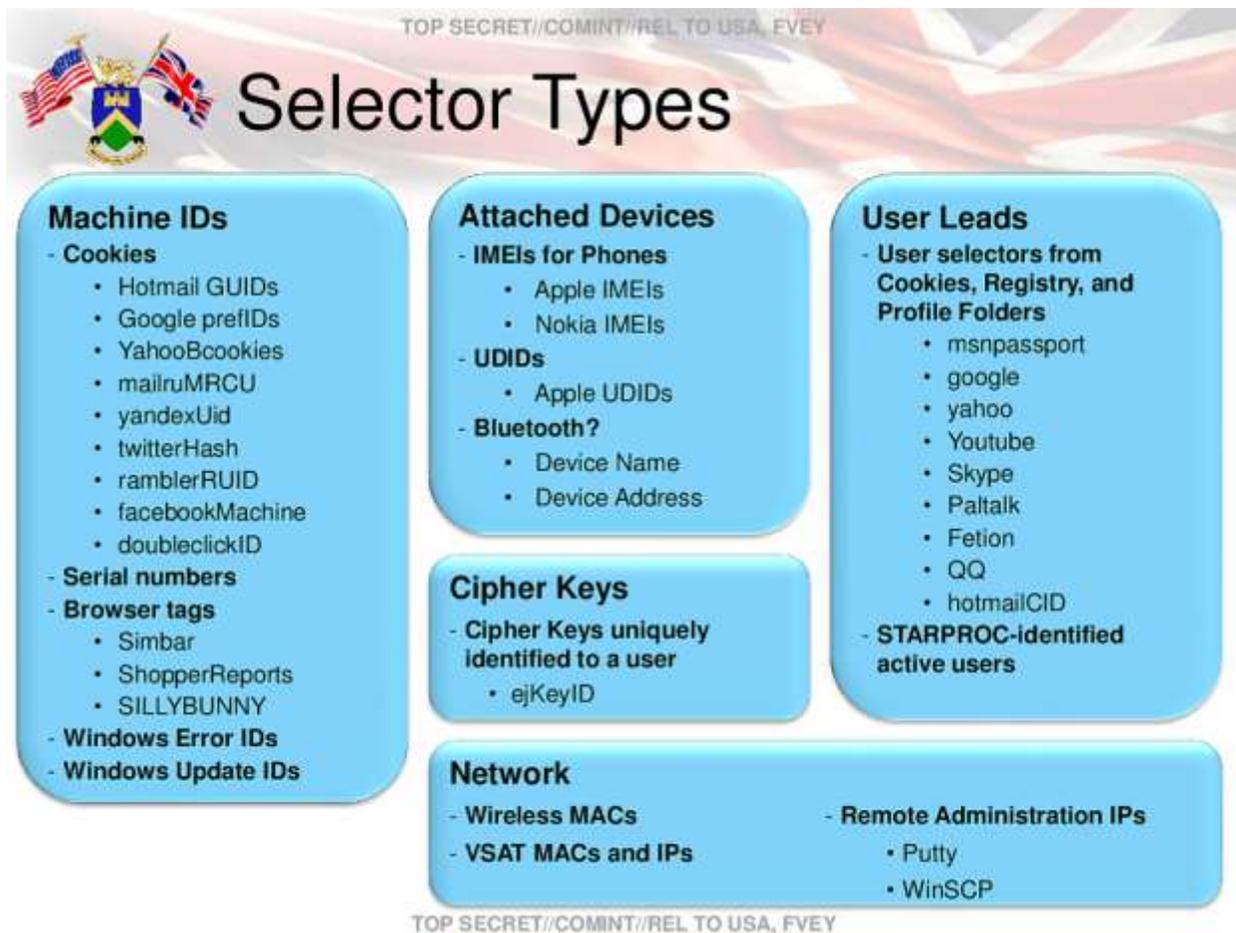
The NSA's headquarters in Maryland are part of this network, as are eavesdropping bases used by the agency in Misawa, Japan and Menwith Hill, England.

The sensors, codenamed TURMOIL, operate as a sort of high-tech surveillance dragnet, monitoring packets of data as they are sent across the Internet.

When TURBINE implants exfiltrate data from infected computer systems, the TURMOIL sensors automatically identify the data and return it to the NSA for analysis. And when targets are communicating, the TURMOIL system can be used to send alerts or "tips" to TURBINE, enabling the initiation of a malware attack.

The NSA identifies surveillance targets based on a series of data "selectors" as they flow across Internet cables. These selectors, according to internal documents, can include email addresses, IP addresses, or the unique "cookies" containing a username or other identifying information that are sent to a user's computer by websites such as Google, Facebook, Hotmail, Yahoo, and Twitter.

Other selectors the NSA uses can be gleaned from unique Google advertising cookies that track browsing habits, unique encryption key fingerprints that can be traced to a specific user, and computer IDs that are sent across the Internet when a Windows computer crashes or updates.



What's more, the TURBINE system operates with the knowledge and support of other governments, some of which have participated in the malware attacks.

Classification markings on the Snowden documents indicate that NSA has shared many of its files on the use of implants with its counterparts in the so-called Five Eyes surveillance alliance – the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.

GCHQ, the British agency, has taken on a particularly important role in helping to develop the malware tactics. The Menwith Hill satellite eavesdropping base that is part of the TURMOIL network, located in a rural part of Northern England, is operated by the NSA in close cooperation with GCHQ.

[Top-secret documents](#) show that the British base – referred to by the NSA as “MHS” for Menwith Hill Station – is an integral component of the TURBINE malware infrastructure and has been used to [experiment](#) with implant “exploitation” attacks against users of Yahoo and Hotmail.

In [one document](#) dated 2010, at least five variants of the QUANTUM hacking method were listed as being “operational” at Menwith Hill. The same document also reveals that GCHQ helped integrate three of the QUANTUM malware capabilities – and test two others – as part of a surveillance system it operates codenamed INSENSER.

GCHQ cooperated with the hacking attacks despite having reservations about their legality. One of the Snowden files, [previously disclosed](#) by Swedish broadcaster SVT, revealed that as recently as April 2013, GCHQ was apparently reluctant to get involved in deploying the QUANTUM malware due to “legal/policy restrictions.” A representative from a unit of the British surveillance agency, meeting with an obscure telecommunications standards committee in 2010, separately [voiced concerns](#) that performing “active” hacking attacks for surveillance “may be illegal” under British law.

In response to questions from *The Intercept*, GCHQ refused to comment on its involvement in the covert hacking operations. Citing its boilerplate response to inquiries, the agency said in a statement that “all of GCHQ’s work is carried out in accordance with a strict legal and policy framework which ensures that our activities are authorized, necessary and proportionate, and that there is rigorous oversight.”

Whatever the legalities of the United Kingdom and United States infiltrating computer networks, the Snowden files bring into sharp focus the broader implications. Under cover of secrecy and without public debate, there has been an unprecedented proliferation of aggressive surveillance techniques. One of the NSA’s primary concerns, in fact, appears to be that its clandestine tactics are now being adopted by foreign rivals, too.

“Hacking routers has been good business for us and our 5-eyes partners for some time,” notes one NSA analyst in [a top-secret document](#) dated December 2012. “But it is becoming more apparent that other nation states are honing their skillz [sic] and joining the scene.”

Documents published with this article:

- [Menwith Hill Station Leverages XKeyscore for Quantum Against Yahoo and Hotmail](#)
- [Five Eyes Hacking Large Routers](#)
- [NSA Technology Directorate Analysis of Converged Data](#)
- [Selector Types](#)
- [There Is More Than One Way to Quantum](#)
- [NSA Phishing Tactics and Man in the Middle Attacks](#)
- [Quantum Insert Diagrams](#)
- [The NSA and GCHQ’s QUANTUMTHEORY Hacking Tactics](#)
- [TURBINE and TURMOIL](#)
- [VPN and VOIP Exploitation With HAMMERCHANT and HAMMERSTEIN](#)
- [Industrial-Scale Exploitation](#)
- [Thousands of Implants](#)

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5 lies that have shaped the Obama presidency

By [Jack Cashill](#) September 13, 2014 [Modal Trigger](#)

“YOU LIE!”



JACK CASHILL



If past presidents are remembered for their signature achievements, Obama will be remembered for his signature lie: “If you like your health care plan, blah, blah, blah.” The reader knows the rest. Although the most consequential of Obama’s lies — it got him re-elected — it’s far from his only prevarication.

I’ve counted 75 significant lies since his campaign for president began, but that doesn’t begin to tally the casual fibs and hyperbole he spouts seemingly every day. Here are five that illustrate just how much Obama’s presidency is built on falsehoods.

5. “My father left my family when I was 2 years old.”



Obama made this claim in September 2009, when addressing the nation’s schoolkids. By then, the blogosphere knew that baby Obama had never spent a night under the same roof as his father, let alone two years.

For years, Obama and his advisers invested enormous political capital in what biographer David Remnick called Obama’s “signature appeal: the use of the details of his own life as a reflection of a kind of multicultural ideal.”

Remnick called Obama’s autobiography “a mixture of verifiable fact, recollection, recreation, invention and artful shaping.” In other words, the truth is never good enough.

4. “The Fast and Furious program was a field-initiated program begun under the previous administration.”



Obama spun this fiction at a September 2012 Univision forum knowing it was false. In fact, the bizarre, deadly idea to let American guns “walk” into Mexico, where they were used by drug cartels to kill dozens, began in October 2009.

Three months earlier, White House press secretary Jay Carney had made the same bogus claim virtually word for word at a press conference and got shot down on national TV. “It began in fall 2009,” corrected White House correspondent Jake Tapper, then with ABC.

Carney refused to acknowledge he lied, and the president continued to lie weeks later. It's all part of Obama's ducking of responsibility — it's always someone else's fault.

3. “Not even a smidgen of corruption.”



Obama said this in response to Bill O'Reilly's question about the IRS scandal: “You're saying no corruption?”

If there were not even a “smidgen of corruption,” as Obama insisted, it is hard to understand what outraged him, or at least seemed to, when news of the IRS scandal first broke. “It's inexcusable, and Americans are right to be angry about it, and I am angry about it,” Obama said in May 2013. Obama routinely expressed anger when some new scandal erupted on his watch — IRS, the failed ObamaCare website, the VA scandal, Fast and Furious — but never before had he shoved a scandal down the memory hole so quickly.

And how could Obama know there wasn't a smidgen of corruption before the investigation was even over? Perhaps because the administration knew that any proof of that was gone with deleted emails and destroyed hard drives?

2. “We revealed to the American people exactly what we understood at the time.”



During that same Super Bowl Sunday interview, Obama made this claim in response to O'Reilly's inquiry about the attack on the American consulate in Benghazi. Obama continued to dissemble: "The notion that we would hide the ball for political purposes when a week later we all said, in fact, there was a terrorist attack taking place and the day after I said it was an act of terror, that wouldn't be a very good coverup."

In fact, it was exactly a week after the attack, on Sept. 18, that Obama took his first questions about Benghazi. Bizarrely, he did so to David Letterman. "Here's what happened," Obama said.

"You had a video that was released by somebody who lives here, sort of a shadowy character who — who made an extremely offensive video directed at — at Mohammed and Islam."

We know now that the administration knew this wasn't true. Not a week later; not even the very night of the attacks. On many levels, this was Obama's most telling lie. He only deals with the world as he sees it, not as it is.

1. "Transparency and the rule of law will be the touchstones of this presidency."



Obama told this whopper to his assembled staff on his first day in office. He promised it to the press. Instead, his administration refuses to hand over documents and Obama refuses to answer questions. As liberal constitutional scholar Jonathan Turley assessed the presidency, "Barack Obama is really the president Richard Nixon always wanted to be."

What do these lies, just a sample of many, tell us? Obama never stopped "artfully shaping" his life.

The scary thing is he might actually believe these lies. He believes that posting a shot from his personal photographer online is "transparent." That targeting conservative groups for audits isn't corrupt. That everything that has gone wrong with his presidency is Bush's fault.

Knowing that, how can we believe anything that he says?

Jack Cashill is the author of "You Lie! The Evasions, Omissions, Fabrications, Frauds and Outright Falsehoods of Barack Obama" (Broadside Books), out Oct. 7.

Damaging Our Country from Wars of Choice

by Ralph Nader / September 18th, 2014

The drums of war are beating once again with the vanguard of U.S. bombers already over Iraq (and soon Syria) to, in President Obama's words, "degrade and destroy ISIS." The Republican Party, led by war-at-any-cost Senators Lindsay Graham and John McCain, wants a bigger military buildup which can only mean U.S. soldiers on the ground.

Here they go again. Another result of Bush's war in Iraq. Washington has already expended thousands of American lives, hundreds of thousands of American injuries and illnesses, and over a million Iraqi lives. The achievement: the slaying or capture of Al Qaeda leaders, but with that came the spread of Al Qaeda into a dozen countries and the emergence of a new Al Qaeda on steroids called the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which has nominal control over an area in Syria and Iraq larger than the territory of Great Britain.

Still, no lessons have been learned. We continue to attack countries and side with one sectarian group against another, which only creates chaos and sets in motion the cycle of revenge and sparks new internal strife. So if slamming a hornet's nest propels more hornets to start new nests, isn't it time to rethink this militarization of U.S. foreign policy? It only increases the violent chaos in that region with the risk of a blow back affecting our country, such as suicide bombers attacking heavily populated public spaces. This kind of attack is very hard to stop, as we have seen thousands of times overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan.

According to Richard Clarke, former White House anti-terrorism advisor to George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden wanted Bush to invade Iraq, so that more Muslims would take up arms against the U.S. and more Muslims would hate our country for its destruction of their land and people. Similarly, ISIS would like nothing better than to embroil the U.S. and our soldiers in a ground war so that it can rally more people to expel the giant U.S. invader.

Then there is the massive over-reaction by our government and its ever-willing corporate contractors. Political turmoil ensues and our democratic institutions, already weakened in their defense of liberty, due process, and the rule of law, are further overwhelmed by the policing dictates of a profitable national security state.

Randolph Bourne, a hundred years ago, wrote an essay with these words about war:

It automatically sets in motion throughout society those irresistible forces for uniformity, for passionate cooperation with the Government in coercing into obedience the minority groups and individuals which lack the larger herd sense... Other values such as artistic creation, knowledge, reason, beauty, the enhancement of life, are instantly and almost unanimously sacrificed...

Benjamin Franklin understood this collective panic, when he said that people who prefer security to liberty deserve neither.

The fundamental question is whether our civil society can defend our institutions critical to maintaining a democratic society.

Will our courts fold before the over-reaching panic by the Executive Branch and its armed forces?

Will our Congress and state legislatures stand firm against sacrificing our liberty and our public budgets that serve our civil society's necessities in the face of a police/military state's over-reacting ultimatums?

Will our media resist hyper-focusing on the "war on terror" and give us other important news about ongoing American life?

Will our government pay more attention to preventing the yearly loss of hundreds of thousands of American lives from hospital infections, medical malpractice, defective products, air pollution, unsafe drugs, toxic workplaces and other domestic perils?

Not likely. The aftermath of the 9/11 atrocities resulted in brutal reaction. In devastating two countries and their civilians, far more American soldiers were injured and killed than those lives lost on 9/11, not to mention the trillions of dollars that could have been spent to save many lives here and repair, with good-paying jobs, the crumbling public works in our communities.

Sadly, our democratic institutions and civil resiliency are not presently prepared to hold fast with the forces of reason, prudence and smart responses that forestall a national nervous breakdown – one which happens to be very profitable and power-concentrating for the few against the many.

Consider what our leaders did to our democracy during their "war on terrorism." Secret laws, secret courts, secret evidence, secret dragnet snooping on everyone, unauditible, massive secret spending for military quagmires abroad, secret prisons and even censored, judicial decisions that are supposed to be fully disclosed! Government prosecutors often have made shambles of their duty to show probable cause and respect habeas corpus and other constitutional rights. Thousands of innocent people were jailed without charges and detained without attorneys after 9/11.

The al Qaeda leaders wanted to not only instill fear about public safety in America, but also to weaken us economically by tying us down overseas. Why are our rulers obliging them? Because, in a grotesque way, power in Washington and profit on Wall Street benefit.

Only the people, who do not benefit from these wars, can organize the exercise of their constitutional sovereignty to shape responses that promote safety without damaging liberty.

One percent of the citizenry diversely organized in congressional districts and reflecting the "public sentiment" can turn around, perhaps with the funding support of an enlightened billionaire or two, the Congress and the White House. Are you up to this challenge?

Top-level turnover makes it harder for DHS to stay on top of evolving threats

By [Jerry Markon](#), [Ellen Nakashima](#) and Alice Crites September 21 at 8:03 PM

An exodus of top-level officials from the Department of Homeland Security is undercutting the agency's ability to stay ahead of a range of emerging threats, including potential terrorist strikes and cyberattacks, according to interviews with current and former officials.

Over the past four years, employees have left DHS at a rate nearly twice as fast as in the federal government overall, and the trend is accelerating, according to a review of a federal database.

The departures are a result of what employees widely describe as a dysfunctional work environment, abysmal morale, and the lure of private security companies paying top dollar that have proliferated in Washington since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The department's terrorism intelligence arm, for example, has cycled through six directors during the Obama administration, decimating morale and contributing to months-long delays in releasing intelligence reports, according to interviews and government reports.

A parade of high-level departures, on top of other factors, has meanwhile helped slow the rollout of key cybersecurity initiatives, including a program aimed at blocking malicious software before it can infiltrate civilian government computers, former officials say.



Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson testifies before the House Homeland Security Committee on September 17, 2014. (Jim Watson/AFP/Getty Images)

[*\(DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson responds to Post article\)*](#)

With the country facing a crisis of unaccompanied minors crossing the southwest border in recent months, the pair of DHS agencies responsible for tackling this problem have been hindered by turnover of top officials. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, for instance, has had six commissioners under President Obama, four of them in a caretaker role because they were not confirmed by the Senate.

And at the Transportation Security Administration, a DHS agency created after 9/11 to enhance airport security, the hemorrhaging of both senior and junior personnel has “had a tremendous effect,” said Kenneth Kasprisin, a former acting TSA head who left the agency in May.

“You cannot sustain a high level of security operations when you have that kind of turnover,” he said, attributing the defections to “a toxic culture” and “terrible” morale.

As evidence of the toll this is taking, Kasprisin cited the results of agency tests in which undercover operatives try to sneak weapons or explosives through airport security. He said security employees are increasingly missing the contraband, with the frequency of failures reaching a “frightening” level.

Homeland security officials acknowledge the challenges, which come at a time when the United States is facing potential threats from al-Qaeda and other extremist groups.

Before his December confirmation, DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson called vacancies and morale his top priorities and said the department faced “a leadership vacuum . . . of alarming proportions.”

Since then, Johnson has won praise from lawmakers for taking steps to improve morale and retain employees, such as restarting an internal awards program and increasing training. The Senate has confirmed 10 top DHS officials in recent months, reducing a top-level vacancy rate that had reached 40 percent.

“Morale has been low in the department for quite a number of years, and it is our responsibility to address it, and we are in fact addressing it,” said Alejandro Mayorkas, the department’s deputy secretary. He said DHS has retained a consulting firm, Deloitte, to develop recommendations to improve morale.

Mayorkas stressed that the churn of personnel has not affected the department’s ability to protect the country. But, he acknowledged, “instability of leadership is not necessarily a galvanizing force for employees.”

The department’s woes date to the George W. Bush administration. Within a few years after DHS began operations in 2003, senior-level vacancy rates were already high and many top officials were leaving the fledgling department for jobs with private security companies. Among the most prominent is the Chertoff Group, a security consulting firm led by former DHS secretary Michael Chertoff, which employs so many former officials it is known in homeland security circles as a “shadow DHS.”

Private-sector salaries for high-level career officials, especially cybersecurity experts, can be double or triple the roughly \$180,000 they can make at DHS.

‘Dysfunctional environment’

During the Obama years, the outflow of personnel has accelerated, according to the FedScope database of federal employees maintained by the Office of Personnel Management. Between 2010 and 2013, the number of annual departures of permanent employees from DHS increased 31 percent, compared with a 17 percent increase for the government overall.

Members of the Senior Executive Service — the government’s top career managers — also are leaving DHS at a much higher rate. In 2013, SES departures were up 56 percent from the year before. By contrast, the rate for the government as a whole was virtually unchanged.

Chet Lunner, a former deputy undersecretary in the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis, recalls the time a high-level colleague realized his phone number was wrong on his DHS business card. This was no small matter. The colleague was the person local officials were told to call with critical questions, such as whether someone police arrested had ties to terrorists. No one was calling.

The official asked administrators for new business cards, Lunner recounted. “They say, ‘You can’t have them. We have a policy that we only give out new business cards every 26 weeks.’ ”

In small and not-so-small ways, some unique to DHS and others not, the department can be an infuriating, exhausting place to work, numerous former and current officials say. The frustrations reflect the fundamental wiring of the department, which was created by plucking 22 autonomous agencies from across the government and welding them into one.

Today, employees describe a stifling bureaucracy made up of agencies with clashing employee cultures and overtaxed by high-pressure responsibilities and relentless congressional carping. It can take many months to hire someone and weeks to get supplies as basic as a whiteboard.

Many former and current officials said the most burdensome part of working for DHS is the demands of congressional oversight. More than 90 committees and subcommittees have some jurisdiction over DHS, nearly three times the number that oversee the Defense Department. Preparing for the blizzard of hearings and briefings, officials say, leaves them less time to do their jobs.

“It’s a very dysfunctional environment, the hardest I’ve ever worked in, and ” said one former senior Obama administration DHS official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal operations. “There were certainly times where you would say, ‘I just got the crap kicked out of me, and I’m making way less than I can make in the private sector.’ ”

Surveys of employee morale show it has plunged to new lows in the past few years. According to the Partnership for Public Service’s annual “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” survey, DHS ranked dead last among large agencies last year.

Some of the most politically sensitive jobs are in the immigration realm, where the department's performance is fodder for partisan wrangling. Despite intense concern in both parties over immigration policy, Customs and Border Protection went five years without a confirmed commissioner until R. Gil Kerlikowske received Senate approval in March. A series of other personnel moves around the same time have meant that the agency, which has critical border-security responsibilities, has been riddled with vacancies.

Most of those vacancies have been filled by officials in an acting capacity, but personnel experts consider that only a stopgap measure. "As an 'acting,' you're a caretaker, not a change agent," said Steve Atkiss, chief of staff for Customs and Border Protection in the Bush administration and a founding partner of Command Consulting Group, a D.C.-based security consulting firm.

While DHS officials say their efforts to secure the border have not been affected, former officials said the leadership vacuum at the border agency has slowed decision-making and made it harder to find creative solutions to pressing problems.

"When you have a proliferation of 'actings,' a lot of hard decisions don't get made with the same level of regularity," said a former senior Obama administration DHS official.

In early 2010, the DHS hierarchy gathered to discuss a report the agency was preparing about its mission. A top official looked around the table and asked who felt they were in charge of the department's counterterrorism role.

Five people raised their hands, said a person who attended the meeting.

DHS's mission has never been entirely clear. Nowhere has this been more nettlesome than at the department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis. The 2002 law creating DHS outlined a powerful intelligence role for the department, but much of that authority was lost during the Bush administration to the FBI and other agencies. The DHS intelligence office, officially created in 2007, instead has come to focus on issuing reports and coordinating with state and local authorities.

For a time, the office operated relatively smoothly. But after its leaders started leaving, it was unable to resist what former DHS officials said were even more power grabs by other agencies. Morale plunged.

By 2010, so many people had left because of "unstable leadership" that the team assigned to study Islamist extremists declined from about two dozen people to four or five, recalled Thomas Barnes, a former DHS intelligence analyst. "It decimated us," he said.

Barnes and other former analysts said the office starting overlooking intelligence.

In late 2009, Barnes told his bosses about a new threat, an extremist group gaining notoriety in Nigeria. "No one was interested," he said. "It was way off their radar because we didn't have any bodies." The group was Boko Haram, which seized international attention this year by kidnapping more than 200 schoolgirls and is seen as a potential threat to the United States.

A bipartisan Senate study in 2012 concluded that understaffing and turnover in the DHS intelligence office were contributing to dangerous delays. The study found that hundreds of reports being prepared by intelligence analysts working with state and local officials on counterterrorism were being released months late, at times based on outdated information.

When the intelligence office's director, Caryn Wagner, stepped down in 2012 after less than three years in the job, the position proved hard to fill. At least five people turned down the post, according to people familiar with the search. "Nobody wanted it. It's the worst job in the intelligence community," one person said.

Mayorkas, the DHS deputy secretary, declined to comment on the office's performance, but he praised its latest undersecretary, Francis X. Taylor, confirmed in April. "He's a superb leader," Mayorkas said. "He will bring morale to where it should be."

Hampering cybersecurity

Even as it wrestles with turnover in the intelligence office, DHS has been hit with defections in another vital area: cybersecurity.

In one nine-month period between June 2011 and March 2012, for example, four senior DHS cybersecurity officials quit and one retired — all headed to the private sector.

The departures came as the department battled the Pentagon and the National Security Agency over who should have responsibility for protecting critical private-sector networks and for responding to industry requests for assistance. DHS was pressing to enshrine its authority in law.

"It became so hard to advocate for DHS to be placed in charge and given more responsibility because people were constantly leaving," recalled Jacob Olcott, a former House Homeland Security Committee aide.

The cybersecurity bill died, a victim of strong opposition from industry and its backers on the Hill.

The continuing stream of departures has at times hampered the department's ability to combat cyberattacks aimed at civilian federal networks and to serve as the federal point of contact for critical industries, such as energy and transportation, and for state and local governments.

The high turnover has meant that at times the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center struggles to carry out its mission of analyzing attacks on federal and private computer systems and responding to them.

Just last month, Larry Zelvin, who had directed the center for two years, and another top DHS cybersecurity official left for corporate jobs.

The constant churn, former officials said, also exacerbated turf battles and other problems that delayed Einstein 3, a program to block malicious software before it enters the dot-gov networks. The program is now scheduled to be completed perhaps by next year.

“If you look at the last six, seven years, there’s been enormous turnover,” said Michael Brown, a former Navy rear admiral and high-level DHS cybersecurity official who retired in 2012. “Absolutely, it’s a problem for consistency and continuity.”

Senior managers leave for several reasons, including the grueling tempo of the job, said Brown, now a senior official at RSA, a cybersecurity firm. The pace was so relentless that the wife of one senior cybersecurity official used to put a place setting at the dinner table for his BlackBerry.

There’s also frustration over the lack of clear authority from Congress to oversee cybersecurity. Without this authority, DHS officials find it difficult to work with private industry when, for instance, they offer help to companies to stem a computer breach.

“It would take three days just to explain what DHS’s mission was, where the FBI can just come in and everybody knows what they do,” said a former official. “It really impeded our ability to do our job.”

Legislation is pending that would spell out DHS’s authority in the cyber sphere.

Those who have left also say they grew weary of fighting to get the simplest things done.

“My cyber folks were spending more time on human resource issues and acquisition than they were analyzing technical data to defend and protect networks,” a former senior official said.

“DHS can’t keep anyone in cyber. They just can’t do it,” said another former DHS official. “You can make \$150,000 protecting the nation or you can make \$650,000. Which one are you going to do?”

THE GOAL OF THE ISIS PSYOPS IS WORLD WAR III

by Dave Hodges | August 21, 2014 5:32 am



[1] ISIS is everywhere and America should be paralyzed with fear. ISIS is in Ferguson, they are on Twitter, they are in Iraq and Syria, they are crossing our undefended southern border. They could be carrying Ebola into the country. Stop, stop, stop! Here is a phrase that I would like all Americans to memorize and recite often:

“ISIS is everywhere, because the CIA is everywhere”.

ISIS Is a Classic PSYOPS

America is both shocked and horrified at the video posted on August 19th, on YouTube, showing American Journalist, James Foley kneeling next to a man dressed in black. Foley reads a message, presumably written by his captors, that his “real killer” is America.



[2]

“I wish I had more time. I wish I could have the hope for freedom to see my family once again.”

Foley can be heard saying in the video. He is then shown being beheaded. ISIS controls vast territory of both [Syria and Iraq](#)[3], and they just posted a video on the Internet of the [beheading of an American journalist](#)[4]. America can expect to see much more of the same in order to maximize the PSYOPS that is being directed at American public opinion as we rapidly move towards our date with World War III.

ISIS has released a number of tweets which proclaims they are going to bring to America extreme harm.

#AmessagefromISISToUS[5]

We are in your state

We are in your cities

We are in your streets

You are our goals anywhere



[6]

ISIS had a sign in Ferguson proclaiming that they were present. It looks like America has a lot to be worried about. ISIS is beheading journalists, threatening America on Twitter and displaying signs on the streets of Ferguson, MO. We should be frightened and now when the next 9/11 false flag attack occurs we know who to blame, don't we? And on and on the drum beats on. **ISIS is everywhere! Why? Because the CIA is everywhere!**

Child-Like Innocence

As some prominent people in American circles would say, “The dumbing down of America is nearly complete”. Most Americans look at current events with the mindset and reasoning ability of a child.

Sorry, but the mental midgets which comprise the majority of the sheep in the country, badly need to Google the word “PSYOP(S)”, but alas, most of our fellow countrymen could not be pulled from the couch, and the upcoming NFL season, long enough to be bothered with the looking up of even this one term. For those who are too busy to familiarize yourself with the term and possess a decided lack of common sense needed to understand when you and your country are the victim of the process, please allow me to save you the time and trouble.

PSYOPS or Psychological Operations: *“Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator’s objectives. Also called PSYOP. See also consolidation psychological operations; overt peacetime psychological operations programs; perception management.*

(Source: U.S. Department of Defense).



[7]

We might be well-advised to replace our current national mindset, which is being conditioned by the present CIA sponsored PSYOPS which is inundating us with the belief that “We (ISIS) are everywhere”, and replace this child-like thinking with some fact-based information.

ISIS Is Not Three Years Old: The MSM’s Phony Timeline Related to Terrorism In Iraq and Syria

Syria has seen terrorist groups operating in their country for over three years. These terrorist groups are operating with the approval of the war mongers in Washington DC and their allies in London and Paris. These terrorist groups are operating with the full knowledge and backing of NATO and their allies in the Gulf, namely Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Saudi Intelligence and a host of CIA backed terror groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Abdullah Azzam Brigades[8] and [Al Baraa ibn Malik Martyrdom Brigade](#)[9], the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, the ultra-extreme jihadist group Ahrar al-Sham, the PK and Kata'ib Mohadzherin[10] have been wreaking havoc in Syria for much longer than ISIS has been in existence. And where did all these (ISIS) terrorist groups get their vast weaponry? As reported in the MSM, they got their weapons from leftover weapons supplies in Iraq which was left by our troops when we pulled out of the country. Shouldn't the U.S. have destroyed their weapons stockpiles? That would have been standard operating procedure, unless someone in our government was interested in arming terrorists with American military grade weaponry and subsequently pointed them in the direction of Syria, knowing full well that this would become the gateway for military intervention into Syria.

The Present Plot Was Previously Exposed by Doug Hagmann

As Doug Hagmann and his source predicted this past Spring, ISIS would roll across Iraq and into Syria, thus forcing an American response as ISIS would be poised to pose a series of horrific events (i.e. false flag events in Syria). The execution of Foley is just an example of what is to come. As predicted, this would be the impetus of World War III. The Obama administration will also use a series of domestic based false flag events to justify inserting the American military into Syria in order to exact vengeance against this CIA front operation. However, let's not forget that BOTH China and Russia have publicly threatened to "Nuke" the United States if it dared to invade Syria. There is a predictable train wreck coming and it is coming in the very near future.

An American invasion of Syria would accomplish a number of things. First, the American military would be able to deploy its medium range missile batteries and neutralize any Russian advance into the region. Second, Syria is an ideal jumping off point from which to invade Iran which has galvanized the BRICS as they purchase oil with Gold rather than the Petrodollar. This is destroying the precious Federal Reserve's most precious asset, the dollar. Third, when the Russians respond to a Syrian invasion as they have promised, the Obama administration will be free to initiate World War III against the Russians which is their prime objective.

What Lies Ahead?

Recently, I interviewed former CIA operative, Dr. Jim Garrow, on [The Common Sense Show](#)[11], and he stated that he had intelligence information that several malls were going to be attacked at the same time. [Garrow's warning](#)[12] predated the inundation of the fact that ISIS "is everywhere". ISIS, a CIA creation, is being championed as both the planner and executioner of a series of false flag operations designed to enflame the American public to accept going into Syria. Doesn't this just smell like post 9/11 America when we used the emotion of the event to sell the American people on the need to invade Iraq who had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks? But the upcoming football season is looking mighty good and the average American can't be bothered with events so far away. It won't be until the country has their football game pre-empted by news that 1,000 malls have been attacked as per Jim Garrow.

I have no doubt this is how WW III will commence. For 18 months, I have discussed all the ancillary variables which will comprise the coming war. In my next article, I will lay out the

unfolding chronology of events in both the path to WW III and the course of the war itself. I would caution America to be mindful of the fact that ISIS is indeed everywhere, just like al-Qaeda was once everywhere, and that is because the CIA is everywhere!

Endnotes:

1. [Image]: <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/siteupload/2014/08/isis-symbol.png>
2. [Image]: <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/siteupload/2014/08/isis-beheading.jpeg>
3. [Syria and Iraq](http://www.dcclothesline.com/2014/06/17/give-guns-syria-fight-iraq/): <http://www.dcclothesline.com/2014/06/17/give-guns-syria-fight-iraq/>
4. [beheading of an American journalist](http://www.dcclothesline.com/2014/08/20/islamic-state-beheads-kidnapped-american-journalist-james-wright-foley-message-america/): <http://www.dcclothesline.com/2014/08/20/islamic-state-beheads-kidnapped-american-journalist-james-wright-foley-message-america/>
5. [#AMessagefromISISToUS](https://twitter.com/hashtag/AMessagefromISISToUS?src=hash): <https://twitter.com/hashtag/AMessagefromISISToUS?src=hash>
6. [Image]: <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/siteupload/2014/08/isis-is-here.jpg>
7. [Image]: <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/siteupload/2014/08/isis-and-mccain.jpg>
8. Abdullah Azzam Brigades: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/05/190810.htm>
9. [Al Baraa ibn Malik Martyrdom Brigade](http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4549): http://www.start.umd.edu/start/data_collections/tops/terrorist_organization_profile.asp?id=4549
10. Kata'ib Mohadzherin: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/hundreds-of-russian-islamists-fighting-assad-in-syria-expert-says/476629.html>
11. [The Common Sense Show](http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/): <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/>
12. [Garrow's warning](http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/2014/07/27/dave-hodges-interviews-jim-garrow-regarding-new-operational-details-about-the-impending-attacks-upon-u-s-shopping-malls/): <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/2014/07/27/dave-hodges-interviews-jim-garrow-regarding-new-operational-details-about-the-impending-attacks-upon-u-s-shopping-malls/>

Source URL: <http://www.thecommonsenseshow.com/2014/08/21/the-goal-of-the-isis-psyops-is-world-war-iii/>

Multi Billion Dollar Bonanza: Companies which Make Money By Keeping Americans “Terrified of Terror Attacks”

A massive industry profits off the government-induced fear of terrorism.

By [Alex Kane](#)

Global Research, September 22, 2014



Michael Hayden, the former director of the National Security Agency, has invaded America's television sets in recent weeks to warn about Edward Snowden's leaks and the continuing terrorist threat to America.

But what often goes unmentioned, as the Guardian's Glenn Greenwald pointed out, is that Hayden has a financial stake in keeping Americans scared and on a permanent war footing against Islamist militants. And the private firm he works for, called the Chertoff Group, is not the only one making money by scaring Americans.

Post-9/11 America has witnessed a boom in private firms dedicated to the hyped-up threat of terrorism. The drive to privatize America's national security apparatus accelerated in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, and it's gotten to the point where 70 percent of the national intelligence budget is now spent on private contractors, as author Tim Shorrock reported. The private intelligence contractors have profited to the tune of at least \$6 billion a year. In 2010, the Washington Post revealed that there are 1,931 private firms across the country dedicated to fighting terrorism.

What it all adds up to is a massive industry profiting off government-induced fear of terrorism, even though Americans are more likely to be killed by a car crash or their own furniture than a terror attack.

Here are five private companies cashing in on keeping you afraid.

1. The Chertoff Group



On August 11, former NSA head Michael Hayden, the man at the center of the Bush administration's 2005 surveillance scandal, was defending his former agency on CBS News in the wake of the latest NSA spying scandal. Commenting on President Obama's half-hearted promises to reform some NSA practices, Hayden told host Bob Schieffer that "the President is trying to take some steps to make the American people more comfortable about what it is we're

doing. That's going to be hard because, frankly, Bob, some steps to make Americans more comfortable will actually make Americans less safe."

Former Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff had a similar message when he appeared on ABC News August 4. Speaking about the purported threat from an Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen that led to the closure of 19 U.S. embassies, Chertoff said that "the collection of this warning information [about Al Qaeda] came from the kinds of programs we've been discussing about, the ability to capture communications overseas."

CBS and ABC did not see fit to inform viewers that both Hayden and Chertoff are employees of the Chertoff Group, a private firm created in 2009 that companies hire to consult on best practices for security and combatting terrorism. Some of the companies the firm advises go on to win government contracts. Chertoff is the founder and chairman of the group, while Hayden serves as a principal. So they profit off a war on terror they say is crucial to keeping Americans safe.

Though it's unclear how much in total exactly the firm makes, there are some known numbers. After the failed attempt in 2010 to blow up an airliner on Christmas Day with a bomb hidden in underwear, Chertoff pushed for better airport security procedures. One of the suggestions Chertoff made was for the Transportation Security Agency to use full-body scanners like the ones Rapiscan, one of the Chertoff Group's clients, made. And sure enough, after the Christmas Day plot, the TSA ordered 300 Rapiscan machines. The Huffington Post reported that Rapiscan made \$118 million from the government between 2009-2010.

2. Booz Allen Hamilton



This private intelligence contractor has become a household name in the wake of the NSA scandal. Edward Snowden, the man responsible for leaking secret documents that exposed the

breadth of NSA surveillance, was working for Booz Allen when he downloaded the documents he handed off to media outlets. As the New York Times reported in June, the company parlays its technology expertise for intelligence uses into massive government contracts. Thousands of employees of the company provide services to the NSA, like analyzing the massive amounts of data the government agency collects every day. The company is also the shining symbol of the government-private security complex's revolving door: its vice president is the former director of national intelligence, while the current director of national intelligence is a former employee of Booz Allen.

Despite the Snowden security breach, Booz Allen continues to work with the government. And they're making a lot of money from the U.S. In the last fiscal year, the company made \$1.3 billion from working in U.S. intelligence. In total, Booz Allen Hamilton made over \$5 billion last fiscal year. And the cash keeps coming: in January, the company announced that it had won a contract with the Defense Department to provide intelligence services. The amount of money it could make from the deal is up to \$5.6 billion.

And like Hayden and Chertoff, Booz Allen's vice president Mike McConnell has publicly hyped up the threat of terrorism to blast Snowden's leaks. McConnell told a government contracting conference in July 2013 that Snowden's leaks have done "irrevocable damage" to the U.S.'s ability to stop terrorism. "It's going to inhibit our ability to understand nuclear activity in North Korea, what's going on in Syria, what might be happening with the Taliban in Afghanistan," said McConnell.

3. Science Applications International Corporation

Sometimes referred to as "NSA West" because so many former NSA employees go on to work for the formerly California-based Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), this firm makes a ton of cash off government contracts. And they do so by hawking their expertise in combatting the terrorist threat.



Browse through SAIC's website and you're constantly greeted with the words "terrorist threat" and information on how the SAIC can help the government and others battle it. SAIC developed a "Terrorism Protection Manual" for Florida law enforcement that was developed to fight "today's national terrorist threat and implement recommended security best practices." They boast of their "experience meeting the terrorism incident response training needs of a wide variety of customers, from training for a national Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) scenario, applicable at agency response levels, to lesser levels of incidents affecting a city, a military installation or a special facility."

Back when John P. Jumper, the current CEO of SAIC, was an Air Force general, he said the threat of terrorism is "greater than Nazism, greater than communism. This threat that we have of terrorist zealots is the most dangerous because these are people who care nothing about life. They care nothing about our lives, for sure, and they care nothing about their own lives." And Larry Prior, a U.S. intelligence veteran who used to run the company's Intelligence and Security Group, said in an internal newsletter that "the future of the nation rests on their backs," referring to employees in his group.

SAIC is an immensely lucrative and large company. It boasts 42,000 employees—20,000 of whom hold U.S. government security clearances. It is the NSA's largest contractor, according to CorpWatch, and is deeply involved in the NSA's collection of intelligence. Last year it reported a net income of \$525 million.

4. Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies

U.S. intelligence agencies aren't the only sectors of government where the private sector has cashed in on the fear of terrorism. The post-9/11 world has seen the blossoming of a cottage industry of self-styled "experts" on Islam from private companies that market their supposedly ironclad analysis of the threat from Islamists to other federal agencies and state and local law enforcement. These companies have profited from law enforcement taking part in the "war on terror."



Through Homeland Security grant programs like the State Homeland Security Program and the Urban Areas Security Initiative, the federal government has doled out over billions of dollars to these private companies to provide Islamophobic training. One of these companies is called the Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies.

Based in Virginia, the center “posits radical Islam as a new global ideological menace on the order of the old communist threat from the Soviet Union,” as Political Research Associates (PRA) noted in a 2011 report on private firms doing counter-terror training. Staff members include former FBI, CIA and Defense Department personnel.

Their claim to fame is providing education and training to members of the U.S. national security community—including law enforcement agencies, according to their website. They say they have trained over 67,000 people over the past decade.

It’s unclear exactly how much this firm makes per year. But according to the PRA report, a five-day course for government employees on the “Global Jihadist Threat Doctrine” costs \$39,280. The firm also lists the costs of individual courses on their website. For a 30-person class titled “Dying to Kill Us: Understanding the Mindset of Suicide Operations,” the cost is \$7,856. For a three-day course for 30 people on “Informant Development for Law Enforcement to Fight Terrorism,” the cost is \$23,568.

The training pushes anti-Muslim ideology. On the section of their website where they list feedback from participants of the courses, one wrote: “An eye-opener. Especially how many Muslim Brotherhood front organizations there are and that the government doesn’t get it.”

5. Security Solutions International

Security Solutions International is yet another private firm hawking anti-Muslim training to law enforcement. This Miami-based company founded in 2004 uses its Israeli security connections to boost its standing in the market. They use Israeli security trainers in their courses and their president, Henry Morgenstern, is a dual Israeli-U.S. citizen who says he “developed excellent high level contacts with the Security Establishment [in Israel], making SSI the premiere training company for counter-terror related subjects.”



The company has trained over 700 law enforcement agencies since 2004. Officials from law enforcement agencies like the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Department

of Homeland Security have participated in the conferences they put on for profit. While SSI claims that they don't cast aspersions on the whole of Islam, an examination of their trainings, conferences and the speakers they use indicate otherwise.

At a 2009 conference sponsored by Police magazine, an SSI instructor who is the company's "expert" on Islam used a video that showed a terrorist beheading a hostage. After the course was met with criticism, the company's CEO said "their religion got linked to terrorism a long time ago."

The conferences they hold are usually well-attended, and this year SSI is putting on a conference in Orlando, Florida for three days. The cost for each attendee is \$400. The keynote speaker this year is Steve Emerson, a well-known member of what's been termed the "Islamophobia industry." SSI also makes money off its Counter Terrorist magazine. A yearly subscription is \$35, and the company says it has 15,000 subscribers.

Khorasan: US officials warn Syrian terror group may be bigger threat than Isis



The group is believed to be headed by senior al-Qaeda operative, and close associate of Bin Laden, Muhsin al-Fadhli

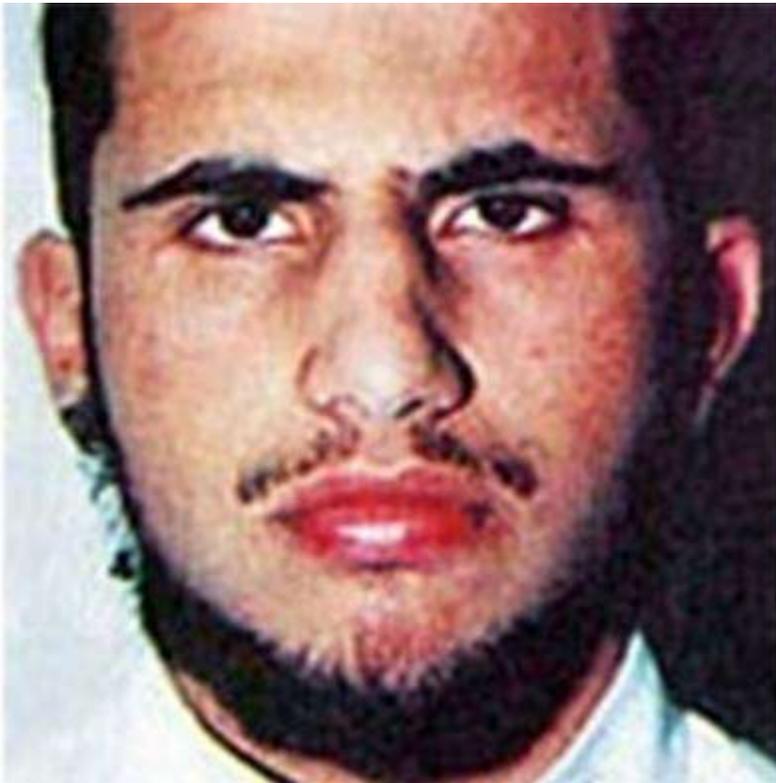
[Rose Troup Buchanan](#)  Monday 22 September 2014

A shadowy group of extremists with links to Al-Qaeda is as big a threat as the Islamic State and just as likely to launch a terror attack against Western targets, US intelligence officials have warned.

The Khorasan is led by a former Al-Qaeda commander and officials have warned that the group's expertise in making bombs coupled with the presence of jihadist fighters with Western passports in its ranks make it a significant threat to homeland security.

James Clapper, the US Director of national intelligence, said: "In terms of threat to the homeland, Khorasan may pose as much of a danger as the Islamic State."

According to [the New York Times](#), the group is described by several intelligence, law enforcement and military officials as being made up of al-Qaeda operatives from across the Middle East, South Asia and north Africa.



Longtime al-Qaeda operative Muhsin al-Fadhli is thought to be the leader of the Khorasan. The man thought to lead the group, Muhsin al-Fadhli, was involved in the 11 September terror attacks and was one of Osama bin Laden's top commanders. Beyond that, little is known about the group.

Last week, CBS reported that at least two dozen US airports were subjected to enhanced security screenings over fears that Khorasan were targeting the airline industry by recruiting Western fighters to carry bombs back into the country.

[According to CBS](#), they were built by experts trained by al-Qaeda bomb-maker Ibrahim al-Asiri.

John U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism [John Brennan](#) said al-Asiri was a "very dangerous individual" earlier this year.

Read more: [Blair: Ground troops are necessary to fight Isis](#)
[John Cantile video hints at fears of Western bombardment](#)
[Analysis: Isis' demise rests on Syrian truce](#)

According to former deputy director of the CIA Mike Morrell this is what makes the group dangerous.

"That is very worrisome because that brings together two pieces of a potential plot in the West," [Morell told CBS This Morning](#). "It brings together Western fighters who have gone to Syria to fight - so capable of carrying out operations in the West - with this bomb technology that Asiri brings to the table. You put those things together, you have a serious threat."

An Foreign Office spokesperson said they did not comment on intelligence matters.

Lt Gen William Mayville said al-Qaeda-linked militants, known as the Khorasan Group, were among the targets

The US says some of its air strikes in Syria aimed to disrupt an imminent attack on the West by al-Qaeda veterans from the so-called Khorasan group.

The raids in Aleppo province came hours after the US, backed by Arab allies, launched the first air strikes against Islamic State (IS) militants in Syria.

The Aleppo raids were carried out by the US alone, the US military said.

The Khorasan group was in "the final stages of plans to execute major attacks", a US military spokesman said.

Lt Gen William Mayville, the Pentagon's operations chief, said the group's targets were "either in Europe or the homeland".

Other officials have said the group was planning to attack aircraft.

Very little is known about Khorasan outside of recent statements by US officials.

After the latest air strikes in Syria, the US military said the group had "established a safe haven in Syria to develop external attacks, construct and test improvised explosive devices and recruit Westerners to conduct operations".



Ship-launched Tomahawk Cruise missiles were involved in the attack on Khorasan

On Tuesday, US President Barack Obama confirmed that the group had been targeted in the overnight strikes on Syria.

"We will not tolerate safe havens for terrorists who threaten our people," he said.

The term Khorasan Group, apparently coined by the US, is used to describe a group of al-Qaeda veterans who have travelled to Syria to take advantage of the situation there.

Embedded within al-Qaeda's regional branch there, al-Nusra Front, and possibly other local groups, they have come largely from the Afghanistan and Pakistan region, which jihadists refer to as Khorasan.

The US says they have been plotting an imminent attack against US and Western interests, but the cell itself has not said anything about its aims or existence. Jihad supporters online believe the US is using the phrase to refer to operatives within al-Nusra Front or the group itself.

Several al-Qaeda veterans have turned up in Syria this year, including al-Nusra Front's spokesman, Abu Firas al-Suri, and its top military commander, Abu Humam al-Suri. Both have appeared in al-Nusra Front propaganda.

But the Khorasan cell's alleged leader, Muhsin al-Fadli, has had no public profile.

The US Central Command said earlier on Tuesday that fighter aircraft had carried out eight air strikes targeting Khorasan to the west of Aleppo.

At a Pentagon briefing later in the day, a spokesman said that more than 40 Tomahawk missiles had been launched, the majority them targeting Khorasan. The missiles are fired from ships or submarines.

There has been no confirmation of the impact of the air strikes on the ground.

Some 50 al-Qaeda-linked militants and eight civilians are reported to have been killed in overnight US raids on Syria's Aleppo and Idlib provinces.

It is not clear if the casualties - reported by the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group that monitors the Syrian conflict - are linked to the US strikes targeting Khorasan.

Most of the 50 dead militants are said to have been foreign citizens. The civilian deaths reportedly included one woman and three children.

The Terror Con, Booz Allen Hamilton and the NSA

By [Robert Scheer](#)

Global Research, June 19, 2013 [Truthdig](#) 18 June 2013



(Image: UGO Entertainment)

For defense contractors, the government officials who write them mega checks, and the hawks in the media who cheer them on, the name of the game is threat inflation. And no one has been better at it than the folks at Booz Allen Hamilton, the inventors of the new boondoggle called cyber warfare.

That's the company, under contract with the National Security Agency, that employed whistleblower Edward Snowden, the information security engineer whose revelation of Booz Allen's enormously profitable and pervasive spying on Americans now threatens the firm's profitability and that of its parent hedge fund, the Carlyle Group.

Booz Allen, whose top personnel served in key positions at the NSA and vice versa after the inconvenient collapse of the Cold War, has been attempting to substitute terrorist for communist as the enemy of choice. A difficult switch indeed for the [military-industrial complex](#) about which Dwight Eisenhower, the general-turned-president, had so eloquently warned us.

But just when the good times for war profiteers seemed to be forever in the past, there came 9/11 and the terrorist enemy, the gift that keeps on giving, for acts of terror always will occur in a less than perfect world, serving as an ideal excuse for squandering resources, as well as our freedoms.

Just ask New York Times columnists Thomas Friedman and Bill Keller. Rising to the defense of NSA snooping on a scale never before imagined in human history, they warn us that if there was a second 9/11-type attack, we would lose all of our civil liberties, so we should be grateful for this trade-off.

"I believe that if there is one more 9/11—or worse, an attack involving nuclear material—it could lead to the end of the open society as we know it," Friedman wrote in his June 11 column.

No nation in history has ever possessed such an imbalance of military superiority and the ability to ward off foreign threats without sacrificing its core values. Never has this country been as vulnerable to foreign attacks as when the founders approved our Constitution with its Fourth Amendment and other protections of individual sovereignty against an intrusive government. They did so out of the conviction that individual freedom makes us stronger rather than weaker as a nation. In short, they trusted in the essential wisdom of the people as opposed to the pundits who deride it.

Defending Friedman's column, Keller wrote Sunday:

"Tom's important point was that the gravest threat to our civil liberties is not the NSA but another 9/11-scale catastrophe that could leave a panicky public willing to ratchet up the security state, even beyond the war-on-terror excesses that followed the last big attack."

So it's the panicky public's fault and not the ill-informed work of establishment journalists like Friedman, who led the charge to war with Iraq based on phony claims about terrorism.

Once again, Friedman has a misplaced faith in the work of the intelligence community. The NSA snooping was quite extensive before 9/11 and certainly in full force prior to the Boston Marathon attack, but did not prevent either event. Indeed, our much-vaunted spy agencies still have not come up with an explanation of how 19 hijackers, 15 from our ally Saudi Arabia, managed to legally enter this country and learn flying skills while under our government's watch.

Nor have those intelligence agencies explained why the only three countries that recognized the Taliban government sponsors of al-Qaida were that same Saudi Arabia as well as our other friends in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. For information on the UAE connection, the NSA might check with its buddies at Booz Allen Hamilton.

As The New York Times reported Saturday: “When the United Arab Emirates wanted to create its own version of the National Security Agency, it turned to Booz Allen Hamilton to replicate the world’s largest and most powerful spy agency in the sands of Abu Dhabi. It was a natural choice: The chief architect of Booz Allen’s cyber strategy is Mike McConnell, who once led the NSA and pushed the United States into a new era of big data espionage. It was Mr. McConnell who won the blessing of the American intelligence agencies to bolster the Persian Gulf sheikdom, which helps track the Iranians.”

Tracking the Iranians, you say? But they’re not the enemies who attacked us on 9/11, and indeed they are Shiites, who were implacably hostile to the Sunni fanatics of al-Qaida. The reasoning makes sense only if you follow the money that the UAE can pay. “They are teaching everything,” one Arab official told The New York Times about Booz Allen’s staffers. “Data mining, web surveillance, all sorts of digital intelligence collection.”

How great. Now, it’s not just the government we elect but also those everywhere, even in desert emirates, that can mine our data.

“The NSA data mining,” Keller assures us, “is part of something much larger. On many fronts, we are adjusting to life in a surveillance state, relinquishing bits of privacy in exchange for the promise of other rewards.”

Behold McConnell. While director of national intelligence from 2007-09, he did much to inflate the threat of cyberterrorism; he then returned to the private sector and was rewarded with \$4.1 million his first year back at Booz Allen, solving the problem he had hyped while heading the NSA. There’s a guy who knows how to play the game.

Robert Scheer, editor in chief of [Truthdig](#), has built a reputation for strong social and political writing over his 30 years as a journalist. [MORE](#)

Attorney General Holder Announces Pilot Program to Counter Violent Extremists

U.S. Department of Justice September 15, 2014

- Office of Public Affairs (202) 514-2007/TDD (202)514-1888

WASHINGTON—Attorney General Eric Holder announced Monday that the Justice Department will launch a new series of pilot programs in cities across the country to bring together community representatives, public safety officials and religious leaders to counter violent extremism. The new programs will be run in partnership with the White House, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Counterterrorism Center.

“Today, few threats are more urgent than the threat posed by violent extremism,” Attorney General said in a video message posted on the Justice Department’s website. “And with the emergence of groups like ISIL, and the knowledge that some Americans are attempting to travel to countries like Syria and Iraq to take part in ongoing conflicts, the Justice Department is responding appropriately.”

The complete text of the Attorney General’s video message is below:

“Last week, millions of Americans paused to mark the 13th anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001—the deadliest acts of terror ever carried out on American soil. For my colleagues at every level of our nation’s Department of Justice, and for me, this anniversary was also a solemn reminder of our most important obligation: to ensure America’s national security and protect the American people from a range of evolving threats.

“Today, few threats are more urgent than the threat posed by violent extremism. And with the emergence of groups like ISIL, and the knowledge that some Americans are attempting to travel to countries like Syria and Iraq to take part in ongoing conflicts, the Justice Department is responding appropriately.

“Through law enforcement agencies like the FBI, American authorities are working with our international partners and Interpol to disseminate information on foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, including individuals who have traveled from the United States. We have established processes for detecting American extremists who attempt to join terror groups abroad. And we have engaged in extensive outreach to communities here in the U.S.—so we can work with them to identify threats before they emerge, to disrupt homegrown terrorists, and to apprehend would-be violent extremists. But we can—and we must—do even more.

“Today, I am announcing that the Department of Justice is partnering with the White House, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Counterterrorism Center to launch a new series of pilot programs in cities across the nation. These programs will bring together community representatives, public safety officials, religious leaders, and United States Attorneys to improve local engagement; to counter violent extremism; and—ultimately—to build a broad network of community partnerships to keep our nation safe. Under President Obama’s leadership, along with our interagency affiliates, we will work closely with community representatives to develop comprehensive local strategies, to raise awareness about important issues, to share information on best practices, and to expand and improve training in every area of the country.

“Already, since 2012, our U.S. Attorneys have held or attended more than 1,700 engagement-related events or meetings to enhance trust and facilitate communication in their neighborhoods and districts. This innovative new pilot initiative will build on that important work. And the White House will be hosting a Countering Violent Extremism summit in October to highlight these and other domestic and international efforts. Ultimately, the pilot programs will enable us to develop more effective—and more inclusive—ways to help build the more just, secure, and free society that all Americans deserve.

“As we move forward together, our work must continue to be guided by the core democratic values—and the ideals of freedom, openness, and inclusion—that have always set this nation apart on the world stage. We must be both innovative and aggressive in countering violent extremism and combating those who would sow intolerance, division, and hate—not just within our borders, but with our international partners on a global scale. And we must never lose sight of what violent extremists fear the most: the strength of our communities; our unwavering respect for equality, civil rights, and civil liberties; and our enduring commitment to justice, democracy, and the rule of law.”

The full video of the Attorney General’s message is available at <http://www.justice.gov/agwa.php>.

Holder: Al-Qaida offshoot hit by airstrikes was close to attack on U.S., allies

[A.G. links Khorasan Group plotting to summertime aviation restrictions](#)

By Katie Couric, Michael Isikoff, and Olivier Knox 2 hours ago Yahoo News

Attorney General Eric Holder revealed Tuesday that President Barack Obama ordered American airstrikes against the Khorasan Group in Syria because the shadowy al-Qaida offshoot was close to launching attacks on the United States or its allies. The group's plotting led to [a tightening of air travel restrictions](#) this past summer, Holder said.

While most Americans had never heard of that band of Islamist extremists prior to the sustained overnight bombing campaign, “this is a group that has been known to us for two years,” Holder told Yahoo News Global Anchor Katie Couric.

“We hit them last night out of a concern that they were getting close to an execution date of some of the plans that we have seen,” he said. “And the hitting that we did last night, I think, will probably continue until we are at a stage where we think we have degraded their ability to get at our allies or to the homeland.”

U.S. officials told Yahoo News that the Khorasan terror plot involved American and European aircraft. Holder did not confirm that but linked the group directly to Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson’s decision in early July to [forbid uncharged cellphones, laptops, and other electronic devices](#) on some U.S.-bound flights originating overseas.

"I can say that the enhanced security measures that we took [in] the aviation sector some months ago," Holder told Couric, "[were] based on concerns we had about what the Khorasan Group was planning to do."

The Khorasan Group comprises “seasoned” or “veteran” al-Qaida fighters from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen, according to U.S. officials. It is thought to be led by a man so close to Osama bin Laden that he was told about the terrorist strikes of Sept. 11, 2001, before they happened.

Members of the group converged on Syria, forged links with militant rebel groups, and worked to enlist Westerners, including Americans, for “external operations” — attacks made possible by the new recruits’ European or U.S. passports.

Its members were “constructing and testing improvised explosive devices,” one official said.

“We were monitoring active plotting that posed an imminent threat to the U.S. and potentially our allies,” one senior official told reporters at a background briefing. “That was the united view of our intelligence community.”

“It was a threefold perfect storm,” added one U.S. counterterrorism official, describing the intelligence that prompted Obama to order the airstrikes that pounded Khorasan Group facilities in Syria overnight.

U.S. officials had picked up intelligence that the plot to attack Western aircraft had reached advanced stages and “there were timetables on it,” one official told Yahoo News.

It was this intelligence that led to Monday night’s strike — using Tomahawk missiles and precision bombs — on Khorasan training camps, munitions facilities, and command and control centers west of Aleppo. The strikes also targeted Khorasan’s leader, Muhsin al-Fadhli, a 5-foot-5 Kuwaiti-born militant who formerly led al-Qaida in Iran.

But while U.S. officials told reporters that the strikes had been effective in hitting their targets, they could not confirm whether they had gotten al-Fadhli. U.S. officials have offered [a \\$7 million reward](#) for any information that led to his capture.

The comments today about a possibly imminent attack by Khorasan were especially striking since they appeared to contradict repeated assurances from senior U.S. government officials in recent weeks denying there was any specific or credible information about any plots against the U.S. homeland.

Until last week, when Director of National Intelligence James Clapper first referred to Khorasan as a “potential” threat, there had been few public references to it.

Obama had never said the group’s name in public before his brief remarks Tuesday about the overnight U.S.-led onslaught against Islamic State targets in Syria.

“We also took strikes to disrupt plotting against the United States and our allies by seasoned al-Qaida operatives in Syria who are known as the Khorasan Group,” [Obama said on the South Lawn of the White House](#). “And once again, it must be clear to anyone who would plot against America and try to do Americans harm that we will not tolerate safe havens for terrorists who threaten our people.”

U.S. officials told Yahoo News that they first picked up intelligence two years ago about Khorasan Group operatives moving into Syria and forging links with the al-Nusra Front, another Syrian rebel group that was aligned with al-Qaida. As first reported by Yahoo News, National

Counterterrorism Center Director Matthew Olsen alluded to the group — but not by name — last July when he told the Aspen Security Forum that veteran al-Qaida operatives had moved into Syria for the purpose of taking advantage of the country's civil war to mount attacks against the U.S.

“In some cases this is essentially the same cast of characters that we've had our eye on for many years. These are known operatives to us rather than a new group appearing out of whole cloth,” a senior administration official told reporters on a conference call arranged by the White House.

The United States had been contemplating striking the extremist cell “separate and apart from the growing threat from ISIL,” as the militant group Islamic State is also known, the official said. “Clearly the fact of the United States launching a military action in Syria provided an opportunity to take that action.”

A senior U.S. official also confirmed to Yahoo News Tuesday that there were “communications” between the Khorasan operatives and members in Yemen of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, the terror group that has most alarmed U.S. officials because of its advanced bomb-making capabilities.

Al-Fadhli was first designated as a global terrorist by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2005. At the time, U.S. officials linked him to terror plots dating back to October 2002 involving attacks to blow up the French ship MV Limburg against U.S. Marines based on Failaka Island in Kuwait.

But he was also described as a key terrorist financier, providing financial and material support to both al-Qaida and the network of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the original leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, the group that has since morphed into the Islamic State.

Al-Fadhli was again designated by the Treasury Department in December 2012. This time, officials described him as a top member of al-Qaida's network operating in Iran, helping to facilitate the flow of fighters and money through that country. Although al-Fadhli was at one point arrested by the Iranians, he was later released. In one of the early hints of his involvement in the Syria conflict, Treasury officials said then that his network was “working to move fighters and money through Turkey to support” al-Qaida elements in Syria. He also was “leveraging his extensive network of Kuwaiti jihadist donors to send money to Syria via Turkey.”

Amid concern in Washington that the group could recruit Americans, Holder told Yahoo News that the United States and its allies would soon unveil a new approach to tagging potential terrorist threats among citizens returning home after fighting alongside jihadis overseas.

“It will be focused on people who have terrorist connections and come up with new ways in which information is shared between INTERPOL members that, frankly, don't exist now,” he said. “We have red notices that we use for people who are charged with crimes. But we're gonna come up with a new kind of notice that deals with people who are suspected of engaging in terrorist activities.”

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U.S. Suspects More Direct Threats Beyond ISIS

By [MARK MAZZETTI](#), [MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT](#) and [BEN HUBBARD](#) SEPT. 20, 2014

Photo



WEARY TRAVELERS Thousands of people journey daily between Iraqi Kurdistan and territory controlled by the Islamic State. Credit Andrea Bruce for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — As the United States begins what could be a lengthy military campaign against the Islamic State, intelligence and law enforcement officials said another Syrian group, led by a shadowy figure who was once among Osama bin Laden's inner circle, posed a more direct threat to America and Europe.

American officials said that the group called Khorasan had emerged in the past year as the cell in [Syria](#) that may be the most intent on hitting the United States or its installations overseas with a terror attack. The officials said that the group is led by Muhsin al-Fadhli, a senior Qaeda

operative who, according to the State Department, was so close to Bin Laden that he was among a small group of people who knew about the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks before they were launched.

There is almost no public information about the Khorasan group, which was described by several intelligence, law enforcement and military officials as being made up of Qaeda operatives from across the Middle East, South Asia and North Africa. Members of the cell are said to be particularly interested in devising terror plots using concealed explosives. It is unclear who, besides Mr. Fadhli, is part of the Khorasan group.

Graphic



The director of national intelligence, James R. Clapper Jr., said on Thursday that “in terms of threat to the homeland, Khorasan may pose as much of a danger as the Islamic State.”

Some American officials and national security experts said the intense focus on the Islamic State had distorted the picture of the terrorism threat that has emerged from the chaos of Syria’s civil war, and that the more immediate threats still come from traditional terror groups like Khorasan and the Nusra Front, which is Al Qaeda’s designated affiliate in Syria.

Mr. Fadhli, 33, has been tracked by American intelligence agencies for at least a decade. According to the State Department, before Mr. Fadhli arrived in Syria, he had been living in Iran as part of a small group of Qaeda operatives who had fled to the country from Afghanistan after the Sept. 11 attacks. Iran’s government said the group was living under house arrest, but the exact circumstances of the Qaeda operatives were disputed for years, and many members of the group ultimately left Iran for Pakistan, Syria and other countries.

In 2012, the State Department identified Mr. Fadhli as Al Qaeda’s leader in Iran, directing “the movement of funds and operatives” through the country. A \$7 million reward was offered for

information leading to his capture. The same State Department release said he was working with wealthy “jihadist donors” in Kuwait, his native country, to raise money for Qaeda-allied rebels in Syria.

In [a speech](#) in Brussels in 2005, President George W. Bush referred to Mr. Fadhli as he thanked European countries for their counterterrorism assistance, noting that Mr. Fadhli had assisted terrorists who bombed a French oil tanker in 2002 off the coast of Yemen. [That attack](#) killed one and spilled 50,000 barrels of oil that stretched across 45 miles of coastline.

The Islamic State, also known as [ISIS](#) or ISIL, is viewed as more focused on consolidating territory it has amassed in Syria and [Iraq](#) than on attacking the West. Some even caution that military strikes against the Islamic State could antagonize that group into planning attacks on Western targets, and even benefit other militant organizations if more moderate factions of the rebellion are not ready to take power on the ground.



James R. Clapper Jr., the director of national intelligence, identified the group called Khorasan as a danger “to the homeland.” Credit T.J. Kirkpatrick/Getty Images

The Islamic State’s recent statements, including [a video](#) using a British captive as a spokesman, have sought to deter American action against the group and threatened attacks only as revenge for American strikes.

At the same time, the rise of the Islamic State has blunted the momentum of its rival groups in Syria, including the Nusra Front, once considered to be among the most capable in the array of Syrian rebel groups. The Islamic State’s expansion across northern Iraq and in oil-rich regions of eastern Syria has sapped some of the Nusra Front’s resources and siphoned some of its fighters — who are drawn by the Islamic State’s battlefield successes and declaration of a caliphate, the longtime dream of many jihadists.

It is difficult to assess the seriousness and scope of any terror plots that Khorasan, the Nusra Front or other groups in Syria might be planning. In several instances in the past year, Nusra and the Islamic State have used Americans who have joined their ranks to carry out attacks inside Syria — including at least one suicide bombing — rather than returning them to the United States to strike there.

Beyond the militant groups fighting for control of territory, Syria has become a magnet for Islamic extremists from other nations who have used parts of the country as a sanctuary to plot attacks.

“What you have is a growing body of extremists from around the world who are coming in and taking advantage of the ungoverned areas and creating informal ad hoc groups that are not directly aligned with ISIS or Nusra,” a former senior law enforcement official said.

Spokesmen for the C.I.A. and the White House declined to comment for this article.



The grinding war in Syria, well into its fourth year, has led to a constant shifting of alliances among the hard-line rebel groups.

Ayman al-Zawahri, the head of Al Qaeda, anointed the Nusra Front as its official branch in Syria and cut ties with the Islamic State early this year after it refused to follow his orders to fight only in Iraq. Officials said that Khorasan was an offshoot of the Nusra Front. According to a new report by the [Bipartisan Policy Center](#), a nonprofit research and analysis organization, the rifts among these various groups “threaten to create a conflict throughout the jihadist movement that is no longer confined to Syria and Iraq.”

While Nusra has been weakened, it remains one of the few rebel organizations that has active branches throughout Syria. Analysts view the organization as well placed to benefit from American strikes that might weaken the Islamic State.

Jennifer Cafarella, a Syria analyst with the [Institute for the Study of War](#) in Washington, said that American strikes could benefit the Nusra Front if the United States did not ensure that there was another force ready to take power on the ground.

“There is definitely a threat that, if not conducted as a component of a properly tailored strategy within Syria, the American strikes would allow the Nusra Front to fill a vacuum in eastern Syria,” she said.

She noted that the Nusra Front had been the primary force in the eastern province of Deir al-Zour before it was pushed out by the Islamic State earlier this year, and that the group had maintained better relationships with the local tribes than ISIS had. This could make it easier for the group to return if ISIS is chased out by American airstrikes.

While the Nusra Front does not openly call for attacks on the West, it remains loyal to Mr. Zawahri, whose clout among jihadists has waned with the rise of the Islamic State.

A great deal remains uncertain about the Nusra Front's ultimate aims inside Syria. Hamza al-Shimali, the head of the American-backed rebel group the Hazm Movement, said that he and his allies did not trust the Nusra Front. He said he feared that one day he would have to fight the Nusra Front in addition to the Syrian government and the Islamic State.

American intelligence officials estimate that since the Syrian conflict began, about 15,000 foreigners, including more than 100 Americans and 2,000 Europeans, have traveled to the country to fight alongside rebel groups. Syria's porous borders make it relatively easy to get in and out of the country, raising concerns among Western officials that without markings on their passports they could slip back undetected into Europe or the United States.

Fuelling Isis Inc

By Borzou Daragahi and Erika Solomon



Waiting for his job interview, the young Syrian was impressed by the array of high-end camera equipment, video-editing pods and overall organisation in the offices of his prospective employer. The salary, five times that of a typical Syrian civil servant, was not bad either.

“They offered me \$1,500 a month, plus a car, a house and all the cameras I needed,” says the one-time tailor in his late 20s. “I remembered looking around the office. It was amazing the equipment they had in there. I remember thinking, these people can’t just be getting their money on their own. There has to be a state behind this.”

His prospective employer, the [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant](#), the al-Qaeda offshoot known as Isis, has pretensions to being a state but it is not there yet. The group controls a third of Iraq and a quarter of Syria but the young man was not being recruited to take up arms. Instead, he was being hired to work at the group's media office – the sort of operation more often associated with multinationals – in Raqqa, the Syrian city that is the de facto capital of the group's self-declared Islamic Caliphate or state.

He chose not to take the job – staying in Syria was too dangerous, he decided – but the story illustrates the level of resources and funding available to the terror group that has grown out of the Syrian conflict into an organisation that President Barack Obama committed the US to [“degrade and ultimately destroy”](#) this month.

Strangling the source of that revenue – which estimates put at anywhere between \$1m and \$5m a day – is seen by the US and its allies as essential to halting the Isis advance.

10 The number of oil fields under Isis control in Syria and Iraq

Western investigators have sought to trace bank account numbers in the Gulf and locate jihadi donors as far afield as Indonesia. In addition to nefarious ransom and extortion rings, Isis taps areas under its control for money, charging retail stores about \$2 a month in taxes. In coming days, it plans to charge for electricity and water consumption to make money in areas under its control, according to one activist in Syria.

But experts say that to crack down on Isis's finances, western governments and their Middle East allies must look first at a decades-old oil smuggling network, which is now being tapped by the group to finance its proto-state. This lucrative unofficial trade encompasses northern Iraq, northeastern Syria, southern Turkey, parts of Iran and, according to western officials and leading international experts, is where Isis earns the bulk of its money.



Maplecroft, the risk management firm, says in a recent report that Isis now controls six out of 10 of Syria's oilfields, including the big Omar facility, and at least four small fields in Iraq, including those at Ajeel and Hamreen.

Oil smuggling has deep roots in the region. After the imposition of UN energy sanctions on Iraq in the 1990s, a robust network of smugglers, traders and bootleg refineries have flourished.

171 Iraq's ranking in Transparency International's corruption index

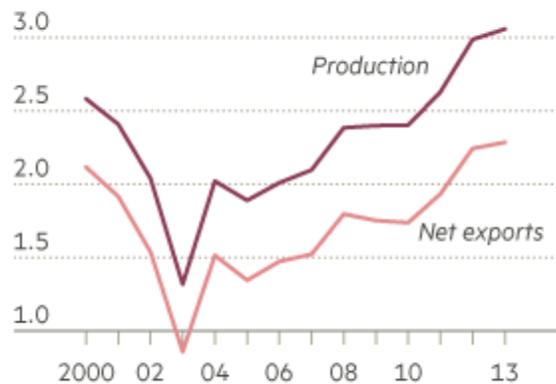
Hundreds of entrepreneurs emerged, buying and selling small parcels of Iraq's oil at discounted prices and transporting them across the Turkish border to sell at a markdown. Many of the business people have grown rich and powerful, with vested interests and political ties.

Energy experts and western officials say Isis may be laundering up to 80,000 barrels of oil a day worth several million dollars through this shadow market. The oil is smuggled through rugged mountain and desert routes or even legitimate crossings at Reyhanli, Zakho or Penjwan for consumption in Turkey, Iran or Jordan.

“The fact that Iraq was under sanctions for so long led Kurdish and Iraqi businessmen to fill a vacuum and create smuggling networks for Iraqi oil,” says Valerie Marcel, a Middle East and Africa energy specialist at Chatham House, the London think-tank. “Turkish, Iranian, Syrian, Iraqi networks have grown because of decades of bans on exports. From Iraq and now from Syria there is this grey market. That's becoming a huge problem.”

Iraqi oil production and exports

Million barrels per day



Source: EIA

FT

Black market oil is often refined at plants in Iraqi Kurdistan that are partly the byproduct of the tensions between Kurdish leaders and Baghdad. In recent years the Kurdistan Regional Government looked the other way as homegrown refineries popped up to supply the local market after Baghdad banned the export of petroleum products without its consent.

This means that the Kurds are potentially helping put money in the coffers of the jihadi group that its own peshmerga forces are fighting. “It’s now possible that Isis could be selling crude [via middlemen] to these knock-off refineries,” says Bilal Wahab, an energy expert at the American University of Sulaymaniyah. “The KRG is unwilling to shut them down because it would have to raise the price of gasoline. It can’t raise the price of gasoline because it can’t pay salaries, and it can’t pay salaries because the central government hasn’t given the KRG its budget in eight months. Yes, it’s illegal. Yes, it’s bad. But it is what greases the wheels of the economy.”

It is pumping oil and selling it to fund its brutal tactics, along with kidnappings, theft and extortion

- John Kerry, US secretary of state

International officials accept that the bulk of Isis’s funds are raised within the vast areas of Iraq and Syria it controls.

“It’s pumping oil and selling it to fund its brutal tactics, along with kidnappings, theft, extortion and external support,” John Kerry, US secretary of state said last week. Asked if the administration was looking at bombing oilfields or refineries controlled by Isis, Mr Kerry said: “I have not heard any objection.”

The boundaries of the mostly Kurdish black market zone have never been easy to police, rarely recognised by people with cross-border kinship and trade ties. The terrain ranges from the grassy plains dividing Turkey from northwest Syria to the forbidding mountains between Iraqi

Kurdistan and its Turkish and Iranian neighbours to the flatlands along Iraq and Syria's Jordanian borders.

Isis oil production

Syria

50,000 b/d

\$2.0m per day*

Iraq

30,000 b/d

\$1.2m per day*

* At black market price of \$40 a barrel

Sources: EIA; Iraq Energy Institute

Smuggling underpins the economy of the semi-autonomous, three-province KRG with smugglers' coves dotting its borders with Iran, Syria and Turkey. In towns like Hajj Omran along the Iran-Iraq border smugglers openly regale visitors with tales of their exploits.

Iraqi Kurdistan officials warn they have limited resources to police the trade – it now shares a 1,000km border with Isis – and complain that funds have shrunk since Baghdad began withholding budget revenues to the region, another example of how Iraq's political divisions benefit Isis.

“The government is doing all it can to control the borders,” says Sherko Jawdat Mustafa, a member of the Kurdistan region's parliament. “But recession is prevailing over Kurdistan with all its institutions and apparatus.”

Officials also suspect border guards in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey are bribed to allow shipments to pass. “It's like a drug cartel and a criminal organisation which is also benefiting from official support or [those in power] turning a blind eye,” says Ms Marcel. “It couldn't exist on the scale that it is right now without some army and customs people being complicit and benefiting.”

Oil fund

The Islamist group now controls 10 oilfields including the big Omar facility in Syria and those at Ajeel and Hamreen in Iraq

Iraq ranks 171 out of 177 in Transparency International's 2013 ratings of perceived official corruption. Security forces often look the other way in exchange for a cash payment.

"A lot of money also goes to the guys at the checkpoints," says Mr Wahab. "So you have to enforce accountability at the checkpoints and find ways to keep them from taking bribes."

A Turkish official recently said seizures of smuggled fuel had risen from 35,260 tons in 2011 to more than 50,000 tons in the first six months of 2014 alone, suggesting an explosion in the trade. But the market appears to have shifted in recent weeks in response to a tightening of Turkish border controls.

Self sufficient

Isis charges stores \$2 per month in taxes and is set to introduce electricity and water charges

Much of the trade is carried out inside Isis-controlled areas, making efforts to curb it even tougher. "Now most of the traders are Iraqi," says Othman al-Sultan, an activist in the Syrian city of Deir Ezzor. "All the Iraqi traders come to buy the crude and take it back into Iraq. Syrian crude is cheap and they use it for generators and factories in Iraq."

Isis has sought to divorce itself from dependence on international donors in its efforts to create a self-sufficient economy since establishing itself as a significant presence in the Syria conflict. It was in part a disagreement over whether to raise funds locally or internationally that led to friction with other Syrian rebel groups, including the al-Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat al Nusra.

Analysts suggest tracking down account numbers or arresting international supporters will do little to damage the finances of a group that deals almost exclusively in cash. Most Gulf supporters seeking the removal of Bashar al-Assad, the Syrian president, are now largely shunning the group.

"Given that the Islamic State has sought to minimise its reliance on the international banking system, the group is comparatively less prone to asset seizures or international financial sanctions," says the Maplecroft report.

Big earner

Analysts believe oil represents the single biggest income stream for Isis with the bulk of raised inside its area of control

In addition, the group is believed to have distributed its money across a wide geographic area. "Stopping smuggling operations will not affect the Islamic State in the short run," says Hisham Hashemi, an authority on Sunni insurgents in Baghdad. "They have enough money – in cash – that could keep them going for a good two years."

But Isis's outsized ambition and refusal to compromise might lead to the downfall of its financial empire. Isis's pretensions toward statehood have compelled it to attempt to take control of the

entire process and cut out the middlemen. There are also signs that international momentum is building to stifle the black market oil trade. The governments of Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan have announced fresh interdiction efforts. Prices of crude oil in Syria have risen from \$25 to \$41, suggesting decreased production following Turkey's clampdown on the border, an activist says.

At the smuggling village of Hacıpasa, near the Syrian border, residents recently railed at government efforts to block illegal border crossings that provide a livelihood for many Turks. If the recently installed Baghdad government of prime minister Haider al-Abadi resumes long-delayed budget payments to Kurdistan, it would create even more of an incentive for Kurds to crack down on bootleg refineries that purchase black-market oil.

“Isis is trying to take the oil products as close to the end user as possible to capture more profit,” says Ms Marcel. “By doing that, Isis’s finances become probably easier to target than a constellation of little middlemen with small volumes crawling around the whole territory.”

Supply chain: Industry on alert to spot rogue oil

The quantities are small but the risks are large for any global trader found to be handling oil from Isis-controlled fields, *writes Anjali Raval in London.*

The biggest traders say they are confident they have avoided purchases of any smuggled oil because of the procedures – counter parties have to pass through strict due diligence and other “know your customer” processes – already in place. As a result low volumes of poor-quality, unauthenticated crude are unlikely to make it into their networks, they say.

Analysts, however, warn there is a small chance that oil smuggled out of Iraq by truck could enter the global supply chain. Once extracted it can be easily mixed and processed with oil from legitimate sources, disguising its origin, and making it more difficult for traders to identify its source.

Shwan Zulal, an Iraqi oil analyst, says the volumes of Isis oil that could enter the international markets are minimal. But he adds that it is possible for trucked crude to be mixed with pipeline oil in storage facilities at the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

“Nobody wants to get involved in this stuff, but this is really the only way [traders] could inadvertently be buying Isis crude,” says Mr Zulal.

After Isis's June takeover of much of northwestern Iraq the UN Security Council warned that those caught trading crude from regions

controlled by the group could face sanctions. This could affect bank credit lines.

Richard Mallinson, geopolitical analyst at Energy Aspects, a consultancy in London, says: “The Kurdistan Regional Government and operators in the region want their oil to be credible. There is little advantage gained through the smuggling and selling of Isis oil.

“What is more likely, is crude via these small refining units being sold within the region to domestic buyers,” he says. “It is much easier to see the end users being located in these areas rather than the oil getting into the international markets in any real way.”

Even so the industry is on alert, says Stéphane Graber, general secretary of the Geneva Trading & Shipping Association. “We are following the situation with our members very closely to ensure [they are] not breaking any existing international rules.”

Additional reporting by Piotr Zalewski in Ankara, Geoff Dyer in Washington and Lobna Monieb in Cairo

Analysis: Declining US military spending pressures defence contractors

Tate Nurkin, Director of Research, IHS Aerospace, Defence & Security

19 September 2014

As uncertainty rises over US defence spending and as the possibility of further deep defence cuts tied to sequestration raises questions over the future of the US force structure, both China and Russia are moving forward, significantly increasing their investments in defense procurement and force modernisation over the next decade.

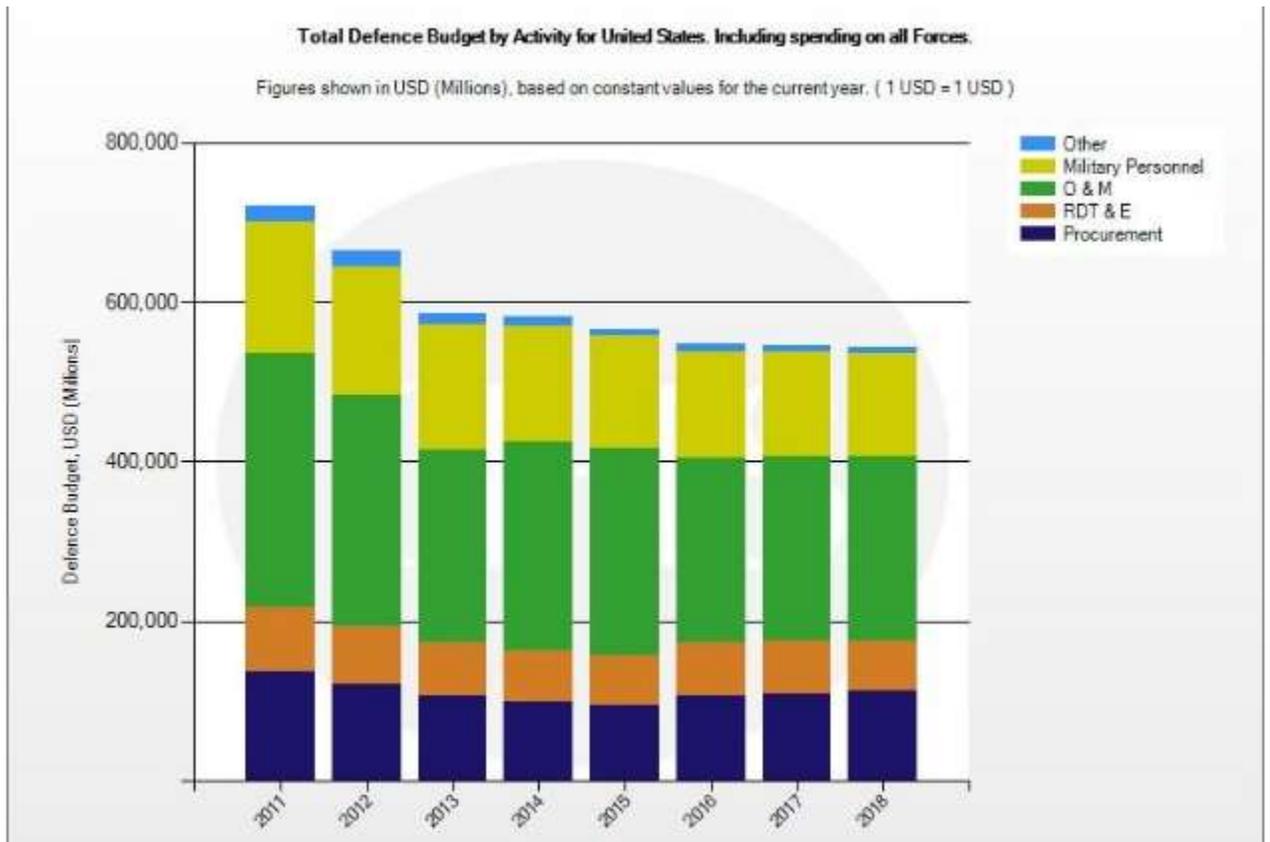
Recent analysis by IHS Aerospace, Defence & Security highlights the challenges and opportunities this overall shift in worldwide defence spending presents for US defence contractors and the need for greater agility in responding to an ever-more competitive marketplace.

The statistics on trends in US, Chinese and Russian spending are stark. According to [IHS Jane's Defence Budgets](#), in 2011 the US defense budget was more than three-and-a-half times the size of Chinese and Russian military spending combined. However, by 2020, this US multiple will shrink to less than twice of that of the combined Chinese and Russian budgets.

This shrinking gap is the result of a continuing steep rise in Chinese and Russian defense spending and a corresponding projection of a 25 per cent reduction in real US expenditures during the same period.

By 2020, the actual—as opposed to announced—Chinese defense budget is estimated to rise to USD259 billion, up from USD143 billion in 2011. Russian spending will increase to USD108.3 billion in 2020, up from USD57.2 billion in 2011.

US spending is likely to decline to USD540 billion at the end of the decade, down from USD720 billion in 2011.



Total defence budget by activity for the US. Credit: IHS Defence Budgets

Sequestration stress

Yet the more pertinent factor weighing on the defence industry is the sheer uncertainty surrounding US spending plans.

Neither the Obama administration nor Congress has provided sufficient clarity on whether sequestration will take full effect in 2016 as currently planned, or whether fixes will be made to avoid precipitous drops in spending. This uncertainty complicates efforts to project the size and composition of the US force structure and which programs will be funded at what levels, further undermining the internal planning of defense contractors.

Furthermore, senior US military officers have expressed concern that sequestration in 2016 could endanger the American shipbuilding industrial base.

“The biggest threat, the one that worries me the most, is the industrial base,” said Admiral Jonathan Greenert, chief of naval operations, speaking in May. “If it’s time to recapitalise and we don’t have the shipbuilding industrial base, we’re in a hurt locker. We’re in deep trouble.”

Money isn’t everything

The shrinking gap in defense spending between the United States on the one hand and Russia and China on the other should not be over emphasised.

Defence spending is not an exact proxy for military capability, and the United States continues to enjoy key advantages in its operational experience and capabilities; current technologies; and existing industrial base. China’s military faces a range of technical, operational and organisational challenges.

China’s military, and especially its blue-water navy, is relatively inexperienced. The country also faces obstacles in developing expertise in operating more sophisticated armaments.

Meanwhile, Russia must confront hard questions over the technical capability of its armaments industry to produce advanced systems in coming years.

Nevertheless, tentative signs of a growing Sino-Russian rapprochement, including greater economic as well as energy cooperation and joint military training, underscore the potential threats to U.S. strategic dominance if left unchecked.

Contractors face challenges

With these shifts in the defense landscape, the overriding question for US defence contractors involves the future of their capability to develop and maintain exports in an increasingly competitive market. Without question, the US military will remain their dominant customer. However, with decreased domestic sales and increasingly thin margins, [IHS Jane’s Defence Industry & Markets Intelligence Centre](#) analysts see US firms having increasingly to address emerging markets and commercial adjacencies to maintain productive revenue growth and pursue needed market diversification.

In doing so, it is likely they will confront greater direct competition with Russian and Chinese arms makers that already enjoy unique advantages. Most notably, these state-owned entities receive a regular stream of governmental subsidies and support—as do some aerospace and defence companies in Europe and other Asian states—and can thus afford to look past immediate profits or concerns over technology transfer to focus instead on long-term relationships.

For US companies, it can sometimes feel as if they are locked in competition with sovereign governments—with all of the resources and benefits that accrue. For example, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced in June that 100 state guarantees totaling USD11 billion will be granted to 60 state defense enterprises in 2014.

Most of this funding is designed to ensure the successful ramping up of Russia's decade-long rearmament effort—the CEO of Russia's state arms import/export agency Rosoboronexport announced in August that his company anticipates holding exports constant at around USD13 billion until 2017 in order to meet domestic demand. However, the degree and escalation of support does provide Russian firms with some advantages in an increasingly competitive global market, especially the “good enough” market that stresses value, technology transfer and favorable contracting terms.

Thus, it should be no surprise that Russia and China already both rank among the top 10 nations in terms of gross defence exports, or that China scored a major breakthrough by concluding an initial agreement to supply an integrated air defense system to Turkey last fall. The capability of the state-owned enterprise China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corp. (CPMIEC) to offer extensive technology transfer and a system that was approximately USD1 billion cheaper than the European and US offerings was cited as critical to Turkey's decision.

True, final closure of the deal has been delayed, and the agreement looks as if it might fall through due to persistent NATO concerns about a Chinese state-owned enterprise having access to a NATO integrated air defence system. Nonetheless, the initial award validated the growing perception that China can be a viable competitor against leading Western providers in the global defense export market.

US on the defensive

The US has much to lose in the global realignment of defence spending. America leads in global defense exports, at USD25.3 billion in 2013. This represents more than two-and-a-half times the total of the No 2 exporter, Russia, at USD9.5 billion. U.S. defense exports are about equivalent to the total for the next five largest countries combined. China ranks seventh, with USD1.9 billion in exports.

Adjusting to the new world order

IHS assesses that US defence firms should prepare to adapt their traditional lines and models of business. This worldwide shift in defence spending—from North and West to South and East—and the savage competitive dynamics it has unleashed will compel US firms to rethink their traditional markets and how to most effectively promote their competitive advantages.

IHS will continue to study the shifting terrain for US defence contractors in what may be the most seismic set of shocks to the global defence business since the end of the Cold War.

Tate Nurkin is the Managing Director for Consulting and Thought Leadership at [IHS Aerospace, Defense & Security](#), and contributes regular insight into international defense and security issues for [IHS Quarterly](#).

Be Afraid: Why America Will Never Defeat ISIS



[Micah Zenko](#) September 22, 2014

On the eve of the Iraq War in 2003, while commanding the 101st Airborne Division, then-Maj. Gen. David Petraeus repeatedly asked Rick Atkinson the rhetorical question: “Tell me how this ends.” What began as a [private joke](#) between a military commander and an embedded journalist has become a warning for the need to define clear objectives and be cognizant of unexpected outcomes before going to war. Last week, President Barack Obama attempted to provide clear strategic guidance for the U.S.-led war against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS or ISIL), [declaring](#): “Our objective is clear: We will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL.”

I published a [column](#) in *Foreign Policy* recently that highlights two troubling elements about Obama’s declared end state.

First, other Obama administration officials have offered their own end states that confuse or contradict what the president stated just eight days ago. White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough [stated](#) recently: “Success looks like an ISIL that no longer threatens our friends in the region, no longer threatens the United States. An ISIL that can’t accumulate followers, or threaten Muslims in Syria, Iran, Iraq, or otherwise.” Also, Secretary of State John Kerry declared before the the Senate Foreign Relations Committee something else: “The military action ends when we have ended the capacity of ISIL to engage in broad-based terrorist activity that threatens the state of Iraq, threatens the United States, threatens the region. That’s our goal.” Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel told the House Armed Services Committee that “success” included “stability in the Middle East.”

Second, the United States—and any combination of partners or allies—will never “destroy” ISIS. The evidence supporting this assertion is simple: Both Presidents George W. Bush and

Obama declared that the Taliban and al-Qaeda and its affiliates would be “defeated” and “destroyed.” Meanwhile, the size and lethality of these groups has increased almost everywhere that they exist. The reason that presidents make such absolutist and totally unachievable pronouncements says more about American political culture than providing realist military campaign objectives. As I wrote in my [column](#), a courageous president would tell the American people the truth, which is:

“The United States will attempt to diminish the threat that [ISIL] poses to U.S. personnel in the region to the greatest extent possible based upon the political will and resources that the United States and countries in the region are willing to commit.”

That is a strategy of mitigating ISIS’ threats and containing its influence within Iraq and the surrounding region. Yet, while mitigation and containment will drive the U.S. counterterrorism strategy regarding ISIS as a reality, the Obama administration (and Congress and the media) will pretend that the strategic end state is to defeat and destroy them. So when you hear the White House promise to destroy ISIS, don’t believe them, but consider why it is politically mandatory that they make such an outrageous and impossible claim.

This article first appeared on CFR's blog channel: Power, Politics, and Preventive Action [here](#).

United States Launches Airstrikes in Syria - Real Target Is Assad

Brandon Turbeville [Activist Post](#)

Late Monday evening, September 22, the United States began the first of its airstrikes inside Syria.

Although details are still murky about where the attacks took place and what targets were actually hit, the Pentagon has acknowledged responsibility for the bombings.

[According to USA Today](#) , Rear Admiral John Kirby stated that "I can confirm that U.S. military and partner nation forces are undertaking military action against ISIL terrorists in Syria using a mix of fighter, bomber and Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles. Given that these operations are ongoing, we are not in a position to provide additional details at this time."

USA Today reports that the strikes were carried out both by bomber jets and by ships firing cruise missiles. It is said that the strikes have hit about 20 ISIS targets, including what is being called “headquarters buildings” for “militants who have based their movement in Syria.”

The attacks were not carried out with the coordination and cooperation of the Syrian government. Nor were they carried out with Syrian government permission.

While Syria has already stated that any airstrikes conducted over Syrian airspace would be

considered an act of war and that Syria might very well shoot down any American planes conducting those strikes, it is as of yet unclear as to how the Syrian government will respond.



The United States [has repeatedly stated](#) that it refuses to coordinate any airstrikes with the Syrian government and responded with an Orwellian statement that it would oust Assad military if he dare defend himself against American attacks.

The attacks come after a decision made by the White House and approved by Congress on September 17, 2014, to arm and train the alleged “moderate” Syrian rebels. The vote was 273-156 in favor of the \$500 million plan. Of course, the bill in question was actually an amendment that was [cynically attached to a bill](#) designed to continue funding for the federal government in the short-term, ensuring maximum support from members of the House.

Then, on Thursday September 19, the [U.S. Senate followed](#) suit by approving the plan as well. The support for the plan in the Senate was, as expected, bipartisan with members such as Nancy Pelosi, Harry Reid, John McCain, John Boehner, and [Lindsey Graham](#) voting “Yes” on the bill.

The [Obama administration reiterated](#) that it was neither asking for permission nor for a new authorization to use military force. The White House asserts that it has all the authority it needs to achieve its goals under the authorizations to use military force that were approved after the 9/11 attacks and in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Essentially, as Obama stated in his address to the American people on September 10, the consultation of Congress was a mere formality. The plan to aid the “moderate rebels” fighting against Assad and engage in airstrikes against the secular government was going ahead regardless of the decision by Congress.

Much like the decision to invade Afghanistan and Iraq as well as passing the PATRIOT ACT, and other Constitution-shredding legislation, Congress was convinced to support the plan both because their handlers directed them to do so or because the risk of revealing themselves as completely irrelevant was too damaging to undertake.

Yet, while the amendment was sold to the American people and even members of Congress as Obama’s plan to “detect and degrade” ISIS, the reality is that the plan is nothing more than a plan to detect and destroy the Syrian government to benefit of ISIS and other fundamentalist groups that the United States has created, funded, trained, and directed since the very beginning of the Syrian crisis.

Even Congressman Justin Amash was able to recognize the fact that this new amendment was a clever disguise for a war on the secular government of Syria with no options off the table, including the use of ground troops.

[In his own statement](#) announcing his opposition to the amendment, Amash stated,

Today’s amendment ostensibly is aimed at destroying ISIS—yet you’d hardly know it from reading the amendment’s text. The world has witnessed with horror the evil of ISIS: the public beheading of innocents, the killing of Christians, Muslims, and others.

The amendment’s focus—arming groups fighting the Assad government in Syria—has little to do with defeating ISIS. The mission that the amendment advances plainly isn’t the defeat of ISIS; it’s the defeat of Assad.

[...]

The Obama administration has tried to rally support for U.S. involvement in the Syrian civil war by implying that our help would be at arm’s length. The amendment Congress will vote on broadly authorizes “assistance” to groups in Syria. It does not specify what types of weapons our government will give the groups. It does not prohibit boots on the ground. (The amendment is silent on the president’s power to order our troops to fight in the civil war; it states only that Congress doesn’t provide “specific statutory authorization” for such escalation.) It does not state the financial cost of the war.

[...]

If the Syrian groups that are “appropriately vetted” (the amendment’s language) succeed and oust Assad, what would result? Would the groups assemble a coalition government of anti-Assad fighters, and would that coalition include ISIS? What would happen to the Alawites and Christians who stood with Assad? To what extent would the U.S. government be obligated to occupy Syria to rebuild the government? If each of the groups went its own way, would Syria’s territory be broken apart, and if so, would ISIS control one of the resulting countries?

While Amash was correct to suggest that Congress should have opposed the amendment and that the amendment was actually a plan for an assault against the Syrian government as well as the fact that that anarchy, chaos, and unspeakable violence will reign supreme in Syria if the “appropriately vetted” groups managed to gain control of the country, Amash does miss part of the point.

The truth is not that “we don’t know much about the groups we are funding in Syria.” The truth is that “we” know full well that they are ISIS/Al-Qaeda terrorists, with only an occasional name change and branch off due to Western political motives or internal squabbling. That has been and still is the whole point.

There never were any moderates to support in Syria to begin with.

There Are No Moderate Syrian Rebels

As Tony Cartalucci wrote in his article, “ [In Syria, There Are No Moderates](#) ,”

. . . . there were never, nor are there any "moderates" operating in Syria. The West has intentionally armed and funded Al Qaeda and other sectarian extremists since as early as 2007 in preparation for an engineered sectarian bloodbath serving US-Saudi-Israeli interests. This latest bid to portray the terrorists operating along and within Syria's borders as "divided" along extremists/moderate lines is a ploy to justify the continued flow of Western cash and arms into Syria to perpetuate the conflict, as well as create conditions along Syria's borders with which Western partners, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey, can justify direct military intervention.

Indeed, even the New York Times has been forced to admit that there are, as Cartalucci expertly argues in his article, no moderates in the ranks of the Syrian death squads. [As Ben Hubbard wrote in April, 2013](#) ,

In Syria’s largest city, Aleppo, rebels aligned with Al Qaeda control the power plant, run the bakeries and head a court that applies Islamic law. Elsewhere, they have seized government oil fields, put employees back to work and now profit from the crude they produce.

Across Syria, rebel-held areas are dotted with Islamic courts staffed by lawyers and clerics, and by fighting brigades led by extremists. Even the Supreme Military Council, the umbrella rebel organization whose formation the West had hoped would sideline radical groups, is stocked with commanders who want to infuse Islamic law into a future Syrian government.

Nowhere in rebel-controlled Syria is there a secular fighting force to speak of. [emphasis added]

Even one of the FSA commanders, Bassel Idriss, recently admitted to openly collaborating with ISIS and al-Nusra, revealing yet another example of the fact that the “moderate rebels” are not moderate at all.

[In an interview with the Daily Star of Lebanon](#) , Idriss stated “We are collaborating with the Islamic State and the Nusra Front by attacking the Syrian Army’s gatherings in . . . Qalamoun . . . Let’s face it: The Nusra Front is the biggest power present right now in Qalamoun and we as

FSA would collaborate on any mission they launch as long as it coincides with our values.”

Idriss also admitted that many FSA fighters had pledged allegiance to ISIS. He said, “[ISIS] wanted to enhance its presence in the Western Qalamoun area. After the fall of Yabroud and the FSA’s retreat into the hills [around Aarsal], many units pledged allegiance [to ISIS]”.

Abu Fidaa, a retired Syrian Army Colonel who is now a part of the Revolutionary Council in the Qalamoun, corroborated Idriss’s statements by saying that “A very large number of FSA members [in Aarsal] have joined ISIS and Nusra. In the end, people want to eat, they want to live, and the Islamic State has everything.”

Not only the FSA, but also the Syrian Revolutionary Front has also openly admitted to working with Nusra and al-Qaeda. The leader of the SRF, Jamaal Maarouf [admitted that his brigades](#) coordinate with Nusra and al-Qaeda regularly.

ISIS Is Controlled By The U.S. And NATO

It is important to point out that the Islamic State is not some shadowy force that emerged from the caves of Afghanistan to form an effective military force that is funded by Twitter donations and murky secretive finance deals. IS is entirely the [creation of NATO](#) and the West and it [remains in control of the organization](#) .

As Tony Cartalucci writes in his article “ [Implausible Deniability: West’s ISIS Terror Hordes In Iraq](#) ,”

Beginning in 2011 - and actually even as early as 2007 - the United States has been arming, funding, and supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and a myriad of armed terrorist organizations to overthrow the government of Syria, fight Hezbollah in Lebanon, and undermine the power and influence of Iran, which of course includes any other government or group in the MENA region friendly toward Tehran.

Billions in cash have been funneled into the hands of terrorist groups including Al Nusra, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), and what is now being called "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" or ISIS. One can see clearly by any map of ISIS held territory that it butts up directly against Turkey's borders with defined corridors ISIS uses to invade southward - this is because it is precisely from NATO territory this terrorist scourge originated.

ISIS was harbored on NATO territory, armed and funded by US CIA agents with cash and weapons brought in from the Saudis, Qataris, and NATO members themselves. The "non-lethal aid" the US and British sent [including the vehicles we now see ISIS driving around in](#).

They didn't "take" this gear from "moderates." There were never any moderates to begin with. The deadly sectarian genocide we now see unfolding was long ago predicted by those in the Pentagon - current and former officials - interviewed in 2007 by Pulitzer Prize-winning veteran [journalist Seymour Hersh](#). Hersh's 9-page 2007 report, "[The Redirection](#)" states explicitly:

To undermine Iran, which is predominantly Shiite, the Bush Administration has decided, in effect, to reconfigure its priorities in the Middle East. In Lebanon, the Administration has cooperated with Saudi Arabia’s government, which is Sunni, in clandestine operations that are

intended to weaken Hezbollah, the Shiite organization that is backed by Iran. The U.S. has also taken part in clandestine operations aimed at Iran and its ally Syria. A by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to Al Qaeda.

"Extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam" and are "sympathetic to Al Qaeda" - is a verbatim definition of what ISIS is today. Clearly the words of Hersh were as prophetic as they were factually informed, grounded in the reality of a regional conflict already engineered and taking shape as early as 2007. Hersh's report would also forewarn the sectarian nature of the coming conflict, and in particular mention the region's Christians who were admittedly being protected by Hezbollah.

While Hersh's report was written in 2007, knowledge of the plan to use death squads to target Middle Eastern countries, particularly Syria, had been reported on even as far back as 2005 by Michael Hirsh and John Barry for Newsweek in an article entitled "[The Salvador Option](#)."

Regardless, Cartalucci states in a separate article, "[NATO's Terror Hordes In Iraq A Pretext For Syria Invasion](#),"

In actuality, ISIS is the product of a joint NATO-GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] conspiracy stretching back as far as 2007 where US-Saudi policymakers sought to ignite a region-wide sectarian war to purge the Middle East of Iran's arch of influence stretching from its borders, across Syria and Iraq, and as far west as Lebanon and the coast of the Mediterranean. ISIS has been harbored, trained, armed, and extensively funded by a coalition of NATO and Persian Gulf states within Turkey's (NATO territory) borders and has launched invasions into northern Syria with, at times, both Turkish artillery and air cover. The most recent example of this was the cross-border invasion by Al Qaeda into Kasab village, Latikia province in northwest Syria.

Cartalucci is referring to a [cross-border invasion](#) that was [coordinated with NATO, Turkey, Israel, and the death squads](#) where Israel acted as air force cover while Turkey facilitated the death squad invasion from inside its own borders.

Keep in mind also that, prior to the rapid appearance and seizure of territory by ISIS in Syria and Iraq, European media outlets like [Der Spiegel reported](#) that hundreds of fighters were being trained in Jordan by Western intelligence and military personnel for the purpose of deployment in Syria to fight against Assad. The numbers were said to be expected to reach about 10,000 fighters when the reports were issued in March, 2013. Although Western and European media outlets would try to spin the operation as the training of "moderate rebels," subsequent reports revealed that these fighters [were actually ISIS fighters](#).

Western media outlets have also gone to great lengths to spin the fact that ISIS is operating in both Syria and Iraq with an alarming number of American weapons and equipment. [As Business Insider](#) stated, "The report [study by the London-based small arms research organization Conflict Armament Research] said the jihadists disposed of 'significant quantities' of US-made small arms including M16 assault rifles and included photos showing the markings 'Property of US Govt.'" The article also acknowledged that a large number of the weapons used by ISIS were provided by Saudi Arabia, a close American ally.

ISIS Attack On Taqba Airbase – The Precursor To A NATO Attack On Syria

Keeping in mind that ISIS is controlled and directed by NATO and Western intelligence, the fact that the death squads have recently focused on the [Taqba Airbase in Raqqa province](#) is significant. Particularly when viewed in context of the recent “debate” taking place in front of the American public by the Obama administration on whether or not to engage in targeted airstrikes inside Syria.

For those who may not [see the pattern](#) – while the United States and NATO deliberated engaging in targeted airstrikes in Syria and the Syrian government subsequently states its opposition to those attacks and its intentions to shoot down the planes delivering those strikes if they do not coordinate with the Syrian government, death squads have effectively eliminated the air defense capability of the Syrian government in the east of the country.

After all, the Pentagon even stated that [one of the biggest threats](#) to an airstrike operation in Syria is the Syrian government’s air defenses. Thanks to ISIS, those air defenses no longer exist in the east of Syria.

This was the end game of the ISIS battle to take over Taqba from the start – eliminate air defenses so that the NATO powers can launch airstrikes against the Syrian military and thus freeing up a launching pad for the terrorists to conduct attacks even deeper into Syria.

Propaganda Purposes in August, 2014 – American Bombing Of Syria

[As I have written on a number of occasions](#) in the past, the goal has been to drum up support from the American people for a bombing campaign or “limited strikes” inside Syria for the purpose of creating a buffer zone, a desire of [NATO since the destabilization](#) campaign began.

[The reason](#) that ISIS was allowed to seize such large swaths of territory across Iraq was an attempt to create a justification for the eventual invasion of Syria in addition to the reinvasion of Iraq. Indeed, any deployment of American troops, [airstrikes](#), or any other type of US military force, will necessitate a battle against ISIS inside Iraq as well as “cross-border” strikes against the organization in Syria. Such “cross-border” strikes would likely be met with apathetic support from the American people since any restraint regarding borders will be presented and then viewed as placing “handcuffs on the troops.”

Any military action taken across the border inside Syria will not be taken for the purposes of eliminating ISIS. The truth is that such military action will be nothing more than a backdoor attempt at establishing the “buffer zone” that NATO so ardently desired early on in the Syrian conflict. With the establishment of this “buffer zone,” a new staging ground will be opened that allows terrorists such as ISIS and others the ability to conduct attacks even deeper inside Syria.

This pretext has already been publicly discussed in mainstream media outlets across the world. Take, for instance, the article by Patrick Cockburn published in The Independent on June 19, 2014 entitled “[Iraq Crisis Exclusive: US Rules Out Military Action Until Prime Minister Nouri](#)

[al-Maliki Stands Down](#) ,” where Cockburn argues the necessity of a series of airstrikes to be launched against both Iraq and Syria.

Cockburn writes,

The general support for the Sunni revolt in northern and western Iraq will make it very difficult for any counter-offensive, which would be facing far more opponents than Isis originally fielded. Isis now controls almost all the Euphrates valley from Fallujah west of Baghdad through western Iraq and eastern Syria as far as the Turkish border. Any long-term campaign against Isis by the Iraqi government backed by US air power would require air strikes in Syria as well as Iraq. The two countries have effectively become a single battlefield.

Consider also, the writings of former State Department Director of Policy Planning under the Obama administration, [Anne Marie Slaughter](#) , who has been foaming at the mouth every bit as much as John McCain when it comes to the prospect of intervening militarily in Syria. In her most recent op-ed in the New York Times, “ [Don’t Fight In Iraq And Ignore Syria](#) ,” the appropriately-named Slaughter writes,

Deciding that the Syrian government, as bad as it is, was still better than the alternative of ISIS profoundly missed the point. As long as we allow the Syrian government to continue perpetrating the worst campaign of crimes against humanity since Rwanda, support for ISIS will continue. As long as we choose Prime Minister Maliki over the interests of his citizens, all his citizens, his government can never be safe.

President Obama should be asking the same question in Iraq and Syria. What course of action will be best, in the short and the long term, for the Iraqi and Syrian people? What course of action will be most likely to stop the violence and misery they experience on a daily basis? What course of action will give them the best chance of peace, prosperity and a decent government?

The answer to those questions may well involve the use of force on a limited but immediate basis, in both countries. Enough force to remind all parties that we can, from the air, see and retaliate against not only Al Qaeda members, whom our drones track for months, but also any individuals guilty of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity. Enough force to compel governments and rebels alike to the negotiating table. And enough force to create a breathing space in which decent leaders can begin to consolidate power.

Bombing Syria – A Strike At Russia

Slaughter’s previous op-eds, of course, betray an underlying reason for her obsessive warmongering against Syria – the strategic desire to weaken Russia. In this, Slaughter reveals herself as an adherent to the [Brzezinski doctrine](#) as it is espoused in [The Grand Chessboard](#) .[1] Even if Slaughter does not openly state her affinity for such a destructive and provocative foreign policy by name, her ideology is revealed by both her actions and her work. It is important to point out that Slaughter’s position should not be construed as merely her own, but as a representation of the desires of the NATO powers that employ her.

Indeed, in her April, 2014 op-ed for Project Syndicate, entitled “ [Stopping Russia Starts In Syria](#)

,” Slaughter is nothing if not obvious about her offensive geopolitical targeting of the Russian Federation as well as that of [China and Japan](#) . She writes that,

The solution to the crisis in Ukraine lies in part in Syria. It is time for US President Barack Obama to demonstrate that he can order the offensive use of force in circumstances other than secret drone attacks or covert operations. The result will change the strategic calculus not only in Damascus, but also in Moscow, not to mention Beijing and Tokyo.

Slaughter essentially argues that Putin is much too strong to inflict damaging geopolitical costs in Ukraine. She suggests that Putin is much weaker in Syria, however, and, therefore, it is Syria where the United States must strike. Slaughter states,

Regardless of Putin’s initial motivations, he is now operating in an environment in which he is quite certain of the parameters of play. He is weighing the value of further dismemberment of Ukraine, with some pieces either joining Russia or becoming Russian vassal states, against the pain of much stronger and more comprehensive economic sanctions. Western use of force, other than to send arms to a fairly hapless Ukrainian army, is not part of the equation.

That is a problem. In the case of Syria, the US, the world’s largest and most flexible military power, has chosen to negotiate with its hands tied behind its back for more than three years. This is no less of a mistake in the case of Russia, with a leader like Putin who measures himself and his fellow leaders in terms of crude machismo.

It is time to change Putin’s calculations, and Syria is the place to do it.

After repeating the tired, disproven, and borderline idiotic propaganda of Assad’s alleged “chemical weapons attacks,” “killing his own people,” and “barrel bombs,” Slaughter attempts to cover up what is nothing more than a geopolitical strategy as a humanitarian issue.

Slaughter laments the fact that “It is impossible to strike Syria legally so long as Russia sits on the United Nations Security Council, given its ability to veto any resolution authorizing the use of force.” However, she continues her article by stating that the United States should act anyway, unilaterally or multilaterally, by striking Syria and, at the very least, destroying its “fixed wing aircraft.”

The US, together with as many countries as will cooperate, could use force to eliminate Syria’s fixed-wing aircraft as a first step toward enforcing Resolution 2139. “Aerial bombardment” would still likely continue via helicopter, but such a strike would announce immediately that the game has changed. After the strike, the US, France, and Britain should ask for the Security Council’s approval of the action taken, as they did after NATO’s intervention in Kosovo in 1999,” she states.

Slaughter continues by writing,

Equally important, shots fired by the US in Syria will echo loudly in Russia. The great irony is that Putin is now seeking to do in Ukraine exactly what Assad has done so successfully: portray a legitimate political opposition as a gang of thugs and terrorists, while relying on provocations and lies to turn non-violent protest into violent attacks that then justify an armed response.

Slaughter, of course, was angry that the incessant and nonsensical propaganda of her former office, the US State Department, and other Western governments across the world had largely failed to manufacture a string of lies that would serve to effectively motivate Americans to gear up for war yet again.

Indeed, up until this point, on this particular issue, American apathy largely contributed to preventing a war.

Unfortunately, with slightly more clever propaganda narratives, that apathy was finally converted to the benefit of the world oligarchy. Such techniques of propaganda are well understood by elites the world over.

For those of us who have tried to warn of and prevent a direct military intervention in Syria, we must now continue to keep the Syrian people in our thoughts and prayers.

But we must also keep the United States in those thoughts and prayers. For what has been done in our name, we have just earned some terrible karmic consequences.

The United States has sown some very bitter seeds in recent years. Unfortunately, there will be a day when we all are forced to reap the bitter harvest.

Recently from Brandon Turbeville:

- [Associated Press Investigates Americans Supporting ISIS - Forgets John McCain](#)
- [Congress Votes To Fight ISIS By Funding ISIS To Fight Assad](#)
- [Deputy Tases Handcuffed Man Repeatedly: "You Wanna Do This The Hard Way???"](#)

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Read more at <http://www.activistpost.com/2014/09/united-states-launches-airstrikes-in.html#ds81LVKSpTFGRZX.99>

URGENT: 13,000 American troops to deploy to Speicher Base in Tikrit, Iraq

September 25, 2014 by [Abdelhak Mamoun](#)



Tikrit (IraqiNews.com) On Thursday the Vice President of the Saladin Provincial Council, Jassim Mohammed Hassan al-Attiyah, revealed that there are dozens of American military advisers at Speicher Base and that 13,000 additional American soldiers and their military vehicles will arrive during the next few days to the base in the city of Tikrit, located 140 kilometers (87 miles) northwest of the capital, Baghdad.

Al-Attiyah said that “the American military command chose to station personnel in Speicher Base because it is the largest military bases in Iraq,” noting that “there are dozens of American military advisers at the base that coordinate and supervise military battles.”

Al-Attiyah added that “13,000 American soldiers will arrive with their vehicles during the next few days to Speicher Base in order to supervise and participate in the liberation of Saladin province.”



File photo of Jassim Mohammed Hassan al-Attiyah from his Facebook campaign page.

This development comes a day after Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi informed President Barack Obama about Iraq's refusal to accept foreign military ground forces on its territory.

On September 15, 2014, the cleric [Moqtada al-Sadr threatened to target American troops if they returned to Iraq](#), calling for "Mujahideen" to withdraw from their areas in case of the interference of those forces "by land or by sea, directly or indirectly."

Washington has already sent 1,600 troops to Iraq, most recently [on September 10, when an additional 475 soldiers were deployed to the country](#). The US claims most of them serve as advisers to Iraqi and Kurdish forces or provide security for the US embassy and the international airport in the Iraqi capital.

Washington has also been conducting airstrikes against the positions of the ISIS fighters in Iraq.

The deployment comes as [US President Barack Obama said earlier this month that he would not pursue another ground war in Iraq after US troops' pullout from the country in 2011](#).

"As your commander in chief, I will not commit you and the rest of our armed forces to fighting another ground war in Iraq," said Obama in a speech to troops at US Central Command headquarters in Florida on September 17.

Senior religious and political figures in Iraq, including Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, have in recent days called on the Baghdad government not to rely on foreign powers in the battle against the ISIS.

President Obama declares war on war



Obama warned that the world is facing a 'cycle of conflict'

[Christopher Hooton](#) ⁺Thursday 25 September 2014

You'll remember the "war on terror" and the "war on drugs", well now President Barack Obama has declared a "war on war" during a [speech at the UN General Assembly](#).

The phrase sums up the predicament of a world embroiled in numerous complex and inextricable wars.

Obama urged all countries and religions to reject extremist ideologies on Wednesday, lest the world end up in a "cycle of conflict".

Quoting influential Muslim cleric Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah, he suggested that a "war on war" was needed to ensure a peaceful future:

"The ideology of Isil or al Qaeda or Boko Haram will wilt and die if it is consistently exposed, confronted, and refuted in the light of day. Look at the new Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies – Sheikh bin Bayyah described its purpose: 'We must declare war on war, so the outcome will be peace upon peace.' Look at the young British Muslims, who responded to terrorist propaganda by starting the 'notinmyname' campaign, declaring – 'Isis is hiding behind a false Islam.' Look at the Christian and Muslim leaders who came together in the Central African Republic to reject violence – listen to the Imam who said, 'Politics try to divide the religious in our country, but religion shouldn't be a cause of hate, war, or strife.'"

(passage at 22:32 in video)

Taking aim at the Islamic State, Obama condemned the group as a "network of death", saying that "the only language understood by killers like this is the language of force."

His annual visit to the UN comes shortly after the US began bombing Syria in a bid to disrupt the Islamic State.

Earlier in the month, Obama [became the fourth president in a row to go on TV and announce airstrikes in Iraq](#).

United States Says it Can Legally Bomb Syria

President Barack Obama's administration claims it has the legal right to attack militants in Syria. (Photo: Reuters)

Published 23 September 2014

The United States says it's defending Iraq by attacking Syrian strongholds of the Islamic State group.

U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power unveiled Washington's legal justification for conducting military operations in Syria without permission from Damascus or the U.N.

The letter from Power was addressed to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, and claimed the United States is acting in the defense of Iraq, which has been invaded by the Islamic State (I.S.) group. The letter asserts Iraq has a right to self defense against I.S., and has the right to request assistance from the United States.

It then claims that since the government in Damascus has failed to eliminate I.S. safe havens in Syria, the United States has the right to intervene.

“The Syrian regime has shown that it cannot and will not confront these safe havens effectively itself,” the New York Times quotes the letter as stating.

“Accordingly, the United States has initiated necessary and proportionate military actions in Syria in order to eliminate the ongoing ISIL threat to Iraq, including by protecting Iraqi citizens from further attacks and by enabling Iraqi forces to regain control of Iraq’s borders,” it said. ISIL is an abbreviation of I.S.'s former name.

The letter further argued the United States has a right to defend itself from the militant group Khorasan, which has been accused of plotting attacks on Western nations from Syria.

“ISIL and other terrorist groups in Syria are a threat not only to Iraq but also to many other countries, including the United States and our partners in the region and beyond,” Power’s letter claimed.

The letter is a sea-change from earlier justifications for U.S. airstrikes against I.S. These earlier justifications claimed the United States could fight back against I.S. to defend its own personnel in Iraq.

However, many of Washington's troops in Iraq were moved to the country's war-torn torn specifically to fight I.S.

The government in Damascus has stated it's willing to cooperate with the United States to fight I.S., but in the past has urged Washington to respect Syria's sovereignty.

Among the demands made earlier this year was a call for the United States to request permission from Damascus before carrying out military operations. Obama has openly rejected this, prompting a wave of criticism from Syrian allies Russia and Iran.

“Any actions executed without ... UN Security Council approval will be taken as an act of aggression, a gross violation of international law,” spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry warned earlier this month.

China has also urged for Syria's sovereignty to be respected.

However, earlier today Syrian President Bashar al-Assad issued comments seemingly softening his view on unauthorized airstrikes on Syrian soil, according to state broadcaster SANA.

"The Syrian Arab Republic says it stands with any international effort to fight terrorism, no matter what a group is called — whether Daesh or Nusra Front or something else," reported SANA.

With Friends Like These: Bush Lawyer John Yoo Backs Obama's Undeclared War on ISIS

[Damon Root](#) | Sep. 18, 2014



Credit: White House / Flickr.com

When President Barack Obama took the United States to war against Libya in 2011 without first seeking congressional authorization as required by the Constitution, he disappointed more than a few of his liberal followers. But Obama did earn the grudging respect of conservative law professor John Yoo, the controversial former George W. Bush administration lawyer, "[torture memo](#)" author, and [Andrew Jackson apologist](#). In response to Obama's statement that he did not need congressional approval to launch military action in Libya thanks to his "constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations" and his powers "as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive," [Yoo declared](#): "For once, Mr. Obama has the Constitution about right."

Fast-forward to the present day and Obama is once more planning to wage war without first seeking authorization from Congress. And once again, former Bush lawyer Yoo is standing in Obama's corner. "President Obama's 'strategy' for fighting the Islamic state," Yoo [recently wrote](#) at *National Review*, "is coming under fire from conservatives for lacking legal authority. I worry that they are allowing their short-term political opposition to Obama and his foreign policy to overcome the longer-term interest in preserving the powers of the presidency."

To his credit, Yoo is at least consistent. He wants the president to enjoy virtually unlimited war powers and he maintains that position regardless of which political party happens to occupy the office. But to his discredit, Yoo's stance is at odds with the text of the Constitution, which plainly grants Congress—not the president—the "power...to declare war."

Back in 2008, when Obama was first seeking the White House, he was widely seen as an antiwar candidate of "hope" and "change" whose election would repudiate the foreign policy mistakes of the Bush years. I think it's safe to say that the ongoing Obama-Yoo alliance has finally dispelled that myth.

Top U.S. Constitutional Expert: Obama More Extreme Warmonger than Bush or Nixon

Submitted by [George Washington](#) on 09/24/2014

Jonathan Turley is perhaps the [top constitutional law expert](#) in the United States (and a liberal).

Turley told MSNBC that Obama is worse than Bush or Nixon in launching unilateral, unconstitutional wars:

Other constitutional experts [agree](#).

Wrong Turn on Syria: No Convincing Plan

By [THE EDITORIAL BOARD](#) SEPT. 23, 2014

President Obama has put America at the center of a widening war by expanding into Syria airstrikes against the Islamic State, the Sunni extremist group known as ISIS and ISIL. He has done this without allowing the public debate that needs to take place before this nation enters another costly and potentially lengthy conflict in the Middle East.

He says he has justification for taking military action against the Islamic State and Khorasan, another militant group. But his assertions have not been tested or examined by the people's representatives in Congress. How are Americans to know whether they have the information to make any judgment on the wisdom of his actions?

There isn't a full picture — because Mr. Obama has not provided one — of how this bombing campaign will degrade the extremist groups without unleashing unforeseen consequences in a violent and volatile region. In the absence of public understanding or discussion and a coherent plan, the strikes in Syria were a bad decision.

Mr. Obama has failed to ask for or receive congressional authorization for such military action. The White House claims that Mr. Obama has all the authority he needs under the 2001 law approving the use of force in Afghanistan and the 2002 law permitting the use of force in Iraq, but he does not. He has given Congress notification of the military action in Iraq and Syria under the 1973 War Powers Resolution, but that is not a substitute for congressional authorization.

The administration also claims that the airstrikes are legal under international law because they were done in defense of Iraq. In a Sept. 20 letter to the United Nations, Iraq complained that the Islamic State was attacking its territory and said American assistance was needed to repel the threat. But the United Nations Security Council should vote on the issue.

Meanwhile, Congress has utterly failed in its constitutional responsibilities. It has left Washington and gone into campaign fund-raising mode, shamelessly ducking a vote on this critical issue. That has deprived the country of a full and comprehensive debate over the mission in Syria and has shielded administration officials and military commanders from tough questions

Craig B Hulet was both speech writer and *Special Assistant* for *Special Projects* to Congressman Jack Metcalf (Retired); he has been a consultant to federal law enforcement DEA, ATF&E of Justice/Homeland Security for over 25 years; he has written four books on international relations and philosophy, his latest is *The Hydra of Carnage: Bush's Imperial War-making and the Rule of Law - An Analysis of the Objectives and Delusions of Empire*. He has appeared on over 12,000 hours of TV and Radio: *The History Channel* "De-Coded"; He is a regular on *Coast to Coast* AM w/ George Noory and Coffee Talk KBKW; CNN, C-Span ; European Television "American Dream" and The Arsenio Hall Show; he has written for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, *International Combat Arms*, *Financial Security Digest*, etc.; Hulet served in Vietnam 1969-70, 101st Airborne, C Troop 2/17th Air Cav and graduated 3rd in his class at *Aberdeen Proving Grounds Ordnance School* MOS 45J20 Weapons. He remains a paid analyst and consultant in various areas of geopolitical, business and security issues: terrorism and military affairs. Hulet lives in the ancient old growth *Quinault Rain Forest*.