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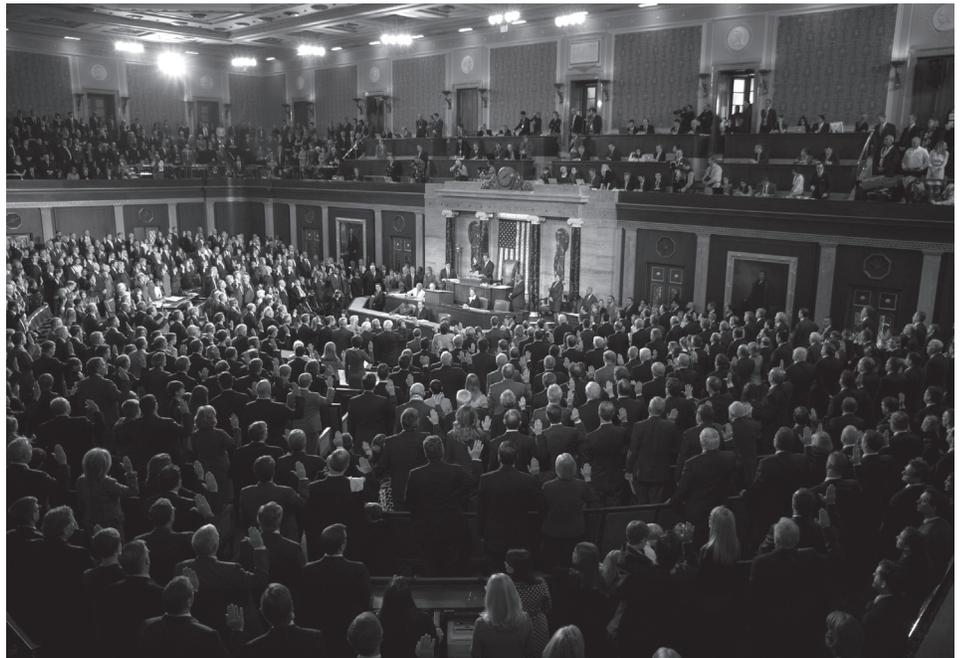
Budget Deal Blows the Pentagon's Diet

BY ETHAN ROSENKRANZ,

POGO NATIONAL SECURITY ANALYST

The Pentagon has been on a diet, of sorts. The spending constraints implemented by the Budget Control Act in 2011 resulted in the first decline in defense spending since 1998. And it had the Pentagon seriously considering how to cut the fat for the first time in decades. But a new budget deal recently enacted has put pork right back on the Pentagon's plate for the New Year.

In real terms, the bipartisan budget agreement orchestrated by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) maintained the defense spending reductions from the Budget Control Act. However, it softened its impact by spreading the cuts further across the next decade, so that the low point will not occur until Fiscal Year 2016. The Murray-Ryan deal increased the cap on defense spending for FY 2014 to more than \$520 billion, up from roughly \$498 billion. This means the Pentagon has more to spend next year—about \$22 billion more. This likely will have the negative effect of relieving some of the immediate budget pressure at the Pentagon—pressure that has been forcing defense planners to make tough, yet strategic decisions about future funding priorities.



But what about cutting wasteful and ineffective spending at the Pentagon? Consider this: currently, the Pentagon has 86 major defense systems under development. Those systems are estimated to cost a combined \$1.6 trillion to develop and procure. When compared to the original cost estimates, those programs have grown in cost by over \$400 billion.

The cost of just one program, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, has grown more than 70 percent since the original estimate in 2001. It will be the most expensive procurement program in American history. Among the many reasons for its out-of-con-

trol cost growth is the fact that the military services are purchasing the aircraft before it has been fully developed or tested, a process known as "concurrency development." As a result, each time a problem or design flaw is found, costly retrofits and redesigns are required, which slows down development and dramatically increases cost. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 7**

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

One of the biggest stories of the year was that of the Edward Snowden disclosures. All the news media seemed to want to cover at the time was where Snowden was going to choose asylum. But that was a sideshow, and one that distracted from the critical issues facing our nation that the case exposed.

The issues we should have been focusing on—and, in fact, should still be focusing on—are how secrecy is undermining our constitutional democracy and just how broken the system for intelligence and national security whistleblowers is.

It is urgent we address the need for more oversight of the government's national security claims—starting with the public disclosure of secret laws. The legal justifications, decisions, and enforcement of laws that allow the government to spy on American citizens must be made public. How can we know if the government has struck the right balance between our security and our rights if its legal interpretations are cloaked in secrecy?

Unfortunately, until that happens, the only way to hold the government accountable for the programs that may threaten the very rights that keep the American people free is through whistleblower disclosures.

Whistleblowers have long been the unsung heroes of government reform. The Project On Government Oversight was founded with the help of national security whistleblowers in the Pentagon who knew what was so badly wrong with the

Defense Department's purchasing system and how to fix it; but they could only speak out at great peril to themselves and their careers. POGO was a vehicle through which these self-proclaimed closet patriots could get relevant information and recommendations for solutions out to policymakers and to the public. That was over thirty years ago. Just as it was then, whistleblowing in the national security and intelligence community today is fraught with hazard: there are too few legal channels for disclosing wrongdoing in secret programs; whistleblower protections for that community are nearly non-existent; and national security whistleblowers have excellent reason to doubt that the authorities will take action on their disclosures, given the inaction by knowledgeable authorities in the Administration, Congress, and the Courts. So whistleblowers leak the information to the public in the hopes that public pressure will result in accountability. But if the leak involves classified information—even if the information was classified only to protect the government from embarrassment rather than to protect national security—the whistleblower is then charged with a crime, regardless of any public benefit that resulted from the disclosures.

Snowden's disclosures of the National Security Agency's domestic surveillance are certainly whistleblowing, but releasing classified information is also against the law. Sometimes though—as was the case with Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers—it is so important to make information public, that it is



necessary to break the law. This is not a new concept. For instance, the Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, provide: "No person may be punished on national security grounds for disclosure of information if...the public interest in knowing the information outweighs the harm from disclosure." Whenever a whistleblower illegally discloses classified information, the public interest must be weighed against the harm to our national security.

As we've been saying for years, the way to stop leaks is to give whistleblowers strong protections and curb over-classification. Instead we have a national security state on steroids, one that engages in far too much secrecy—making it harder for us to keep our legitimate secrets—conducting massive surveillance, and punishing rather than protecting whistleblowers.

In the end, are we safer? What rights are we willing to give up in the name of national security? These are some of the many questions "we the people" must be given ample opportunity to debate. Snowden has reignited that critical public discussion. Nothing less than our constitutional democracy is at stake.

Sincerely,

Danielle Brian

Straus Project and POGO Sponsor Briefings on the A-10 “Warthog”

BY WINSLOW WHEELER, DIRECTOR, STRAUS MILITARY REFORM PROJECT

In November and December, the Straus Military Reform Project and POGO sponsored two briefings on the Air Force’s cheapest and most effective combat aircraft. Over 100 people attended the two events, including many congressional staff, journalists, combat pilots, ground unit commanders, DOD officials, contractors, representatives of think tanks, and others.

While we planned the first session back in August, it turned out to be extremely timely: the Straus Project released an article on September 26 revealing an Air Force plan to send the entire A-10 fleet to the “boneyard” in Arizona for discarded aircraft, and Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) leaked an Air Force document confirming the plan. The two occurrences made the matter a major issue.

The A-10 close support attack aircraft, known as the “Warthog,” was conceived and designed in large part by military reformer Pierre Sprey and a few others. It provides battlefield support to Soldiers and Marines engaged in ground combat. Because it is not designed for the mission that the Air Force prefers (what it likes to call “strategic” bombing), the Air Force is trying to get rid of it.

The A-10 has been extraordinarily cheap to buy and operate, and in all the wars we have fought since Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1991, it has outperformed all other aircraft in its own mission, and many of theirs.

Military reformers Pierre Sprey,

Charles E. (Chuck) Myers, and former top DOD official Thomas Christie, complemented by ground and air combat veterans, were among the speakers. They all underscored the military reform point that cheap and effective should be the criteria of success in defense acquisition. (We already know from the F-22 and F-35 that expensive and ineffective is often the end result of defense acquisition—Here are the basic points the reformers and combat veterans made at the two events.

First, as history shows, the U.S. Air Force has shown little interest in the Close Air Support (CAS) mission. Instead it has preoccupied itself since the 1930s with the theories of Italian General Giulio Douhet and “strategic” bombing of the enemy’s cities and other “critical node” targets. This fixation on bombing described variously today as “deep strike,” “Revolution in Military Affairs,” and “Air-Sea Battle” air operations has meant unaffordable costs, ineffective air power, and longer wars.

Second, Close Air Support—immediate, extremely accurate and persistent fire support and observation for troops directly engaged in combat—is the most effective way air power can impact the land battle and therefore the war. Its most important requirement is at the “people” level: Air and ground commanders at all levels must want it to occur, and the air and ground operators performing it must live and work closely together in order to understand the

other’s tactical needs, achieve instantaneous implicit communication, and eliminate friendly fire incidents.

If the Air Force succeeds in dumping the A-10 fleet, the existing cadre of highly trained, specialized CAS personnel will be dispersed, leaving only partially trained pilots with weak interpersonal connections with ground forces to perform CAS from inappropriate altitudes and distances, at inappropriate speeds, from inappropriate aircraft. Because of their inherent physical limitations, the helicopters and the Short Take Off and Vertical Landing jets of the Army and Marines Corps will not replicate the capabilities of the A-10 fleet. Other programmed aircraft, especially the F-35, will perform even less effectively.

Sprey, Myers, and the others also talked about what characteristics were needed in an effective, affordable replacement for the A-10, but they all agreed that the people issues were far more important and that the first order of business is to stop this latest effort of the Air Force to get rid of one of its most important, effective, and affordable aircraft. Nonetheless, some in the press and the defense community have begun to speculate on what makes the A-10 so effective and what they think any A-10 replacement must be able to do. Here’s what the combat veterans and experts at the Straus/POGO events laid out:

- Ability to fly low and slow enough to find targets independently, distinguish real targets from civilians and friendly troops, operate in bad weather (below ceilings of 1,000 feet) when the enemy likes to attack, and turn around and re-attack in a matter of seconds;

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Take Her Deep

Reforming the U.S. Silent Service

BY ROGER THOMPSON

IN 1959, the U.S. Navy commissioned its final diesel-electric submarine combatant, the USS *Blueback*, which served until 1990. She was the last of her kind in the American Navy because of its insistence, or some would say, dogma, that all combatant submarines must be nuclear powered. After all, diesel-electric submarines are merely surface ships that can submerge only for short periods of time. They are too slow as well, and for these reasons primarily, they are thought to be inferior to nuclear submarines. At least that's the way the U.S. Navy thinks, but I would like to suggest that this thinking is wrong. Not just wrong, actually, but expensive and unreasonable as well. Conventional submarines, especially those with the incredibly quiet and long lasting Air Independent Propulsion (AIP), are arguably an essential weapon for any modern navy, including the U.S. Navy, for reasons that follow.

Try as they might, there is no denying that conventional submarines, even old ones, and despite their lesser speed and submerged duration, have proven themselves quite capable of sinking the U.S. Navy's best and most expensive nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. I documented these defeats extensively in my second book, but it's worth keeping in mind just how costly and numerous these incidents have been.¹ To cite just one example, in the late 1960s the U.S. Navy decommissioned an old diesel boat from WWII, the USS *Argonaut*, and sold it to

Canada, a country with a very small navy, thinking that a first-rate navy like the USN no longer had much need for such outdated submarines. The Canadians renamed her HMCS *Rainbow*, and soon put her to good use. According to author Julie Ferguson, "*Rainbow* earned her share of accolades and even a mention in a Russian newspaper following her 'sinking' of a U.S. carrier bound for Vietnam" in a training exercise.² And contrary to what the U.S. Navy wants us to believe, these sinkings, albeit only theoretical, have been happening all the time. By my

count based on unclassified reports, 16 American aircraft carriers, two battleships and 10 U.S. nuclear submarines have been theoretically sunk (or, in the case of the submarines, detected) in exercises and in operations since 1966. The real number, which is obviously classified, is most certainly much higher.

Conventional submarines are less expensive, quieter, require much smaller crews, and are capable of operating in very shallow waters, and thus are often better than nuclear submarines. Now that the USN is supposed to be focusing on the shallow littoral waters as opposed to the open ocean, small conventional submarines really make sense. Nevertheless, the U.S. Navy does not seem very interested in acquiring them. Instead, it likes to emphasize that its nuclear submarines are nearly impossible to find, but allies and enemies know better. When my late father flew the CP-140 Aurora maritime patrol aircraft in the early 1980s, he told me that Canadian aircrews could find both the Soviet boomers AND the American nuclear attack submarines tailing them, and that the Americans were displeased (and in denial) when they found out that their nuclear submarines were not as stealthy as they claimed.³

Aside from this, the late Scott Shuger, a former Naval Intelligence officer, once said that conventional submarines offer another advantage that rarely gets mentioned: their simplicity of design, relatively speaking, makes it easier and faster for crews and captains to become expert at using them in combat.⁴ The Soviets and Russians surely knew this, as Commander Richard Compton-Hall, RN, told us back in the 1980s. He said “It is a great mistake to denigrate SSKs [conventional submarines]: they will continue to be a menace for the foreseeable future and the Soviet Navy knows it.”⁵ Similarly, Senator Gary Hart (D-CO) and his military affairs adviser William S. Lind observed,

While the “Washington Navy” disparages diesel submarines, the fleet admirals—those commanding battle groups at sea—often say they worry less about Soviet nuclear submarines than about their conventional boats, because the latter are so small and quiet they sneak up on them undetected.⁶

In addition, the U.S. Navy’s focus on nuclear engineering at the expense of combat skills compounds the

problem. British submarine officers who have served on exchange with the U.S. Navy have often commented that their American friends spend far too much time and money on nuclear engineering and not enough on seamanship and fighting the ship. Back in 2007, a senior Royal Navy submariner of my acquaintance told me about his experiences after completing a two year tour as an exchange officer with the U.S. Navy. He was not exactly thrilled with how the U.S. Navy trains its submarine skippers.

There is a conflict between the focus on engineering and warfare. In the USN, engineering wins. Director, Naval Reactors [the admiral in charge of nuclear engineering] is without doubt the most powerful man in the Navy. The self-regulation that they have in place, accepted by the U.S. government, and very successful is paid for by their almost religious concentration on engineering. For example the U.S. submarine Command Course (28 students four times a year) consists of four weeks in the classroom and four weeks at sea and a 9-12 week nuclear engineering course. The average U.S. officer has conducted only two sea going posts at this stage (Junior Officer tour, generally in Engineering) and a Department Head tour. [This means that the U.S. Navy produces better engineers than warriors.] The UK split between engineering and warfare is completely correct and many U.S. believe that as well. I have no engineering degree, however am capable of driving a submarine far more effectively than my U.S. counterparts. Experience and not restricting your search for submarine officers to within the engineering community is the key to success. I had 10 years at sea as a warfare officer before I started the Brit “Perisher” course and there were only four of us (six-month course with nine weeks in the simulator and four weeks at sea). The difference is staggering. That is not to say that there are some exceptions. My previous U.S. Commodore was a tactical genius, however in 15 rides at sea on different U.S. submarines, I have only found two CO’s who match a Brit.

In other words, the Royal Navy, unlike the U.S. Navy, does not focus on engineering, and as a result it has a well-established reputation for producing some of the very best submarine captains in the world. In a recent exercise between the new British nuclear submarine HMS

Roger Thompson, MA, FRSA, is an assistant professor at Kyung Hee University and a Fellow of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. He is the author of *Lessons Not Learned: The U.S. Navy’s Status Quo Culture* and *Brown Shoes, Black Shoes, And Felt Slippers: Parochialism and the Evolution of the Post-War U.S. Navy*. For more information visit www.rogerthompson.info.

Astute and the USS *New Mexico*, a new *Virginia* class submarine, the captain of the *Astute* reported that his ship was easily able to deal with the USS *New Mexico*: “The Americans were utterly taken aback, blown away with what they were seeing.”⁷ Bear in mind that no ship is better than her crew, but it is all too common for people to praise equipment, and forget the human element. Without a well-trained and cohesive crew, the *Astute* and her excellent sonar would not prevail, and that is something that needs to be addressed in the U.S. Navy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

1 Firstly, the U.S. Navy needs to reform its training regimen for submarine commanders. The British and the Dutch produce excellent submarine captains, a fact confirmed not just by their fighting records, but by the Americans who have taken (and survived) the British and Dutch submarine command courses in recent years. The Navy should consider making arrangements for all new submarine captains to take one of these courses.

2 Secondly, in keeping with the thinking of the great military and naval thinkers, not only does the U.S. Navy need truly committed and well-trained warriors to command its submarines, it also needs to build more cohesive crews for all its ships, including submarines. The late submariner Captain Edward L. Beach wrote in his 1999 autobiography that personnel turbulence is too high, and sailors often have weak bonds to their crew and their submarine. His remedy is to implement a “home ship” concept in which personnel are specifically assigned to one ship for most of their career. This would improve cohesion, which will generally improve combat readiness, and give the Navy a better return on its considerable investment.⁸

3 Finally, as Professor Milan Vego recommended, it is high time for the U.S. Navy to get back into the business of operating conventional submarines. Simply borrowing a boat from Sweden, as it did recently to try to get a handle on the threat from AIP submarines, will not do the trick; America needs to have her own, in addition to her existing nuclear subs.⁹ For starters, Chuck Spinney suggests that the Navy “buy 2 or 3 of these AIP boats and set up an experimental squadron which could be used like the Air Force used its Aggressor Squadrons (F-5s) to test the effects of asymmetric capabilities but also to evolve new tactics in free play exercises tailored to these boats and monitored by objective umpires. This would provide a great training platform and a relatively low

cost operational testing/experimentation mechanism.”¹⁰

The U.S. Navy has a golden opportunity to reform itself now, and be better prepared to face future threats. Status quo thinking has undermined the Navy for too long, and the changes called for will require leadership and innovation at the highest levels. Unfortunately, history has shown that the Navy will try to resist most attempts at serious reform unless or until blood is drawn in battle, but let us hope the new generation of admirals will be more sensible. ■

My thanks to Captain John L. Byron, USN (Ret.), Winslow T. Wheeler, Dave Foster, and Chuck Spinney for their assistance in researching this article.

NOTES

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2. Julie H. Ferguson, *Through a Canadian Periscope: The Story of the Canadian Submarine* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1995), p. 274.
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4. Scott Shuger, “The Navy We Need and the One We Got,” *The Washington Monthly*, March 1989.
5. Richard Compton-Hall, *Sub Vs. Sub* (New York: Orion Books, 1988), p. 23.
6. Gary Hart with William S. Lind, *America Can Win: The Case for Military Reform* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1986), p. 94.
7. Ministry of Defence, “HMS *Astute* arrives home from US sea trials,” March 2, 2012. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hms-astute-arrives-home-from-us-sea-trials--2>
8. Edward L. Beach, *Salt and Steel: Reflections of a Submariner* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999), pp. 275-276.
9. Milan Vego, “The Right Submarine for Lurking in the Littorals,” *Proceedings*, June 2010.
10. Chuck Spinney, email message to Roger Thompson, October 20, 2013.

LEARN MORE: AIP SUBMARINES

For more information on AIP submarines, please read:

“Full steam ahead for submarine propulsion”
by Dr. Gareth Evans

on NavalTechnology.com.



Budget Deal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Under sequestration, the Air Force publicly stated that it would have to delay purchasing some of its variants of the Joint Strike Fighter in order to save money. This would also have the positive effect of slowing down concurrency development. However, following the Murray-Ryan deal's passage, this budget pressure will evaporate.

Another example is the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), which is years behind schedule, billions of dollars over budget, and is not expected to be survivable in hostile threat environments. The program has been plagued by flawed designs, failed equipment, and construction deficiencies, which have only fueled its excessive cost growth. Because of sequestration, the Pentagon has been actively considering cutting in half the number of LCS procured. But now, this important consideration will likely be shelved.

These are just two programs out of many that ought to be cancelled or significantly curtailed. William Hartung of the Center for International Policy recently told the blog *Breaking Defense* that, "Throwing an extra \$20 billion at the Pentagon now may just postpone a necessary rethinking of how we structure our armed forces and what we expect of them in a world where traditional approaches no longer work." POGO agrees.

Chairmen Murray and Ryan deserve kudos for finally setting aside partisan politics to strike a deal. We also are pleased that they did not take the Pentagon budget off the table as some had anticipated, and the deal provides the same amount of relief to domestic agencies, thus maintaining the Budget Control Act's parity between defense and non-

defense programs for deficit reduction. The Murray-Ryan deal also did not completely eliminate the cap on defense spending. So, there remains an important opportunity for Congress to weigh in on the defense budget and curtail wasteful and inefficient programs.

When Congress returns to session after the holidays, it intends to pass an omnibus appropriations act that will include a full-year Pentagon spending bill. However, the defense appropriations bills that Congress has been working on all year, as currently drafted, were already roughly \$52 billion above the previous cap imposed by sequestration, and now is roughly \$30 billion above the new defense spending cap implemented by the Murray-Ryan deal. In order for next year's omnibus appropriations to comply with the new cap, they need to cut \$30 billion or so from the current spending bills.

As a result, Congress still needs to find significant savings in the defense budget. Fortunately, last year, POGO jointly released a list of recommendations with Taxpayers for Common Sense that could, if implemented, save close to \$700 billion over the next decade. Other organizations from right to left have made further suggestions. Indeed, every two years, the Congressional Budget Office releases its biannual "White Book," which catalogues many additional ways for the federal government, including the Department of Defense, to save money.

There is plenty of waste and ineffective spending from which to choose. It's past time for Congress to honor its commitment to reduce excess defense spending as it prioritizes investments in national security programs that will enhance the United States' security for decades to come. ■

A-10 "Warthog"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

- Three or more hours of fuel and weapons, enabling an extended lethal presence over the battlefield, and the ability to do that up to three times a day;
- Operating off rough airstrips (such as has been the case in Afghanistan and Iraq's western desert);
- Pilots living in tents to foster close coordination with the ground force;
- Extreme survivability due to its armor, triple-redundant flight controls, adequate countermeasures and tactics—for example, against modern Iraqi and Serb air defenses in 1991 and 1999, A-10s proved far more survivable than predicted and at least as survivable as far more costly, so-called "more capable" aircraft, such as the F-117;
- A simple, rugged airframe that can be maintained and repaired quickly;
- A highly effective, precise weapon—usable when the enemy is ten yards from friendlies—such as the GAU-8 gun with enough ammunition for 10 to 12 firing passes;
- A diversity of other munitions to compensate for those that may be defeated by countermeasures in future wars (GPS guidance) or that may not be useable for extremely close-in attacks (laser guidance);
- Radios and commensurate training to communicate effectively with all levels of ground forces; and
- High combat capability per dollar to produce a force that can be bought and maintained in large numbers at an affordable cost.

The question, of course, is which of these characteristics does the F-35—the Air Force and Marine Corps-intended A-10 replacement—have? The answer: None. ■



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Center for Defense Information**
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Tel: 202.347.1122 / Fax: 202.347.1116



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