



NPS IN THE NEWS

Weekly Media Report –Dec. 15-21, 2020

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VISITS:

1. [CNO Explores Future Warfare at the Naval Postgraduate School](#)

(News Break 18 Dec 20)

(NPS.edu 18 Dec 20)

(Navy.mil 18 Dec 20) ... Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class James Norket

In an effort to explore current research related to key naval priorities, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Gilday visited the Naval Postgraduate School, Dec. 17, to assess the university's latest research and experimentation regarding unmanned systems and space engineering, as well as gain an appreciation for what NPS' faculty and students are doing for the future of warfare.

EDUCATION:

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(Navy.mil 18 Dec 20) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Taylor Vencill

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RESEARCH:

3. [Transparency About Autonomous Military Systems is Critical to Acceptance, Research Says](#)

(The University of Alabama in Huntsville 17 Dec 20)

(Tech Xplore 18 Dec 20) ... Jim Steele

When it comes to military use of autonomous systems, transparency about them, perceived usefulness and perception of ease of use all contribute to acceptance and adoption by personnel, according to new research at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), a part of the University of Alabama System.

The project's principal investigator is Dr. Bryan Mesmer, an associate professor in the UAH Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering and Engineering Management (ISEEM). The work was supported by the **Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Consortium for Robotics and Unmanned Systems Education and Research (CRUSER)**, which funds novel research in robotics and autonomous systems through its Seed Research Program.

4. [US Navy Helps Small Companies Engage with Experimentation](#)

(MarineLink 17 Dec 20) ... Ned Lundquist

The United States' Department of Navy (DoN) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Experimentation Cell (DoN SEC) connects SBIR innovators with the DoN experimentation community to deliver innovative solutions for the warfighter.



“We’ve been instrumental in transitioning technologies and solutions from small companies and those that have not traditionally worked in the defense sector,” said Prof. Raymond R. Buettner Jr., PhD., the Director, Joint Interagency Field Experimentation (JIFX) at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. “Students, academics and industry representatives gather together—in person and virtually--to watch and witness demonstrations and experimentation.”

5. [Navy Tests Cutting-Edge Technology in California Hills](#)

(AUSN Magazine Fall 2020) ... Edward Lundquist

On a hot, dry hilltop in central California, an unlikely group of students, academics, and industry representatives gathered together recently — in person and virtually — to watch and witness what may be the future of technology in the U.S. Navy.

A spectrum of exercises and demonstrations is helping to find new and better solutions to hard warfighting problems, and the nexus for addressing those problems with innovative solutions is the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

FACULTY:

6. [Warnings Unheeded, Again: What the Intelligence Lessons of 9/11 Tell Us About the Coronavirus Today](#)

(Homeland Security Affairs 15 Dec 20)

(Homeland Security Today 15 Dec 20) ... Erik Dahl, NPS associate professor of National Security Affairs

Since the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, experts have debated whether the crisis was an intelligence failure. Some argue the pandemic was the result of mistakes by American intelligence agencies who failed to warn, or by policymakers who failed to heed the warnings they were given. President Trump has blamed the U.S. intelligence community for downplaying the threat, while also claiming that he saw it coming early on. And our understanding about intelligence and the pandemic has become even more muddled with the revelations that Trump was aware of how serious the threat was in early February and yet declined to take decisive action.

7. [Rubin and Gülen: Whoever Pays the Most Holds the Leash](#)

(Daily Sabah 18 Dec 20) ... Robert Williamson

Turkey has always been a luring subject for politicians, academics and journalists looking for attention. One of those fierce and obsessive voices against Turkey is Michael Rubin, a senior lecturer at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Civil-Military Relations.

ALUMNI:

8. [Santa Maria Names Interim Fire Chief](#)

(KEYT 16 Dec 20) ... Travis Schlepp

Santa Maria has appointed a new interim fire chief following the retirement of Chief Leonard Champion.

Santa Maria city manager Jason Stilwell announced Wednesday that Deputy Fire Chief Todd Tuggle, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, will be assuming the role of chief beginning Saturday. Champion announced his retirement earlier this month.

9. [Baldwin Native Could be First Woman on the Moon](#)

(LIHerald 16 Dec 20) ... Bridget Downes

Baldwin native Jasmin Moghbeli, a Naval Postgraduate School alumna, could become the first woman to step foot on the Moon.

10. [Filipino Marine Officer Graduates with Distinction at US Naval Postgraduate School](#)

(Mintfo 20 Dec 20) ... Gaile Tiamzon

The Philippine Marine Corps (PMC) has congratulated Major Romulo G. Dimayuga II for graduating in his program with distinction at Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, United States.



UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

December 25: Christmas Day

January 1: New Year's Day

January 4: 2021 Winter Quarter Classes Begin

January 18: Martin Luther King Day



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With NPS being host to 1,500 resident students offering nearly 70 different defense-focused curricula, the visit allowed Gilday the firsthand opportunity to see the university's interdisciplinary education and applied research in action as NPS researchers discussed innovative solutions to real operational problems. The Navy's senior uniformed leader also toured multiple laboratories during his visit, including the Center for Autonomous Vehicle Research Lab and the Space Systems Lab.

"NPS is the Navy's applied research university," said Gilday. "There are functions that occur here that [the Navy] can't get anywhere else in the world. The surplus of experience and knowledge partnered with the ability to work on classified material on a secure campus makes NPS an invaluable asset to the fleet."

During the tour, Gilday learned about the newly-commissioned Wayne P. Hughes, Jr. Naval Warfare Studies Institute (NWSI), a program developed to provide fleet operational commands front-door access to NPS and coordinate the university's interdisciplinary response to their warfighting needs.

As NWSI Director and Professor of Practice retired Navy Capt. Jeff Kline explained to Gilday, the ultimate purpose of NWSI echoes NPS' ultimate purpose, which is to be a vital link between the institution and the naval forces in the development of concepts, wargaming and experimentation that leads to the rapid prototyping of emerging technologies.

"The NPS mission really hasn't changed since its inception," said Kline. "Our job is to take a look and capture emerging tech and provide both the education and research environments so that officers can assess those emerging technologies and learn how to apply them in future conflict. That was our mission when we first started at the naval academy with mechanical engineering and radars, and it's our mission today as we take a look at artificial intelligence, machine learning and quantum sensing capabilities."

Lt. Timothy Howarth, an NPS student who is applying machine learning to develop better terrain navigation, was one of three students who presented their research to Gilday. He was honored to share his work, as just one example of the valuable research efforts underway across campus.

"I think seeing students who are motivated to change the Navy for the better will show [Gilday] just how crucial NPS is," said Howarth. "This is the perfect place for Sailors to learn. It lets us further our education and continue to make connections that will make tomorrow's Navy better than today's."

Overall, the brief visit provided Gilday with just enough information to peak his interest, noting he was very interested in the presentations and looking forward to seeing what comes out of NPS next.

"NPS is effectively creating the future leaders of the future Navy," he said.

<https://www.newsbreak.com/california/monterey/news/2129184220733/cno-explores-future-warfare-at-the-naval-postgraduate-school>

<https://nps.edu/-/cno-explores-future-warfare-at-the-naval-postgraduate-school>

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2453002/cno-explores-future-warfare-at-naval-postgraduate-school/>

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EDUCATION:

Marine Corps Commandant, Senior Leaders Commend Fall Quarter Graduates

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(Navy.mil 18 Dec 20) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Taylor Vencill

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In commencement remarks recorded prior to graduation day, 38th Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger congratulated the 340 graduates, including 27 international students from 13 countries, highlighting the intellectual power and critical thinking present in NPS alumni. He emphasized the value of adapting to a changing environment, and to overcome challenges that only intellectual capability can master.

“In the future, the joint force can no longer expect to win on technical capabilities alone,” said Berger. “Your ability to rapidly process information will seize the initiative against a peer adversary. The future fight will be fluid with an ever-changing environment, and it will demand that Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and our civilian workforce have the intellectual rigor to make sense of the environment, decide and act.”

Berger noted the military profession is a “thinking profession” where intellectual capabilities are imperative as the joint services look to future operating environments characterized by peer level competition and conflict.

“Although the environment and equipment will change, what must remain constant is our ability to understand, decide and act faster and more effectively than our competitors,” stated Berger. “We need leaders like you, who can think through multiple layers of the problem then quickly provide key operational solutions.”

According to Berger, NPS graduates, through their studies, receive the critical thinking tools required to leverage the power of information by analyzing a problem, making sense of the information, and responding effectively in the form of their thesis.

“The Fleet needs people who can accurately recognize cues, quickly make sense of information, and respond effectively,” said Berger. “In the end, it will not be technology that wins the next conflict, but the force with the intellectual edge.”

Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, who also recorded a special congratulatory message for the graduates, noted that an NPS education is an investment for the nation.

“The education you received at NPS not only improves you all as individuals, but it also allows you to use your knowledge on behalf of national defense and the American people,” said Wolf. “The department of homeland security specifically relies on NPS to produce the next generation of homeland security professionals and leaders. Investing in our leaders of tomorrow is an investment worth making.”

NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau lauded the graduates on their ability to persevere and overcome challenges in the COVID-19 environment.

“You have adapted, you have persevered, and you have performed in an outstanding manner amidst all the challenges, completing your research, your theses, your projects and your capstones that will lead to key warfighting solutions for our nation,” said Rondeau. “The accomplishments we celebrate today have empowered you to become committed innovators, adaptive thought leaders, and professional warfighters, more valued to your service and to your nation than ever before.

“We will be challenged again by forces well outside our nation’s control,” continued Rondeau. “But take solace, confidence and comfort in all that we do, in that we have the future leaders in place to champion the next challenge that lies before us.”

<https://nps.edu/-/marine-corps-commandant-senior-leaders-commend-fall-quarter-graduates>



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RESEARCH:

Transparency About Autonomous Military Systems is Critical to Acceptance, Research Says

(The University of Alabama in Huntsville 17 Dec 20)

(Tech Xplore 18 Dec 20) ... Jim Steele

When it comes to military use of autonomous systems, transparency about them, perceived usefulness and perception of ease of use all contribute to acceptance and adoption by personnel, according to new research at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), a part of the University of Alabama System.

"Of those three factors, transparency was regarded as the most critical to accepting and adopting an autonomous system," says Lisa Matsuyama, a second-year graduate research assistant in psychology who is the lead author of the research paper.

"It makes sense that transparency was most important because once operators understand the system and why they are using it, their perceptions of how useful and easy to use the system is can shift dramatically depending on what information they are given, or not given."

Autonomous systems perform tasks without external influence. Examples of autonomous systems include self-driving cars, learning thermostats and home assistants. These systems are becoming ever more prevalent in modern life.

"Understanding a system's capabilities is imperative to the acceptance and adoption of autonomous systems," Matsuyama says.

The project's principal investigator is Dr. Bryan Mesmer, an associate professor in the UAH Department of Industrial & Systems Engineering and Engineering Management (ISEEM). The work was supported by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Consortium for Robotics and Unmanned Systems Education and Research (CRUSER), which funds novel research in robotics and autonomous systems through its Seed Research Program.

Dr. Mesmer teamed up in a UAH cross-campus collaboration with co-principal investigator Dr. Kristin Weger, an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology and Matsuyama's advisor.

"Dr. Mesmer and myself have collaborated on several other funded projects for NASA and the Army," says Dr. Weger. "What is interesting about these projects is that without the involvement of both disciplines, these research projects would not have come to fruition."

Dr. Weger says the Department of Psychology set up the interview questions, formulated a standardized procedure to interview the participants, and collected and analyzed the data. ISEEM applies the data to value modeling and game theory in order to generate and manage systems engineering requirements.

The project is a multi-university collaboration between UAH and NPS collaborators Dr. Douglas Van Bossuyt and Dr. Robert Semmens from the Systems Engineering Department.

"Autonomous systems are complex due to their underlying engineering and their uncertain interactions with human users," says Dr. Mesmer.

"It is only through a multi-university and multi-discipline examination, bringing in perspectives from multiple fields and backgrounds, that a real understanding of the acceptance of these systems can be made," he says. "That is what makes this collaborative team unique and appropriate for this project."

At UAH, Matsuyama's position and that of Raleigh Zimmerman, an undergraduate ISEEM major, are funded through CRUSER. Dr. Nathan Tenhundfeld, an assistant professor of psychology, is also supporting the effort.

Besides understanding an autonomous system's capabilities, Matsuyama says operators want to know why they are using the system and why it is needed.

"That intertwines with perceived usefulness, and users need to perceive a system as easy to use to be more likely to accept and adopt a system, as well," she says.

For example, Matsuyama says it is probably safe to say that a system with buttons on a controller that is similar to a Microsoft Xbox video game controller would be perceived as easy to use and be more readily accepted and adopted than an unknown controller with random buttons because users would already be familiar with the interface of the Xbox controller.

With the help of the NPS collaborators, the UAH researchers interviewed 47 active-duty military students in semi-structured interviews, mostly asking open-ended questions about their opinions of autonomous systems.

"Once we finished the interviews, we transcribed each interview and then coded each transcription," Matsuyama says. "Coding allowed us to group and analyze the data and transcriptions in a scientific way."

The scientists also reviewed pertinent literature of technological models, acceptance, adoption and autonomous systems to identify key determinants, including system effectiveness, system transparency, risk-based criticality and mental workload.

The study's conclusions apply across the branches of the military, the researchers found.

"We conducted a chi-square test of independence that found no significant differences between military branches and essential factors to accept and adopt autonomous systems," Matsuyama says. "Basically, that's statistical language to say that participants across all branches of the military agreed on what factors were most important regarding accepting and adopting autonomous systems."

Because enlisted warfighters encounter challenges regarding the acceptance and adoption of autonomous systems for operations, the findings are important to the military, she said.

"This research has the potential to help streamline the research and development phase of new systems, as well as give our warfighters/operators what they actually need and desire to work with in the future."

The next step is to administer a questionnaire to get additional perspectives on acceptance and adoption of autonomous systems to inform systems engineering and requirements management, Matsuyama says.

"Additionally, because a lot of companies can get overwhelmed with input from various sources, I think this research could really help to realign and bring the focus back on the operators and the people who will actually be using these systems."

<https://www.uah.edu/news/items/transparency-about-autonomous-military-systems-is-critical-to-acceptance-research-says>

<https://techxplore.com/news/2020-12-transparency-autonomous-military-critical.html>

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US Navy Helps Small Companies Engage with Experimentation

(MarineLink 17 Dec 20) ... Ned Lundquist

The United States' Department of Navy (DoN) Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Experimentation Cell (DoN SEC) connects SBIR innovators with the DoN experimentation community to deliver innovative solutions for the warfighter.

"Our mission is to support the SBIR community from the first idea to experiment execution by offering beginning-to-end facilitation, mentoring, and training in all aspects of experimentation," said Scott Bartlett, the DoN SEC program manager,

Naval experimentation can validate or inform concepts of operations, operational plans and doctrine, and ultimately how the Navy and Marine Corps fights. The magnitude and focus of naval experimentation events range from small limited technology demonstrations to large scale naval exercises. "Finding a fit



and function where small businesses can insert their technologies and prove their warfighter capability is extremely challenging. In addition to these challenges, small businesses have limited exposure and lack of understanding of naval experimentation processes and are logistically challenged by security and engineering processes encompassing numerous organizations,” said Bartlett.

“We understand all of the options that are available within the huge dynamic that is fleet experimentation, said Chris Dillman, the SEC’s lead planner. “Specifically, we know where we can include SBIR initiatives, and we can mentor our SBIR companies and facilitate their inclusion in appropriate experimentation opportunities. Most of these experimentation events are planned a year in advance, if not more. We can work with our small businesses to help them find the right venue and time to include their technology in existing Navy experimentation events.”

The SEC is developing a guidebook called “The 101 Basics of Experimentation,” tailored for SBIR community, and focused on government sponsors and experimentation venue owners to encourage and help them bring SBIR companies into their experiments.

“SIBRS are one piece of that much bigger puzzle, but they can be one of the most important pieces,” Dillman said.

Exercising experimentation

“We’ve worked very closely with the operating forces, such as the U.S. Fourth Fleet, where we’ve used available assets such as the USNS Spearhead, an expeditionary fast transport (EPF) as a vessel of opportunity to test various unmanned systems and adaptive force packages to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance,” Dillman said. “We can make those kinds of connections.”

More often, the experimentation occurs in a large planned event. The Navy and Marine Corps are planning an ambitious array of exercises in the months and years ahead, including Trident Warrior, RIMPAC, Sea Dragon, Bold Alligator, Valiant Shield, Valiant Blitz, Large Scale Exercise 2020, to name a few, along with Advanced Naval Technology Exercises (ANTX) and Joint Interagency Field Exercises.

Originally planned for this year, Large Scale Exercise 2021 will leverage new operational concepts like Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO), Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO), and Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE), naval operational architecture, and command and control in a contested environment to develop and test alternative warfare concepts.

RIMPAC, the biennial Rim of the Pacific Exercise, is the world’s largest international maritime warfare exercise, with participation from a number of navies from around the Pacific and beyond. Led by the United States Indo-Pacific Command, RIMPAC is a unique training opportunity that promotes interoperability among Pacific Rim armed forces, as a means of promoting stability in the region to the benefit of all participating nations. The next one will be in 2022.

Where RIMPAC is primarily a training event that involves some experimentation, Trident Warrior is an annual large-scale, at-sea field experiment where the Navy selects potential initiatives that address capability gaps and provide inventive solutions in an operational environment. Trident Warrior initiatives focused on maritime domain awareness, networks, information operations, and command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) technologies.

Advanced Naval Technology Exercises

The Navy Warfare Development Command and acquisition community runs a series of events called Advanced Naval Technology Exercises (ANTX), which are not tied to fleet events.

“With ANTX, the Navy and Marine Corps are bringing the warfighter together with the engineer to address an operational problem,” said Bill Bray, DASN RTD&E. “It could be agile, resilient logistics; or moving data from one place to another; or a specific mission area, such as ship-to-shore maneuver. Working with our warfare centers, we bring in the operators to help us state the problem and look at the technologies that are out there. We then put out an offering to industry to ask them if they think they have technologies that would work and help the warfighter in that particular space, to bring it forward, we’ll assess it, and then we’ll actually take it into the field and run an exercise.”



Bray said ANTX has a low barrier of entry for industry partners. “We provide the environment; we provide the warfighters; and industry and the labs bring the technology. We put the technology in the hands of the Sailors and marines, and we let them run it in the actual environment—with rain, heat, salt water—and we see how it performs.”

“We provide direct feedback on what worked and what didn’t work in the technology.

“I think it’s a very powerful event,” Bray said.

One upcoming ANTX will focus on naval integration in a contested environment. ANTX NICE 2021 is being held in April at Camp Lejeune, N.C., to explore naval integration in a contested environment. “NSWC Crane is one of the sponsors, and working with Crane, we identified 48 SBIR technologies they were interested in, and came up with four or five that might be a good fit for the ANTX. We’re trying to get the systems command program managers, the prime contractors and the TPOCs to involve their small companies, and want to include them in these experimentation opportunities. In the case of this ANTX, we found both a sponsor and a TPOC that are very interested in bringing this particular SBIR company, Utopia Compressions, into the experiment,” Dillman said. “Utopia Compressions is teaching us the learning process as we go through this effort so we can teach TPOCs how to do this.

Joint Interagency Field Experimentation

“We’ve been instrumental in transitioning technologies and solutions from small companies and those that have not traditionally worked in the defense sector,” said **Prof. Raymond R. Buettner Jr., PhD., the Director, Joint Interagency Field Experimentation (JIFX) at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.** “Students, academics and industry representatives gather together—in person and virtually—to watch and witness demonstrations and experimentation.”

Buettner said the JIFX work at NPS is not funded by the basic education mission, but he said it’s a good fit. “We bring in this work through research and working with other partners, such as our sponsor, the DoD Rapid Reaction Technology Office (RRTO). The students and faculty benefit because they participate in it, but the JIFX purpose and mission is to enhance our ability to identify commercial technology that we can adopt or adapt for the warfighter.”

But, Buettner said, JIFX is a good fit at NPS. “According to Buettner, JIFX works in both directions. “We create an environment in which the government can learn about these new and emerging technologies. And we give the technologists in those companies and organizations the chance to learn about what it will take to make that a government program.”

For companies not used to working with the armed forces, there are some big advantages in participating in JIFX. “At JIFX, we brought out a Cyber Vulnerability Assessment Team. The benefit to these companies is that we will assess their technology, and they learn how the government is going to evaluate their technology to make sure it will meet the cyber security guidelines. If they want to sell their technology to the government down the road, they understand at the early prototyping level what it’s going to take to do that. We will access their tech, and they can see how we look at.”

The JIFX team manages all of the regulatory functions, including permission to fly manned and unmanned aircraft in restricted airspace, to obtaining authority to transmit on certain radio frequencies.”

Buettner said his team generally conducts four events a year (although COVID has had some impact on the schedule), focused on the priorities set by the Navy. “The stakeholders identify technologies that are proposed by companies. If any of the stakeholders believe that technology can address a national security problem, we invite that company out to JIFX.”

<https://www.marinelink.com/news/us-navy-helps-small-companies-engage-484004>

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Navy Tests Cutting-Edge Technology in California Hills

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A spectrum of exercises and demonstrations is helping to find new and better solutions to hard warfighting problems, and the nexus for addressing those problems with innovative solutions is the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

“We’ve been instrumental in transitioning a variety of solutions from small companies and those that have not traditionally worked in the defense sector,” said Prof. Raymond R. Buettner Jr., Ph.D., who serves as the director of the Joint Interagency Field Experimentation (JIFX) at NPS.

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“We create an environment in which the government can learn about these new and emerging technologies,” he continued. “And we give the technologists in those companies and organizations the chance to learn about what it will take to make that a government program.”

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Buettner said his team generally conducts four events per year, although COVID-19 has had some impact on the schedule. These events are focused on the priorities set by the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Evaluation and naval leadership.

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No handshakes

With COVID, conducting events in person became difficult. At the March event, which like all JIFX events thrives on networking, there were no handshakes. Due to a lockdown, the May event was cancelled, and the August event was moved into September as a hybrid virtual event. On-site participants were dispersed throughout the 42,000 acres of Camp Roberts, a California National Guard Training installation.

During the September experiment, the virtual space included the Camp Roberts Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF), which allowed participants to experiment with multiple ground and air vehicles within the real and virtual CACTF simultaneously from multiple locations.

“We rolled out a whole series of COVID protocols that enabled us to have an event earlier this year, as well as the hybrid event we just completed in September,” said Buettner.

Despite the limitations, about 30 companies participated.

“We can’t stop looking for emerging technology, and we can’t stop educating non-traditional potential defense contractors,” he said. “Our goals were the same — to educate industry about the national security problems the government has, and educate the government about the potential capabilities that are available.”



The JIFX team manages all of the regulatory functions, including permission to fly manned and unmanned aircraft in restricted airspace, as well as obtaining authority to transmit on certain radio frequencies.

Buettner said the different entities within the Defense Department do not always know what everyone else is doing. “The labs and warfare centers will come here to interact more broadly with others and have a better understanding of what others are working on.”

At JIFX, participants can decide how much they want to collaborate and share. “We tell companies that this is collaboration, and we won’t share anything they don’t want us to share, but our real objective is to share as much as possible with all participants.”

Adapting to virtual

There’s value even if individuals can’t participate in the actual exercise. JIFX offers a Technology Showcase webpage to view the technology presentations from current and previous JIFX “alumni” companies, as well NPS technologies presented during the exercise. And one can sign up to join the NPS JIFX community of interest to stay current with scheduling and developments.

“One of the companies was being evaluated by a team within the Pentagon while also participating in JIFX and listed on our website,” Buettner said. “A member of that selection team took part in the virtual JIFX and was able to show the other members how advanced the company’s technology was, and that company was selected for additional consideration.”

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. Gerald Scott, an NPS faculty research associate in the department of information sciences, said one of the objectives of the most recent JIFX was to connect virtual elements with real-world environments to make simulation training better. The JIFX team adopted a simple tracking tool to follow virtual and on-the-ground participants in the exercise.

“We’ve developed experimentation tools to help us rapidly explore technologies on how we collect, calculate, and communicate information about our physical surroundings, and how we use that information to interact with it,” Scott said. “Research like this, into what we call cyber-physical systems, informs how we design, build, and use technology in all aspects of our lives.”

Scott said not all of the technologies demonstrated at the exercise are entirely new. JIFX also finds ways to integrate mature technologies into new solutions.

“We’re experimenting with stretching the application of several technologies, enabling communication between otherwise isolated technologies that lets us blend physical and virtual,” he said.

Scott noted that NPS is not unlike other academic institutions and research facilities that have had to adapt to the pandemic restrictions, including the adoption of technologies that help conduct research at researcher’s homes during the pandemic — instead of labs and facilities with dedicated equipment and information technology infrastructure.

Scott said NPS and its partners have brought together disparate technologies and data to create the JIFX simulation environment.

“We now have a working simulation of one of our field research locations that is capable of exchanging information with other technologies already in use,” he said. “We can now do our experiment planning using the simulation and conduct ‘practice’ experiments prior to coming out to Camp Roberts, making the time spent at Camp Roberts during experimentation weeks that much more fruitful.”

Scott’s coffee cup reads, “Experiment, Fail, Learn, Repeat.”

“That is what we do at JIFX,” he said. “Rather than playing it safe and having a demo that we had rehearsed prior to the event, we are also presenting which we met, such as streaming historical flight logs, and sending data to and from existing government systems. We also have a habit of setting stretch goals, such as linking multiple instances of the simulation, which we didn’t meet this time. During the course of the week, we went through our experiment-fail-learn-repeat cycle multiple times per day. That is success.”



Providing value to everyone

NPS provides unique value to Navy and Marine Corps officers through JIFX, with students looking at the technologies and offering their thoughts on how these technologies would be useful to the fleet and in the field. They even provide comments about the implications of these technologies being used against the United States.

This is first-hand informal feedback from mid-level officers who are warfighting professionals. It's unofficial, but leadership believes the objective feedback from warfighters made directly available to those companies is valuable.

All of this makes JIFX a great value to everyone involved, Buettner said.

“The companies get free feedback, a cyber inspection, access to resources, exposure to labs and warfare centers, access to airspace, and a tutorial on how the government does business,” he said. “In return, the government gets to watch them experiment with their technology. These are not set-piece demonstrations, but real experiments where they are trying to accomplish something in an operational environment.”

The NPS Field Lab has evolved to provide that environment, supporting the capacity for diverse, realistic exploration. JIFX provides a realistic field environment with airspace, buildings, tunnels, forests, and open plains for demonstrations and experiments, and companies provide their emerging technologies to address challenges faced by U.S. military forces.

In the end — and perhaps best of all, Buettner said — is “we’re creating a unique educational opportunity for our students, the future leaders of the United States military.”

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FACULTY:

Warnings Unheeded, Again: What the Intelligence Lessons of 9/11 Tell Us About the Coronavirus Today

(Homeland Security Affairs 15 Dec 20)

(Homeland Security Today 15 Dec 20) ... Erik Dahl, NPS associate professor of National Security Affairs

Since the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, experts have debated whether the crisis was an intelligence failure. Some argue the pandemic was the result of mistakes by American intelligence agencies who failed to warn, or by policymakers who failed to heed the warnings they were given. President Trump has blamed the U.S. intelligence community for downplaying the threat, while also claiming that he saw it coming early on. And our understanding about intelligence and the pandemic has become even more muddled with the revelations that Trump was aware of how serious the threat was in early February and yet declined to take decisive action.

How to make sense of all this? While we will not be able to make a final assessment until a future national coronavirus commission or other high-level body investigates, enough information is now available to indicate the disaster was indeed an intelligence failure, in which the complex, worldwide system of collection, analysis, and warning that had been developed for just such an eventuality was unsuccessful in preventing the global spread of the disease. And the global intelligence failure of the Covid-19 pandemic bears remarkable similarities with past failures of intelligence and warning such as Pearl Harbor, and in particular the 9/11 attacks.

The crisis today is very different from those previous intelligence failures, of course, most notably in the nature of the enemy we face. But despite these differences, in both the case of the 9/11 attacks and the coronavirus pandemic, the United States was threatened by an enemy that was present in our country for several weeks or even months before it was recognized. In both cases our systems designed to detect just such a threat failed to prevent disaster.



From an intelligence perspective, the most important difference may be that today the task of analyzing data and warning of the threat is not shouldered solely, or even primarily, by the agencies of the traditional American intelligence community, as it was before 9/11. In fact, the job of collecting and analyzing intelligence on pandemic threats belongs mostly to a complex network of national and international medical surveillance systems.

Today as in the past we have seen a deadly combination of three factors at work: strategic level warnings that preceded the crisis but were ineffective in preventing it; a lack of specific intelligence on the actual threat as it developed until it was too late; and an absence of receptivity—which I have described elsewhere as a willingness to listen to and act on the basis of the intelligence they receive—on the part of policymakers who could have done something to head off disaster.

In this article I compare the coronavirus crisis with intelligence failures of the past in an effort to help us place today's events in context. And more importantly, I hope that by recognizing these parallels, we may be better able to avoid making even more mistakes in the future.

Warnings Before the Crisis

Before both the 9/11 attacks and the coronavirus outbreak, there were strategic-level, big picture warnings from prominent officials and blue-ribbon commissions that went unheeded, and tabletop exercises and wargames that, after the fact, seem remarkably prescient.

White House counterterrorism advisor Richard A. Clarke famously warned of the threat from al Qaeda before 9/11, while as the 9/11 Commission Report detailed, multiple commissions and studies warned about the danger of domestic terrorist attacks well before September 11. Before the current crisis, warnings of the danger from an infectious disease pandemic came from individuals as well-known as Bill Gates, and from studies such as a blue-ribbon report published last November by the CSIS Commission on Strengthening America's Health Security.

For years before 9/11, government agencies, think tanks, and scholars used war games, exercises, and scenarios to examine the possibility that terrorists might use airplanes as bombs. The coronavirus outbreak was just as extensively war-gamed and anticipated, such as when incoming Trump administration senior personnel participated with outgoing Obama officials in a table-top exercise that tested their response to a global flu pandemic. And just last October, the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, the World Economic Forum, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation war-gamed what might happen if a new coronavirus swept the globe. They found that “[t]he next severe pandemic will not only cause great illness and loss of life but could also trigger major cascading economic and societal consequences that could contribute greatly to global impact and suffering.”

Before 9/11, American intelligence agencies as well known as the Central Intelligence Agency and as obscure as the intelligence office of the Federal Aviation Administration warned about the rising terrorist threat. Nearly a year before the current outbreak, the Director of National Intelligence warned in January 2019 that “the United States and the world will remain vulnerable to the next flu pandemic or large-scale outbreak of a contagious disease that could lead to massive rates of death and disability.”

These early warnings appear today to be eerily prophetic. But it is not enough for intelligence agencies simply to warn of threats that may come. For example, in the same testimony in which the Director of National Intelligence warned of the pandemic threat, he also warned of increasing threats in the cyber world, from weapons of mass destruction, and from environmental change. More specific intelligence is needed before leaders can be reasonably expected to decide how and where to take action when faced with such a panoply of threats. As I discussed in a book examining the intelligence failures of Pearl Harbor and 9/11, in order to use intelligence to prevent disaster and surprise, leaders need specific, credible threat information—actionable intelligence—before they can respond effectively.

Alarms as The Crisis Developed

In the immediate weeks and months surrounding both crises, intelligence agencies warned of the rising threat, but in both cases the specific, tactical-level intelligence on the actual threat—the 9/11 hijacking plot and the novel coronavirus—was frustratingly and tragically limited.



For example, during the spring and summer of 2001 American intelligence agencies produced a number of threat reports, including the famous President's Daily Brief that warned "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US." But none of these warnings actually referred to the plot that became the 9/11 attacks.

For pandemic threats such as the coronavirus, the specific intelligence that can be most useful to head off a crisis is collected primarily from medical surveillance systems. These systems were hampered by limited COVID-19 testing in many countries, and disease reporting from China was blocked during the first weeks of the outbreak by government bureaucracy and fears of upsetting officials in Beijing.

There were also limitations on disease surveillance in the United States during the early stages of the outbreak. A CDC report released in May 2020 stated that limited community transmission of the virus likely had begun in the United States as early as late January and early February, at levels too low to be detected by the disease surveillance systems being used. As the *Washington Post* put it, "[t]he virus was already circulating but at a level below the epidemiological radar." Epidemiologists have called this a missed opportunity; for example, William Hanage from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health said "[s]urveillance at the time was wholly inadequate to the task of catching a pandemic virus of this sort, whenever it was introduced."

Other disease surveillance and detection systems might have been helpful in warning of the coronavirus outbreak but were either not available or not successful. For example, a U.S. government program called PREDICT was begun in 2009 to look around the world for viruses that could cross from animals to humans and cause pandemics. But the funding for that program was cut off in September 2019, and although an emergency extension was announced in April 2020, the program was evidently not available to help accomplish its goal of prediction and warning in the case of Covid-19.

The pandemic was a failure of tactical warning and intelligence in other countries as well. In Canada, the Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN) system, which was designed to use artificial intelligence and big data to detect early signs of outbreaks, appears to have not been active during the months leading up to the pandemic. Canadian intelligence scholar Wesley Wark has written, "Faced with a new and unprecedented coronavirus threat, the surveillance and warning system failed, resulting in costly delayed responses."

The traditional agencies of American intelligence appear to have reported on the new threat as soon as information became available, but they too were limited by a lack of specific knowledge in the early weeks. In January and February of this year, as reports began to multiply about the coronavirus, intelligence agencies were reporting about the rising threat. One official told the *Washington Post*, echoing the 9/11 Commission Report, that "[t]he system was blinking red." These warnings went not only to the White House and other executive branch agencies, but they were also conveyed in a classified briefing given to the Senate and House intelligence committees in February.

According to some news accounts, U.S. intelligence detected first indications of a disease outbreak in China as early as November, even before Chinese authorities recognized the problem. These reports have been denied by the National Center for Medical Intelligence, a little-known part of the U.S. intelligence system that tracks emerging diseases and bioterrorist threats. But U.S. officials have acknowledged that the first time President Trump was briefed on the virus was January 23, when his briefer downplayed the threat. According to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Trump was "told that the good news was the virus did not appear that deadly." As many medical experts were realizing at that time, this assessment was incorrect.

Unreceptive Decision Makers

The third factor that led to disaster on 9/11 as well as in the case of the coronavirus was a lack of receptivity on the part of key policy makers toward the warnings they received. Just as President George W. Bush and his top advisors were unreceptive to warnings about Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, President Trump and his team were slow to respond to the rising threat of the coronavirus. And as he has on other issues, Trump has disagreed publicly with the intelligence community on the coronavirus, for example over the question of whether the virus originated in a laboratory in Wuhan, China.



The most significant evidence for a lack of receptivity on Trump's part are the revelations from journalist Bob Woodward, which show that Trump knew early on that the virus was more deadly than he had been saying in public, and yet still declined to act. On February 7, 2020, he told Woodward he had spoken the previous day with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and when Woodward asked what they had talked about, he said "we were talking mostly about the virus." He went on to tell Woodward that "[y]ou just breath the air and that's how it's passed. And so that's a very tricky one. That's a very delicate one. It's also more deadly than even your strenuous flus." Trump has since defended his actions as merely presenting a positive, optimistic face to the country, but his comments to Woodward clearly indicate that he understood the gravity of the situation.

It is not clear that Trump gained his understanding of the threat from intelligence; his February 7 conversation with Woodward suggests he was repeating what he had learned from the Chinese leader. But by early February, Trump had received warnings about the coronavirus from a number of sources, including top advisors as well as the intelligence community. Although the story of the current crisis is still being written, what we know at this point strongly suggests that Trump's inaction will be remembered along with other infamous cases in which politically motivated behavior and neglect of intelligence led to calamity. And it does appear that this part of the failure played a greater role in the coronavirus disaster than it did in 9/11, because President Trump was much less receptive to warnings about the virus than President Bush was to warnings about bin Laden and al Qaeda.

But it is too simplistic—and perhaps too easy—to only blame the Trump administration. The failure to grasp the seriousness of the crisis in the early stages was a broader failure of intelligence and warning throughout the United States and around the world. Trump's failure to act does not explain similar failures in many other countries, and it does not fully explain the lack of early, decisive action in many U.S. states and communities—where many of the most important public health decisions are made—in the early period of the crisis.

Lessons from Past Failures

When we see this history of warnings unheeded, it is tempting to draw only the depressing lesson that failures of intelligence and warning are inevitable because no matter how often or how loudly intelligence officials and other experts warn, leaders will continue to make decisions based on their own often flawed judgment. This was the conclusion reached after the 9/11 attacks by experts who pointed out that the nation had made many of the same intelligence failures before Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier—suggesting that as scholar Richard Betts has argued, intelligence failure is not only inevitable, but natural.

But in two important ways, the intelligence situation we face today offers room for optimism. First, in the 19 years since 9/11 the 17 agencies that make up the American intelligence community appear to have learned to coordinate and share information better than they had before. What we know so far suggests intelligence agencies did well in reporting and sharing what information they had once news of the virus became available by early January. A key question for a future investigation will be whether the intelligence community had been able to—or should have been able to—collect and analyze intelligence on the outbreak earlier than January, when Chinese authorities were limiting the flow of information and when efforts to prevent the spread of the virus might have been most effective.

The second and most important difference is that after initial delays in reporting from China, the worldwide medical intelligence and surveillance system appears to have performed generally well. In particular, newer systems such as ProMED and HealthMap were among the first in the West to report on the virus outbreak. Many of these surveillance programs had been developed and strengthened in recent decades following infectious disease outbreaks including SARS and Ebola, and it is clear the crisis would have been much worse without the data and early warning provided by medical surveillance. But it still was not enough to curb the outbreak.

Where Do We Go from Here?

As the United States and the world continue to respond to the crisis, we should remember that one of the key intelligence lessons from 9/11 came after that disaster had occurred. As part of the nation's



response to being attacked, American leaders gave intelligence agencies new, largely unchecked powers to monitor and surveil their own citizens. When these programs eventually came to light, they not only caused a national scandal, but they were found to have contributed little to increasing the country's security. The Bush administration's warrantless telephone monitoring program, for example, was a case study in how a democracy should not surveil its own citizens. The lesson of the intelligence failure *after 9/11* is that secret domestic surveillance programs are much more likely to fail than those begun with appropriate oversight and transparency.

Many countries around the world—although not, to any great extent, the United States—are using cell phone tracking and other surveillance technologies to monitor those who have been infected or who are in quarantine after possible exposure. Such tools appear to be very useful for contact tracing, but they raise a multitude of questions about privacy and civil liberties. There has been relatively little public discussion about how or whether they might be used in this country, and many experts argue that a better approach would be to use large-scale manual contact tracing instead. If such digital surveillance programs are put into wide-scale use in the United States, they should be implemented publicly, with as much transparency as possible, and with strong policies in place to protect civil liberties.

In the case of the coronavirus, as with 9/11, the problem was not a lack of long-term, strategic warning; the critical failures were in being able to develop timely, actionable intelligence of the threat as it developed, and in having a strong enough intelligence-policy relationship to ensure that the warnings would be heeded. When a nation faces attack—whether from a hostile military, a terrorist plot, or a growing pandemic—timely warning is critical. To reduce future mistakes in the current crisis and to help develop the warning needed to prevent future disasters, three steps should be taken now.

First, the American intelligence community must continue to be able to walk and chew gum at the same time—to track and warn of not only the immediate threats facing the country, but of the dangers beyond the horizon. Experience shows that at the very top levels, the national security establishment can only focus on one problem at a time. A year ago, that was great power competition. Several years before that, it was international terrorism. And last January, the focus was on impeachment. But the coronavirus crisis shows that global threats can arise from literally anywhere, and that the United States needs an intelligence community that can monitor and warn of such a wide range of threats. Only by having the most expansive (and expensive) intelligence community in history will that be possible, and this means continuing to spend a significant portion of our national treasure on intelligence.

This also means American intelligence agencies should focus on the areas where they have a comparative advantage over open source medical intelligence, especially on collecting and analyzing (often at a classified level) information about how other countries are responding to the threat. Such clandestine reporting is often critical for developing the actionable intelligence leaders need to guide their decisions. As an example of how this applies against a threat such as the coronavirus, reports indicate that the intelligence community has for some time been warning that Chinese authorities were understating the number of infections in their country. Such assessments are also critical concerning suspect disease reporting from Russia, North Korea, and other nations where autocrats are likely to have both means and motive to mislead the world about the spread of the virus.

In addition, major institutional changes are needed in the American intelligence community, such as elevating the National Center for Medical Intelligence to the status of an independent national center, reporting to the Director of National Intelligence, and reinstating the position of National Intelligence Officer for Warning that was abolished several years ago.

The second step we must take is to improve our medical surveillance capabilities, both in the United States and around the world. This means increased support for international programs such as the Global Health Security Agenda, which helps countries improve their epidemic detection and response capabilities, and for domestic efforts such as the National Syndromic Surveillance Program, which is an early warning system in the U.S. that tracks symptoms of patients at medical facilities such as emergency rooms.

Changes must also be made to national and international medical surveillance systems, including, if possible, a new international treaty to provide the World Health Organization with the authority to



enforce requirements for nations to monitor and report potentially serious outbreaks. Efforts using artificial intelligence and big data to detect early signs of outbreaks show promise and should be expanded.

Some experts have suggested developing a global early warning system for infectious diseases and other health threats that would integrate the global hodge-podge of disease surveillance systems that currently exists, and provide a worldwide system similar to those already in place to warn about earthquakes and tsunamis. Such a system is needed, but so far the pandemic has failed to inspire the sort of coordinated international effort that will be necessary. Because we cannot count on international coordination to always be effective, but also because local authorities are critically important in health emergencies, there will also need to be new state and local systems developed to counter the threat of future pandemics. At the U.S. federal level, the National Weather Service offers a useful model for what could become a National Disease Forecasting Service, while at the local level the current crisis has demonstrated the importance of local surveillance and data collection efforts.

Third, and perhaps most important, our leaders must learn to trust their intelligence advisors and become receptive to the warnings they receive. This does not, of course, mean decision makers should automatically agree with intelligence assessments, but it means we must get beyond the dysfunctional relationship that President Trump has had with the intelligence agencies and leaders who work for him. This may be the most difficult goal of all, especially in this time of ideological polarization and partisanship. Trump may never be able to develop the close, trusting relationship with the intelligence community that military commanders typically form over years of collaboration with their intelligence advisors. But for at least as long as this president's time in office lasts, the need to improve America's intelligence-policy relationship may mean that the intelligence establishment will be forced to accept what is normally considered anathema: Trump's habit of promoting loyalists into key intelligence positions. Such moves are often criticized by experts who argue that top intelligence posts should be apolitical, but if this is what it takes to get the president to listen to intelligence, then it may ultimately be beneficial.

There is of course no guarantee that American intelligence will be able to help prevent a future pandemic. But if these steps are taken, we may find that when the next warnings of crisis come, they will be heeded.

<https://www.hsaj.org/articles/16304>

<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/emergency-preparedness/warnings-unheeded-again-what-the-intelligence-lessons-of-9-11-tell-us-about-the-coronavirus-today/>

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Rubin and Gülen: Whoever Pays the Most Holds the Leash

(Daily Sabah 18 Dec 20) ... Robert Williamson

Turkey has always been a luring subject for politicians, academics and journalists looking for attention. One of those fierce and obsessive voices against Turkey is Michael Rubin.

But who is this “pudgy-faced boy,” as investigative journalist Robert Dreyfus calls him, occasionally aiming at President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and other Turkish officials.

According to his resume, he is currently a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a senior lecturer at the Naval Postgraduate Center for Civil-Military Relations and a senior editor of the Middle East Quarterly.

Rubin also worked as a staff adviser for Iran and Iraq at the Pentagon between 2002 and 2004. He also lectured at Yale University, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and at three different universities in northern Iraq.

He gave a lecture titled “Asymmetrical Threat and Its Impact on International Security” in a symposium called “New Dimensions of the Security and the International Organizations” held by the Turkish Command of the Military Academies in 2007.



One can easily be mistaken about his expertise by looking into his resume, however, by reviewing some of his work, it is easy to understand that he is no more than a “puppet.”

Rubin is trying to convince his audience, especially his own country, the United States, that Turkey is not a reliable actor for the West anymore. Now that Joe Biden takes the lead in the U.S. presidency, Rubin may find a more convenient base to raise his neocon ideas.

In his article titled “Turkey is No Ally of the United States” at the public policy think tank American Enterprise Institute (AEI) on Oct. 23, 2019, Rubin considers Turkey to be a “Russia’s trojan horse” in NATO and goes on to launch baseless allegations against Turkey, such as being an ally to Daesh, without being able to provide any concrete evidence.

Master of disinformation

However it is not surprising, as this is Rubin’s “modus operandi.” He takes a rumor and makes it appealing without bothering to support his arguments, like he did during the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Dreyfus, who writes for the U.S. weekly magazine the Nation, stated in his article entitled “The Lie Factory” in 2004 in Mother Jones magazine that “Michael Rubin is one of the neocons who led the the U.S. to war with Iraq through misinformation and bogus intelligence.”

When covering a special story on the George W. Bush administration pushing disinformation, Dreyfus spoke to now-retired Air Force Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatkowski, who said: “It was not intelligence, it was propaganda. They’d take a little bit of intelligence, make it sound much more exciting, usually by juxtaposition of two pieces that don’t belong together.”

Kwiatkowski added that “the Pentagon’s Office of Special Plans (OSP) made up horrifying stories about Iraq’s weapons and its ties to terrorist. In order to convince the American public to an unnecessary war, it was the job of OSP to provide the necessary arguments.” Rubin, as a part of that team, knows how to manufacture news to suit his agenda.

The New York Times revealed on Jan. 2, 2006, that Rubin had reviewed propaganda articles that had been produced for distribution to the media by the Lincoln Group PR firm, which had been hired by the Pentagon.

According to the Times, the Lincoln Group paid Iraqi newspapers to print positive articles about American soldiers. The Lincoln Group is also known for its poor interpretation of statements of Iranian leaders.

Fake news for sale

Not only the Americans believe he is a fraud, but the Somalis too.

In 2019, after meeting the Somaliland administration, Rubin suddenly became interested in the region and started to write several articles about Somalis and Somaliland.

Just looking at the headlines, and his hidden agenda behind the articles is clear. Some of these articles are entitled “U.S. Africa Policy Cannot Afford to Ignore Somaliland” on Feb. 26, 2019, in The National Interest, “the US and UN are Repeating Iraq-Style Mistakes in Somalia” on Feb. 19, 2019, in The Hill, “10 Questions Somalia’s Prime Minister Should Answer In Washington” on April 8, 2019, in the Washington Examiner and “U.S. Misteps in Somalia Benefit Our Enemies” on March 25, 2019, in National Review.

All of the articles were written to convince Washington to begin relations with Somaliland. As always, with little knowledge of the region, he repeats his client’s arguments without fact checking.

Somali sources claim Rubin’s article in the Washington Examiner entitled “Somalia’s President is No Ally Against Terrorism” on July 28, 2019, in which he mentions video footage portraying Somali leaders as irresponsible, is based on a video that had been edited and translated into English before being sent to Rubin.

The same sources shared that Rubin gets \$50,000 per month to change U.S. lawmakers’ opinions by propounding negative propaganda against the Somali government.

Fetullah Gülen’s Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ) had many schools in Somaliland in the past; it could be that the group recommended Rubin as an “experienced disinformation asset” to Somaliland.



Anti-Semitic cult leader

Rubin, being inconsistent in his own arguments, befriended his one-time enemy Gülen after 2015.

He used to call Gülen an “anti-Semitic Turkish cult leader,” accusing him of continuing an inconsistent approach to secularism and equating secularism with fascism.

What changed his mind, in his own words, was “the fact that Gülen is now critical of Erdoğan.”

His hatred toward Erdoğan lies in the fundamentals of his good relations with Gülen and his followers. As he apologizes to Gülen in his article “Reconsidering Fethullah Gulen” in Commentary Magazine on May 20, 2015, and befriends Gülenists, it becomes easier for him to launch false allegations at Erdoğan with the help of his new friends.

Ali Ünal, a Turkish journalist who worked in FETÖ’s now-dissolved Zaman newspaper, stated in his confession that he witnessed Rubin’s visit to Gülen’s residence in Pennsylvania in June 2015 – explaining the sudden change in Rubin’s perception of Gülen.

The coup whisperer

However, it is not difficult to see the connection. Like Lord Varys’ “little birds” in Game of Thrones, he envoys a message of a possible coup in Turkey, only a few months before the failed coup attempt.

In his article, “Will There Be a Coup Against Erdogan in Turkey,” in Newsweek on March 24, 2016, he claimed that there would be a coup in Turkey soon. Unless he is a psychic, it is clear he had inside information from the perpetrators, that is to say, Gülen and FETÖ.

Rubin doesn’t even bother to hide the connection. At the time this article was written, two of the 46 accounts he is following belong to FETÖ members: Ahmet Yayla, the fugitive former police officer, and Ilhan Tanır from the media branch of the group. Rubin echoes the arguments of these Gülenists in every article or interview about Turkey.

In an interview with Ahval News, one of the Gülenist media assets supported by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in September 2020, just before the U.S. elections, Rubin was still praising Gülen and Gülenists, describing them as being more akin to Anatolian Sufism and accusing Erdoğan of being affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. It is no surprise the executive editor of Ahval News, Tanır, is a friend.

In a podcast interview with Elan Journo in New Ideal on Sept. 30, 2020, entitled “How Turkey Went From Secular To Islamic Authoritarianism,” Rubin makes the same intentional comparisons, linking Gülen’s Islam closer to Sufism, and Erdoğan’s Islam to the Muslim Brotherhood several times, all the while forgetting his own arguments in 2008, accusing Gülen of planning to establish an Islamic state in Turkey, like Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran.

It is clear that his assumptions are wrong and aim to convince those who are not well-informed about Turkey, as in the same interview he claims that “Turks refuse to classify Islamic State in their official listings of terrorism.”

If he had been an expert on Turkey as he claimed to be, with a little research that even little children can do on the internet, he would have learned that Turkey, following a determined fight against Daesh, recognizes it as a terrorist organization.

His obsession with Turkey continues with the arguments of Gülen and FETÖ after 2015, as in his every article or interview about Turkey, he brings the conversation around his now-friend Gülen and idolizes him.

This time Gülen holds his leash. The enemy is common, the rhetoric is the same and Rubin continues to bark the words prompted by his Gülenist friends.

The only audiences he can convince are the supporters of Gülen, the PKK and those who consider Turkey an enemy. Rubin has made a career out of propaganda and is an expert in “falsified, baseless analysis.” If anyone is looking for a pawn to use against Turkey, he comes highly recommended.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/rubin-and-gulen-whoever-pays-the-most-holds-the-leash>

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ALUMNI:

Santa Maria Names Interim Fire Chief

(KEYT 16 Dec 20) ... Travis Schlepp

Santa Maria has appointed a new interim fire chief following the retirement of Chief Leonard Champion.

Santa Maria city manager Jason Stilwell announced Wednesday that Deputy Fire Chief Todd Tuggle will be assuming the role of chief beginning Saturday. Champion announced his retirement earlier this month.

Tuggle has been with the Santa Maria Fire Department since February and previously served 17 years with the Fresno Fire Department.

Tuggle graduated from Cal Poly in the '90s and **in 2016 he earned his Master of Arts in Homeland Security from the Naval Postgraduate School.**

The Santa Maria Fire Department serves the entire city of Santa Maria with 75 positions and five fire stations. A sixth fire station provides dedicated service to the Santa Maria Public Airport. The fire department responds to about 10,000 service calls every year, the city said.

<https://keyt.com/news/santa-maria-north-county/2020/12/16/santa-maria-names-interim-fire-chief/>

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Baldwin Native Could be First Woman on the Moon

(LIHerald 16 Dec 20) ... Bridget Downes

Baldwin native Jasmin Moghbeli could become the first woman to step foot on the Moon.

NASA recently selected 18 astronauts from its corps to form the Artemis Team and pave the way for the next astronaut missions on and around the Moon as part of the Artemis program.

The members of the Artemis Team, according to a NASA news release, were introduced during the National Space Council meeting at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Dec. 9.

After completing more than two years of basic training, Moghbeli, along with her fellow candidates, graduated from the program in January and became eligible for spaceflight, including assignments to the International Space Station, Artemis missions to the moon, and ultimately, missions to Mars.

The NASA candidates were chosen from a record-setting pool of more than 18,000 applicants. Moghbeli was selected and joined the Astronaut Candidate Class in 2017.

The New York native was born in Germany but considers Baldwin her hometown. She attended Lenox Elementary School, later graduated from Baldwin Senior High School and earned a Bachelor's degree in Aerospace Engineering with Information Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, followed by a **Master's degree in Aerospace Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School.**

She is also a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Navy Test Pilot School and has accumulated more than 1,600 hours of flight time and 150 combat missions.

At the time of her selection in 2017, Moghbeli was testing H-1 helicopters and serving as the quality assurance and avionics officer for Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron 1 of the U.S. Marine Corps in Yuma, Ariz.

She has been awarded four Air Medals, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, three Navy and Marine Corp Achievement Medals and various unit commendations as well as other awards and recognitions.

NASA's modern lunar exploration program will land the first woman and next man on the Moon in 2024, according to the release, and establish a sustainable human lunar presence by the end of the decade.

NASA will announce flight assignments for astronauts later, pulling from the Artemis Team. Additional Artemis Team members, including international partner astronauts, will join the group, as needed, officials said.



“We are incredibly grateful for the president and vice president’s support of the Artemis program, as well as the bipartisan support for all of NASA’s science, aeronautics research, technology development and human exploration goals,” NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said in a statement. “As a result, we’re excited to share this next step in exploration – naming the Artemis Team of astronauts who will lead the way, which includes the first woman and next man to walk on the lunar surface.”

The astronauts of the Artemis Team will help NASA prepare for the coming Artemis missions, which begin next year working with the agency’s commercial partners as they develop human landing systems; assisting in the development of training; defining hardware requirements; and consulting on technical development. They also will engage the public and industry on the Artemis program and NASA’s exploration plans.

<https://www.liherald.com/stories/baldwin-native-could-be-first-woman-on-the-moon,129296>

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Filipino Marine Officer Graduates with Distinction at US Naval Postgraduate School

(Mintfo 20 Dec 20) ... Gaile Tiamzon

The Philippine Marine Corps (PMC) has congratulated Major Romulo G. Dimayuga II for graduating in his program with distinction at Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, United States.

The graduation ceremony was graced by the United States Marine Corps Commandant, General David H. Berger USMC, as the guest speaker.

Major Dimayuga got the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award for International Student. He was also awarded Outstanding Thesis for his thesis “Commercial-Off-the-Shelf Drone Design: A Rapid Equipage Alternative for Force Recon Companies”.

“The Naval Postgraduate School, operated by the US Navy, offers graduate studies for experienced officers from the joint services, civilians from various defense and homeland security organizations, and international students from different countries. The school focuses on global security issues vital to national security,” the Philippine Marines said.

<https://www.mintfo.com/news/filipino-marine-officer-graduates-with-distinction-at-us-naval-postgraduate-school/23981/>

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