



SAF/SB Media Summary

21—27 January 2011

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ARTICLE SUMMARIES

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SMALL BUSINESS

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Federal Computer Week

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Air Force Opening \$1 billion Medical Contract

The Washington Post

The Air Force is launching a program worth up to \$985 million over five years to provide a host of medical advisory and consulting services, such as helping military medical centers handle their accounting, order supplies, conduct research and administer evaluations. In the past, the Air Force used other strategies to buy these services, such as buying through a contracting office at an individual base, but the military branch is now launching a single medical services program -- known as Air Force Medical Service Clinical Advisory/Technical Services, or CATS. The program is slated to have 10 winners, five unrestricted in size and five small businesses.

WPAFB's \$82.5M Decision Awaited

Dayton Daily News

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Obama Portrays Small Business Owner as Man Who Did 'Big Things'

CNN

When the President of the United States wants to mention you in his State of the Union speech, and the first lady invites you to sit with her, there's really no way to decline. And so, Fisher donned a suit and tie and showed up with his wife, Julie, as guests in Michelle Obama's box during President Barack Obama's second State of the Union address to the nation. In the eyes of the President, the small business owner was not just an honored guest of the evening. He was a symbol of the American dream – alongside Vice President Joe Biden, "a working class kid from Scranton" and Speaker of the House John Boehner, "who began by sweeping the floors of his father's Cincinnati bar."

SBIR/STTR

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Advanced Defense Technologies, Inc., a developer of breakthrough technologies for military defense, homeland security and commercial communications systems announced today that it is using its co-patented technology and military R&D for the development of defense and commercial product applications. ADTI's technology has been refined and enhanced by Phase I projects and two Phase II projects with the US Air Force and the US Army. Advanced Defense's co-patented technology has been enhanced over the years by many Phase I projects and two Phase II projects -- one each for the Air Force and the Army.



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BUDGET & ACQUISITION

U.S.A.F. Space + Missile Systems Center... Studies For The Future (MILSATCOM)

SatNews

The U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center announced today that it has awarded four contracts totaling \$3.7 million as a result of a Broad Agency Announcement released in June 2010. The BAA, officially designated "SMC-32, Broad Agency Announcement: MILSATCOM Commercial Architecture Options," will study the feasibility of using minimally modified commercial satellite communication products and capabilities to meet future MILSATCOM requirements operating in military frequencies. These studies will inform an upcoming Joint Space Communications Layer Materiel Solutions Analysis phase, which is likely to begin in CY2011.

Obama War Request Cuts DoD Budget by 26 Percent

Federal News Radio

The Obama administration wants to cut another 26 percent out of this year's war budget by reducing the number of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Pentagon officials tell Bloomberg News that the administration will cut the Pentagon's war budget by \$42 billion. That translates into a proposed \$117 billion war budget for fiscal 2012. That would mark the lowest expenditure for the wars since fiscal 2005.

In New Round of Budget Talks, Defense Spending Not Safe

Federal News Radio

Lawmakers are showing a greater appetite for cutting federal programs - even defense spending - as they ramp up for the next round of budget talks. Many new members of Congress ran on platforms that stressed cutting government spending, and that could include defense spending, MSNBC reports. And many of them argue that the \$78 billion in defense budget cuts proposed by Secretary Robert Gates is not enough. The new majority leader in the House, Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.) has repeatedly said that defense programs will be considered for cuts alongside other programs.



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INDUSTRY

DOD Struggles to Count Contractors, GAO reports

Federal Computer Week

As Congress seeks more information on the Defense Department's service contracts, the DOD officials have to figure out how to accurately determine the number of private-sector employees doing the work, according to a report released this week. The defense agencies differ in their approaches to reviewing the work performed by contractors and the extent to which they use the inventories to make workforce decisions, according to the Government Accountability Office.

Contractor Performance Database Goes Public in April

News Gnomes

A new government database that tracks contractor misconduct and performance, previously available only to federal officials, is expected to be made public by April 15, Government Executive has learned. In one of the most dramatic steps to date in shining a light on the conduct of firms that do business with the government, the General Services Administration will open its Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System — otherwise known as FAPIIS — to public scrutiny within the next three months, GSA's Senior Procurement Executive Joseph Neurauter said in an interview on Thursday.

LEGISLATION

HASC to Examine DoD Efficiency Push

Federal News Radio

Rep. Buck McKeon (R-Calif.), the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee told his members to get ready for a busy year as the panel met Thursday to adopt new rules, an oversight plan and security procedures for the new Congress. Although their first meeting dealt primarily with housekeeping matters, the committee will get down to issues next week. McKeon has scheduled a classified briefing on combat operations for Tuesday. Then, on Wednesday, the committee will hold an oversight hearing on Defense Secretary Robert Gates' budget efficiency initiative.

OPERATIONS

Nuclear Weapons Center Attains Full Operational Capability

Air Force Print News Today

The commander of the Air Force Materiel Command declared full operational capability for the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center during the change of command ceremony Jan. 20 here. The criteria to reach full operational capability, established in Air Force Program Action Directive PAD 08-06, is to be able to provide focused nuclear-sustainment oversight and standardization in support of the warfighter.



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LEADERSHIP

Pentagon Needs a Plan for Life After Gates, Advisory Board Says

The Hill

Defense Secretary Robert Gates needs to leave his successor with a game plan for keeping the Pentagon on the path to a leaner budget, a Pentagon advisory board says. Gates last year launched an internal DoD cost-cutting drive, an effort that has unearthed \$150 billion in savings so far. But since Gates began the efficiencies drive, allies and critics asked the same question: Even if it works, what happens after Gates leaves the Pentagon? With the nation facing a dire financial outlook, the influential Defense Business Board approved on Thursday a report with a few suggestions. “The ‘Houston, we have a problem’ moment is upon us,” said board member Fernando Amandi, adding the Pentagon is headed for an era of “constrained resources.”

JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

F-35 Restructuring Saves \$6.9 Bln Over 5 Years

Reuters

The Pentagon's decision to delay buying 124 Lockheed Martin Corp (LMT.N) F-35 fighters until after fiscal year 2016 saved \$6.9 billion over the coming five years, a Defense Department spokesman said on Tuesday. On Jan. 6, Defense Secretary Robert Gates overhauled the Pentagon's largest weapons program for the second time in a year, slowing a planned ramp-up in production and adding \$4.6 billion to the program's development phase. At the time, Gates said the move would result in net savings of about \$4 billion over the next five years -- after subtracting the money needed to buy 41 additional Boeing Co (BA.N) F/A-18 warplanes to offset slower F-35 production. The Pentagon's biggest arms program, the new fighter is being developed with eight international partner countries at a total cost of \$382 billion, but the program has run into schedule delays and massive cost overruns in recent years.

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Air Force Plans To Track 20,000 Pieces of Space Trash

TPM Media

Above our heads, 21,000 pieces of man-made junk uncomfortably share the orbit around our planet with satellites, space craft and space platforms. These chunks of orbital debris threaten to collide with all that equipment, potentially bringing down communications, scientific, and military satellites. But if the Air Force has its way, its Space Fence system will track the thousands of pieces of debris and give data to scientists to help them avoid collisions. This past November, the Air Force's Electronic Systems Center put out a call for proposals for developing a Space Fence that will use up to three powerful S-band radars to keep track of debris in the southern hemisphere as small as one inch in diameter. These new sensors will compliment the current United States Space Surveillance Network, whose sensors can follow objects down to ten centimeters in diameter.



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Blast Off! Tech Students' Winning Satellite to Be Launched into Orbit

Michigan Tech News

A team of Michigan Technological University students has taken first place in the prestigious University Nanosat 6 competition, earning the rare privilege of having the Department of Defense launch their custom-made satellite into orbit. The University Nanosat Program is sponsored by the Air Force Research Laboratory, which handpicked 11 university teams from dozens of applicants across the nation. Each of those 11 teams was then awarded a two-year contract to design and build a small satellite ("nanosat") to perform a mission of its choosing. The program culminated with a flight competition review, held Jan. 16-17 in Albuquerque, N.M., adjacent to Kirtland Air Force Base. By winning the competition, Michigan Tech received a contract to further develop its satellite and launch it into orbit aboard a DOD rocket.



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Small Business

HUBZone Program Faces Economic Uncertainties

By Matthew Weigelt, Federal Computer Week, January 25, 2011

Small companies in economically depressed regions have lost their priority status when it comes to set-aside contracts.

Acquisition officials are no longer required to check for companies in Historically Underutilized Business Zones before awarding a contract. Instead, they can choose to set aside a contract for any type of small business, such as those in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program.

As a result, HUBZone companies might get fewer contracts as set-asides go to more popular programs.

Congress took away the HUBZone program's priority status last year by changing the legal wording. The Small Business Jobs and Credit Act of 2010 changed the word "shall" to "may" in the language that governs HUBZone contracting. The so-called Rule of Two previously required contracting officers to award a contract to a HUBZone firm if there were at least two such companies that could offer reasonable bids on the project. By changing the requirement to an option, the government has put the HUBZone program on an equal footing with the other major set-aside programs.

There had been an ongoing debate among the Obama administration, Government Accountability Office and U.S. Court of Federal Claims about whether the "shall" actually meant "shall." Whichever interpretation officials took, the wording muddied the waters, and Congress just cleared them up.

However, the HUBZone program might now fall behind the other types of disadvantaged small businesses, such as those owned by service-disabled veterans and women, experts say.

"I believe current environmental factors at play still favor service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses," said Guy Timberlake, CEO and chief visionary officer at the American Small Business Coalition. "But the impending launch of the women's procurement program on Feb. 4 seems to have significant momentum and could be a game changer in the small-business community."

On top of all that, the HUBZone program has had a lot of bad press. Business owners have to certify that the place where the company does most of its work is in a HUBZone before they can get the designation. In 2008, GAO investigators found at least 10 businesses in the Washington, D.C., area that were not meeting that requirement. And in 2009, GAO reported more fraudulent companies in the HUBZone program.



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Clearly, agency officials weren't checking on businesses. As part of its investigation, GAO auditors successfully certified bogus companies for the HUBZone program by using the addresses of the Alamo in Texas and a public storage facility in Florida.

The fraud problems were overshadowed by the shall vs. may debate. But with that resolved, such activities will likely get more scrutiny.

"Buyers may recall that not all businesses who call themselves HUBZones are — at least according to GAO," said Larry Allen, president of Allen Federal Business Partners and former president of the Coalition for Government Procurement. Now that agencies are aware of the problem, federal officials are more likely to make sure HUBZone firms are what they say they are.

The checkups are laudable, but they could have a detrimental effect on legitimate HUBZone companies. "If [government] buyers think that it takes too much time, they may use another acquisition method," Allen said.

Thriving on its own

Meanwhile, advocates say the program is strong enough to succeed on its own merits.

Ron Newlan, chairman of the HUBZone Council advocacy group, said the program is mature enough to survive without the legal preference. "Contracting officers know about the program and have used it for years," he said. "I'm sure they're going to continue to do so."

Furthermore, the federal government's spending has increased dramatically since 2001, making the pie large enough for everyone to get their fair share, he added.

HUBZone companies received an average of 2.8 percent of federal prime-contracting dollars in fiscal 2009, which is short of the 3 percent annual goal. Still, it was a slight increase from the 2.3 percent awarded in 2008, according to the Small Business Administration's annual reports.

Although the federal acquisition workforce might be familiar with the program, many new members of Congress don't know anything about it. The HUBZone Council's leaders are developing relationships with the new lawmakers to protect the program from budget cuts. One of its strategies is highlighting HUBZone success stories.

"We have story after story about how people would not have jobs or medical insurance if not for the HUBZone program," Newlan said.

<http://fcw.com/articles/2011/01/31/home-page-acquisition-hubzone-future.aspx>



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Air Force Opening \$1 billion Medical Contract

By Marjorie Censer, The Washington Post, January 24, 2011

Contractors have advised and consulted at Air Force medical centers in the past, but they'll have to compete anew as the Air Force prepares to open a nearly \$1 billion competition that will consolidate these health care advisory services.

Seeking to be more efficient, the Air Force is launching a program worth up to \$985 million over five years to provide a host of medical advisory and consulting services, such as helping military medical centers handle their accounting, order supplies, conduct research and administer evaluations. Some of the work is expected to happen at medical center sites around the country.

In the past, the Air Force used other strategies to buy these services, such as buying through a contracting office at an individual base, but the military branch is now launching a single medical services program -- known as Air Force Medical Service Clinical Advisory/Technical Services, or CATS.

As a result, "there's no incumbent in the traditional sense," said Bryan J. Girkins, coordinator of Air Force programs at government contracting market analysis company FedSources.

The program is slated to have 10 winners, five unrestricted in size and five small businesses.

Girkins said the broad range of included services means the program is drawing a large group of interested contractors. About 350 subscribers to Input, which also analyzes the government contracting market, have indicated they're interested in pursuing the program, according to Amber Robinson, Input's Air Force analyst.

The small-business focus is one of the program's appeals, but Robinson also cited the large pool of potential users. Various Air Force commands as well as Army and Navy medical treatment facilities will be able to use the program to purchase services, she said.

The Air Force has said it plans to release the solicitation by the end of this month, said Girkins, and awards could then be made in July.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/21/AR2011012106163.html>



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WPAFB's \$82.5M Decision Awaited

By John Nolan, Dayton Daily News, January 22, 2011

Base officials could decide as soon as late February which company will win a new contract potentially worth \$82.5 million to handle Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's construction projects.

The decision rests with the base's operational contracting unit. It may also take the Air Force several additional months to decide the competition and award the contract, depending on the base's needs. The contract could run up to 5½ years.

Bids for the contract were to have been submitted Thursday. The government keeps confidential the bids and the companies that submit them.

The contract would succeed a \$10 million contract awarded in July 2010 to a joint venture of Daytep Inc., a Dayton construction company, and Custom Mechanical Systems Corp., of Bargersville, Ind., a minority-owned small business. The Air Force has already spent at least \$5.18 million against that contract, which would expire this summer.

Wright-Patterson solicits bids for these contracts through a Small Business Administration set-aside program restricting the bids to those from small, economically disadvantaged companies. Daytep, a subcontractor on a prior Wright-Patterson infrastructure contract, teamed with CMS to win the current contract.

The contracts cover construction and renovation projects at Wright-Patterson, home of almost 800 buildings and 27,000 employees.

Base officials awarded the current one-year contract to succeed a five-year pact awarded to Arctic Pipe & Materials (APM) LLC. The APM contract approached its \$60 million limit more than two years early, swelled by stimulus-funded projects added to the contract assignments starting in 2009.

Air Force headquarters has since barred APM from pursuing any new contracts with the government until 2013. The Air Force said California-based APM misrepresented itself in order to improperly receive contracts through the small-business set-aside program.

A federal investigation of these allegations involving APM and other companies is continuing.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/business/wpafbs-82-5m-decision-awaited--1060848.html>



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House Committee to Review SBA's Management

By Matthew Weigelt, Federal Computer Week, January 24, 2011

The Small Business Administration can expect to undergo in-depth, strategic reviews of its operations along with potential deep cuts throughout during the next two years, according to Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), the new chairman of the House Small Business Committee.

Graves is looking for offices and programs that may duplicate each other while not helping small businesses or protecting the government from fraud, according to a letter released today that lists the areas in which the committee will host hearings in the next two years. The committee is scheduled to hold an organizational hearing Jan. 26.

“The committee will focus particularly on streamlining and reorganizing of the agency’s operations to provide maximum assistance to small-business owners,” according to the letter.

In the same way as other House Republican leaders, Graves wants to reduce what he calls unnecessary spending and programming. He intends to recommend eliminating offices that assist officials in SBA’s headquarters but that don’t promote small businesses’ interests or protect the government. For example, the committee noted a few specific areas, such as SBA’s Office of Policy, its regional administrators, and the Office of Advocacy’s regional advocates. The small-business lending fund and loan programs may also face an uncertain future.

“In particular, the committee will assess whether the reorganization and realignment of employees to more critical functions at the SBA, such as positions as procurement center representatives, will provide a more effective agency,” Graves wrote.

The SBA has wrestled with major abuses to its small-business programs, such as those supporting companies in Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones) and service-disabled veteran business owners. After a hearing in July, Graves said the SBA may need an overhaul because officials had not aggressively dealt with those abuses.

SBA “spends scarce resources studying these problems,” Graves said in July. “The SBA does not need any more studies. It needs action.”

The HUBZone and service-disabled veteran programs will continue to get attention from the committee in this Congress as officials attempt to weed out fraud. Numerous fake companies have been certified into these special categories of small business, which allows them the chance to compete for set-aside contracts.



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Overall government contracting issues are another area Graves wants to look into. He wants to see whether fraud and abuses still exist in the programs, but also whether the programs are actually helping more small businesses get involved in the federal marketplace. He also plans to check on other agencies' small-business assistance offices, including the offices of small and disadvantaged business utilization.

Graves will look at whether the government saves money by outsourcing federal services to private companies rather than expanding government to provide them internally.

<http://fcw.com/articles/2011/01/24/house-small-business-committee-hot-topics-2011.aspx>

28-Year-Old SBA Policy Restricts Small Business

By Mark Sunshine, The Huffington Post, January 25, 2011

It's tough to explain why the Small Business Administration favors banks over non-banks in its flagship SBA 7(a) loan program. For the last 28 years, the SBA has refused to license a single new non-bank lender and has restricted the ability of existing non-bank 7(a) lenders to finance their portfolios.

Since 1982, the SBA has been working to solve its 1970s operational problems by limiting the number of non-bank 7(a) licenses at 14. This Reagan Administration era policy was adopted in response to perceived poor management and high losses of the SBA during the preceding Carter Administration. Oddly, the SBA and its Congressional overseers haven't seriously considered whether a restricted access policy still makes sense.

So while non-banks can't become licensed 7(a) lenders, literally thousands of banks only need to fill out a few forms to get into the program.

The SBA 7(a) program is the most popular source of SBA backed loans and liquidity and according to Karen Mills, the SBA Administrator, the most important program that the SBA runs. Through the 7(a) program, the SBA provides 90% loan guarantees on loans up to \$5 million in size and delivers liquidity to thousands of businesses that might otherwise be frozen out of the lending markets.

The SBA 7(a) program is a great way for sick banks to be able to make loans but is only marginally useful for healthy banks. Healthy banks don't need the SBA 7(a) program to lend money to small business because they don't need the liquidity that the SBA guarantee provides and they have plenty of capital to support their loan portfolios.

On the other hand, unhealthy banks make a lot of SBA 7(a) loans because the program solves two problems for weak institutions, a lack of capital and liquidity. Banks can both reduce their equity requirement and raise



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liquidity by selling the government guaranteed portion of newly originated SBA 7(a) loans into the secondary markets.

The SBA 7(a) program should be generating massive interest from healthy non-bank lenders which could get a lot of liquidity in the hands of small business owners.

Non-bank lenders don't have the advantage of funding through insured deposits and the SBA 7(a) program should largely eliminate that disadvantage.

But, instead of being able to manage funding without interference from the SBA, current non-bank lenders must get SBA permission before using their SBA 7(a) loans for liquidity. The SBA regulatory process for the 14 existing non-bank lenders is generally perceived to be cumbersome and slow and takes away most of the advantage of being a SBA 7(a) lender.

As a result, since 1982, the SBA has been hitting non-bank lenders with a one-two punch. They have refused to license new lenders and have rationed liquidity for existing lenders.

How could it possibly be a good idea for the SBA to continue to prevent healthy, well capitalized and well managed non-banks from participating in the 7(a) program while being the back door bailout of choice for weak and failing depository institutions? Especially in light of the Obama Administration emphasis on job creation through the growth of small business and bi-partisan support for the small business sector of our economy.

Now is the time for the SBA and its Congressional oversight committee to ditch the 28-year-old restricted access policy and instead bring all healthy lenders into its flagship 7(a) program.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-sunshine/28-year-old-sba-policy-re_b_813398.html

Obama Portrays Small Business Owner as Man Who Did 'Big Things'

CNN, January 25, 2011

Brandon Fisher has tried to avoid the publicity that comes with playing a key role in two of the last decade's biggest mine rescues.

But when the President of the United States wants to mention you in his State of the Union speech, and the first lady invites you to sit with her, there's really no way to decline.

SAF/SB internal document—not for public release.



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And so, Fisher donned a suit and tie and showed up with his wife, Julie, as guests in Michelle Obama's box during President Barack Obama's second State of the Union address to the nation.

In the eyes of the President, the small business owner from Berlin, Pennsylvania, was not just an honored guest of the evening. He was a symbol of the American dream – alongside Vice President Joe Biden, "a working class kid from Scranton" and Speaker of the House John Boehner, "who began by sweeping the floors of his father's Cincinnati bar" - someone of modest means who would go on to "do big things," Obama said.

"We may have different opinions, but we believe in the same promise that says this is a place where you can make it if you try. We may have different backgrounds, but we believe in the same dream that says this is a country where anything's possible. No matter who you are. No matter where you come from. That dream is why I can stand here before you tonight," he said.

"And that dream is the story of a small business owner named Brandon Fisher."

Fisher's business, which specializes in drilling technology, is based in the heart of Pennsylvania's mining country. His company, Center Rock Inc., aided in the rescue of nine miners who were trapped for more than four days after the 2002 collapse of the Quecreek Mine. He has drilled oil, gas and water holes and the foundations for the Trump Tower in Chicago, Illinois.

But those assignments paled in comparison to the difficulties of rescuing 33 men in Chile who became trapped August 5 when a copper and gold mine they were working in collapsed around them.

Fisher became involved in the rescue effort when the company that distributes his custom-made drills in Chile put the Chilean government in touch with him. Eventually Fisher's drill bits widened the hole leading to the miners to a size that allowed them to be extracted from underground one at a time in a specially designed cage.

Fisher's wife, Julie, also spent 37 days in Chile working to drill the mine shaft.

By the time the actual rescue commenced, Fisher was already home in Pennsylvania, working on his next project, Obama said.

"Later, one of his employees said of the rescue, 'We proved that Center Rock is a little company, but we do big things.'

"From the earliest days of our founding, America has been the story of ordinary people who dare to dream. That's how we win the future. We are a nation that says, 'I might not have a lot of money, but I have this great idea for a new company. I might not come from a family of college graduates, but I will be the first to get my



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degree. I might not know those people in trouble, but I think I can help them, and I need to try. I'm not sure how we'll reach that better place beyond the horizon, but I know we'll get there. I know we will.

"We do big things."

<http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2011/01/25/obama-portrays-small-business-owner-as-man-who-did-big-things/>

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ADCF Leveraging Co-Patented Technology and Military R&D for Defense and Commercial Product Applications

Stock Markets Review, January 20, 2011

Advanced Defense Technologies, Inc. (PINKSHEETS: ADCF), a developer of breakthrough technologies for military defense, homeland security and commercial communications systems announced today that it is using its co-patented technology and military R&D for the development of defense and commercial product applications. ADTI's technology has been refined and enhanced by Phase I projects and two Phase II projects with the US Air Force and the US Army.

Advanced Defense's co-patented technology has been enhanced over the years by many Phase I projects and two Phase II projects -- one each for the Air Force and the Army. The US Navy and the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA) have also commissioned Phase I projects.

The applications for this technology have been focused on military defense systems; specifically in the areas of advanced radar and communications. Other important applications include homeland defense for use in large-scale perimeter surveillance, multi-point communications and monitoring the critical infrastructure.

Commercial applications for the ADCF technology include the replacement of horn and dish antennas, interactive television, on-demand telecommunications, and PC phone systems.

<http://www.stockmarketsreview.com/news/91121/>



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New Hampshire Business Review, January 26, 2011

The outcome was no great surprise, but a key technology grant program of the U.S. Small Business Administration has been given another short lease on life. The U.S. House Committee on Small Business has passed a resolution granting the Small Business Innovation and Research, or SBIR, program another stopgap extension through May 31, in the hopes a more permanent bill can be hammered out by the full Congress by then.

While it is still technically possible funding could be allowed to sunset, the bill is being sent to the Senate Committee for Business and Entrepreneurship, where it is expected to pass without much incident, and then on to President Obama for his signature by the end of the week.

Without the short extension, the program, along with similar programs such as the Small Business Technical Transfer, or STTR, program would lose funding as of Jan. 31.

The key sticking point between Senate and House versions of the SBIR reauthorization bill has been the percentage of venture ownership allowed for firms seeking grants. The House favors a slightly larger VC ownership percentage -- up to 51 percent VC-owned -- than the Senate.

According to the office of New Hampshire U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen - who sits on the Senate Committee for Business and Entrepreneurship and who has been a vocal supporter of the SBIR program -- New Hampshire firms received 80 total awards totaling \$26 million in grants in the last two years.

<http://www.nhbr.com/businessnewsstatenews/906594-257/pgtsbir-extended-through-may.html>

Budget & Acquisition

U.S.A.F. Space + Missile Systems Center... Studies For The Future (MILSATCOM)

SatNews, January 24, 2011

The BAA, officially designated "SMC-32, Broad Agency Announcement: MILSATCOM Commercial Architecture Options," will study the feasibility of using minimally modified commercial satellite communication products



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and capabilities to meet future MILSATCOM requirements operating in military frequencies. These studies will inform an upcoming Joint Space Communications Layer Materiel Solutions Analysis phase, which is likely to begin in CY2011. The MSA phase of DoD acquisition seeks to assess the broad spectrum of candidate solutions to meet Initial Capabilities Document requirements validated by the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. The JROC approved the JSCL ICD in September 2010 and DoD is preparing to evaluate the range of options to meet future warfighting communications needs.

These MILSATCOM Commercial Architecture Options studies will complement SMC's on-going feasibility studies to develop the future DoD SATCOM architecture. The importance of these BAA studies is not only towards what set of MILSATCOM requirements can be met by minimally modified commercial systems, but also what are the range of feasible "commercial-like" acquisition approaches that are suitable to procure such a system. Toward this end, the BAA studies will assess the application of innovative and feasible commercial-like acquisition approaches to enhance affordability, reduce delivery time, and expand the space industrial base. SMC has negotiated four, 6-month study contracts with Intelsat General Corporation, Space Systems/Loral, Orbital Sciences Corporation, and The Boeing Company. SMC expects to announce a second set of awards by the end of January 2011.

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<http://www.satnews.com/cgi-bin/story.cgi?number=686580214>



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Obama War Request Cuts DoD Budget by 26 Percent

Federal News Radio, January 21, 2011

The Obama administration wants to cut another 26 percent out of this year's war budget by reducing the number of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Pentagon officials tell Bloomberg News that the administration will cut the Pentagon's war budget by \$42 billion. That translates into a proposed \$117 billion war budget for fiscal 2012. That would mark the lowest expenditure for the wars since fiscal 2005.

Defense budget analysts say the decrease reflects the President's plan to reduce troop levels in the war zones - as well as stricter White House rules on what costs can be included in the war budget. They reportedly say it also probably means the Administration wants to start reducing troops levels in Afghanistan during fiscal 2012.

<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/index.php?nid=150&sid=2243417>

In New Round of Budget Talks, Defense Spending Not Safe

Federal News Radio, January 24, 2011

Lawmakers are showing a greater appetite for cutting federal programs - even defense spending - as they ramp up for the next round of budget talks.

Many new members of Congress ran on platforms that stressed cutting government spending, and that could include defense spending, MSNBC reports. And many of them argue that the \$78 billion in defense budget cuts proposed by Secretary Robert Gates is not enough. The new majority leader in the House, Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.) has repeatedly said that defense programs will be considered for cuts alongside other programs.

So in the House at least everything is apparently on the cutting board as the U.S. wrestles with a \$1.3 trillion deficit.

Cutting defense programs is something a majority in both chambers have resisted in the past. For example, in their Pledge to America campaign last fall, Republican leaders in the House specifically did not include any cuts in defense, homeland security or veterans' programs.

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The defense cuts and savings proposed by Secretary Gates would amount to \$13 billion less than the Pentagon wanted to spend in the coming year. But it still stands as 3 percent growth after inflation.

<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=150&sid=2246574>

Industry

DOD Struggles to Count Contractors, GAO reports

By Matthew Weigelt, Federal Computer Week, January 20, 2011

As Congress seeks more information on the Defense Department's service contracts, the DOD officials have to figure out how to accurately determine the number of private-sector employees doing the work, according to a report released this week.

The defense agencies differ in their approaches to reviewing the work performed by contractors and the extent to which they use the inventories to make workforce decisions, according to the Government Accountability Office.

An inventory of service contracts can help DOD officials make decisions about insourcing and their reliance on contractors if it can give an honest assessment.

"At this point, the absence of a way forward hinders the achievement of this objective," the GAO wrote.

GAO officials recommended that DOD draw up a plan on how officials will gather data on manpower. More immediately, DOD should improve how it estimates the number of workers. Defense officials agreed with the recommendations.

DOD relies heavily on contractors to carry out its work, even to the point of supporting core missions. Officials are worried that the government is put at risk if contractors handle key functions. In 2008, Congress told DOD to compile an inventory of service contracts, which includes the number of contractor employees that are working on these contracts and the work they perform.

In November, defense officials released their fiscal 2009 report, a 9,118-page inventory.

Recently, the undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics gave an interim approach for measuring contractor employees that is similar to that of the Army, which is more advanced than other



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services in gathering data. The undersecretary hasn't issued new guidance, even though officials said they would release some by August 2010.

<http://fcw.com/articles/2011/01/20/gao-dod-service-contract-inventory.aspx>

Contractor Performance Database Goes Public in April

News Gnomes, January 23, 2011

A new government database that tracks contractor misconduct and performance, previously available only to federal officials, is expected to be made public by April 15, Government Executive has learned.

In one of the most dramatic steps to date in shining a light on the conduct of firms that do business with the government, the General Services Administration will open its Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System — otherwise known as FAPIIS — to public scrutiny within the next three months, GSA's Senior Procurement Executive Joseph Neurauter said in an interview on Thursday.

A provision in the wartime supplemental appropriations bill, sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and signed into law by President Obama in July 2010, mandated that GSA disclose on a public website all information in FAPIIS, with the exception of past performance evaluations.

The bill did not provide a deadline for publicizing the information, which now is accessible only to a handful of government officials, lawmakers and contractors that are listed in the database.

"This is a good thing because it gives more transparency," said Neurauter, who also serves as GSA's suspension and debarment official. "That's really what we are about. The more information that you can legally and within reason make available to the public, the better."

FAPIIS, used by federal contracting officials since April, culls information dating back five years from a number of disparate federal databases and government records.

The database includes criminal, civil and administrative proceedings against suppliers in connection with federal awards; past performance evaluations; records of suspensions and debarments; administrative agreements issued in lieu of suspension or debarment; nonresponsibility determinations; contracts that were terminated for fault and defective price determinations.

And in a new development, the database also will include instances when a company's behavior might have put its employees in harm's way.



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A provision in the fiscal 2011 Defense Authorization Act requires department contracting officials to publicly disclose cases when a procurement official denied or reduced a contractor's award fee because of a company's reckless or negligent behavior. The database also will include a determination of fault by Defense Department leadership.

For contracts above the simplified acquisition threshold of \$150,000, federal contracting and grant officers are required to check FAPIIS before making a responsibility determination. The new public site, Neurauter said, will be searchable and user-friendly.

While much of the information available in FAPIIS is already publicly available on myriad federal websites, the data has never before been comprehensively assembled for public viewing.

On Monday, Jan. 24, an interim rule is expected to be published in the Federal Register informing the contractor community that FAPIIS data soon will be made public, Neurauter said. The public will have 60 days to comment on the notice. But contractor officials already are raising concerns that opening the database to the public could jeopardize the integrity of the acquisition process and potentially risk the disclosure of private information.

"Making this data public opens the door to all kinds of misperceptions, misunderstandings and even mischief," said Stan Soloway, president of the Professional Services Council, an industry trade association.

GSA officials are aware of industry's concerns and are taking steps to redact data prohibited by the 1974 Privacy Act or that concerns a contractor's proprietary information. Other information also could be withheld based on pending litigation, according to Neurauter.

"We can't mindlessly put things in there," he said. "We have to give it thought and consideration and understand there is a balance of competing regulatory and statutory interests that we have to be mindful of."

Soloway, however, is concerned that the administration has yet to develop governmentwide business rules spelling out how contracting officials should use the information in FAPIIS. For example, the government has not provided guidance to procurement officials regarding how much weight a years-old tax discrepancy or equal employment violation should have in a company's post-award responsibility determination.

"We are looking for clarity on how this information is going to be used," Soloway said.

The Federal Acquisition Institute has developed a tutorial detailing the purpose of FAPIIS and the types of data it will include. The site is available at <http://www.fai.gov/FAPIIS/trailer/module.htm>.

<http://news.gnom.es/public-policy/contractor-performance-database-goes-public-in-april>



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Legislation

HASC to Examine DoD Efficiency Push

By Jared Serbu, Federal News Radio, January 20, 2011

Rep. Buck McKeon (R-Calif.), the new chairman of the House Armed Services Committee told his members to get ready for a busy year as the panel met Thursday to adopt new rules, an oversight plan and security procedures for the new Congress.

Although their first meeting dealt primarily with housekeeping matters, the committee will get down to issues next week. McKeon has scheduled a classified briefing on combat operations for Tuesday. Then, on Wednesday, the committee will hold an oversight hearing on Defense Secretary Robert Gates' budget efficiency initiative. It was unclear whether Gates himself would testify at the hearing. A committee spokesman said staff was still in talks with DoD to determine the witness lineup.

McKeon has already signaled his displeasure with some of the changes Gates has announced, particularly the plan to decrease the permanent size of the Army and the Marine Corps.

"I'm not happy," he said in statement following Gates' announcement. "These cuts are being made without any commitment to restore modest future growth, which is the only way to prevent deep reductions in force structure that will leave our military less capable and less ready to fight. This is a dramatic shift for a nation at war and a dangerous signal from the Commander in Chief."

The oversight plan adopted Thursday says the committee as a whole finds the proposed cuts "deeply troubling," and promises close scrutiny of any proposal involving manpower reductions.

The committee's oversight plan also promises to review changes in the structure of the office of the Secretary of Defense, as well as DoD's progress on implementing the Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness plan. The committee's plan states Gates' efficiency effort lacks credibility if the department cannot produce audit-ready financial statements.

The committee updated its rules to mirror the broader House rules on transparency, such as making bills and other documents publicly available prior to hearings. The new rules also alter the names and shuffle the jurisdictions of a few subcommittees. The intention is to have the panels oversee DoD missions as opposed to individual armed services.



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The Subcommittee on Air and Land Forces is now the Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, chaired by Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-Md.). It will have jurisdiction over Army, Air Force and Marine Corps acquisition programs, except for Marine amphibious assault vehicle programs, space, strategic lift, strategic missiles, long-range strike and information technology. The panel will also inherit all tactical aviation programs across all the armed services. The Seapower and Expeditionary Forces subcommittee will become the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces. It and its chairman, Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.) will take on Navy acquisition programs, Marines amphibious assault, seaborne unmanned aerial strike and deep strike bombers, and strategic lift programs.

The Terrorism and Unconventional Threats and Capabilities subcommittee becomes the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. Its jurisdiction remains essentially unchanged - but it will oversee all science and technology programs, rather than only Defense Advanced Research Programs Agency activities. Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tx.) is the panel's new chairman.

McKeon's office released a full list of the new subcommittees and their members on Thursday afternoon.

As the committee implements its oversight plan, both McKeon and ranking Democrat Adam Smith (D-Wash.) are promising they will do their work free from party politics.

"This is probably the most bipartisan committee in Congress," Smith said Thursday. "Without question there will be things we disagree on, but the overwhelming majority of the time we will be working together to help the men and women who are serving in our armed forces."

In that spirit, McKeon and Smith are planning to take road trips together over the coming year to visit military bases in one another's' districts.

<http://www.federalnewsradio.com/?nid=35&sid=2242375>

Operations

Nuclear Weapons Center Attains Full Operational Capability

Air Force Print News Today, January 25, 2011

The commander of the Air Force Materiel Command declared full operational capability for the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center during the change of command ceremony Jan. 20 here.



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Gen. Donald Hoffman, the AFMC commander, spoke about the center's growth and said the center was the "single bellybutton for the Air Force in sustainment and assurance that our nuclear weapons are safe, secure and effective."

The criteria to reach full operational capability, established in Air Force Program Action Directive PAD 08-06, is to be able to provide focused nuclear-sustainment oversight and standardization in support of the warfighter.

"I know this designation was based on the hard work of the past two years under Brig. Gen. Thomas to grow expertise, document processes, and conduct training." said Brig. Gen. Garrett Harencak, the AFNWC commander.

The AFNWC staff members accomplished several major milestones prior to being declared FOC, including increasing and stabilizing weapon storage area production; completing several rounds of nuclear surety inspections; creating roadmaps and developing strong partnerships with nuclear stakeholders; and integrating the staff and unit into one focused team, fully embracing a culture of continuous improvement.

"General Hoffman has declared us (full operational capability), an incredible achievement across the nuclear enterprise, and I look forward to working with each and everyone of you as we continue to build on this success," General Harencak said.

<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123239610>

Leadership

Pentagon Needs a Plan for Life After Gates, Advisory Board Says

By John T. Bennett, The Hill, January 20, 2011

Defense Secretary Robert Gates needs to leave his successor with a game plan for keeping the Pentagon on the path to a leaner budget, a Pentagon advisory board says.

Gates last year launched an internal DoD cost-cutting drive, an effort that has unearthed \$150 billion in savings so far.

But since Gates began the efficiencies drive, allies and critics asked the same question: Even if it works, what happens after Gates leaves the Pentagon?

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With the nation facing a dire financial outlook, the influential Defense Business Board approved on Thursday a report with a few suggestions.

“The ‘Houston, we have a problem’ moment is upon us,” said board member Fernando Amandi, adding the Pentagon is headed for an era of “constrained resources.”

That means, as senior defense officials are stressing, the DoD will need to wring out savings annually from within and transfer those monies to projects like next-generation vehicles, aircraft and ships, board members said during a meeting at the Pentagon.

The board will recommend to Gates that he leave for the next defense secretary a “governance process ... around every transformation initiative taking place or scheduled,” states the report, approved unanimously.

Without such a process waiting for the next Pentagon leadership group, “we won’t be able to build on the efficiencies initiative,” said Amandi, who led the group that crafted the DBB report. He also has been a senior executive with corporations such as American Express and Motorola.

“A well-led and planned institutional cultural change process is essential to consolidate, build on, and sustain this efficiency objective,” states the report.

The board, which is largely credited with hatching the idea to shutter U.S. Joint Forces Command, also suggests the defense secretary designate a single DoD official to oversee all efforts designed to change how the department does business.

As of now, the deputy defense secretary is the Pentagon’s acting chief management officer. Several board members expressed concern with that arrangement, saying that position has too many other responsibilities. The board recommended that the Pentagon consider making another senior official the chief management officer.

The panel also suggested creating a new program office within DoD to oversee all efforts aimed at altering how it does business.

Such moves would allow the defense secretary and deputy secretary to improve their personal relationships with Congress and industry, as well as other federal agencies, according to the board.

Meanwhile, the DBB also announced it will restart a study into whether the military could reap savings if it started hedging fuel purchases.



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Large companies like airlines do this by entering into long-term fuel contracts, assuming future fuel prices will be higher.

The business board tried this before in recent years, but that effort “was a failure,” declared DBB member Denis Bovin, who also is an executive with an investment banking firm.

That extinguished study was halted, Bovin said, because other federal agencies loudly objected to even exploring the idea. He said the White House Office of Management told the board “there’s no need to hedge fuel prices because the U.S. government owns huge stocks.”

But now that there is evidence hedging would have produced savings, Bovin said a DBB study team will examine the idea again.

The U.S. military is the federal government’s largest fuel consumer. Business board members said the Pentagon buys about as much jet fuel each year as a major airline.

<http://thehill.com/news-by-subject/defense-homeland-security/139171-pentagon-needs-a-plan-for-life-after-gates-board-says>

Joint Strike Fighter

F-35 Restructuring Saves \$6.9 Bln Over 5 Years

By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters, January 25, 2011

The Pentagon's decision to delay buying 124 Lockheed Martin Corp (LMT.N) F-35 fighters until after fiscal year 2016 saved \$6.9 billion over the coming five years, a Defense Department spokesman said on Tuesday.

On Jan. 6, Defense Secretary Robert Gates overhauled the Pentagon's largest weapons program for the second time in a year, slowing a planned ramp-up in production and adding \$4.6 billion to the program's development phase.

At the time, Gates said the move would result in net savings of about \$4 billion over the next five years -- after subtracting the money needed to buy 41 additional Boeing Co (BA.N) F/A-18 warplanes to offset slower F-35 production.



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The Pentagon's biggest arms program, the new fighter is being developed with eight international partner countries at a total cost of \$382 billion, but the program has run into schedule delays and massive cost overruns in recent years.

Joe DellaVedova, the Pentagon's F-35 spokesman, provided additional details, including the \$6.9 billion savings figure on Tuesday.

He said the \$4.6 billion added to the development phase would be used to improve the propulsion system of the Marine Corps variant of the F-35, including the lift fan that gives it short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) capability.

The system of doors used to operate the propulsion lift system would also likely need a redesign to improve its durability, he said.

He said some of the money would also be used for training and to upgrade the pilot-vehicle interface.

Some money had also been set aside to address "unknown items that may be discovered in developmental flight test," DellaVedova said in an emailed statement answering questions.

He said those estimates would be refined as part of an integrated baseline review to be conducted this fall.

The Pentagon estimated earlier this month that it would cost \$13.8 billion to finish the development phase of the F-35 fighter, on top of the \$37 billion spent to date.

DellaVedova said development of the Air Force and Navy versions of the F-35 would be extended by 10 months until the first quarter of 2016, while 20 months would be added to the development of the Marine Corps variant.

A detailed schedule laying out development and operational testing would be available later this year, he said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN254694620110126>



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Research and Technology

Air Force Plans To Track 20,000 Pieces of Space Trash

By Alex Sciuto, TPM Media, January 25, 2011

Above our heads, 21,000 pieces of man-made junk uncomfortably share the orbit around our planet with satellites, space craft and space platforms. These chunks of orbital debris threaten to collide with all that equipment, potentially bringing down communications, scientific, and military satellites. But if the Air Force has its way, its Space Fence system will track the thousands of pieces of debris and give data to scientists to help them avoid collisions.

This past November, the Air Force's Electronic Systems Center put out a call for proposals for developing a Space Fence that will use up to three powerful S-band radars to keep track of debris in the southern hemisphere as small as one inch in diameter. These new sensors will compliment the current United States Space Surveillance Network, whose sensors can follow objects down to ten centimeters in diameter.

Orbital debris is everything sent up in space ships that does not return either in the rocket or through gradual reentry into the atmosphere. According to NASA's Orbital Debris Program website, orbital debris can be derelict spacecraft, intentionally released materials, solid rocket waste, and "tiny flecks of paint released by thermal stress or small particle impacts." Lower orbit debris that is nearer to the atmosphere may circle the Earth for a few years, but higher orbit debris can stay aloft for centuries.

The Air Force's current call for proposals is worth up to a total of \$214 million for up to two contracts. The contract or contracts will last 18 months and will include preliminary system designs, radar performance tests, and finally actual prototypes. The Air Force estimates that producing the final Space Fence will cost around \$3.5 billion dollars. It is scheduled to be operational by 2015.

In 2009, Raytheon Company, Northrop Grumman, and Lockheed Martin completed \$30 million worth of studies into the viability of a space fence. In November, Lockheed and Raytheon submitted bids for one of the two \$214 million contracts. A Northrop Grumman spokesperson told TPM that they did not plan on bidding.

Chip Eschenfelder, a spokesperson for Lockheed Martin's Radar Systems operations, said he believed that Lockheed's history of S-band research would help it produce the final Space Fence. "Lockheed Martin is the world leader in S-band radar development. We have helped outfit over one hundred warships with S-Band radar," Eschenfelder said. Lockheed Martin has over 400 S-band arrays currently in operation worldwide. You can see Lockheed Martin's Space Fence website here, and their promotional video embedded at the end of the article.



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"These new Space Fence radars will be so precise that they will be able to track an orbiting basketball-size thing traveling at 17,000 miles per hour orbiting the earth," Eschenfelder said.

Scientists have been warning about the dangers of space debris since the 1970s. But in the last ten years, says Nicholas Johnson (NASA's Chief Scientist for Orbital Debris), areas of space have reached a critical density of space debris. At low levels of debris, debris naturally is removed by being pulled into the Earth's atmosphere and burning up. But at higher levels, as debris collides with other debris, more pieces of debris are produced than are filtered out by the atmosphere.

This cascading effect has been exacerbated by recent high profile space collisions. On February 10, 2009 a Russian satellite and an Iridium Communications satellite collided over Siberia. The two satellites collided at 26,170 mph and produced over 1,500 new pieces of debris. In 2007, China also successfully tested an anti-satellite rocket that produced an additional 800-1,000 pieces of debris.

Wouldn't it make more sense to just remove the pieces of debris instead of spending billions to track it? "That is the sixty-four thousand dollar question," says NASA's Johnson. "We've been looking at that problem for several decades. We're still trying to develop a way forward on what technologies and concepts might be the most attractive, but we're years away from beginning to remove debris."

President Obama's National Space Policy published (PDF) this past June, pledged as one of its goal to begin researching ways to remove space debris. "The United States shall ... Pursue research and development of technologies and techniques ... to mitigate and remove on-orbit debris, reduce hazards, and increase understanding of the current and future debris environment."

<http://tpmlivewire.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/01/air-force-looking-to-track-20000-pieces-of-space-trash.php>

Blast Off! Tech Students' Winning Satellite to Be Launched into Orbit

By Marcia Goodrich, Michigan Tech News, January 20, 2011

A team of Michigan Technological University students has taken first place in the prestigious University Nanosat 6 competition, earning the rare privilege of having the Department of Defense launch their custom-made satellite into orbit.

The University Nanosat Program is sponsored by the Air Force Research Laboratory, which handpicked 11 university teams from dozens of applicants across the nation. Each of those 11 teams was then awarded a



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two-year contract to design and build a small satellite (“nanosat”) to perform a mission of its choosing. The program culminated with a flight competition review, held Jan. 16-17 in Albuquerque, N.M., adjacent to Kirtland Air Force Base. By winning the competition, Michigan Tech received a contract to further develop its satellite and launch it into orbit aboard a DOD rocket.

“This is a major accomplishment by our students,” said William Predebon, chair of the University’s Department of Mechanical Engineering-Engineering Mechanics. “It’s just fantastic.”

Built by students in the Aerospace Enterprise, Michigan Tech’s entry is called Oculus-ASR, for its role as an orbiting eye and for its ability to assist scientists on the ground with satellite attitude and shape recognition—more on that later. The 154-pound satellite was engineered to help in a Department of Defense effort.

“The DOD wants to know what’s orbiting the Earth, who owns it, what it’s doing, and what it might do in the future,” said team advisor L. Brad King, an associate professor of mechanical engineering-engineering mechanics.

Unfortunately, unless you use an extremely powerful telescope, it’s hard to tell much about satellites from the surface of the Earth. For the most part, they look like nondescript dots of white light drifting overhead. Yet, those dots actually provide lots of information that scientists can use to recognize a satellite’s attitude—its orientation in space—and its shape. The trick lies in analyzing that information, and Oculus was designed to help the Air Force do just that.

“In general, our role will be to calibrate their telescopes,” said King, by providing different views of the satellite for the air force to look at and by releasing targets, which both Oculus and air force scientists on the ground can photograph. “It’s a very capable little vehicle. There’s a lot packed into it.”

That functionality is a big reason Oculus won Nanosat 6. “Nobody wants to spend a million dollars to put a beeping university mascot into orbit,” King observed. “One of our strengths was our vehicle’s relevance to the DOD, the fact that it was doing meaningful science.”

Nanosat is exceptionally grueling for a college competition. “Reviewers come from all over government and industry, and they don’t take it easy on the teams,” he said. “If they see a flaw or have a question, they unload both barrels on the students and make them defend their design. They were expected to satisfy all the requirements of any satellite the air force launches.”

Above all, Nanosat teaches students about engineering design, he said. “They discover that design is really about accountability, proving that your design works and vigorously testing it. That’s where we excelled,” King said. “Our students also know how to build things, know how to do hands-on design, and that was an advantage.”



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Winning Nanosat 6 wasn't quite like a Super Bowl victory. "You get this fantastic news, but it comes on the back of a five-day effort, with the students working day and night," he said. Because the contest is so stressful, "it's hard to tell if they felt exhilaration or release."

King counseled the team members to accept their victory with quiet grace, but with limited success. "I told them, 'You get to the end zone, act like you've been there before.'" Restraint, however, was too much to ask of at least one student. "He said later, 'I don't care what you say, I'm dancing.'"

For more on the science behind Oculus, see the story in Michigan Tech's employee newsletter, Tech Today.

<http://www.mtu.edu/news/stories/2011/january/story36271.html>