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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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August 1, 2012

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LAWRENCE J. BRADY  
STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1400 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1400

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is conducting oversight of the Army's use of the Distributed Common Ground System-Army (DCGS-A). As part of this oversight, we are writing to request documents and information relating to the findings made in both the April 25, 2012, and May 25, 2012, Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) Forward Operational Assessment Reports (FOAR) for the Palantir System.

Through FY 2012, the Army has spent over \$2.3 billion in procurement and research and development to fund DCGS-A.<sup>1</sup> Reports indicate, however, that DCGS-A is "unable to perform simple analytical tasks."<sup>2</sup> More specifically, users have expressed that DCGS-A does "not provide intuitive capabilities to see the relationships between a wide variety of disparate sets of information."<sup>3</sup>

### **Field Commanders and Members of Congress Repeatedly Voiced Concerns about DCGS-A**

According to information received by the Committee, commanders in theater submitted multiple requests for a more robust system. For example, in a Joint Urgent Operational Need Statement (JUONS) dated July 2, 2010, Major General Michael Flynn requested a "theater-wide web-based advanced analytical platform to store, organize, access, retrieve and enable full understanding of intelligence and information from

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army, Army Financial Management Budget Materials, <http://www.asafm.army.mil/offices/BU/BudgetMat.aspx?OfficeCode=1200>.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Hoskinson, *Army's Faulty Computer System Hurts Operations*, POLITICO, June 29, 2011, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0611/58051.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum from Michael T. Flynn, Major General, U.S. Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence to Deputy Commanding General for Support, USFOR-A, (July 2, 2010) 1 available at [http://www.politico.com/static/PPM223\\_110629\\_flynn.html](http://www.politico.com/static/PPM223_110629_flynn.html).

multiple disparate data sets.”<sup>4</sup> Further, the JUONS stated that, “The enemy is able to take advantage of his ability to hide in plain sight in the population because we have been unable to fully exploit the information/intelligence we already have.”<sup>5</sup>

An August 25, 2010, Congressional letter also noted deficiencies in the DCGS-A platform. In that letter, Members of Congress further specified a major concern that “a DCGS-A cloud-based system will not provide the necessary real time computing capabilities to access necessary data and upload actionable intelligence while on the move.”<sup>6</sup>

In November 2011, the 82nd Airborne Division in Kandahar Air Field formally requested the Palantir System through the Army’s Rapid Equipping Force (REF). The 82nd Airborne’s request stated that, “Solving very hard analytical problems takes several days when using existing tools against these data sources. In our experience in using the Palantir platform against the same problems, we were able to reduce this time to a few hours. This shortfall translates into operational opportunities missed and unnecessary risk to the force.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the request indicated the “[b]y utilizing Palantir, the [Regional Command (South) Counter-IED] section will be able to leverage incredible reach back and collaborative assistance not possible with existing tools.”<sup>8</sup>

However, the Office of the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8 resisted the 82nd Airborne’s request. Over the course of four days, Kristin Hoffman, who reports to “the Army principal on the DCGS and DI2E Steering Boards,”<sup>9</sup> argued with the 82nd Airborne about the effectiveness of Palantir. Ms. Hoffman wrote that, “While we do appreciate the look and feel and speed of Palantir, we are cautious about the lack of interoperability with the DCGS and Mission Command families, the lack of more Multi-INT tools (rather than ‘all-source’ tools), and the fact that the volume of data in the Palantir backend is not as robust as DCGS-A.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite the informational exchange between the Office of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff and the 82nd Airborne, it appears that the decision to end use of Palantir was predetermined. Prior to Ms. Hoffman’s e-mails with the 82nd Airborne, she e-mailed the Operation Enduring Freedom DCGS-A Officer-in-Charge about the G-8’s “efforts to turn

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>6</sup> Letter from Representatives Gabrielle Giffords and Adam Smith, to Peter A. Newell, Colonel, U.S. Army (August 25, 2010) *available at* [http://www.politico.com/static/PPM223\\_110629\\_hasc.html](http://www.politico.com/static/PPM223_110629_hasc.html).

<sup>7</sup> Request from Intelligence and Surveillance Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, (WAA6B0), 82nd Airborne Division, Kandahar Air Field (November 2011).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> E-mail from Kristin Hoffman, Office of the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, to 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army (Jan. 4, 2012, 03:10) (on file with author).

<sup>10</sup> E-Mail from Kristin Hoffman, Office of the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, to 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army (Jan. 5, 2012, 19:16) (on file with author).

off REF funding of Palantir for the 82nd's [Counter-IED] cell . . . ."<sup>11</sup> In her e-mail, she also requested certain data points that would support "our argument for more control over the contractors running around theater selling this stuff, and further supports the issue that Palantir makes data interoperability harder by not registering their servers with those in charge of the networks."<sup>12</sup>

### **Possible Manipulation of an ATEC Assessment of the Palantir System**

According to its stated mission, ATEC "plans, conducts, and integrates developmental testing, independent operational testing, independent evaluations, assessments, and experiments to provide essential information to Soldiers and into the hands of acquisition decision makers supporting the American Warfighter."<sup>13</sup> The ATEC Forward Operational Assessment (FOA) Team's primary functions are to liaise with commands in theater to collect data and report on specified systems.<sup>14</sup> These entities are designed to be unbiased in their assessment and communication of reports to Department stakeholders.

According to source documents, ATEC submitted an assessment of Palantir on April 25, 2012. The purpose of this study was to assess Palantir, and provide recommendations about whether to procure this new system. It appears, however, that a second version of the report was created, which withheld certain survey responses. A comparison between the April 25, 2012 and May 25, 2012 reports reveals significant discrepancies. For example, *The Washington Times* reported that "[i]n the 'findings section . . . the second report deletes a paragraph that told of how Palantir allows war fighters to simultaneously search multiple databases . . . ."<sup>15</sup> Other comments criticizing DCGS-A were also allegedly deleted from the final report.<sup>16</sup>

In an apparent effort to conceal the original findings, a June 29, 2012, memorandum from Colonel Joseph Martin, Commanding Officer of the Army Operational Test Command (AOTC), directed that the original April 25, 2012, report be "formally rescinded and replaced" by the May 25, 2012, version.<sup>17</sup> Additional correspondence requested that all copies of the original report be "destroyed" and

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<sup>11</sup> E-Mail from Kristin Hoffman, Office of the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, to Ryan Leuders, Major, U.S. Army (Jan. 3, 2012, 19:54) (on file with author).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Army Test and Evaluation Command, Mission/Vision, [http://www.atec.army.mil/mission\\_intro.htm](http://www.atec.army.mil/mission_intro.htm).

<sup>14</sup> Briefing on ATEC Forward Operational Assessment Team, *available at* <http://www.dtic.mil/ndia/2008test/THURSDAY/ThurI/Mills.pdf> (last visited July 27, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Rowan Scarborough, *Army Destroyed Report that Favored Software that Detected Buried Bombs*, THE WASHINGTON TIMES, July 22, 2012, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jul/22/army-destroyed-report-that-favored-software-that-d/>.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> Memorandum from Joseph M. Martin, Colonel, U.S. Army, Commanding, Army Operational Test Command (June 29, 2012).

replaced with the amended May 25, 2012, version.<sup>18</sup> This message further requested that all recipients of the original be identified.

The purported justification for these changes, according to the Army Intelligence Chief Information Officer for the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-2, Lynn Schnurr, was for “correcting a report with inaccuracies and/or clarifying verbage [sic].”<sup>19</sup> It is unclear, however, what benefit such an amended report would provide to stakeholders seeking a raw and unbiased assessment. As such, these actions could be construed as limiting positive feedback on Palantir’s system, in an effort to justify the continued use of a more expensive and less effective program.

To assist the Committee with its oversight, we ask that the Department please provide the following documents and information:

1. Please provide a copy of the April 25, 2012, and May 25, 2012, versions of the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) Forward Operational Assessment Report (FOAR) for the Palantir System;
2. Please provide all documents related to ATEC’s methodology in assessing Palantir;
3. Please provide all documents and communications referring or relating to the creation of the May 25, 2012, version of the ATEC FOAR for the Palantir System;
4. Please provide all documents, including e-mails or other communications such as memos referring or relating to any Palantir assessments performed or requested by the Department of Defense from February 1, 2012 to present. This includes documents authored by, but is not limited to, the following individuals: Major General Genaro J. Dellarocco; Brigadier General Laura J. Richardson; Colonel Joseph M. Martin; Ms. Lynn M. Schnurr; Mr. Don Tison; Ms. Kristin M. Hoffman; and Colonel Peter A. Newell;
5. Please provide all documents and communications referring or relating to requests for the Palantir system for use in Afghanistan from June 1, 2010 to present.

We request that you provide the requested documents and information and designate appropriate officials to provide a briefing to the Committee staff as soon as possible, but **no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 15, 2012**. When producing documents to the Committee, please deliver production sets to the Majority Staff in Room 2157 of

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<sup>18</sup> Internal documents reviewed by the Committee.

<sup>19</sup> E-mail from Lynn Schnurr, Army Chief Information Officer for the Deputy Chief of Staff, to Joseph Martin, Colonel, U.S. Army (July 6, 2012, 19:34 EST) (on file with author).

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta

August 1, 2012

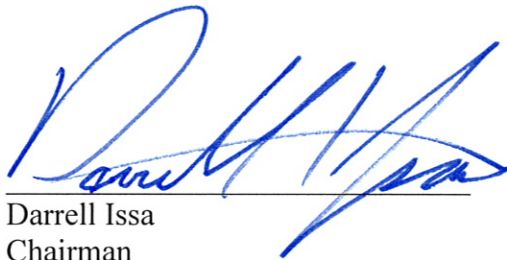
Page 5

the Rayburn House Office Building and the Minority Staff in Room 2471 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The Committee prefers, if possible, to receive all documents in electronic format.

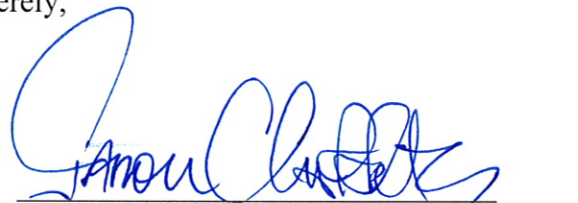
The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and may at "any time" investigate "any matter" as set forth in House Rule X.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Sang Yi or Thomas Alexander of the Committee Staff at 202-225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa  
Chairman



Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security,  
Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable John F. Tierney, Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on National Security, Homeland Defense and Foreign Operations