

## INSIGHT FROM TOFFLER ASSOCIATES

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**-Toffler Associate  
Engagement Leader**

# Department of Defense: Defining Cyber Operations and Planning for the Future

## EMERGING DEFENSE MISSION: CYBER OPERATIONS

Computers and electronic systems networks create new capabilities for military forces to defend our nation and wage war, and also open up new vulnerabilities that adversaries can exploit. While each Military Service prepares to undertake missions in the emerging area of "cyber operations," the question remains: who among them will lead?

This question led one Military Service to seek out the help of Toffler Associates to help determine what cyber capabilities and vulnerabilities were most critical for the future and what role it should play alongside other Military Services and Defense agencies in this increasingly central aspect of national defense.

## CHALLENGES

Toffler Associates quickly identified three major challenges hindering an effective strategy for managing cyber operations:

- 1) Lack of definition across the Defense Department with regard to what "cyber operations" are and are not.
- 2) No consensus as to how, or whether, to exercise Department-wide control of cyber operations.
- 3) Little alignment within the client organization itself on the definition of cyber operations or its leadership role.

## BUILDING STRATEGIES THROUGH DEFINITION

To begin, the Toffler Associates team worked with the wide range of existing definitions of "cyber" and cyber-related operations in order to provide focus both for the study and for the debate within the Services. Surveying the views of the numerous stakeholders and applying its own analysis, the team surfaced the underlying commonalities to arrive at a definition that allowed for a methodical assessment of what types of military activities do and not constitute "cyber operations." Moreover, this definition and subsequent assessment provided a basis for an "apples to apples" comparison of the capabilities

that each Military Service and Defense agency can bring to bear to conduct, and lead, cyber operations for the Department.

The Toffler Associates team then began a comprehensive analysis of each Service's and agency's capabilities. Taking a broader view of "capabilities" than the traditional focus on equipment and personnel, the team examined a wide range of elements vital to achieving objectives in the unique domain of cyber operations. Looking at capabilities this way, to include doctrine, organizational structures, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities, Toffler Associates was able to develop and provide the client a 360° picture of how each organization across the Defense Department can contribute in cyber operations.

#### **CLARITY AND CONSENSUS FOR THE WAY AHEAD**

Because this multi-faceted approach allowed clear insight into not only the current capabilities of each Military Service and Defense agency, but also their potential to develop capabilities for the future, the Toffler Associates team was able to recommend a set of specific actions the client could take to:

- Foster a shared view across DoD with respect to the definition and constituent elements of cyber operations
- Increase internal alignment around missions to assign to different organizations within the Service to present a unified command and control approach for cyber
- Enhance its real and perceived leadership role in various aspects of cyber operations in the future

"The framework we developed can, and we believe will, be shared with the other Military Services and Defense agencies, benefiting the whole Defense Department in this area that's so important, but still only beginning to be well understood," said the Toffler Associates engagement leader. "That will aid in decisions regarding who should undertake what leadership roles in cyber operations in the future, and helps show our client's own commitment to leading in this area for the good of the nation."

Within the next year, the question of how to assign roles and responsibilities for cyber operations and other defense missions will be examined in two major assessments being prepared for Congress. The client is confident that Toffler Associates' work in



this study will make a vital contribution to ensuring these assessments produce the right decisions for the nation.