

Pentagon creates new spy unit aimed at Iran, China

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26 April 2012

The Pentagon Tuesday confirmed published reports that it is setting up a new military intelligence agency, the Defense Clandestine Service (DCS), that will deploy hundreds of intelligence officers in spy operations directed against targets for future US wars, particularly Iran and China.

The DCS will join 16 other US spy agencies—eight of them affiliated to the military—as part of what is known as the “United States Intelligence Community.”

The military already controls the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), which employs some 16,500 military and civilian personnel worldwide, and the National Security Agency, the massive communications spy apparatus, which intercepts some 1.7 billion US and foreign emails, phone calls and other communications daily. In addition, there are Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine intelligence outfits as well as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office.

According to a senior Pentagon official who gave an interview to several reporters, the new agency will grow from “several hundred to several more hundred” in the coming period, but would not require additional personnel or a larger military budget. The official described the change as a “realignment” of the Pentagon’s human intelligence operations.

According to the *New York Times*, the official said that “the new intelligence service aimed to ensure that ‘officers are in the right locations to pursue those requirements,’” but “declined to give specific examples of where such shifts might occur.”

The most likely “locations” where this new agency will operate include China’s borders. Last January, Obama organized an extraordinary press conference at the Pentagon to announce a shift in US military strategy toward the Asia-Pacific region, with the central aim of

countering the rising influence of China.

Another likely focus for the new military intelligence service is Iran, which Washington sees as an intolerable obstacle to US imperialism’s drive to assert hegemony over the strategically vital energy-producing regions of the Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

While the existing Defense Intelligence Agency has focused principally on providing intelligence to battlefield commanders, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, the new Defense Clandestine Service would apparently be oriented more toward preparing for wars still to come.

The plan was approved last week by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and has already been submitted to congressional committees.

Navy Capt. John Kirby, a spokesman for the Defense Department, described the move as a “rebalancing of our efforts and our focus on the human side of intelligence collection,” while insisting that “it’s not about the militarization of intelligence.”

This last claim may reflect tensions within the US military and intelligence apparatus over the increased blurring of the lines between Washington’s spy agencies and its war machine. Last year, Obama tapped Gen. David Petraeus, the top US commander in Afghanistan, to take over as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. Last October, Petraeus was compelled to deny reports that he was working “to impose a military viewpoint on our analysis”.

As part of the shakeup within military intelligence, the Pentagon last week named Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn to head the Defense Intelligence Agency, whose work he had scathingly and publicly criticized in relation to the Afghanistan war, referring to its officers as “ignorant” and “disengaged.”

Flynn served as the intelligence chief for Petraeus as

well as his predecessor in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal. He played a leading role in the organization of special operations night raids, assassinations of insurgent leaders and interrogations of those detained. Previously, he commanded the 111th Military Intelligence Brigade in Iraq, which was implicated in the torture of Iraqi detainees.



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