

News Transcript

Press Operations

 SHARE

TRANSCRIPT

E-MAIL A COPY | PRINTER FRIENDLY | LATEST TRANSCRIPTS

Defense Department Press Briefing on Implementation Plans as a Result of the Washington Navy Yard Shooting Investigations and Reviews by Secretary Hagel and Navy Secretary Mabus in the Pentagon Briefing Room

Presenters: Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, Principal Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Marcel Lettre, Admiral John Richardson and Dr. Paul Stockton

March 18, 2014

Defense Department Press Briefing on Implementation Plans as a Result of the Washington Navy Yard Shooting Investigations and Reviews by Secretary Hagel and Navy Secretary Mabus in the Pentagon Briefing Room

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CHUCK HAGEL: Good morning. I'll let all these hangers-on get to their fancy seats and then we'll get started.

Q: (OFF-MIC)

SEC. HAGEL: You know, that's the way we like it, you know, deflects attention from the real things.

Okay. Six months ago, the Department of Defense lost 12 members of its family in a senseless act of violence at the Washington Navy Yard. I said at the time that where there are gaps or inadequacies in the department's security, we'll find them and we'll correct them.

And accordingly today, I'm announcing steps DoD is taking to enhance physical security at our installations and improve security clearance procedures responding to lessons learned from this terrible, terrible tragedy. These new measures are based on the recommendations of two reviews that I ordered in the aftermath of the shooting, including an internal review, led by Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Michael Vickers, and an outside review, led by former Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Stockton, who is with us today, and retired Admiral Eric Olson.

Secretary Mabus, who joins me here this morning, also directed the Department of the Navy to conduct its own reviews of security standards, which complemented our work. I appreciate the hard work and the thorough analysis that went into all of these efforts by all of these people.

The reviews identified troubling gaps in DoD's ability to detect, prevent, and respond to instances where someone working for us, a government employee, member of our military, or a contractor, decides to inflict harm on this institution and its people.

To close these gaps, we will take the following actions recommended by the reviews. First, DoD will implement a continuous evaluation program of personnel with access to DoD's facilities or classified information, including DoD contractors, military and civilian personnel. While individuals with security clearances undergo periodic re-investigations, I am directing the department to establish automated reviews of cleared personnel that will continuously pull information from law enforcement and other relevant databases. This will help trigger an alert if derogatory information becomes available, for example, if someone holding a security clearance is arrested.

Second, the department will establish an insider threat management and analysis center that can quickly analyze the results of these automated record checks, help connect the dots, and determine whether follow-up action is needed. It will also advise and support Department of Defense components to ensure appropriate action is taken on each case.

Third, we will centralize authority and accountability for physical and personal security under a single staff assistant, located within the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence. Currently, these responsibilities are fractured among multiple components in the department. This action will identify one person within DoD who is responsible for leading efforts to counter inside threats.

Fourth, the department will accelerate the development of the Defense Manpower Data Center's Identity Management Enterprise Services Architecture. This program will enable DoD security officers to share access control information and continuously vet individuals against U.S. government databases. In

addition to these actions, we are reviewing the best ways to move forward on three additional recommendations offered by the independent review panel. We're going to ensure that these ideas are given a full and serious consideration within the broader context of the recommendations from the 120-day security and stability report that was completed by the Office of Management and Budget earlier this month.

First, we will consider reducing the number of personnel holding secret security clearances by at least 10 percent, a recommendation in line with the October 2013 guidance from the director of national intelligence. Second, we will consider reducing DoD's reliance on background investigations conducted by the Office of Personnel Management and undertake a comprehensive analysis of the cost, the efficiency, and effectiveness of returning the clearance review process to this department. And, third, we will consider developing more effective measures to screen recruits, further de-stigmatize treatment, and ensure the quality of mental health care within DoD.

I've directed Undersecretary Vickers to develop an implementation plan based on the recommendations of these reviews and to report back to me in June on the progress that has been made. Everything the Department of Defense is doing is supporting the broader government-wide review of the oversight of security and suitability standards of federal employees and contractors. That review was approved by President Obama earlier this month. That review was led by the Office of Management and Budget and the National Security Council, in coordination with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Office of Personnel Management.

I think we all understand that open and free societies are always vulnerable, but together we're going to do everything possible to provide our people a safe and secure workplace as possible.

Let me conclude by saying that our thoughts and our prayers go out to the victims and their families of that terrible day. We will continue to do everything we can to prevent such a tragedy from happening again. We owe them nothing less.

I appreciate your attention to this. And now let me ask Secretary Mabus to review with you the findings of his review and then I think, as you know, we have three individuals who will go into the details, the specifics of how we intend to implement these recommendations and these directives, so thank you.

Secretary Mabus?

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY RAYMOND MABUS: Thank you, Secretary Hagel, good morning.

On September 16th last year, the entire Navy family suffered a devastating tragedy at the Washington Navy Yard. For more than a decade, as a military organization, we've experienced the pain of combat losses, but six months ago, we lost 12 patriots who made the same sacrifice in the service of their nation, this time here at home.

It is with the memory of those three women and nine men in mind today that we are releasing the results of our investigation into the shooting. In all of this, our first concern has been for those lost and those wounded, and their families. Over the past few days, Navy liaisons who have been with the families all along have reached out individually to provide them with this information.

Immediately following the attack, we conducted a number of rapid reviews and assessments of our bases and our policies. Based on these reviews, we've already made changes to improve physical security and protect -- force protection on our bases. Our units have completed self-assessments to ensure their own compliance and our departmental leadership has engaged directly with commanding officers around the world to stress their role in protecting our civilian and military personnel.

Where we identified issues with the security clearance processes that involved changes to broader government policy, we forwarded those recommendations through DoD to the appropriate agency and department. We worked closely with the reviews set up in DoD, which Secretary Hagel has explained, and with the broader government-wide review, supporting them with the information we had developed. We will implement as quickly as possible the recommendations laid out by Secretary Hagel, including the continuous evaluation program for security clearances.

And I want to thank Secretary Hagel for his unwavering support for Navy and our entire Navy family throughout and for ensuring that DoD's internal and external reviews built on our efforts. I appointed Admiral John Richardson, here today, to conduct an official comprehensive investigation in accordance with the judge advocate general manual, or a JAGMAN report, into the circumstances surrounding the Navy Yard shooting, to include a review of the policies and programs and how well that guidance was executed.

There are 11 major findings and 14 recommendations made in the JAGMAN report, which Admiral Richardson will speak in detail to. I've accepted all the recommendations, and they're in the process of being implemented. I also directed that additional actions be taken to strengthen the Department of the Navy's contractor requirements and to provide greater oversight on how a sailor or Marine's performance is evaluated and reported. A more detailed list of actions the department has taken recommended by our reviews and our investigations has been made available in written form to you.

I want to thank Admiral Richardson and his staff. They put in some very long hours and did an excellent job working against a very short deadline.

And I'd also like to once again express my gratitude to the first responders for their prompt reaction and critical actions that day. The naval security force, NCIS agents, local and federal law enforcement agencies, and agents responded to the active shooter situation with complete dedication and commitment to help the men and women of the Washington Navy Yard. They ran toward danger to protect their fellow Americans, a brave and selfless action.

In the aftermath of the attack, it was important that our response be timely, strong and responsive. I authorized immediate support services for the fallen and wounded, their families, the people at building 197 and those elsewhere on the Navy Yard, and for the entire Navy affected. The outpouring of support from the local community and from across the nation was overwhelmingly -- was overwhelming and deeply, deeply appreciated.

I appointed the Washington Navy Yard task force, led by Assistant Secretary of the Navy Denny McGinn, who is also here today, to ensure that that support was continuous and comprehensive. This task force will be in existence as long as needed to make sure that everyone in need has what is needed. Those who have participated in this response have been magnificent; including the casualty assistance calls officers, or CACOs, who've worked directly with the families since very soon after this event.

Those who were working at the Navy Yard that awful day have been magnificent, too. Only two days after this searing event, I went back to the Navy Yard and an overwhelming majority of the people were already back at work, making sure that we continue to have the world's finest Navy. And those who were wounded have also returned to work.

We expect our sailors and Marines to go in harm's way. But even in a theater of war, the danger posed by an insider threat is insidious. In an office building near our nation's capital, it's almost incomprehensible, but sadly, as we saw, can be real. As Secretary Hagel said, we cannot completely eliminate this threat, but we can and will guard against these types of events by addressing these findings, even if doing so would not have prevented this attack, because it may prevent a future one. That is one objective of these reviews and investigations.

A parallel and equally powerful reason is to provide answers to our Navy family. It is for them that we conducted a clear-eyed and thorough review of how their loved ones, colleagues and friends came to face such terrible danger that day. It is for them that going forward we will do everything within our power to safeguard their security.

Thank you.

REAR ADMIRAL JOHN KIRBY: Okay, folks, we have three of the individuals -- the three individuals who conducted three of the reviews to come up here and take questions for you. We've got about 20 minutes to do that. Admiral Richardson, who conducted the Navy's JAG investigation, Mr. Paul Stockton, who along with Admiral Eric Olson, retire Admiral Olson, conducted the independent review, and then behind me is Mr. Marcel Lettre, who works for Mr. Vickers, and they worked on the internal review.

And I'm going to turn it over to them. I think they'll have just a couple of quick things to say at the outset, and then we'll start taking questions. I'll moderate the questions.

ADMIRAL JOHN RICHARDSON: Thank you, Admiral Kirby, and good morning to all. I'm Admiral Richardson. And as the secretary, Secretary Mabus, pointed out, I led the JAGMAN investigation.

This investigation began on September 25th and was completed on November the 8th. We examined during this effort the compliance with existing requirements at the time of the incident with respect to Aaron Alexis at the Washington Navy Yard. We executed the task with a team of 30 investigators and 10 support personnel. These people consisted of a range of subject matter experts, including force protection, government contracts, installation management, emergency management, medicine, and law. The investigation was given my top priority. And as I told the team, this effort was among the most important work going on in the Navy at the time.

We organized the JAGMAN investigation along five lines. One line was the personal history of Alexis, including his prior military service and civilian employment history. Another line was the personnel security program designed to vet, and then to continuously evaluate personnel for suitability, for access to classified material, as it applied to Alexis. The third line was the force protection plan designed to prevent unauthorized access to security facilities at the Washington Navy Yard. Fourth line was the incident response and emergency management programs at the Washington Navy Yard. And finally, the fifth effort addressed the response after the incident.

The specific details of the shooting, the shooter's motive and the tactical response are the subject of ongoing criminal investigations and are not part of the JAGMAN. The investigation team reported out 11 major findings in five areas and made 14 recommendations. The findings address the personal security program, as it applied to Alexis, the Washington Navy Yard force protection program, the Washington Navy Yard incident response and emergency management programs, and then, as I said, post-incident response.

The 14 report recommendations encompassed immediate actions to improve the personnel security program execution by Navy organizations and contractors, to improve the Navy's capability against all threats, with the focus on the insider threat to fill critical gaps in the force protection and emergency management programs on the Navy Yard.

And in closing, finally, and perhaps most importantly, I'd like to add my condolences to those already expressed for the victims and their families. I'll turn it over to Mr. Lettre.

PRINCIPLE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MARCEL LETTRE: Thanks, Admiral. As I was introduced, I'm Marcel Lettre. I'm the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence, Mike Vickers' deputy. Mike -- Dr. Vickers is the undersecretary for intelligence who is unavailable today. He's on an overseas assignment this week.

We were asked by Secretary Hagel on September 30th to conduct one of two reviews commissioned by Secretary Hagel, an internal review led by the USDI organization, and I want to thank Tim Davis, Steve Lewis and Theresa Ramsey, our director, deputy director and senior adviser in our Security Directorate, who led this review for us.

As Dr. Stockton will mention in a minute, Secretary Hagel also commissioned a second review, an independent panel that Dr. Stockton and Admiral Olson worked through over the last few months. Our focus was on two areas, installation security and on personnel security and the role of security clearances and security investigations. And as Secretary Hagel mentioned, we had four main recommendations, which he outlined.

In addition, most of the recommendations from the independent panel we found consistent with the work that we had concluded. And so a lot of those are not only consistent with, but incorporated into our four main points, as Secretary Hagel elicited in his opening comments.

Three additional recommendations that the independent panel put forward we have accepted as recommendations for further analysis. Again, Secretary Hagel mentioned those. It's been six months since the tragic events of September 16th last year when we lost members of our DoD family. In our view, it's unacceptable to have another event such as that occur. We're committed to reducing the risk of insider threat across the Defense Department and look forward to working hard, putting our best efforts forward to do so, and look forward to your questions.

With that, I'll turn it over to Paul Stockton for a short summary of the independent panel.

DR. PAUL STOCKTON: Thanks, Marcel.

As Marcel mentioned, the secretary appointed retired Admiral Eric Olson and me to conduct an independent review of some of these same issues and take a bigger-picture look at the challenges of revamping the security clearance process in the United States. And we started out by making the argument -- and I'd urge you to get a copy of the report, because I'm only going to talk about it in the barest overview terms today, the Department of Defense should replace the underlying premise behind installation and personnel security. For decades, the department has approached security from a perimeter perspective. If we strengthen the perimeter, build our fences, if you will, against threats on the other side, we'll be secure. That approach is outmoded, it's broken, and the department needs to replace it.

Increasingly, threats -- cyber, kinetic, all threats -- they're inside the perimeter. What the Department of Defense should do is build security from within.

Admiral Olson and I in our independent review entirely concurred with the recommendations made by

Undersecretary Vickers. As you heard from Secretary Hagel, we also went further and recommended three additional initiatives that the department will now be considering. First of all, it was our assessment that in the Department of Defense, far too many people have security clearances. Since 9/11, the number of those eligible for security clearances in the Department of Defense has tripled. And the department has gotten away from determining that personnel have a need to know that they need access to security clearance in the positions that they occupy.

We've urged that the Department of Defense go forward, reassess whether people in particular jobs actually need those security clearances or not, and we believe significant reductions can be made in the overall size of the cleared population in the Department of Defense, and therefore in order to conduct evaluation and monitoring of those that remain who do have clearances, we'll be able to focus additional resources and follow all of the terrific recommendations that Marcel and Undersecretary Vickers have recommended.

Second, we believe that there is more that can be done to further de-stigmatize those in the Department of Defense who seek mental health care. We need to do everything we can to ensure that personnel who want such care get access to it and are not punished for it.

The independent review has a number of recommendations about how to proceed down this path and further strengthen the already good relationship between the Veterans Administration and the Department of Defense to make sure that our veterans get access to the health care that they need.

And then, finally, we reached the conclusion that the department should reassess whether it wants to continue depending on the Office of Personnel and Management to conduct investigations, the background investigations that constitute the key step forward in granting security clearances. OPM is already making important improvements in the oversight that they conduct for the private-sector contractors that conduct these investigations. We believe that the department should take a deep look at the other models that exist, including the State Department's decision to be responsible for its own investigations.

There are big structural advantages to walking down that path, and so we've urged that the Department of Defense consider taking back to itself responsibility for conducting background investigations as the key step forward in granting security clearances.

A lot in the report. I urge you to take a look at it. And I want to, above all, thank Secretary Hagel on behalf of Admiral Olson and myself for the opportunity and the honor to address this key issue, to ensure as best we can that future attacks of the sort that occurred at the Washington Navy Yard never occur again. Thank you.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: Okay, thanks. We've got time for some questions. We'll start with you, Bob.

Q: Bob Burns with AP. Mr. Stockton, a question for you, since you mentioned this -- the general concept of an outdated approach to building fences, rather than looking inside the workforce for threats. I mean, it strikes me as a lesson that was supposed to have been learned going back to 9/11 in some respects. Isn't it something that's come up before and it -- or is this just an entirely new concept for you?

DR. STOCKTON: It's not a new concept. And I had the honor of helping to lead the investigation of the Fort Hood incident and the development of recommendations to, for example, strengthen sharing of information between the FBI and the Department of Defense. So major improvements have been made, including those made already by Secretary Hagel. The challenge here is that the threat continues to intensify. That is, we have inside the perimeter cyber threats, kinetic threats that we haven't historically in the Department of Defense structured our policies and programs to handle.

We need to continue to strengthen those insider security initiatives in order to match -- in order to exceed efforts by our adversaries to attack us from within.

Q: Why do you say it's growing? Because of cyber -- why is the threat growing inside?

DR. STOCKTON: Cyber threats are especially important. And here's a classic example, Bob. As the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security and other federal departments make sure that their perimeter security against SQL and other forms of cyber attack get stronger, then the incentives grow for adversaries to attack from within.

Q: Thank you.

Q: Dion Nissenbaum of the Wall Street Journal. This is probably for Marcel. In terms of -- can you explain a little bit about how this continuous evaluation process would work? Does this affect everybody

with any kind of security clearance? Is it going to be the kind of thing where if someone gets a restraining order or gets a divorce, that that will be flagged, and then they will be evaluated? And does this need some sort of approval from ODNI or somebody else before it can go forward?

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: Yeah, I'll mention a couple things, and then, Admiral Richardson, if there's anything from the Navy perspective to add, please feel free to.

But just from the perspective of the department more broadly, our current system of personnel security is based on a periodic re-investigation basis, five years, 10 years. The assessment is that that approach limits our ability to understand the evolution that may occur in a person's life that may have them evolve from a trusted insider to an insider threat.

With the continuous evaluation approach, we would have a system which would in part be IT-based, but in part a system that would rely on subject matter experts and the ability to link in investigative ability, as well, to be able to continuously evaluate information that flows in through a number of appropriate channels, and collected in one place to ensure that insights can be gained that may be relevant for deeming something an insider threat.

So I think it's important to mention that the continuous evaluation recommendation comes in conjunction with the recommendation to build up a DITMAC, a defense insider threat management and analysis center, where the function of conducting that evaluation would occur, as well as the necessary training and potential education for the workforce.

As to the -- as to whether this is just a DOD-only approach or something that is more government-wide, there is a sense across the government that this is an approach that needs to be embraced government-wide. That's why you'll see, as you study the report that OMB released today, a clear emphasis within the OMB report on applying a continuous evaluation practice across government, and strong leadership roles, if not the lead role for ensuring the effective implementation of this, in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Q: But does that affect everybody with clearance?

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: It is intended to affect everybody with clearance, yes, which in the DOD context, as you know, currently about 2.5 million individuals hold active security clearances. Implementation will have to occur over time. We have up to now studied continuous evaluation through research and development and through a pilot approach. We envision, as we build out the implementation of this, needing to continue to do pilots on an expanded basis and phase it in over time.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: (OFF-MIC)

Q: For any of the three of you, can you go into more specifics on how exactly DoD can de-stigmatize this issue of, you know, appealing for mental health help?

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: Paul, do you want to start from the perspective of the independent panel, and we can join in afterwards?

DR. STOCKTON: It'd be a pleasure. The department has made great strides in de-stigmatizing the search for mental health treatment. I believe that the current standard security form, SF-86, some of us have filled those out, that asks you whether you seek mental health care, I believe that this question ought to be drastically changed. I believe that despite the best efforts of those who do the security clearance process to de-stigmatize those who seek mental health care, despite their best efforts, that question I don't believe gives us reliable answers. I believe self-reporting is inherently unreliable. There's no evidence that it's a valid way of understanding the degree to which mental health care is needed by a particular person.

And then, secondly, I believe we need to do more to reach out to those members of the Department of Defense community and ensure that they know that when they seek help for mental care issues, that is not -- repeat, not -- going to in any way affect their ability to serve. We need to go the extra mile, especially in today's environment, to ensure that that message gets through. Thanks.

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: I'll just add briefly, the department very much appreciates the work that Dr. Stockton and Admiral Olson did to incorporate some of this analysis into the independent panel's work. It is important as we move forward to think about the services that we can provide to both our military and our civilian workforce to help them as they determine they may need to seek mental health counseling. And we need to make sure that we do that in conjunction with, in parallel with the other efforts that we've undertaken here to deal with the insider threat challenge.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: Spencer?

Q: Thanks. Spencer Ackerman with the Guardian. To go back to Dion's question, what are the appropriate inputs for continuous evaluation? Will there be something that's limited to, you know, criminal arrests, that sort of thing, something more -- more than that? And what happens for those clearance-holders who over the course of, say, two years, five years, 10 years don't have any criminal arrest record or anything like that? Are they just monitored like they would normally be monitored right now?

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: The bottom line is the inputs that would go into a continuous evaluation system are the same appropriate inputs that would occur under a periodic re-investigation model, just done on a push basis, so we have a periodic re-investigation model that revisits that data set every five or 10 years. We would move to a continuous evaluation approach in its first phases where we could query the databases on an on-demand pull basis. And then over time, as the system matures, moving to a model and a technique that would allow more of a near-real-time pull or push of data on any cleared individual for which a potential flag would be raised that would merit further investigation and analysis. For...

Q: So you're not looking at additional inputs? You're just looking at a more efficient manner of accessing the data that you currently collect?

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: At this time, we are -- we would start with the inputs that we have available to us now under the current model. It's not to say that as times change, as technology changes, as what the government deduces is a useful input to the security clearance process, as those evolve over time, we want to make sure we build a system that can accommodate those changes and practice.

DR. STOCKTON: Can I add one point to that? You'll see in the independent review that we did raise the question of whether additional sources of data ought to support this continuous evaluation process. We made the strong recommendation that if the Department of Defense goes down that path that additional steps be taken to further strengthen respect for privacy and civil liberties in that process, and the fair information principles system, transparency, the same kinds of principles that we have in the FIP approach that the federal government takes overall, if we're going to ramp up the degree to which we assess people for their suitability or retaining a security clearance, we need to ensure that we also continue to ramp up protection of privacy and civil liberties.

Q: Andrew Tilghman with Military Times. Admiral Richardson, can I ask, in your JAGMAN report, does it identify any particular individuals that were found to be negligent of performing their duties as described in the existing regulations in an unsatisfactory way that contributed to this? Or was this basically that you just identified some flawed policies?

ADM. RICHARDSON: Well, what our report did -- our investigation did identify is that the primary responsibility and accountability for this incident rests with Aaron Alexis, who used his access to get inside the defenses and do harm to our -- his fellow workers.

Beyond that, the investigation was primarily focused on where the gaps in compliance were with -- as I said, with the personal security program, force protection, physical security, and incident response. We did identify gaps in all of those areas and laid those out in our findings according to three categories. The highest category would be those findings that if the proper procedures had been followed, the change of events that led up to the shooting on the 16th of September would have been interrupted.

Those findings primarily concern the responsibility for the contractors for whom Aaron Alexis worked, the Experts, Incorporated, and Hewlett-Packard enterprise systems, to comply with security requirements that require them to continuously evaluate their personnel and, if they observe behavior that raises questions about an employee's suitability for access to installations or information, that those concerns should be identified to, in this case, the Navy, and those requirements were not met. They did observe those behaviors and did not make those reports, and so it was impossible for the Navy to act on that information.

The second category of findings concerned those that were the approximation of the finding was not as direct as in category A, where if proper procedures had been followed that may have interrupted the chain of events, those findings concerned oversight of the contractors' execution of the security program, earlier application of the personnel security program, early in Alexis' career.

And then the final category were those findings which even if they had been -- proper procedures had been followed perfectly, they would not have interrupted the chain of events on the 16th, and those primarily concerned the force protection, anti-terrorism measures at the Washington Navy Yard, as well as the emergency response planning and the post-incident response.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: (OFF-MIC)

Q: Admiral, Phil Ewing with Politico. Can I just ask a quick follow-up? Describing the behavior of the vendors before this attack and their ability to see this erratic behavior that you describe in the JAGMAN, is it your understanding that they knew about it and actively decided not to inform the Navy? Or did it ever occur to them, having seen this behavior on his part, to tell their, you know -- the people they deal with in the service about this after it took place.

ADM. RICHARDSON: Right. Those sorts of details were difficult for us to definitively arrive at, but it's our understanding that with respect to the experts, they did have a good knowledge of this aberrant behavior and decided not to make that report. With Hewlett-Packard, it's less certain.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: We have time for a couple more.

Q: (OFF-MIC) BBC News. Can I ask about the security clearances? You mentioned that the figure has tripled since 9/11, but based on the way (OFF-MIC) government (OFF-MIC) country changing, what would have been a normal kind of path of growth? And in trying to cut 10 percent of people who have -- it was 10 percent people that started security clearances going forward, where will they come from? What sector are you looking at? Is there one that you can see where you can lose 10 percent?

REAR ADM. KIRBY: Paul?

DR. STOCKTON: We recommend in our report that the Department of Defense conduct a thorough reassessment of need to know, that is, whether the individuals occupying particular positions in the Department of Defense actually require access to classified information.

Such a review has not happened in a long time. It's my working assumption that given the terrific growth in the number of those who hold security clearances, in the absence of such standards, that we have folks with security clearances who don't need them. And in an era of terrific pressure on the defense budget, anything we can do to downsize the number of people with security clearances so that only those who require them can then get this intensive, more capable, continuous monitoring, that's a great way of proceeding.

UNDER SEC. LETTRE: I'll just add, if I could, as Dr. Stockton has mentioned to you, this was put on our task list to look at thanks to his work and Admiral Olson's work with the independent panel as part of the implementation phase of our work going forward that Secretary Hagel has asked us to do.

We owe Secretary Hagel answers by June on a number of different topics, implementation on the four recommendations that he articulated and considered departmental judgments on the three recommendations that we accepted from the independent panel for further review, to include the possibility of a 10 percent reduction to the security -- the secret level security-cleared workforce.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: Okay, this will be the last one. All the way in the back?

Q: James Rosen, McClatchy Newspapers. Am I correct that from the time the first shot was fired -- this is about the immediate incident response -- from the time the first shot was fired -- this is perhaps for Admiral Richardson -- from the time the first shot was fired to the time the last shot was fired on that tragic day, am I correct that it was over an hour?

ADM. RICHARDSON: No. Well, the response was carried out over the course of over an hour, yes. But in terms of those shots which resulted in fatalities that was a much shorter time.

Q: About how long was that?

ADM. RICHARDSON: That was, we assess, about 23 minutes.

Q: OK. And just a quick follow-up question. On the military base, I think, you know, a lot of Americans might ask, on any military base in the world, particularly one in Washington, D.C., is it acceptable that a shooter, even an insider threat could fire fatal shots for 23 minutes before being taken down?

ADM. RICHARDSON: Well, I would say that any sort of incident like this can never be considered acceptable. And that's why both Secretary Hagel and Secretary Mabus are moving ahead as forcefully as possible to make sure that we minimize the possibility of this happening again in the future.

Q: Is there any criticism of the length of time that the fatal shots were fired in the report?

ADM. RICHARDSON: No. But, again, that tactical response was not -- the detailed tactical response was not in the purview of our JAGMAN. That's the purview of an ongoing criminal investigation that's

4/18/2014 Defense.gov Transcript: Defense Department Press Briefing on Implementation Plans as a Result of the Washington Navy Yard Shooting Investigations a...
happening right now, so we did not look into those sorts of details.

REAR ADM. KIRBY: Thanks , everybody. Appreciate it.