THE CYBER-SURGE

Shane Harris has a long article detailing the state of the US cyberwarfare capability. The hook for the story, though, is a claim that cyberwarfare championed by Michael McConnell and David Petraeus in Iraq in 2007 was as critical to turning the war around as the conventional surge.

> In May 2007, President Bush authorized the National Security Agency, based at Fort Meade, Md., to launch a sophisticated attack on an enemy thousands of miles away without firing a bullet or dropping a bomb.
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> At the request of his national intelligence director, Bush ordered an NSA cyberattack on the cellular phones and computers that insurgents in Iraq were using to plan roadside bombings. The devices allowed the fighters to coordinate their strikes and, later, post videos of the attacks on the Internet to recruit followers. According to a former senior administration official who was present at an Oval Office meeting when the president authorized the attack, the operation helped U.S. forces to commandeer the Iraqi fighters communications system. With this capability, the Americans could deceive their adversaries with false information, including messages to lead unwitting insurgents into the fire of waiting U.S. soldiers.

Now, I hope the tech wonks read the whole article and let us know what they think of the overall article (Harris is well-sourced in the vicinity of Ft. Meade).

But for the moment I'd like to focus on the timing and the personalities: It was Petraeus and McConnell, with cyberwarfare, in Iraq, in

2007. That is, David Petraeus, currently in charge of both our wars. And McConnell, who in 2007 was busy pushing for expanded electronic surveillance authority, and has long been a champion of outsourcing intelligence, precisely this kind of thing (he's currently back at Booz Allen).

No wonder there has been so much concern about putting NSA in charge of the nation's cyber-defense.