

# The Passy Press®

## Letters to the Editor

From: Jim Webb <jwebb@undisclosed.com>  
To: Nick Gardiner <enpg@thepassypress.com>  
Sent: 23 Nov 2018 at 04:17  
Subject: Cyber Essay, November 2018

Dear Sir,

Thanks for having put together the important article regarding Cyber in the Passy Press.

During the one presidential debate in which I participated (October 2015) we were asked to state our opinion on the greatest future threats facing the U.S. My response was that there were (and are still) three:

On a grand strategic level, it is defining and managing our complex relationship with China.

On a day to day military level, it is defining and managing our operational commitments, particularly our over-involvement on the ground in the Middle East.

And on a day to day level here at home, it is Cyber, in all of its manifestations.

That being said, while I would agree that streamlining is useful, I would caution against the centralization of the oversight and policy mechanisms in the Congress that were mentioned in the article.

The need for centralizing policy development in some areas is manifest. A classic example is the debacle of the legislation which became known as “Obamacare,” despite Obama’s failure to even send a Bill to the Congress for its consideration. The legislation was considered by five different Congressional committees, three in the House and two in the Senate. This resulted in a massive, uncoordinated, 7,000-page document that was nearly impossible to read, much less fully understand. The rest, of course, is history.

However, in matters related to intelligence and other sensitive issues such as government intrusion into individual privacy and the potential for manipulation of data and policy from the international arena, centralization can be a dangerous concept. This was a reason that I expressed my own concerns about the creation of a single “National Intelligence Director” during my time in the Senate. In order to understand how important it is to retain and encourage multiple channels of information on these important fronts, one need only consider the damage done by our ill-conceived invasion of Iraq after intelligence information was manipulated in order to reach a conclusion, urged by Colin Powell, that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. The rest of this is history, also, measured in trillions of dollars, thousands of lives, and the deterioration of our international standing.

Sincerely,

Jim Webb

*Jim Webb is an author, attorney, former U.S. Presidential Candidate, U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Navy and heavily decorated Marine. His expertise includes a focus on the economy, politics and military in Asia.*