

Federal Computer Week

Gates: Cybersecurity is a high priority for DOD

- By [Doug Beizer](#)
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More attention needed for cybersecurity, say defense secretary and Joint Chiefs chairman

The Defense Department is bolstering its responses to cybersecurity threats, Defense Secretary Robert Gates told the the Senate Appropriations Committee's Defense Subcommittee today.

Gates said at a subcommittee hearing that cybersecurity must be a priority for DOD, and his budget request reflects that.

The request increases funding for a range of information assurance capabilities to improve the security of information as it is generated, stored, processed, and transported across information technology systems; Gates said.

The request also would increase "the number of cyber experts this department can train from 80 students per year to 250 per year by fiscal year 2011," Gates said. The request also calls for establishing a cyber test range where cyber defenses and weapons can be tested in a realistic setting, he said.

"There is no doubt that the integrity and security of our computer and information systems will be challenged on an increasing basis in the future," Gates said. "Keeping our cyber infrastructure safe is one of our most important national security challenges."

Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the panel that potential threats beyond the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are uncertain and complex, and cyberwarfare will play a prominent role in DOD's strategic priorities.

"A prominent aspect of this shifting strategic environment is the disturbing trend in cyberattacks, where we face both state and non-state actors," Mullen said.

Responding to cyber threats will depend heavily on DOD's ability to share information with other government agencies, and using the different strengths of various agencies will be a key to thwarting diverse types of attacks, he said.

"When appropriate, DOD will lead," Mullen said. "Likewise, when appropriate, DOD will provide support and ensure collective success."

About the Author

Doug Beizer is a staff writer for Federal Computer Week.

