DEFUND ALL "BAD GUY" NATIONAL SECURITY THINKING

Ellen Nakashima has a report on the development of CyberCommand's national mission teams. Here's how her anonymous "senior defense official" source described their job.

> Part of their job is to do reconnaissance work on foreign networks to watch traffic in servers used by adversaries that the military has gained lawful access to, he said.
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> "We need to be inside the bad guy's head and network," he said. "That's the mission of the national mission teams: to be inside the bad guy's head and his network."
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> Getting inside the bad guy's network means monitoring the "hop points" or servers commandeered around the world by adversaries to route and disguise their computer traffic, not necessarily hacking into their command and control computers, he said. "Whatever these bad guys are using in order to do their work, that's what we're interested in."

It's defense appropriations season, though admittedly too late into the process to do this. But can I suggest an amendment defunding any program or person who discusses targeting in terms of "good guys" and "bad guys"?

Even when discussing physical attacks — say those about to be unleashed on ISIS — it encourages a kind of simplistic thinking. But when discussing online targeting, in which sorting legitimate targets from Big Data chaff should involve a lot of nuanced analysis, and which does happen with little oversight, thinking in such Manichean terms betrays a

sloppiness that is unacceptable.

And for both kinds of targeting, physical and digital, presuming we are always the "good guys" fosters a sense of impunity for whatever we do, no matter how rash and — at times — disproportionate our actions are.

Our national security establishment seems to be run by men (mostly men, anyway) with the cognitive sophistication of children. Perhaps we'd be well-served to change that.