

OPINION

Stopping the Next Cyberassault

By Mike Rogers

In 10 years on the House Intelligence Committee I've watched a range of national security threats grow and evolve, but none as quickly as cyberwarfare. Two recent examples suggest the magnitude of the present and future danger.

The first is the North Korean government's campaign against Sony for its movie, "The Interview," poking fun at the regime. The company was hacked and private documents, some embarrassing, were leaked. Hackers even posted threats against major theater chains to deter them from showing the film.

This sort of cyberterrorism isn't new. Hactivist groups like Anonymous have long used these kinds of tactics to achieve their political goals. What's new is that the resources of a nation state are now being applied to the task. North Korea, long known for its brutal repression of its own people, is using cyberterrorism in an attempt to repress free speech in the United States.

The second example, not as widely discussed in the media, is a cyberthreat group called "FIN4" in a recent report from the cybersecurity firm FireEye. FireEye's report notes that FIN4 has hacked into nearly 100 publicly traded companies and collected sensitive insider financial information in what is probably an attempt to manipulate the stock market for profit. FIN4 uses sophisticated techniques,



has native-English language skills, and demonstrates detailed knowledge of corporate practices and financial markets. Cyber financial crimes are not new, but FIN4 shows that the threat has grown and evolved dramatically.

The Sony hack and FIN4 will not be isolated cases. It will likely not be long before North Korea engages in cyberwar against others who criticize, make fun of or challenge the Kim Jong Un regime. And other nation states will also be inspired by North Korea to step up their own cyberterrorism efforts. Similarly, the tactics of FIN4 may not just be used for the profit of a criminal enterprise. Groups could use its methods to disrupt or shock markets to achieve a terrorist or political goal. China already engages in

widespread economic cyberespionage. Iran has tried to disrupt American banks with denial-of-service attacks, and conducted a destructive attack on a Saudi oil company's computers in 2012. Russian organized crime groups use cyberespionage to commit financial fraud. The cast of characters, capabilities and motives continue to grow.

What can we do to cope? It is not enough to simply exhort American companies to work harder or the government to promulgate new regulations. A company can devote enormous resources to cybersecurity, do everything right, and still be vulnerable to a breach when it is attacked by a nation state or an advanced cybercriminal or group.

The U.S. government has an obligation to help those compa-

nies defend themselves by sharing any actionable intelligence the government has to warn them when and where they can expect an attack to come from.

Congress must update the law to expand the private-sector's access to government-classified cyberthreat intelligence. The law must also be updated to knock down the many barriers, such as concerns about legal liability or action by government regulators, that currently impede or stop companies from sharing cyberthreat information with each other and the government.

The U.S. government also needs to bring all appropriate tools of national power to bear to address this threat, and specifically to respond to North Korea's cyberattack. There are plenty of diplomatic, trade and other options to make clear that the U.S. will not tolerate nation-state attacks on our companies. We need to make an example of North Korea.

North Korea's attack on Sony and the FIN4 group's hacks are warnings about what is to come. Congress and the Obama administration must heed these warnings and take decisive action to defend the country and American businesses from these growing threats.

Mr. Rogers, a Republican from Michigan, is chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Kimberley A. Strassel is away.

BOOKSHELF | By Edwin Yoder Jr.

The Old Master

Essays After Eighty

By Donald Hall

(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 134 pages, \$22)

Thomas Mann once observed that "a writer is someone who finds it hard to do what others do easily"—a definitive encapsulation of the need for revision and a lesson that some would-be writers never seem to learn. By Mann's standard, Donald Hall is a prodigy. In the title piece of "Essays After Eighty"—a collection in which aging is a major theme but hardly the only one—he claims that "some of these essays took more than 80 drafts, some as few as 30." As for that major theme, Mr. Hall, the hardy octogenarian, moves in some pretty fast literary company—Cicero, for instance, in the consoling pages of his classic essay "De Senectute" (concerning old age) and even Shakespeare in the latter lines of the "Seven Ages of Man" soliloquy ("sans teeth, sans eyes . . . sans everything"). Mr. Hall doesn't suffer in the comparison.

For even an accomplished writer, however, his assertions about revision, taken literally, stretch a sound point. Mr. Hall may mean that it takes 30 to 80 tweaks of a piece of writing to satisfy his quest for euphony and rhythm and the mot juste. This is the typically blunt way he puts it: "The greatest pleasure in writing is rewriting. My early drafts are always wretched."

This is the secret pleasure that all real professionals know. In Mr. Hall's case, the claim of 30 to 80 revising efforts is credible, given the power and precision that he brings, presumably after much labor and what painters call *pentimento*, or repentance, to even the most ordinary scene, whether observing birds from the window of his New Hampshire farmhouse or reminiscing about his past adventures. These include a term (2006-07) as poet laureate of the United States, when he found, happily, that office hours were not required.

For these late prose pieces we are indebted to the alleged flight of Mr. Hall's ability to write poetry—"poetry abandoned me," he says—though his essays often echo his poetry, especially the poignant pages of his collection "Without" (1999), a free-verse account of the decline and death of his wife, the poet Jane Kenyon. His insistence on precision reminds me of the precepts of my teacher, Phillips Russell of Chapel Hill. "Be specific" was his golden rule: A chair isn't merely a chair; it is a Queen Anne chair with a fiddle-shaped back and a brown leather seat riddled with spidery cracks. The winter birds that Mr. Hall observes in an essay titled "Out the Window" aren't nameless; they are juncos and chickadees, nuthatches, American goldfinches and sparrows.

The former poet laureate says he has been abandoned by the muse of poetry. Perhaps that is why his prose is keener than ever.

Long ago, in Ann Arbor, Mich., where Mr. Hall taught English for 20 years, "the jacket pockets of men's gray suits showed the fangs of handkerchiefs." The squirrels raiding his bird feeder are "tree rats with the agility of point guards." In these inventive metaphors we catch the intact voice of the poet's absconded muse. And he is certainly right, by the way, to abhor the slack formulations now in fashion, such as "may I share my poems with you?" and people "passing" or "passing away" on obit pages, where no one is allowed to simply die.

One is tempted, among the excellences in "Essays After Eighty," to fuss a bit about the ancient bearded author photograph on the book jacket—it feels like a consciously exaggerated pose—and about Mr. Hall's boastful defiance of conventional health practices. He is a dedicated cigarette smoker and, glorying in "malfitness," insists that his semi-weekly exercise routines are merely prophylactic, to avert the wheelchair. No doubt anyone who survives to write as well and as long as Mr. Hall has favorable genes to thank and ought to take better care of them. His tributes to tobacco and flabbiness seem out of tune, not because he isn't entitled to his habits but because they are uncharacteristically ordinary. Let us also note, with mild regret, the occasional in-your-face vulgarities—"Washington's penis," for instance. I guess he means the patriarchal monument, about which such wisecracks occur to every passing nitwit.

Deliciously readable though it is, "Essays After Eighty," with its sketchy allusions to earlier lives, invites complement. Fortunately, a previous autobiography, "Unpacking the Boxes" (2008), subtitled "A Memoir of a Life in Poetry," fills the bill. It traces Mr. Hall's lives as poet, as student (Exeter, Harvard, Oxford), as college teacher, as lover of three wives and many mistresses, and as public platform reader. His lecture audiences must have enjoyed his seemingly effortless flow of aperçus, such as: "Poetry is more erotic than fiction, which is why female poets were so rare until the mid-20th century. Jane Austen and George Eliot were permitted to write great novels, but the only great 19th century woman poet was the eccentric eremite Emily Dickinson. . . . The vast increase in the number of good women poets has coincided with sexual liberation."

Maybe, as Mr. Hall claims, poetry is slipping away from him now. But if, as the sages say, there is a compensatory dynamic in the human spirit such that as one sense falters, another is enhanced (as the deaf are said to see more acutely), Donald Hall, if abandoned by the muse of poetry, has wrought his prose to a keen autumnal edge. It used to be said that a Parisian chef could do more with an old leather shoe-tongue than amateurs with fine cuts of beef, and Mr. Hall, likewise, touches his writing with music. Long may this defiantly "malfit," scruffily bearded, cigarette-puffing gnome sit by that window on Long Pond and defy his lurking Nemeses. Any writer should be proud to be apprenticed to the art of which he is a master.

Mr. Yoder, a former editor and columnist in Washington, is the author of a novel, "Lions at Lamb House."

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Letter From a Venezuelan Jail

By Leopoldo López

Los Teques, Venezuela
My country, Venezuela, is on the verge of social and economic collapse. This slow-motion disaster, nearly 15 years in the making, was not initiated by falling oil prices or by mounting debts. It was set in motion by the authoritarian government's hostility toward human rights and the rule of law and the institutions that protect them.

I know this on an all-too-personal level. I am writing from a military prison, where I have been held since February as a result of speaking out against the government's actions. I am one of scores of political prisoners in my country who are locked away because of their words and ideas.

This unjust incarceration has given me a firsthand view of the pervasive abuses—legal, mental and physical—perpetrated by the ruling elite in my country. It has not been a good experience, but it has been an enlightening one.

My isolation has given me time to think and reflect on the larger crisis facing my country. It has never been clearer to me that Venezuela's road to ruin was paved years ago by a movement to dismantle basic human rights and freedoms in the name of an illusory vision of achieving greater

good for the masses through the centralization of power.

When the current ruling party, the United Socialist Party, first took power in 1999, its supporters viewed human rights as a luxury, not a necessity. Large segments of the population were living in poverty, and in need of food, housing

I am one of scores of political prisoners locked away because of our words and ideas.

and security. Protecting free speech and the separation of powers seemed frivolous. In the name of expediency, these values were compromised and then dismantled entirely.

The legislature was neutered, allowing the executive to rule by decree without the checks and balances that prevent government from veering off track. The judiciary was made accountable to the ruling party, rendering the constitution and the law meaningless. In an infamous 2009 case, Judge Mary Lourdes Afuni was imprisoned for ordering the release of a businessman and government critic who had been held for three years in pretrial detention, one

year more than allowed under Venezuelan law.

Meanwhile, political leaders—myself included—were persecuted and imprisoned, stifling the competition of ideas that could have led to better decisions and policies. Independent news organizations were dismantled, seized or driven out of business. The "sunshine that disinfects," and the scrutiny that motivates good decision-making, no longer benefit our leadership.

Venezuela's current president, Nicolás Maduro, has taken this to a terrible new low. Rights are rationed as though they were scarce goods to be traded for other means of subsistence: You may have employment if you give away your free speech. You may have some health benefits if you give away your right to protest.

Apologists, many from other countries, including the U.S., say these sacrifices were and are for the collective good of the country. Yet the lives of Venezuelans, especially the poor, are worse by every measure. Inflation, at more than 60%, is rampant. Scarcity of basic goods has led to empty shelves and long lines. Violent crime is skyrocketing and the murder rate is the second highest in the world, behind only Honduras. The health-care system is collapsing. And many financial experts are predicting a default on the country's

debts in a matter of months.

The challenges now facing Venezuela are complex and will require years of work on many fronts. That work must begin with restoring the rights, freedoms and checks and balances that are the proper foundation of civil society.

The international community has an important role to play—especially our neighbors in Latin America. To remain silent is to be complicit in a disaster that doesn't just impact Venezuela but could have implications across the hemisphere. Organizations such as the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) and the South American trade bloc Mercosur must come off the sidelines. Countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Argentina must get involved.

At home, our constitution provides a way forward if we will heed its words. Our proposal is simple but powerful: All rights for all people. Not some rights for some people. No regime should have the power to decide who gets access to which rights. This idea may be taken for granted in other countries, but in my country, Venezuela, it is a dream worth fighting for.

Mr. López is the former mayor of the Chacao district of Caracas and the leader of the Popular Will opposition party.

Science Increasingly Makes the Case for God

In 1966 Time magazine ran a cover story asking: Is God Dead? Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete—that as science progresses, there is less need for a "God" to explain the universe. Yet it turns out that the rumors of God's death were premature. More amazing is that the relatively recent case for his existence comes from a surprising place—science itself.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

By Eric Metaxas

Here's the story: The same year Time featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: The right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion—1 followed by 24 zeros—planets in the universe, there should have been about septillion—1 followed by 21 zeros—planets capable of supporting life.

With such spectacular odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a large, expensive collection of private and publicly funded projects launched in the 1960s, was sure to turn up something soon. Scientists listened with a vast radio telescopic network for signals that resembled coded intelligence and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Congress defunded SETI in 1993, but the search continues with private funds. As of 2014, researchers have discovered precisely *bubkis*—0 followed by nothing.

What happened? As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two



parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thousand planets and kept on plummeting.

Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for Skeptical Inquirer magazine: "In light of new findings and insights, it seems

The odds of life existing on another planet grow ever longer. Intelligent design, anyone?

appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest We should quietly admit that the early estimates . . . may no longer be tenable."

As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that even we shouldn't be here.

Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every

single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth's surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

Yet here we are, not only existing, but talking about existing. What can account for it? Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point is it fair to admit that science suggests that we cannot be the result of random forces? Doesn't assuming that an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing that a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the inconceivable odds to come into being?

There's more. The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the "strong" and "weak" nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio