

Exhibit 13

October 2011 Panetta Statement

National Security

Panetta: loose lips on CIA's not-so-secret secret

By **Craig Whitlock** October 7, 2011

SIGONELLA NAVAL AIR STATION, Italy — One of the U.S. government's worst-kept secrets is the [CIA's program to hunt and kill suspected terrorists with armed drones](#). Everybody knows the CIA does it. The agency, however, refuses to publicly acknowledge the covert program, a fig leaf that has obscured the CIA's operations and limited official accountability.

So ears perked up Friday when Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta not once, but twice made cracks about the agency's fleet of unmanned Predator drones while visiting troops in Italy.

Panetta, who served as CIA director prior to [becoming Pentagon chief in July](#), jokingly told an auditorium full of sailors at the U.S. naval base in Naples that he was enjoying his new job because of all the firepower at his disposal.

“Obviously I have a hell of a lot more weapons available to me here than I had at the CIA,” he said. “Although the Predators aren't bad.”

A few hours later, during a stop at the Sigonella Naval Air Station in Sicily, Panetta made another reference to the CIA's armed drones.

Standing in front of an unarmed Global Hawk surveillance drone, Panetta lauded the [role played by the U.S. military's Predator fleet in the war in Libya](#). The use of Predators, he added slyly, “is something I was very familiar with in my past job.”

Shortly after that remark, as if on cue, a U.S. Air Force Predator took off from the other side of the base. It circled slowly for a few minutes, looking from a distance like a fat, metallic-gray mosquito, before disappearing over the horizon — presumably en route to Libya.

Unlike the CIA, the Pentagon is open about its use of armed Predator drones and a newer model, the Reaper. The military has deployed them in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. The CIA flies most of its armed drones over Pakistan, but has [recently ramped up its operations in Yemen](#).

Panetta was visiting Italy to hear from U.S. commanders running the Libya campaign and to give pep talks to U.S.

and NATO forces in Naples and Sicily. With Col. Moammar Gaddafi ousted and most of the country under the control of the opposition, Panetta found himself in a position to crow a bit about NATO's successful military intervention.

Panetta recalled how "a lot of critics" had questioned whether NATO should get involved in Libya and had warned that the alliance would get bogged down in the mission. "The critics have really been proven wrong," he said.

He didn't name any names. But one of the biggest doubters was his predecessor as defense secretary, Robert M. Gates. Gates, who retired in June, [had argued that Libya wasn't a national security priority](#) for the Obama administration and that it was a bad idea for the U.S. military to engage in a war in yet another Muslim country.

Craig Whitlock covers the Pentagon and national security. He has reported for The Washington Post since 1998.

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