

# Secure-the-Grid Coalition Weekly Teleconference Rollup for February 16, 2024

Members,

Thank you for your continuing commitment to this national movement.

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

Next Friday's Coalition Teleconference will feature **Texas State Senator Bob Hall**, a consummate Grid Warrior. Be sure to be online for that.

We give great thanks and a hearty welcome to **former [REDACTED] PUC Commissioner [REDACTED]** for his time on Friday's telecon, and thanks extend to **[REDACTED]** who arranged for that presentation.

We also thank **Dave Cserep of All Secure Group**, and its affiliation with **D-Fend Solutions** in the **Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems** space. We also thank All Secure Group for publishing anonymized versions of our private **Coalition Rollups** on their website, which will begin very soon.

In keeping up to date with the threat landscape put forth in Friday's teleconference, the **RAND Homeland Security Research Division** has published a free report:

["Emerging Technology and Risk Analysis: Unmanned Aerial Systems Intelligent Swarm Technology"](#) (Feb 15, 2024)

This brand-new report can be found at the hyperlink and is also ATTACHED.

Here is CNN's account of ["Russia attempting to develop nuclear space weapon to destroy satellites with massive energy wave, sources familiar with intel say"](#)

Note that the earth-surface impacts on electronics controlling critical infrastructure is not considered in this article. Same omission in [other accounts](#).

Here is an exception, thanks to **[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]**, who found this account in **NewsMax** quoting warnings from **BG (ret) [REDACTED]** and our friend **William Forstchen**: ["EMP Attack Consequences Could Be Widespread."](#)

See more in **"Nuclear Threat"** under **"Compartmented Items"** below.

**[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]** each refer us to this **MUST-SEE** video of the [Butler County, Ohio Sheriff Richard \(Jonesy\) Jones Addressing What He Learned at a Conference](#) of the **National Sheriff's Association** in Washington D.C.

Sheriff Jones speaks **directly to the public** on what he learned, **including threats to the U.S. and "need-to-know information."**

Last week [REDACTED] gave a presentation at the widely attended **Military Operations Research Society**. It is hoped many were able to attend, as it appears there will not be an On Demand for this event.

**Michael Mabee's** FERC filing requesting FERC take **Official Notice of additional purchase and installations of Chinese-manufactured large power transformers** in **EL21-99-000**. To view the document for this Filing, [click here](#).

Also **ATTACHED** is the spreadsheet with Michael's updated totals.

Here are some of the activities from **David Pyne** this past week:

[Mysterious Russian Space Nuclear Weapon System Identified as Super-EMP Weapons Capable of Destroying US](#). An interview on [Brannon Howse Live](#).

A new installment to [The Real War](#) titled, "[How to End the War in Gaza and Restore Peace to the Middle East](#)"

*This is David's 15-point compromise peace proposal to end the destructive and deadly war in Gaza contains realistic provisions designed to be acceptable to both sides since a two-state solution is not possible.*

[REDACTED] alerts to old vehicle hoarding at NASA  
[Short video here](#) posted on Facebook – You will **NOT** need a Facebook account to view this.

### [FERC Annual Report for 2023 from the Office of Public Participation](#)

*FERC's Office of Public Participation's (OPP) published its **second Annual Report**. In its 2023 OPP Annual Report, OPP discusses its public services, community outreach and assistance efforts, and growing toolbox of educational resources that facilitate greater public participation in FERC proceedings.*

[Coalition members who did not file a motion or comments in 2023 should review this and the educational resources FERC makes available to put public viewpoints into the permanent public record. Filings with FERC impact the legislative process. **Legislators refer to FERC dockets in their quest to evaluate the public pulse.**]

[REDACTED] alerts us to the upcoming [2024 Air Force Intelligence Community Security Review Board \(SRB\)](#) (hyperlink to register)

*The 2024 Air Force Intelligence Community Security Review Board (SRB) will convene virtually **21 - 22 May 2024** (unclassified), with classified workshops taking place on **23 May 2024**. This event brings together Information System Security Managers (ISSM), Information System Security Officers (ISSO), and Chief Information Security Officers (CISO) and other cybersecurity professionals throughout the United States Air Force to discuss the latest policy updates, priorities, tools, methods, and related Intelligence Community cybersecurity concerns.*

[This event will appear each week in **Calendar Section** (below) without extended description.]

Steve Curtis provides an extracted copy of the article he co-authored with Pete Roche, “Microgrids for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Case for a Defense Energy Architectures, as published in the Joint Forces Quarterly that is easier to email, so it is ATTACHED to this week’s Rollup.

To view the entire National Defense University publication, [click here](#).

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## COMPARTMENTED ITEMS:

### Cyber & Control Systems & Sensors

#### [Microsoft Azure customers hit by phishing, account takeover attacks](#)

*More than 200 organizations have been targeted via employee compromise, Proofpoint said.*

#### Free Report: [9 Ways Microsoft Security is Soft on Threats](#)

*Not saying that Microsoft is the worst, but it is good to see different opinions. We should always be looking at things critically when it comes to security.*

THX [REDACTED]

#### [FBI-led operation disrupts botnet controlled by state-linked Forest Blizzard](#)

*Russia’s GRU-backed group exploited hundreds of vulnerable routers to conduct spear phishing and credential harvesting attacks against U.S. targets.*

### Physical Security

Power Engineers, a 100% employee-owned company with 50 locations nationwide, is [recruiting experienced power engineers to design physical security substations](#) in the Houston area.

### Microgrids

#### [“Interconnection Woes Stymie DER and Microgrid Deployment: These Innovative Policies Could Help”](#)

*The International Energy Agency estimates that more than 3,000 GW of projects are stalled in interconnection queues globally, slowing microgrid and distributed energy resource (DER) deployment and the clean energy transition. A number of obstacles have led to this standstill, including long and complicated interconnection queues, unexpected grid upgrades, permitting challenges, transmission bottlenecks, and equipment and supply chain delays.*

THX [REDACTED]

#### [SDG&E Unveils Four New Microgrids to Support Mission Critical Sites](#)

*All four San Diego Gas & Electric microgrids can operate independently and in tandem with the regional grid. The battery storage installations are connected across four substations and will provide backup power to police and fire stations, schools and cooling centers.*

[If these are mission-critical, these all should be HEMP/GMD resilient! Are they?]

## **Solar Threat**

Solar eruptions **do not have to face Earth to impact our planet**. There is a magnetic “danger zone” that is explained in this article, [“The Danger of Sunspots that Don’t Face Earth.”](#)

## **Nuclear Threat**

### [From Russia with nukes? Sifting facts from speculation about space weapon threat](#)

*“Nuclear weapons in space are a really, really dumb idea,” said Jessica West of Canadian non-profit Ploughshares, but experts note that with Russia, nothing can ever be fully ruled out.*

THX [REDACTED]

### [Officials sound alarm about new Russian ‘space threat’](#)

*Russia has been experimenting with ways to disable satellites, raising concerns that classified intelligence about a new weapon could indicate a strategic threat to national security.*

## **Generation, Transmission Distribution**

### [General guidelines for safekeeping of high voltage transformers – Part 1](#)

*This article serves as a guideline for substation managers, asset managers, and substation engineers in the absence of any guidelines issued by their utilities or in the industry.*

### [Siemens Energy to invest \\$150 million in US transformer factory](#)

*Siemens Energy said construction of the factory would begin this year with manufacturing to begin in early 2026.*

[Sounds like these will not be EHV transformers, however]

### [Vegetation Management Improves Service](#)

*By making changes to its vegetation management program, MTE is improving power reliability for its members.*

### [Grid Deployment Office: February Newsletter](#)

[Doubling down on the same, for the most part.]

## **Communications Security**

House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on February 15: [Securing Communications Networks from Foreign Adversaries](#) [video – action begins at 6:40]

THX [REDACTED]

## Energy Democracy/Equity

### [Self-Determination Can Save the Energy System](#)

*John Farrell: Americans prefer local control, explains Farrell, yet continue to tolerate a costly, undemocratic energy system. Monopoly utilities disconnect millions of customers for nonpayment, yet rake in billions of dollars for their shareholders and executives. Utilities are also some of the top players in political lobbying, pushing for policies that diminish the power of their ratepayers. Meanwhile, local ownership of clean energy has big benefits: reduced energy costs, a boost to local economies.*

THX [REDACTED]

## Regulatory and Policy

### [State officials blame federal regulation for higher energy prices: ‘Customers are getting hurt.’](#)

*Proposed federal limits on fossil fuel power plants will further raise costs and weaken reliability, three state energy officials told a U.S. House subcommittee on Wednesday.*

### [FERC Churn Won't Impact Grid Policy Push, Chair Says](#)

*The prospect of commissioner departure will not impact the efforts to finalize the overhaul of electric transmission policies.*

### [DOE Aims for More Capacity Contracts for New Transmission Projects](#)

*The contracts are meant to boost investment in transmission and get critical transmission lines built when they might not have otherwise.*

Defense Systems Information Analysis Center (DSIAC) has released the [February 13 Edition of the DSIAC Digest](#).

*This issue features information on autonomous systems, the electromagnetic spectrum, rocket science, and more.*

## Whistleblowers

### [Supreme Court Decision in SOX Retaliation Case “A Major Win for Whistleblowers”](#)

*On February 8, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous ruling in Murray v. UBS Securities, LLC, a Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) whistleblower case with widespread implications for the ability of whistleblowers to seek anti-retaliation protections under federal whistleblower laws.*

*In 2023, National Whistleblower Center filed an Amicus Curiae brief in Murray v. UBS Securities that detailed the Congressional intent behind the “contributing factor” standard of proof, advocating for Murray’s case. This recent Court decision is an incredible victory for whistleblowers and for anti-retaliation protections.*

### **[Ex-First Energy executives, Ohio utility regulator charged by state in bailout and bribery scandal](#)**

*Whistleblower cheers new indictments. Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost announced scores of felony charges against a former regulator who also has been charged federally, and against two people who haven’t — former top executives for Akron-based FirstEnergy whom the company admitted paid more than \$60 million in bribes between 2016 and 2020 in exchange for a \$1.3 billion ratepayer bailout.*

## **Storage**

### **[Lawmakers see power grid security risks from Chinese storage batteries](#)**

*Lawmakers and experts fear that the use of Chinese storage batteries could threaten the power grid, but few alternatives are in the offing, at least in the short term.*

### **[China’s BYD sets sights on crowning itself as global energy storage leader](#)**

*2023 marked a turning point for BYD as it began to double down on energy storage projects in the domestic market for ultra-low prices.*

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## **CALENDAR – with hyperlinks for information**

*[ In the case of webinars, it is always wise to pre-register for these virtual events, even if you will be unable to view them “live.” Many of these events are still available online post-event, and in most of those cases even available to those who did not pre-register. ]*

### **February:**

**20<sup>th</sup>**    **[Strengthening Operational Resilience with IEC Cyber Security Regulations Case Study](#)** 5am ET

**NEW** **[Introducing Effective Physical Security for Electric Substations](#)** 1pm ET

**21<sup>st</sup>**    **NEW** **[“Ask Me Anything”](#)** Webinar: cybersecurity questions can be submitted in advance 2pm ET

**27<sup>th</sup>**    **[Threat intelligence: Unleashing the full potential of your security arsenal](#)** – 10:45am-4pm ET

**28<sup>th</sup>**    **[DSIAC – “Expanding Release Envelopes Into the Supersonic Regime via CFD Analysis”](#)** 12pm ET

**29<sup>th</sup>**    **["API Security: Protecting Your Application’s Attack Surface"](#)** - 1pm ET

### **March:**

14<sup>th</sup> **NEW** [“Novel Nuclear Forensics for the 21st Century” HDIAC](#) 12pm ET

21<sup>st</sup> [Cybersecurity’s Hottest New Technologies: What You Need to Know](#) 11am-5pm ET

**May:**

21-23 **NEW** - [2024 Air Force Intelligence Community Security Review Board \(SRB\)](#)

**NOW ON DEMAND:**

[Future Directions for Gallium Nitride \(GaN\) Devices in RF Applications](#)

[Overcoming First of a Kind Risk - Accelerating SMR Commercialization](#)

[Evolution Of Physical Security & Cloud-Based Access Control Will Shape the Future](#)

[Securing the Grid: A Solution for NERC CIP Transient Cyber Asset Requirements](#)

[Joint Meeting of NRC and FERC \(Docket Number AD06-6-000\)](#)

[CSIAC – Developing the Cybersecurity Workforce: An Intro to the NICE Framework](#)

[Dennis Quaid Interview on Tucker Carlson](#)

[Maximizing Your ROI - Holistic Cybersecurity Strategies With Expert Joe Weiss](#)

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**TRACKING THE TELECON:**

**Tommy Waller** opens the February 16 Coalition teleconference announcing that Texas State Senator Bob Hall will join our next Coalition teleconference. Tommy extends an invitation for experts to contribute to discussions on creating educational solutions for grid security. Tommy details the focus of analyzing the "full picture" of the energy supply, from fuel supply to distribution, and the technologies that can protect the grid from various threats.

Tommy sets the agenda with an introduction of [REDACTED], president of [REDACTED] **Energy Group, LLC**, highlighting [REDACTED] extensive background in working at state and federal levels on utilities, especially post-winter storm Uri. [REDACTED] service in the Army and experience with the [REDACTED] **Public Utility Commission** are also mentioned as the honor of having [REDACTED] participate in today’s Coalition discussion.

[REDACTED] follows on with other details of his background and his work with the **Senate Business and Commerce Committee**. Will then describes his involvement in **addressing natural**

**resources and utilities legislation** that impacts grid security and resiliency, emphasizing the importance of maintaining **reliable supply chains** and having **recovery protocols** in extreme weather scenarios.

Tommy segues into commentary regarding regulatory environments and the **upcoming NARUC Conference**. Tommy explains the complexity of security beyond just technological solutions, mentioning the **political, regulatory, and economic environments**. He highlights the NARUC conference as a significant event, considering its influence on grid security, and calls for future collaborations with commissioners on a state level.

#### **TIME-TRACK 6:51**

Tommy turns the moderator duties to Doug, who delivers announcements regarding the continuing expansion of Chinese transformers into the U.S. grid, highlighting **Michael Mabee's** formal filing with FERC requesting that regulatory body take "Official Notice" of the growing numbers of installed Large Power Transformers of Chinese Manufacture.

#### **TIME-TRACK 8:22**

Doug continues the agenda announcing that [REDACTED] presented before the **Military Operations Research Society** this past week, and will comment on this event and future events that he has booked on the non-recorded portion of today's teleconference.

Doug references Glenn Rhoades and the Zoom Conference this past week of the Task Force on National and Homeland Security leadership team. The topic presented was counter-drone technology using D-Fend Solutions offering in the non-kinetic space, and ably presented by DJ Smith, Technical Coordinator with the Virginia State Patrol.

The Conference ran long, and arrangements were discussed about further inquiry into this topic with guest **Dave Cserep of All Secure Group**, affiliated with **D-Fend Solutions**. Alternative dates are discussed regarding the pressing need, however if convened too soon could create schedule-conflicts, yet recognizing the pressing need to address this evolving threat without delay.

A solution is suggested which could incorporate **Dave Cserep** into today's STG Coalition teleconference and some time is volunteered to that purpose. Doug references the Coalition's hosting Dave last fall, which included **Mark Barclay** and **Troy Kearse**.

#### **TIME-TRACK 11:10**

Before launching the agenda items, a video clip provided by [REDACTED] is referenced. It is brief panoramic view of a NASA parking lot where hundreds of vintage vehicles are stored. These vehicle predate microelectronic dependencies that are in today's vehicles, and therefore these vintage models are considered more rugged against effects of HEMP. What this storage portends is thought provoking.

#### **TIME-TRACK 12:31**

██████ sets the stage referencing a request from Congressional membership to formulate ideas that could be **instituted with immediacy to enhance grid resilience** to massive threats that have not been addressed by meaningful actions.

██████ explains initiatives to protect critical infrastructure, including military and county sheriff interventions to handle both national and local matters. He elaborates on the need for securing the perimeter of critical facilities and the role of drone countermeasures. **Dave Cserep** is introduced by Len to shed further light on drone security solutions.

#### **TIME-TRACK 15:01**

After ██████ introduction, **Dave Cserep** begins to provide a deeper understanding of the potential impact of drone technology. Dave emphasizes the effectiveness of the systems of **D-Fend Solutions** in protecting critical infrastructure, such as power grids, and thereby underscores their strategic importance of the **Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (C-UAS)** role in enhancing national security measures. By highlighting the evolving threat landscape and the need for innovative defense strategies, Dave underscores the Coalition's commitment to staying ahead of emerging security threats.

Specifically, Dave advocates a tiered solution set consisting of both kinetic and RF jamming methods, as well as non-destructive methods such as radio frequency **control intervention**, which offers a nuanced perspective on the challenges of **balancing security concerns with civilian safety considerations**. Dave makes a contrast between traditional defense methods like kinetic action and jamming methods to further underscore the commitment to adopting tailored solutions that align with broader national security objectives **while shielding civilian life and property from collateral damage from resultant falling debris in kinetic solutions, and widespread communication disruptions from RF Jamming**.

Dave provides capabilities to **ferret out unauthorized aerial systems** and bring them to ground safely at a predetermined "safe zone" through **taking over control of the aerial vehicle while locking the perpetrator out**. Dave also explains the "**patrol-type**" defense of portable **Enforce-Air**.

Dave asserts that the **D-Fend Solutions** offering in this space is the **preferred system of the "alphabet agencies."**

#### **TIME-TRACK 22:58**

Doug receives a bulletin announcing that former ██████ Commissioner ██████ will need to jump off soon and has some prepared remarks to present on the Texas grid "weatherization" plan and other matters. So Dave's presentation and Q&A are **suspended temporarily** to turn the floor back to ██████.

#### **TIME-TRACK 23:25**

██████ shares the elements of Texas' aggressive measures in hardening the grid system post-Winter Storm Uri, including **weatherization programs**, developing **firm fuel supply** services, **improving communication** protocols, mapping **critical energy supply chain** points, and involving **residential backup power** systems in grid management.

█ begins by outlining Texas' response to recent severe storms, noting three significant events in four years impacting the state and neighboring regions. Texas responded by implementing stringent weatherization programs for its energy systems. Generation stations are required to meet specific temperature thresholds and implement mitigation strategies tailored to regional weather patterns.

#### **TIME-TRACK 25:27**

█ then details the weatherization requirements, explaining that generation stations are required to install measures such as **pipe wraps, heat tracing, and wind turbine modifications** to withstand extreme temperatures. He highlights the **region-specific** nature of the regulations, with different temperature thresholds for North and South █. **Inspectors will be deployed annually** to ensure compliance, with **significant penalties** for non-compliance to incentivize adherence to the standards.

Another key aspect of █ approach was the establishment of a **firm fuel supply** service, which incentivizes generation stations to maintain **backup fuel reserves on-site**. █ notes that over **three gigawatts of backup fuel capacity** are now available in the system to mitigate the risk of fuel scarcity during emergencies. Additionally, emergency and ancillary services are bolstered to address contingencies such as wind fluctuations and power plant failures.

**Communication improvements were also prioritized**, with the formation of the █ **Reliability Committee** comprising major stakeholders to coordinate emergency responses. █ highlights the importance of **pre-positioning personnel ahead of major weather events** to ensure continuity of the energy supply chain, including gas pumping to generators and the public.

Furthermore, **critical energy supply chain points were mapped out and designated as priority sites** to receive uninterrupted power during emergencies. Will emphasizes the importance of these measures in enhancing the resilience of █ energy infrastructure.

#### **TIME-TRACK 29:39**

In terms of funding, grants were allocated for **backup power solutions for critical facilities such as hospitals and emergency service centers**. Additionally, transmission and distribution utilities were required to submit **resiliency plans** outlining investments in technologies to improve reliability and reduce recovery times during disruptions.

█ introduces a groundbreaking **virtual power plant program**, allowing consumers with backup power systems to sell surplus energy to the grid during peak demand periods. He expressed confidence that these initiatives could serve as a national framework for enhancing energy resilience, **citing interest from other states and from NERC**.

#### **TIME-TRACK 33:15**

Doug highlights the importance of raising awareness among the public about energy reliability and resilience. He noted that the public often takes electricity for granted and stressed the need for **greater understanding of all hazards**.

Doug opens the floor to **Q&A with [REDACTED]**, and participants [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and **Tommy Waller** discuss topics like **CenterPoint Energy's** electromagnetic damage mitigation offering of **SIPROTEC**, some comparisons of [REDACTED] grid initiatives to national policies, and the **role of telecommunication** infrastructure in grid resiliency. Will addresses these concerns and confirms Texas' forward-thinking grid strategies and **partnerships with telecom companies like AT&T to ensure reliable communication during emergencies**.

The discussion also touched on [REDACTED] grid ties with other regions and the **value of [REDACTED] independent regulatory structure** in fostering innovation and problem-solving, and Will emphasizes the **importance of [REDACTED] autonomy in addressing unique challenges and pioneering solutions** that could benefit the broader energy industry.

In conclusion, [REDACTED] reiterated the significance of [REDACTED] policy initiatives as a potential model for enhancing energy resilience nationwide. He emphasized the need for continued collaboration and innovation to address evolving threats and ensure the reliability of energy systems across the country.

#### **TIME-TRACK 45:34**

Doug thanks [REDACTED] for his time today and acknowledges the blessing of having Will's experience on the team as we go about our shared mission of securing the electric grid and other critical infrastructures. Also, gratitude is expressed to [REDACTED] for bringing Will to the Secure-the-Grid Coalition teleconferences.

#### **TIME-TRACK 46:55**

Doug resumes the discussion with **Dave Cserep** that was suspended earlier with a question regarding the **cost-sharing aspect of the EnforceAir** suite of solutions. Doug refers to previous offline discussions about establishing routes to cover critical infrastructure like electric utility substations and generation plants. Doug proposes a **roving route spanning four kilometers** in width around water, oil, gas, and communications infrastructures.

Dave acknowledges Doug's question and clarifies his role as a safety and security analyst and discusses the possibility of **clustering or "Daisy-Chaining" EnforceAir systems**. Dave elaborates on the recent partnership with **Centralized Vision** for system monitoring, highlighting the cost-effectiveness and flexibility of **EnforceAir** in budgeting and planning.

Doug further explores the concept of countywide cooperation to cover costs and ensure security. He suggests collaboration between **county boards, sheriff's departments, utilities, and other critical infrastructure stakeholders**. Doug emphasizes the need for routes to be changed frequently in view of operational security needs.

Dave continues, affirming the **mobility of the EnforceAir system** and its **adaptability to various vehicles**. He details the process of pre-positioning waypoints for effective protection during travel. Dave emphasizes the system's ability to **mitigate drone threats in real-time**, ensuring the safety of critical infrastructure.

#### **TIME-TRACK 54:08**

██████████ joins the discussion to inquire about the **coverage of band frequencies by EnforceAir**. He seeks clarification on whether any drones operate outside the covered frequencies. Dave responds by explaining the operating frequencies of **EnforceAir** and the continuous updating of technology to address new threats. Dave assures the group of **EnforceAir's effectiveness, citing a 95-98% success rate** in countering drone threats, **citing CIA experience and EnforceAir's constantly updated library of protocols**. Doug expresses gratitude for the comprehensive explanation and reassures our audience that EnforceAir covers even **homemade drone threats**. He appreciates Dave's analogy of EnforceAir as a "big **drug-sniffing dog**" that is looking, not for drugs, but for radio frequencies and special UAS protocols.

**TIME-TRACK 57:39**

██████████ concludes the recorded discussion by suggesting the addition of the **drone category for future law enforcement presentation at the National Sheriff's Association Conference** that he and ██████████ are preparing. He highlights the significance of drone threats and their implications for law enforcement agencies.

**TIME-TRACK 1:00:27**

Doug thanks all speakers and participants for their contributions, highlighting the need for wide collaboration on securing the grid. He particularly thanks ██████████ and **Dave Cserep** for their presentations today and welcomes them to future calls. The conversation then prepares to transition to a non-recorded session for further, more sensitive discussions.

Truly,

-Doug