

Puzzle for December 4, 2006

The following is a passage from the book *The Pentagon Wars*, by James Burton (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD ©1993; p. 41).

Weapons developers, when given a choice, always go for the complex, elaborate solution at the expense of the simple one. Complexity leads to higher costs: purchase costs, operations costs, and maintenance costs. Higher costs result in fewer weapons, which, in turn, lead to contrived tests and analyses to prove that the relatively few complex systems can overcome the larger numbers of the simpler, less expensive weapons of the enemy. The fewer the weapons, the tighter is the control of these precious assets by a centralized command structure. The elaborate paraphernalia that comes with the centralized command structure only adds to the complexity of the overall system.

How does weapons development compare to developing security mechanisms?