

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:30 PM ET**

June 4, 2014

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## **Former Naval DEVGRU Chief's Threat Assessment Finds Keystone XL Would be Soft Target for Terrorists**

New study analyzes security vulnerabilities of Keystone XL and the threat posed to nearby agricultural lands and waterways

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The first-ever threat assessment of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline highlights the potential security vulnerabilities. The report finds that the pipeline has a high-risk of being exploited and could easily cause a catastrophic spill of more than seven million gallons of toxic tar sands “dilbit” into surrounding farmlands and waterways.

A recent poll shows that 72 percent of Americans are familiar with Keystone XL, making it possibly the most recognized piece of U.S. energy infrastructure. That means it would be an especially attractive target for terrorists, according to the threat assessment's author, Dave Cooper, a 25-year veteran of U.S. Naval special operations and winner of a Silver Star and six Bronze Stars for combat valor.

Cooper was commissioned by NextGen Climate America, Inc. to conduct the threat assessment to make it available to key decision makers and U.S. State Department's staff as it conducts its National Interest Determination.

“There has been plenty of public discussion about the safety of the pipeline when it comes to things like corrosion, materials construction, excavation and operator error, but very little discussion about its security,” said Cooper. “As a citizen with no firmly held opinion on whether the Keystone XL pipeline should be built, I was genuinely intrigued about how soft a terrorist target the pipeline would be and the ease with which terrorists could attack it. I was surprised by how easily terrorists could cause a catastrophic spill and the volume of toxic dilbit they could dump into surrounding farm fields and waterways.”

Cooper found that a dozen terrorists could cause a massive spill of more than seven million gallons by attacking the pipeline at three points with explosives of

four pounds per attack point – even if TransCanada were to execute perfectly on its advertised shut-down protocol of under 12 minutes.

The assessment was conducted in several phases:

- Gathering is publicly available information from the Internet.
- Conducting a site visit to the existing Keystone 1 pipeline to assess current security measures (Cooper found practically none).
- Examining existing federal security requirements for pipelines (minimal).
- Constructing threat scenarios for several particularly vulnerable points along the pipeline's existing route.

“Our security standards right now are practically nonexistent for pipelines,” said Cooper. “My goal in releasing this version of the assessment is to provide federal officials and the public with the information on this vulnerability to take it into account – and take steps to address it. We need a serious national conversation about what we do to head off an attack. Until then, I’d offer a saying we used on the SEAL teams: ‘If you cannot defend a position, you shouldn’t take it.’”

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Editors/producers note: If you’re interested in speaking with Mr. Cooper about his findings, please contact Tanara Bowie at [tbowie@tigercomm.us](mailto:tbowie@tigercomm.us) or 703-302-8383.