



Walter Mencken's

SD ON THE QT

Almost factual news

Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Drones

San Diego-Based Defense Contractor General Atomics Looks to Reshape the Way We Bomb Now; Begins Selling Drone Technology to Every Two-Bit Country With \$10 Million and a Dream

By MAUREEN DOWD

Maybe the scumbag Senator from Iron Man 2 had a point about the privatization and proliferation of military technology?

CROUCHED IN A GODFORSAKEN CAVE AND HOPEFULLY OUT OF HARM'S WAY, PAKISTAN — Nearly 30 years ago, President Ronald Reagan proposed a plan to protect the United States from a possible nuclear missile attack by the Soviet Union. He called it the Strategic Defense Initiative, but it didn't take long for people to start calling it "Star Wars" because the plan included the use of lasers to intercept ballistic missiles from space. It sounded far-fetched and a little bit ridiculous, sort of like the a young punk from a hick planet showing up and taking out the Empire's ultimate weapon. But the force was with Luke Skywalker, and apparently it was with Ronnie, too. The Soviets blinked, and for whatever reason, we won the Cold War.



Speaking of drones...

Now, we have a sequel of sorts, and just like the cinematic versions put forth at the turn of the millennium, this new story has substituted political machinations and video game-style technology for the original's

magic and meaning. In place of an Evil Empire, we have terrorist cells operating in countries that simultaneously praise and blame our foreign policy. (Am I the only one who couldn't bring herself to care about Nute Gunray's sinister plan to take over Naboo?) In place of a Soviet Premiere promising to bury us, we have Pakistani officials agreeing to protest our decision to bomb their country without declaring war while doing nothing about it. (Oooo, Count Dooku, your treachery is almost as subtle as your name!) And in place of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, we have the Predator drone, designed right here in San Diego. (Bye-bye Death Star; hello Roomba-style droids!) Easily replicable — dare we say

"cloned" — relatively cheap, and soon, widely available. China is building their own. Everybody else wants to buy ours.

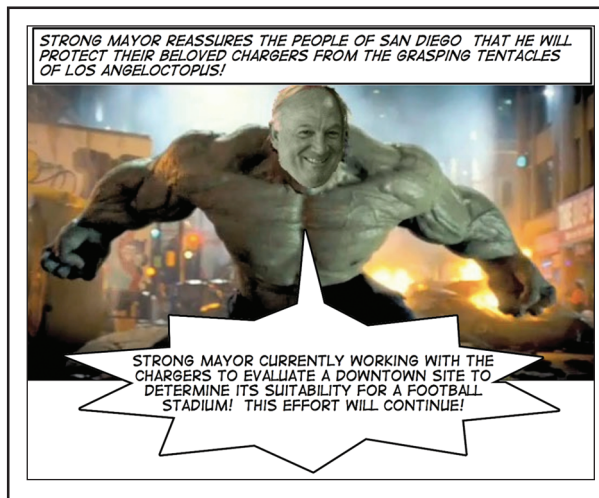
In the meantime, drones are fast becoming the U.S. military's SOP when it comes to taking out the bad guys, just like those unmanned Iron Men thingies in *Iron Man 2*. It's estimated that the U.S. ran 13 drone strikes in Pakistan in September alone. Want to be a good soldier? Sharpen those joystick skills.

Attack of the Drones. It's crass, it's commercial, and it's probably going to ruin Western Civilization. Thank you, George Lucas.

(Maureen Dowd appears by special arrangement with the dark side of the Force *New York Times*.)



Look Ma, no cockpit!



STRONG MAYOR REASSURES THE PEOPLE OF SAN DIEGO THAT HE WILL PROTECT THEIR BELOVED CHARGERS FROM THE GRASPING TENTACLES OF LOS ANGELOCTOPUS!

STRONG MAYOR CURRENTLY WORKING WITH THE CHARGERS TO EVALUATE A DOWNTOWN SITE TO DETERMINE ITS SUITABILITY FOR A FOOTBALL STADIUM! THIS EFFORT WILL CONTINUE!

Scientists Heave Heavy Sigh of Relief After Huge FDA Win



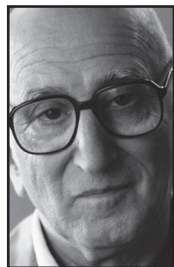
San Diego-based pharmaceutical company Orexigen Therapeutics scored a thundering victory when an FDA advisory panel voted 13-7 to recommend their anti-obesity drug Contrave for FDA approval. "We certainly were anxious down here at the lab," said Orexigen President Michael Narachi. "Especially after the FDA denied approval to [experimental weight-loss drugs] Lorcaserin and Qnexa and asked Abbott [Labs] to pull Meridia. There was talk of a nasty ripple effect across the entire sector. Now, we've got good reason to

believe that the FDA will grant ultimate approval in January, and when that happens, we'll have a big, fat party. Er, so to speak." Narachi did admit that the advisory panel had requested that a larger trial should be conducted to examine the risk of heart attack due to the drug's tendency to raise blood pressure and pulse rate. But he refused to comment on whether or not members of the Orexigen Board of Directors had agreed to commit mass suicide in the event of an FDA rejection by taking enough Contrave to burst their already broken hearts.

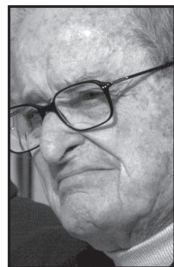
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WHO PLAYS WHO

CHARGERS SALE EDITION



On *The Sopranos*, **Dominic Chianese** played Junior Soprano, an aging boss whose money and power slipped away as he neared death.



Chargers owners **Alex Spanos** is looking to sell part of his interest in the team in order to avoid estate taxes.



In *Commando*, **Dan Hedaya** played an evil dictator who kidnapped Arnold Schwarzenegger's beloved daughter in order to regain power.



Media mogul **Philip Anschutz** wants to capture San Diego's beloved Chargers in order to move them to LA.



On *Saturday Night Live* sketch "Hey, Remember the '80s?" **Jim Breuer** played Goat Boy, a half-human talk-show host who would distract from the goings on by braying and kicking.



Special Counsel to the President of the Chargers **Mark Fabiani** is a lawyer who issues carefully worded denials regarding the team's move to L.A.