

# The Washington Post

## **IN THE LOOP**

*Al Kamen*

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### **Green Felt Battlegrounds**

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Even the Pentagon's budget can always use a little help. And **Edward C. "Pete" Aldridge Jr.**, undersecretary of defense for acquisitions, technology and logistics, may have a great solution.

We got an invite to a panel he's chairing in May at the biannual Department of Defense procurement conference, where 500-plus "senior members of the procurement community," including all the top defense procurement folks, will talk about getting the best stuff in "supporting the warfighters."

The procurement officials, always worried about having enough cash, must be feeling lucky these days. The four-day conference is going to be held at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. And it conveniently ends on the Friday before Memorial Day weekend.

Rolling the dice for the "warfighters?"

### **War Is Hell, for The Donald**

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The looming war has already altered some things. We lament that the biannual Department of Defense procurement conference, where everyone who's anyone in the defense procurement community gathers, and which had been scheduled for the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City in May, has been put off.

A recent e-mail from the Pentagon planners said they "regret to announce that we are taking the drastic step of postponing the conference until late spring 2004. We are doing this because of the imminence of the commitment of US troops to armed conflict and the heightened state of terrorism alert we are currently experiencing."

Even at the blackjack tables?