



**THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION
AND US STRATEGY:
THE FIRST 100 DAYS**

April 12, 2009

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No President could restructure US national security strategy; US force plans and procurement plans; and the key aspects of US plans, programs, and budgets in 100 days. The President takes office at a time when much of the coming year's budget is already drafted, and much of the current fiscal year's budget is spent. The formal cycles for drafting new US strategy documents are not linked to the timing of election, and a new President inherits the previous President's "white papers" at a point in their calendar where updates are not due for months or even years.

It is possible to announce new strategic concepts and goals, and to make some time-urgent changes. In practice, however, it takes months to translate strategic concepts into detailed plans and budgets, and even the most urgent actions require time to be implemented. It now takes roughly six months for a new President to select his national security team and get them confirmed by Congress. A major restructuring of US procurement or military end strength can take several years to implement and the same is true of any major reorganization of a key Department and the interagency process.

President Obama took office with one of the worst Presidential legacies of the Post-War era. He was inaugurated at a time when America's image in world opinion had deteriorated sharply for nearly eight years according to every major polling organization that has attempted to track foreign attitudes toward the US. He faced two ongoing wars, and the war in Afghanistan was reaching the point of crisis. He faced a massive domestic and international financial crisis – much of it blamed on the US.

There are also finite limits to what the US can do, regardless of who is President and how long he or she has been in office. It is easy to talk about America as a "superpower," and the "American Century." In practice, there are sharp limits to US military power and political influence in most parts of the world, and other powers have steadily emerged as major players in the global economy. Regardless of what the Bush Administration may have thought or attempted, there are good reasons why the US has always been strongest when it worked with its allies and other powers, rather than sought to lead on its own.

Changing America's Image

That being said, President Obama has made an impressive start in changing America's image and the goals and concepts that shape the operational realities of its national security strategy. Images in international relations are often as important as substance, and the new President acted quickly to change America's image. From the start, he made it clear that his Administration was willing to listen as well as speak. During his first 100 days, he showed he was far more willing to consult America's allies, work with other nations and the UN, and pay attention to religious and cultural sensitivities in dealing with terrorist and extremist movements.

He also took a series of actions that demonstrated that he was far more of a pragmatist and realist than President Bush, far less ideological, and far more committed to proactive diplomacy. While any lasting change depends on his successes in the years that follow, a

range of polls show that President Obama was able to reverse much of America's lost prestige and popularity in a matter of months.

Changes in substance are a different issue. The new Presidency has been consumed by what is essentially an experimental effort at economic recovery and to restructure America's place in the global economy. President Obama has to deal with the US withdrawal from Iraq – at a time when the Iraq War is far from over – and the need to create new facts on the ground in Afghanistan in time for a 2009 campaign season that already is underway. Problems like Iran and North Korea have not gone away. The threat from non-state actors and terrorists remains, and so does the need to articulate America's strategic position relative to Russia and China. It will be nearly a year before President Obama can present his first true budget to Congress, and months before his first major strategy document – the next Quadrennial Defense Review – is due.

Grand Strategic Issues

Nevertheless, the new President has made it clear that he must be taken seriously in any effort to rebuild and reshape the international economy. He has developed at least the broad outline of a new strategy for Afghanistan, and made it clear that the US is now prepared to treat the conflict as the Afghan-Pakistan conflict it has always been. He has shown that the US now will work with the UN, and pay far more attention to its partners in NATO – both in developing a new strategic concept and setting goals for their participation in NATO/ISAF.

With regards to the list of key grand strategic issues, there are many areas where President Obama has made a new beginning:

The International Financial Crisis

America's future national security position and strategy may be dictated more by the success of its economic recovery, and efforts to restructure its domestic economy and the international financial system, than any other set of actions that President Obama takes during his first term. It is far too early to talk about success, or even how deep and long the crisis will be.

President Obama has made it clear that he will be a major actor in shaping US and international policy, and that he will have a strong centrist team of advisors and Cabinet officials. The reliance he put on stimulus in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act he signed on February 17, 2009 may or may not work, and many key US allies did not support his policies at the G20 meeting in Strasbourg on April 5, 2009. The G20 meeting was scarcely the "turning point" marked by "unprecedented progress" that the G20 press briefings claimed.

At the same time, the President showed that the US will face the crisis head on, experiment until it finds solutions, avoid economic isolationism and work with its allies to restructure the international financial system. President Obama was also proactive enough to also deflect much of the blame that the US had previously received for triggering the present crisis. At this point, this is all the strategy the US can have and all a

President can do. Dealing with the combination of a domestic and international financial crisis may well be the “experiment” that dominates Obama’s entire first term in office.

National Security Spending and Civil-Military Teamwork

It is easy to forget that a nation’s strategy is not what it declares but rather what it does, and that how it allocates its resources is often a far better measure of its actual strategy than the words in any of its white papers and doctrines. The Administration made it clear that it would not reduce its defense commitments, called for more foreign aid, and a stronger State Department and civilian role in national security policy.

It then proceeded to try to fund these efforts in both the FY2010 defense budget request that Secretary Gates announced on April 6th – which called for \$534 billion in spending and two-percent real growth on top of inflation – and in the \$83.4 billion supplemental budget request that he submitted to Congress on April 9th. As is discussed later in this analysis, there are many uncertainties and problems in these requests. It will be several years before the full implications of the decisions and policies announced in these documents can be institutionalized and put into action. Nevertheless, the new Administration made a solid beginning formulating the key elements of a new US strategy and putting it on a well-resourced and affordable track.

The Afghan Pakistan War:

President Obama announced the outline of a new strategy for the Afghan-Pakistan War on March 27. He was forced to rush his decisions before all of the necessary planning and budgeting could be completed given that the war had reached a crisis point, and was effectively being lost at the ideological and political level. Pakistan was acting as a sanctuary for jihadist movements, and action had to be taken immediately to deal with the 2009 campaign season in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It will be June at the earliest before the US has a real Joint Campaign Plan that defines the details of its strategy and plans for Afghanistan. It is also unlikely that the necessary elements to deal with the “AfPak” conflict – and metrics to measure success – can be put into place before 2011.

Despite these challenges, the President did redefine the goal of the war: “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens.” He said the US would treat Afghanistan and Pakistan as two countries but one challenge, and make significant increases in U.S. and international support – both economic and military – linked to Pakistani performance against terror. He said the US would pursue intensive regional diplomacy involving all key players in South Asia, including Iran.

The President also said that he would allocate additional US resources that had been badly lacking since 2002, including 17,000 additional combat troops and approximately 4,000 more U.S. troops to train the Afghan National Security Forces to the point where they could begin to replace US and ISAF forces. As was the case in his budget supplemental, he stressed the need to provide significantly more resources to the civilian efforts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and he announced that he supported a bill co-sponsored by Senators Kerry and Lugar to authorize \$1.5 billion a year in direct support to the Pakistani people over the next five years.

The Iraq War:

President Obama did not announce a new strategy for the Iraq War, address Iraq's growing budget crisis, or indicate how the US might react if Iraq's ethnic and sectarian tensions led to new forms of civil conflict and insurgency. He did, however, adjust his plans for withdrawing US forces to reflect the advice of the US military and his national security advisors, and slow the rate of US withdrawal until the Afghan elections are held. He also left the possibility open of a major continuing US military and civilian advisory role after all US troops deployed for combat and support roles were withdrawn in 2011.

It is far from clear what will happen in a "fragile" Iraq between now and 2011, but the President has shown that he is both shaping policy and listening closely to his national security advisors – including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

NATO and Europe

President Obama did not get dramatic increases in European support for the Afghan conflict, although he got some. He did show during the 60th anniversary summit in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany in April that the US would be far more flexible in listening to and consulting its allies, would work actively to develop a new common strategic concept, and was more flexible in dealing with controversial issues including the expansion of NATO and the deployment of ballistic missile defenses in Europe.

The President also played a major role in getting Turkey to support the selection of a Dane as the new Secretary General. Perhaps most importantly, the President refocused US policy towards NATO on the defense of Europe and Atlantic security, rather than focusing solely on Afghanistan and Iraq as the tests of NATO's viability and success, and joined with its European allies in focusing on a "comprehensive approach" integrating civil-military approaches to conflicts like Afghanistan,

Russia

The US could not press the "reset button" in dealing with Russia, and it is far from clear how flexible a reassertive Russia will be in dealing with the US, Europe, "near abroad" countries like Georgia and the Ukraine, and other states. President Obama did, however, make it clear that the US would actively seek to improve relations, be more flexible in dealing with issues like missile defense, and would make arms control a major goal and part of its strategy.

Arms Control

The President did take a clear lead in revitalizing the US role in international arms control. On April 1st, President Obama signed a Joint Statement with President Medvedev of the Russian Federation on negotiations on further reductions in strategic offensive arms. This statement noted that the START Treaty, which expires in December 2009, had fulfilled its purpose, and that the reduced levels for strategic offensive arms called for in the Treaty had been reached years earlier. It called for new, major steps to reduce and limit strategic offensive arms in accordance with U.S. and Russian obligations under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons that would result in an agreement before the START Treaty expires in December.

Administration spokespersons indicated that these steps could potentially reduce strategic weapons to 1,000-1,500 weapons in inventory as the first step in moving towards a “zero option.” They also noted that the US intended to take up the issue of tactical nuclear weapons, and was seeking to destroy reduced weapons, rather than take them out of active service and store them.

The President expanded upon these goals in a speech in Prague on April 5, and mentioned his interest in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a treaty to put an end to the production of fissile materials. His early political appointments also greatly strengthened the leadership of US efforts in non-proliferation, in dealing with theater nuclear weapons, and with other aspects of arms control.

Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement and Relations with the Muslim World

There was little the President could do quickly to achieve an Arab-Israeli peace settlement in the face of a Palestinian movement divided against itself, an Israel turning towards the right, and the broader divisions within the Arab world. He did, however, appoint Senator George Mitchell as his new peace negotiator shortly after taking office.

He described his new strategy for peace negotiations in an interview with Al Arabiya on January 27th, "My job is to communicate to the American people that the Muslim world is filled with extraordinary people who simply want to live their lives and see their children live better lives..."My job to the Muslim world is to communicate that the Americans are not your enemy...Sending George Mitchell to the Middle East is fulfilling my campaign promise that we're not going to wait until the end of my administration to deal with Palestinian and Israeli peace, we're going to start now...It may take a long time to do, but we're going to do it now."

He strengthened both the negotiating team and the effort to build effective Palestinian security forces. He made it clear that he would seek to improve US relations with Syria and support efforts to reach an Israeli-Syrian peace settlement. He also met with King Abdullah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia on April 2, 2009, thanked him for his role in promoting an Arab peace plan, and called for further cooperation in reaching a comprehensive settlement.

Counterterrorism

The ideological aspects of counterterrorism are as critical to a successful strategy as tangible action. President Obama and Secretary Clinton made it clear that the US was conscious that its actions and rhetoric had given many people in the Middle East and the rest of the world the feeling that the US “global war on terrorism” was anti-Arab and anti-Islam. The Administration stopped using the term, and focused on individual terrorist and jihadist movements. It also reached out to the Islamic world.

The President gave a major speech in Turkey on April 6, in which he made it clear the US would work closely with a leading democratic state that had an Islamic government and would continue to press for the admission of Turkey to the EU. It is still far from

clear how successful such efforts will be on a lasting basis, or how they will change the structure of global cooperation on counterterrorism, but they were a new beginning in an area where poll after poll showed that the Bush Administration had alienated much of the Islamic world.

Iran and the Gulf

The new Administration reached out to Iran in several ways, although it did so carefully and with great reservations about how much progress could be made before the Iranian elections and unless a major shift took place in the attitudes of the Iranian leadership.

The President gave a Nowruz speech on March 19th calling for better relations, and senior US officials sent signals by “encountering” Iranian officials. The US said it would now talk to Iran along with the Europeans, Russia, and China about Iran’s nuclear programs; and invited Iran to a conference on aid to Afghanistan that Iran attended. The Administration also made it clear that the US continued to oppose, or “red light,” an Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear facilities.

At the same time, the US also made it clear that it would continue its alliance with Israel and the southern Gulf states, and strongly opposed Iranian proliferation and support of extremist movement. The President announced on March 11th that he would continue sanctions and efforts to block arms and technology sales to Iran. The announcement also carried out a general review of its strategic posture in the Gulf and USCENTCOM area – although it did not announce the results.

Japan and Northeast Asia

President Obama personally reasserted the US strategic partnerships with Japan in a phone call to Prime Minister Aso of Japan on January 29th, and with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak during a meeting with in London on April 2nd.

China

As he did with most of the world’s leaders, President Obama reached out to the leadership of China shortly after taking office. US and Chinese relations eased after a period of tension over US arms sales to Taiwan that began in the summer of 2008, and both countries agreed to resume their military dialogue, but US policy toward Taiwan and the security of Asia did not change. The key shift was economic, and one that neither country was prepared to resolve – not before the full nature of the global economic crisis and US recovery is apparent. However, the US and China did develop a franker and deeper economic dialogue, and President Obama met with President Hu Jintao of China on the sidelines of the G20 Financial Summit in London on April 1st.

The two heads of state agreed to establish a "U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue" with an "Economic Track" and to “further deepen mutually beneficial cooperation in a wide range of areas, including economy and trade, counterterrorism, law enforcement, science and technology, education, culture and health.” They also agreed on the need for stimulus packages to deal with the global economic crisis and the need to restructure the international financial system.

They also agreed to resume and expand consultations on non-proliferation and other international security topics; to share a commitment to military-to-military relations and will work for their continued improvement and development; to work together towards the settlement of conflicts and the reduction of tensions that contribute to global and regional instability, including the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the Iranian nuclear issue, Sudan, humanitarian issues, and the situation in South Asia. While this agreement was more a matter of words than any immediate substance, it made it clear that the US was seeking cooperation rather than rivalry.

North Korea

The Administration made it clear that it would continue the Six Party negotiations designed to get North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and long-range missile programs, and to find ways to bring North Korea into a more normal relationship with its neighbors and the US. At the same time, the Administration did not soften its opposition on North Korean proliferation and threats, and worked with the UN, NATO, and nations like China to try to stop North Korea from undertaking a new long-range missile launch that it cloaked as a satellite launch program. The President issued a formal statement opposing the launch and North Korea's failure to end its threats and efforts at proliferation on April 5th, stating that "The United States is fully committed to maintaining security and stability in northeast Asia and we will continue working for the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks. The Six-Party Talks provide the forum for achieving denuclearization, reducing tensions, and for resolving other issues of concern between North Korea, its four neighbors, and the United States. North Korea has a pathway to acceptance in the international community, but it will not find that acceptance unless it abandons its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and abides by its international obligations and commitments."

Energy and the Environment

President Obama made it clear that he intended to take a much stronger stand on dealing with alternative energy issues, energy independence, and environmental issues like global warming than the Bush Administration. He also advanced what the White House called an "Obama-Biden comprehensive New Energy Plan for America. At the same time, there was little clear substance to this rhetoric. The only substantive features of the plan could do little to meet its ambitious goals: "Help create five million new jobs by strategically investing \$150 billion over the next ten years to catalyze private efforts to build a clean energy future; within 10 years save more oil than we currently import from the Middle East and Venezuela combined; put 1 million Plug-In Hybrid cars -- cars that can get up to 150 miles per gallon -- on the road by 2015, cars that we will work to make sure are built here in America; ensure 10 percent of our electricity comes from renewable sources by 2012, and 25 percent by 2025; and implement an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050." Every President since the Ford Administration has called for progress towards energy independence without advancing credible plans for achieving it. Similarly, President Clinton supported the Kyoto Accords without having any plans that could credibly implement them, and with no regard to the fact that main increases in emissions were coming from the developing world.

The Military Dimension of the Obama Administration's National Security Policy

The more tangible shifts that the Obama Administration is making in America's strategic posture just began to emerge towards the end of the President's first 100 days --largely in the form of changes made in its FY2010 defense budget request and the supplemental that followed.

Secretary Gates provided the first indications of how he will seek to shift the US defense budget and program in his press briefing of April 6, 2009. The key point in his new defense budget request are well worth reviewing in detail, because the Secretary has made it clear in a number of speeches that he intends to shift the US away from a high technology focus on conventional warfighting, and the "Revolution in Military Affairs," toward a more balanced approach to fighting both conventional and irregular wars. This includes shifting from a focus on fighting states to fighting combinations of state and non-state actors.

The Strategic Elements of the FY2010 Budget Request: An Uncertain and Undeveloped Context

There were still many instances where Secretary Gates's statements raised at least as many questions as they answered. It also is unusual in that any charts or detailed background data did not accompany Secretary Gate's budget announcement, and no material that supplements his comments was issued by OSD (Public Affairs).

Part of the reason for this lack of detail may lie in the need to rush some decisions out in time to meet budget deadlines, and before the Secretary had time to develop all of the necessary supporting plans and analysis. The Secretary did say during his briefing that,

My decisions have been almost exclusively influenced by factors other than simply finding a way to balance the books or fit under the "top line" – as is normally the case with most budget exercises. Instead, these recommendations are the product of a holistic assessment of capabilities, requirements, risks and needs for the purpose of shifting this department in a different strategic direction. Let me be clear: I would have made virtually all of the decisions and recommendations announced today regardless of the department's top line budget number."

Perhaps, but Secretary Gates did in fact focus at least as much on cost containment as on meeting US strategic needs. According to some press reports, Secretary Gates was responding to new budget guidance from the White House and OMB that flatly rejected a previous request for an addition of \$60 billion to the past DoD budget baseline to pay for what the *Washington Post* referred to as Gordon England's "fairy dust" – an effort described as "fairy dust" because the Department sought to solve its procurement, manpower, and rest resource crises, and the issues raised in the previous QDR, by throwing more money at them.

Secretary Gate's Stated Goals

The Secretary said that his, "proposed changes are interconnected and cannot be properly communicated or understood in isolation from one another. Collectively, they represent a

budget crafted to reshape the priorities of America's defense establishment. If approved, these recommendations will profoundly reform how this department does business."

He also said that his decisions had three principal objectives:

- "First, to reaffirm our commitment to take care of the all-volunteer force, which, in my view represents America's greatest strategic asset.
- Second, we must rebalance this department's programs in order to institutionalize and enhance our capabilities to fight the wars we are in today and the scenarios we are most likely to face in the years ahead, while at the same time providing a hedge against other risks and contingencies.
- Third, in order to do this, we must reform how and what we buy, meaning a fundamental overhaul of our approach to procurement, acquisition, and contracting."

The Strategic Elements of the FY2010 Budget Request: The Unanswered Questions

While Secretary Gates went on to provide some important details about the new defense strategy, program, and budget he sought to build, there were many areas where he did not. Even if one focuses on a few key areas, the Secretary raised far more questions than he answered. This becomes clear when one examines his individual statements. It should be noted that while many of these issues focus on individual programs, each will tangibly reshape the US force mix, the strategic emphasis behind it, and future US capability to execute given strategic options.

Choices Between "Conventional," "Irregular," and "Mixed Warfare

"Even as we begin to shift resources and institutional weight towards supporting the current wars and other potential irregular campaigns, the United States must still contend with the security challenges posed by the military forces of other countries – from those actively hostile to those at strategic crossroads. Last year's National Defense Strategy concluded that although U.S. predominance in conventional warfare is not unchallenged, it is sustainable for the medium term given current trends. This year's budget deliberations focused on what programs are necessary to deter aggression, project power when necessary, and protect our interests and allies around the globe. To this end, I will recommend new or additional investments and shifts in several key areas:

Some will say I am too focused on the wars we are in and not enough on future threats. The allocation of dollars in this budget definitely belies that claim. But, it is important to remember that every defense dollar spent to over-insure against a remote or diminishing risk – or, in effect, to "run up the score" in a capability where the United States is already dominant – is a dollar not available to take care of our people, reset the force, win the wars we are in, and improve capabilities in areas where we are underinvested and potentially vulnerable. That is a risk I will not take.

(...) To boost global partnership capacity efforts, we will increase funding by \$500 million. These initiatives include training and equipping foreign militaries to undertake counter terrorism and stability operations."

Some of the equipment decisions that Secretary Gates called for in his budget request will have a major impact on conventional warfighting capabilities in the future, but he provided no details or no clear force plans to explain what choices – if any – have actually been made about the strategic goals for US warfighting capabilities and how these translate into shifts in force plans, future equipment strength, and budgets.

Military, Civilian, and Contractor Manpower and End Strength

“Fully protect and properly fund the growth in military end strength in the base budget. This means completing the growth in the Army and Marines while halting reductions in the Air Force and the Navy. Accomplishing this will require a nearly \$11 billion increase above the FY09 budget level.

This budget will support these goals by increasing the size of defense acquisition workforce, converting 11,000 contractors and hiring an additional 9,000 government acquisition professionals by 2015 – beginning with 4,100 in FY10.

A final recommendation that will have a significant impact on how defense organizations are staffed and operated. Under this budget request, we will reduce the number of support service contractors from our current 39 percent of the workforce to the pre-2001 level of 26 percent and replace them with full-time government employees. Our goal is to hire as many as 13,000 new civil servants in FY10 to replace contractors and up to 30,000 new civil servants in place of contractors over the next five years.”

Funding current requests for military end strength is important but it does not address what the end strength should be, whether it will be affordable in terms of equipment and sustainability, and how it should be linked to US strategy or a detailed force plan for each service and outyear budget. It is also painfully obvious that the US has lacked the forces to come close to the “Two major regional contingency” strategy it claimed to have in the past.

It also does not address the key questions the Afghan and Iraq Wars have raised about the proper mix of military, career civilians, and contractors in an era when our current force posture seems to require as many civilians and contractors as military. A budget and force plan that only examines military end strength, rather than all manpower needs, is essentially meaningless, even if one ignores procurement, operations and maintenance.

More broadly, and even more critically, no decision is made about finding the proper balance, roles and missions, and readiness and equipment levels for any element of the active forces, reserves, and National Guard – issues with critical outyear resource, force planning, and mission capability requirements that are inevitably affected by the past over-deployment of force elements involved in combat in Iraq and “AfPak.”

Military Entitlements Problems

“(…) Continue the steady growth in medical research and development by requesting \$400 million more than last year.

(…) Recognize the critical and permanent nature of wounded, ill and injured, traumatic brain injury, and psychological health programs. This means institutionalizing and properly funding these efforts in the base budget and increasing overall spending by \$300 million. The department will spend over \$47 billion on healthcare in FY10.

(…) Increase funding by \$200 million for improvements in childcare, spousal support, lodging, and education. Many of these programs have been funded in the past by supplementals. We must move away from ad hoc funding of long-term commitments. Thus, we have added money to each of these areas and all will be permanently and properly carried in the base defense budget. Together they represent an increase in base budget funding of \$13 billion from last year.

As I told the Congress in January, our struggles to put the defense bureaucracies on a war footing these past few years have revealed underlying flaws in the priorities, cultural preferences, and reward structures of America’s defense establishment – a set of institutions largely arranged to prepare for conflicts against other modern armies, navies, and air forces. Programs to directly support, protect, and care for the man or woman at the front have been developed ad hoc and funded outside the base budget. Put simply, until recently there has not been an institutional home in the Defense Department for today’s warfighter. Our

contemporary wartime needs must receive steady long-term funding and a bureaucratic constituency similar to conventional modernization programs. I intend to use the FY10 budget to begin this process.”

This analysis dodges around the near crisis the Congress has caused by grossly overfunding military entitlements for domestic political reasons – in spite of repeated efforts by senior military leaders to place reasonable limits on them. The end result has been to raise the cost per soldier to the point where it becomes less and less possible to fund the needed overall military end strength. Ironically, military entitlements are becoming a serious threat to the US military and this needs to be openly addressed and discussed.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

“(…) We will increase intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) support for the warfighter in the base budget by some \$2 billion. This will include:

- *Fielding and sustaining 50 Predator-class unmanned aerial vehicle orbits by FY11 and maximizing their production. This capability, which has been in such high demand in both Iraq and Afghanistan, will now be permanently funded in the base budget. It will represent a 62 percent increase in capability over the current level and 127 percent from over a year ago.*
- *Increasing manned ISR capabilities such as the turbo-prop aircraft deployed so successfully as part of “Task Force Odin” in Iraq.*
- *Initiating research and development on a number of ISR enhancements and experimental platforms optimized for today’s battlefield.*

(…) To improve cyberspace capabilities, we will increase the number of cyber experts this department can train from 80 students per year to 250 per year by FY11.

(…) We will terminate the \$26 billion Transformational Satellite (TSAT) program, and instead will purchase two more Advanced Extremely High Frequency (AEHF) satellites as alternatives.”

These are important changes growing out of US experience in Iraq and “AfPak,” but they cannot be addressed without a much clearer picture of the overall architecture for the “IS&R” effort, particularly when it is increasingly tied to combat activity like UCAVs, 5th generation combat aircraft, and the Army’s Future Combat Systems (FCS) programs.

More generally, the US needs for a much clearer strategy to deal with the potential vulnerability of IS&R systems to cyberwarfare and space warfare is not discussed in a meaningful way. There also is a need to make major reforms in the overall IS&R structure to deal with massive cost escalation and delays in the US satellite program, and calls for more funding of human intelligence. These may be addressed, however, in the classified portion of the decisions made by the Secretary.

Army and Ground Forces

“(…) We will stop the growth of Army Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) at 45 versus 48 while maintaining the planned increase in end strength of 547,000. This will ensure that we have better-manned units ready to deploy, and help put an end to the routine use of stop loss. This step will also lower the risk of hollowing the force.

(…) We will significantly restructure the Army’s Future Combat Systems (FCS) program. We will retain and accelerate the initial increment of the program to spin out technology enhancements to all combat brigades. However, I have concluded that there are significant unanswered questions concerning the FCS vehicle design strategy. I am also concerned that, despite some adjustments, the FCS vehicles – where lower weight, higher fuel efficiency, and greater informational awareness are expected to compensate for less armor – do not adequately reflect the lessons of counterinsurgency and close quarters combat in Iraq

and Afghanistan. The current vehicle program, developed nine years ago, does not include a role for our recent \$25 billion investment in the MRAP vehicles being used to good effect in today's conflicts.

(...) Further, I am troubled by the terms of the current contract, particularly its very unattractive fee structure that gives the government little leverage to promote cost efficiency. Because the vehicle part of the FCS program is currently estimated to cost over \$87 billion, I believe we must have more confidence in the program strategy, requirements, and maturity of the technologies before proceeding further.

Accordingly, I will recommend that we cancel the vehicle component of the current FCS program, re-evaluate the requirements, technology, and approach – and then re-launch the Army's vehicle modernization program, including a competitive bidding process. An Army vehicle modernization program designed to meet the needs of the full spectrum of conflict is essential. But because of its size and importance, we must get the acquisition right, even at the cost of delay.”

The Secretary's decisions affecting land forces may have dealt with the need for cost containment – although no out year data were provided and there is no way to tell what will happen in any area that Secretary Gates addressed after FY2010. His decisions failed to provide any picture of the future size, force structure, equipment, readiness or any other aspect of US ground forces – Army or Marine Corps.

To be more specific, no mention was made of the need for the Army and Marine Corps to make difficult near-term decisions to deal with the wear of equipment because of the Iraq and “AfPak” wars – an issue sometimes called “reset.” The problems involved will be compounded by the fact that substantial amounts of equipment will be left in Iraq and later in Afghanistan, the increased operational tempo in the AfPak conflict – which will probably continue for at least three more years, and the fact that new equipment cancellations and/or program slippage will make it more difficult to decide whether to rehabilitate worn equipment, replace it with existing types, or buy new and more modern systems.

The end result is that the US lacks a clear path towards modernizing a critical aspect of its force posture and its ability to implement a coherent force modernization strategy to actually bring conventional and irregular warfare capabilities into balance, or deal with combinations of state and non-state threats. If anything, the Secretary's quick fixes may further complicate taking better-structured decisions. It seems likely to require at least two years of detailed planning before the Army can begin to create a stable path towards modernization, and no mention is made of the serious problems in the Marine Corps equipment program or the risks inherent in its dependence on ships that may not be built or could be delayed for years.

Aircraft Procurement and Force Size

“(...) We will also spend \$500 million more in the base budget than last year to increase our capacity to field and sustain more helicopters – a capability that is in urgent demand in Afghanistan. Today, the primary limitation on helicopter capacity is not airframes but shortages of maintenance crews and pilots. So our focus will be on recruiting and training more Army helicopter crews.

(...) To grow our special operations capabilities, we will increase personnel by more than 2,800 or five percent and will buy more special forces-optimized lift, mobility, and refueling aircraft.

(...) To sustain U.S. air superiority, I am committed to building a fifth generation tactical fighter capability that can be produced in quantity at sustainable cost. Therefore, I will recommend increasing the buy of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter from the 14 aircraft bought in FY09 to 30 in FY10, with corresponding funding increases from \$6.8 billion to \$11.2 billion. We would plan to buy 513 F-35s over the five-year defense plan, and, ultimately, plan to buy 2,443. For naval aviation, we will buy 31 FA-18s in FY10.

(...) We will retire 250 of the oldest Air Force tactical fighter aircraft in FY10.

(...) We will end production of the F-22 fighter at 187 – representing 183 planes plus four recommended for inclusion in the FY 2009 supplemental.

(...) To replace the Air Force's aging tanker fleet, we will maintain the KC-X aerial re-fueling tanker schedule and funding, with the intent to solicit bids this summer.

- *We will not pursue a development program for a follow-on Air Force bomber until we have a better understanding of the need, the requirement, and the technology.*

(...) With regard to airlift, we will complete production of the C-17 airlifter program this fiscal year. Our analysis concludes that we have enough C-17s with the 205 already in the force and currently in production.

I recommend that we terminate the VH-71 presidential helicopter:

- *This program was originally designed to provide 23 helicopters to support the president at a cost of \$6.5 billion. Today, the program is estimated to cost over \$13 billion, has fallen six years behind schedule, and runs the risk of not delivering the requested capability.*
- *Some have suggested that we should adjust the program by buying only the lower capability "increment one" option. I believe this is neither advisable nor affordable. Increment One helicopters do not meet requirements and are estimated to have only a five- to 10-year useful life. This compares to the current VH-3 presidential helicopters that are 30 to 40 years old.*
- *We will promptly develop options for an FY11 follow-on program.*

(...) We will terminate the Air Force Combat Search and Rescue X (CSAR-X) helicopter program. This program has a troubled acquisition history and raises the fundamental question of whether this important mission can only be accomplished by yet another single-service solution with single-purpose aircraft. We will take a fresh look at the requirement behind this program and develop a more sustainable approach."

The Secretary's decisions *began* to address the fact that the US Air Force and other services have shown virtually no capability to create a stable, *affordable* path towards the modernization of the US air fleet, bring programs in on time with the promised effectiveness, and tie procurement to either an affordable approach to deploying new technology or cope with the rapid aging of a fleet engaged in almost continuous combat.

However, the Secretary did not announce a modernization strategy, a force plan, a procurement plan, or a credible and affordable path forward. He proposed a series of one time fixes that do not define future force plans, programs, or procurement goals, and leaves virtually every aspect of future aircraft modernization unresolved. These decisions also do not address the growing problems in creating a stable, competitive industrial base for the US defense industry, and bring future procurements into balance with both probable resources and maintaining a high technology edge in an affordable form.

He also did not address the risk of relying so heavily on the F-35 and delays in the modernization of most other areas of US air capability. What he advanced was at best a one-year fix to crucial problems in both shaping America's future force posture and developing affordable forces. His proposals also did not address the key past problem of trade-offs between procurement expenditures and active force structure, particularly as measured in total fleet size and unit equipment numbers.

Fleet Modernization and Ship Building

"We will increase the buy of Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) – a key capability for presence, stability, and counterinsurgency operations in coastal regions – from two to three ships in FY 2010. Our goal is to eventually acquire 55 of these ships.

(...) To improve our inter-theater lift capacity, we will increase the charter of Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) ships from two to four until our own production program begins deliveries in 2011.

(...) *We will also add \$200 million to fund conversion of six additional Aegis ships to provide ballistic missile defense capabilities.*

- *In FY10, we will begin the replacement program for the Ohio class ballistic missile submarine program.*

(...) *The healthy margin of dominance at sea provided by America's existing battle fleet makes it possible and prudent to slow production of several major surface combatants and other maritime programs.*

- *We will shift the Navy Aircraft Carrier program to a five-year build cycle placing it on a more fiscally sustainable path. This will result in 10 carriers after 2040.*
- *We will delay the Navy CG-X next generation cruiser program to revisit both the requirements and acquisition strategy.*
- *We will delay amphibious ship and sea-basing programs such as the 11th Landing Platform Dock (LPD) ship and the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) SHIP to FY11 in order to assess costs and analyze the amount of these capabilities the nation needs.*

(...) *In this request, we will include funds to complete the buy of two navy destroyers in FY10. These plans depend on being able to work out contracts to allow the Navy to efficiently build all three DDG-1000 class ships at Bath Iron Works in Maine and to smoothly restart the DDG-51 Aegis Destroyer program at Northrop Grumman's Ingalls shipyard in Mississippi. Even if these arrangements work out, the DDG-1000 program would end with the third ship and the DDG-51 would continue to be built in both yards.*

If our efforts with industry are unsuccessful, the department will likely build only a single prototype DDG-1000 at Bath and then review our options for restarting production of the DDG-51. If the department is left to pursue this alternative, it would unfortunately reduce our overall procurement of ships and cut workload in both shipyards."

These changes do little more than begin to address the fact that the US Navy has failed to create a stable, *affordable* path towards the modernization of its fleet, bring programs in on time with the promised effectiveness, and tie procurement to either an affordable approach to deploying new technologies or cope with the rapid aging of a fleet engaged in almost continuous combat.

The Secretary's budget request proposed a series of one time fixes that did not define future force plans, programs, or procurement goals, and leaves virtually every aspect of naval modernization unresolved. Once again, the proposed decisions do not address the growing problems in creating a stable, competitive industrial base for the US defense industry, and to bring future procurements into balance with both probable resources and maintaining a high technology edge in an affordable form.

The end result is at best a one-year fix to a crucial problem in both shaping the maritime side of America's future force posture and in developing affordable forces. Once again, the Secretary's decisions did not address the key past problem of trade-offs between procurement expenditures and active force structure, particularly as measured in total fleet size and unit equipment numbers.

Nuclear Posture

"With regard to our nuclear and strategic forces:

- *We will examine all of our strategic requirements during the Quadrennial Defense Review, the Nuclear Posture Review, and in light of Post-START arms control negotiations."*

No decisions taken.

Missile Defense

"Fourth, in the area of missile defense:

- *We will restructure the program to focus on the rogue state and theater missile threat.*
- *We will not increase the number of current ground-based interceptors in Alaska as had been planned. But we will continue to robustly fund continued research and development to improve the capability we already have to defend against long-range rogue missile threats – a threat North Korea’s missile launch this past weekend reminds us is real.*
- *We will cancel the second airborne laser (ABL) prototype aircraft. We will keep the existing aircraft and shift the program to an R&D effort. The ABL program has significant affordability and technology problems and the program’s proposed operational role is highly questionable.*
- *We will terminate the Multiple Kill Vehicle (MKV) program because of its significant technical challenges and the need to take a fresh look at the requirement.*
- *To better protect our forces and those of our allies in theater from ballistic missile attack, we will add \$700 million to field more of our most capable theater missile defense systems, specifically the terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) System and Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) programs.*
- *Overall, the Missile Defense Agency program will be reduced by \$1.4 billion.”*

Once again, the Secretary outlined what may be necessary “one time” fixes for cost and individual program reasons, but failed to provide a clear sense of future direction, architecture, procurement, or deployment for either strategic or theater missile defenses. No mention of how this will affect plans for Europe, cooperation with Israel or the needs of the Arab Gulf states in dealing with Iran.

He did not discuss the problems in getting the services ready to handle the transfer of theater systems from BMDO, and links to arms control issues. He did not discuss the problems in developing proper cost projections and test and evaluation methods. These are all practical areas that need to be addressed in any workable strategy, force plan, and program budget.

Cost Containment and Procurement and RDT&E Reform

“In today’s environment, maintaining our technological and conventional edge requires a dramatic change in the way we acquire military equipment. I believe this needed reform requires three fundamental steps.

First, this department must consistently demonstrate the commitment and leadership to stop programs that significantly exceed their budget or which spend limited tax dollars to buy more capability than the nation needs. Our conventional modernization goals should be tied to the actual and prospective capabilities of known future adversaries – not by what might be technologically feasible for a potential adversary given unlimited time and resources. I believe the decisions I am proposing accomplish this step.

Second, we must ensure that requirements are reasonable and technology is adequately mature to allow the department to successfully execute the programs. Again, my decisions act on this principle by terminating a number of programs where the requirements were truly in the “exquisite” category and the technologies required were not reasonably available to affordably meet the programs’ cost or schedule goals.

Third, realistically estimate program costs, provide budget stability for the programs we initiate, adequately staff the government acquisition team, and provide disciplined and constant oversight.

We must constantly guard against so-called “requirements creep,” validate the maturity of technology at milestones, fund programs to independent cost estimates, and demand stricter contract terms and conditions. I am confident that if we stick to these steps, we will significantly improve the performance of our defense acquisition programs. But it takes more than mere pronouncements or fancy studies or reports. It takes acting on these principles by making tough decisions and sticking to them going forward.

I welcome the legislative initiative of Senators Levin and McCain to help address some of these issues and look forward to working with the Congress in this regard.

Fully reforming defense acquisition also requires recognizing the challenges of today’s battlefield and constantly changing adversary. This requires an acquisition system that can perform with greater urgency and agility. We need greater funding flexibility and the ability to streamline our requirements and acquisition execution procedures.

The perennial procurement and contracting cycle – going back many decades – of adding layer upon layer of cost and complexity onto fewer and fewer platforms that take longer and longer to build must come to an end. There is broad agreement on the need for acquisition and contracting reform in the Department of Defense. There have been enough studies. Enough hand-wringing. Enough rhetoric. Now is the time for action.

(...) I will close by noting that it is one thing to speak generally about the need for budget discipline and acquisition and contract reform. It is quite another to make tough choices about specific systems and defense priorities based solely on the national interest and then stick to those decisions over time. To do this, the president and I look forward to working with the Congress, industry, and many others to accomplish what is in the best interest of our nation as a whole.”

The Secretary advanced some key issues and priorities for reform. Unfortunately, exactly the same comments could have been made during the Eisenhower Administration – and were. There are reasons why senior US experts on force modernization went from a focus on “netcentric” change at the start of the Bush Administration to “humancentric” change as it became involved in Afghanistan and Iraq, and then began to focus on “cost containment.” No strategy or plan that a nation cannot actually afford to implement has any real meaning, and focusing on unaffordable illusions has usually done great harm. To put it bluntly, the US faces the same basic challenge as virtually every European power since the time of the Cold War. White papers, five year plans, and annual budgets that call for unaffordable and half-implemented modernization programs are little more than dangerous rubbish.

Where Does the Military side of US Strategy Go From Here?

Even if none of this reporting is true, the changes that Secretary Gates called for can only begin a series of massive adjustments to the US defense posture that will play out over at least a decade. No one can define a successful strategy or force posture by addressing most of the issues involved at a conceptual level and focusing on a few select program decisions that will have to be followed by major changes in US spending in the out years, changes in US force and procurement plans, and a massive long term restructuring of the US defense program budget.

The Department of Defense is committed to yet another Quadrennial Defense Review this year, although it is far from clear as yet that it will be any better tied to a clear force plan, procurement plan, and future year defense program and budget (FYDP) than its largely meaningless predecessors.

It is not enough for Secretary Gates not to be Donald Rumsfeld. If the new Administration is serious about creating an integrated national security strategy, at some point it will have to put forward an integrated approach to civil-military strategy, programs, and budget covering the Department of Defense, State Department, and other federal departments and agencies – a massive but necessary reform in the way the US approaches national security and one that could make the rationale for the FY2010 defense budget largely moot.

Moving Towards a “Comprehensive Strategy:” The Strategic Elements of the FY2009 Supplemental

Asking the American people for another \$83.4 billion more for defense in the middle of a massive financial crisis is not the news most Americans wanted to hear. In practice, however, President Obama had no choice other than to ask Congress for yet another supplemental to fight the Iraq and Afghan-Pakistan Wars.

The Bush Administration had failed to draft a comprehensive defense budget, just as it had failed to draft a meaningful strategy for Afghanistan or update its strategy toward Iraq. Something had to be done, although such a request does again defer any real effort to decide on a stable pattern of defense spending and shape an effective defense strategy to shape clear force plans, procurement plans, and progress budgets.

As President Obama stated in the letter he sent to Speaker Pelosi on April 9, 2009, announcing his request, “We face a security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan that demands urgent attention. The Taliban is resurgent and al Qaeda threatens America from its safe haven along the Afghan-Pakistan border.” This level of expenditure will be especially necessary if – as the President intends – “Nearly 95 percent of these funds will be used to support our men and women in uniform as they help the people of Iraq to take responsibility for their own future—and work to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan.”

The President’s request also came with a pledge by Peter R. Orszag, the Director of OMB that the Administration would change its approach to funding its strategy in future years:

“First and foremost, these dollars represent what should be the last supplemental funding request for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of creating an honest accounting of how taxpayer dollars are spent, you have directed the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Defense, and the State Department to anticipate the costs for overseas operations in regular budget processes. Accordingly, your FY 2010 Budget includes those costs in the base Defense and State requests. While unanticipated emergency situations may arise, we believe that there will be sufficient contingency funding in the budget to accommodate those needs. Secondly, we do not seek to declare these funds as “emergency spending.” The emergency funding label has become a gimmick to mask the true costs of the wars in our budgets. Moving forward, the emergency label will be used as it was intended, namely, to fund unanticipated, sudden, urgent needs which cannot be provided within base operating funds.”

The Strategic Implications of the DoD Portion of the Supplemental

Two immediate questions do, however, emerge from the President's supplemental request that will have a near term impact on the strategy the Obama Administration actually implements in its first term. The first is whether the money will be spent in the right areas. The second is whether the Congress can avoid turning this supplemental into yet another exercise in "pork." One can never be optimistic about Congressional responsibility, but most of the key spending priorities in the supplemental request seem well founded.

Nearly 91% of the money in the supplemental (\$75.5 billion) will fund DOD and Intelligence Community activities in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. As Orszag notes it forwarding the interagency request to the President, much (\$44.1 billion or 58%) will go to ongoing operations:

- \$38.0 billion to fund the incremental costs of ongoing military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan during Fiscal Year 2009. This includes the cost of combat and stabilization operations, pre-deployment training, inter- and intra-theater transportation, aircraft flying hours, ship steaming days, and vehicle miles at a wartime operational tempo.
- \$5.6 billion for a range of other items including medical benefits and support programs for the military, new military construction in theater, and intelligence activities supporting ongoing contingency operations.
- \$0.5 billion in additional funds to continue the Commander's Emergency Response Program, which enables U.S. military commanders to respond to urgent, humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs in their areas of responsibility.

These are not programs that should be micromanaged in mid-fiscal year and during the start of a major campaign season. They also include the kind of cost-effective CERP aid that has proven critical in making a "clear, hold, build" strategy work. Dollars can be as good, or better, than bullets in moving away from a focus on winning tactical clashes and towards achieving lasting results.

The request for equipment and force structure merits careful review. The supplemental includes \$11.6 billion to, "refurbish or replace equipment that is worn out or damaged from operating in harsh conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan, including \$0.6 billion to procure four F-22 Raptor fighter aircraft to replace four fighter aircraft lost in the theater of operations."

Secretary Gates did not explained why four more Raptors were worth half a billion dollars, but meeting the Air Force's request for a larger buy is not. More broadly, there was no credible estimate of what the overall cost and procurement strategy will be to pay for the equipment lost or worn out in Iraq, and to ensure a suitable form of "reset" for Afghanistan.

Similar issues arise over spending \$9.8 billion to improve the protection of US forces with lightweight body armor, armored vehicles, safe and secure operating bases, identity management for access control, and persistent surveillance capabilities, and \$1.5 billion to confront the evolving threat from Improvised Explosive Devices. Much of this

expenditure will be vital, but there needs to be a much clearer path to providing an effective mix of armored vehicles to meet both current and future needs.

Far too much money was rushed into MRAPs without sufficient care for whether their design was fully suitable for Iraq or allowed them to be used in other wars. There are far too many uncertainties regarding the future of Army and Marine Corps armored vehicle modernization. It is time that the Department presented plans to deal with both its overall needs for “reset” and warfighting , and for the overall the modernization of it fleet of armored vehicles. Seven years is simply too long to go on with what has become a compartmented series of annual incremental messes.

There is less reason to question the \$5.4 billion requested for “Support for Coalition Partners,” but some issues are still involved. There is an urgent need to provide, “\$3.6 billion to expand and improve capabilities of the Afghan security forces,” but what is happening in Iraq? How much US equipment will go to the ISF as the US leaves? How can the ISF meet its force goals in the middle of a massive Iraqi budget crisis without some US aid? It would be nice to win the Iraq War before we forget about it and to make sure that our exit strategy has some clear destinations.

The strategic purpose, behind many of the other details in the supplemental, however, is less clear. Why spend:

- \$1.4 billion to support Coalition partners who have provided assistance to U.S military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq?” In practice, this may be a far better use of money that sending US troops, but it deserves more explanation and review.
- \$0.4 billion to build the counterinsurgency capabilities of the Pakistani security forces.” If this is part of a lasting program providing massive additional amounts of aid, it needs to be explained. Far too much of the military portion of the \$12.5 billion in past US aid to Pakistan never was used to help fight the Taliban and Al Qa’ida or can’t be accounted for. Future aid should be clearly tied to clearly defined goals for Pakistani action and full accounting for the money.
- \$3.1 billion for classified activities in support of ongoing counterterrorism operations. These activities include support to military operations, intelligence collection and analysis, and overseas law enforcement efforts” may or may not be necessary. It is time to provide more transparency and detail in such efforts.

The same transparency is needed to explain some rather peculiar fine print in the supplemental request:

- Cancellation of Emergency Funds and Re-Appropriation to Extend Availability: FY 2009 emergency funds provided in the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008, for the Iraq Security Forces Fund (\$1.0 billion) and the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund (\$0.1 billion) are proposed for cancellation and reappropriation in order to extend the period of availability until September 30, 2010. The reappropriation of funds will not be designated as an emergency requirement.
- Other Defense Activities (\$350 million): \$3.7 billion in defense costs for other security related Defense activities, most of which is offset by \$2.9 billion in fuel savings and \$0.5 billion in procurement reductions.

Reprogramming and savings need to be explained and justified in plain English. The “magic” DoD uses to get \$3.4 billion in “savings” is often little more than what some experts in the Department call “fairy dust.”

International Affairs and Stabilization Activities

More broadly, the Supplemental request looks beyond the Department of Defense, and includes \$7.1 billion for “International Affairs and Stabilization Activities:”

- \$3.7 billion for foreign assistance and operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, of which:
 - o \$1.6 billion is for increased economic assistance for Afghanistan, and to support additional civilian personnel, and diplomatic operations;
 - o \$1.4 billion is for economic assistance for Pakistan, and to support additional civilian personnel, more secure infrastructure, and diplomatic operations; and
 - o \$0.7 billion is for assistance for Iraq and related diplomatic operations.
- \$0.8 billion to support the Palestinian people, strengthen the Palestinian Authority, and provide humanitarian assistance for the crisis in Gaza.
- \$0.8 billion to sustain current United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, fund an expanded mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a new mission in Chad and the Central African Republic. A portion of these funds may be used to pay UN assessments attributable to a logistics and support package for the African Union Mission to Somalia called for by the UN Security Council.
- \$0.6 billion in humanitarian assistance (excluding Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and West Bank / Gaza) to respond to international disasters, provide refugee and migration assistance, and deliver emergency food aid;
- \$0.5 billion for other priorities such as economic and development assistance for the people of Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Burma; security assistance for Lebanon; funding for heavy fuel oil assistance and to support nuclear dismantlement in North Korea; counterdrug/anti-crime assistance for Mexico;
- \$0.4 billion to address the impact of the global financial crisis in developing countries, including additional support for vulnerable populations through social safety net programs, targeted technical assistance to strengthen crisis response, and loans and loan guarantees for small and medium enterprises; and
- \$0.2 billion to fulfill the United States' commitment to assistance for Georgia.

It is clear from this part of the supplemental that President Obama is making a major effort to rebalance US national security strategy and programs, and to give civilian aid, diplomacy, and the non-military dimension of national security more strength and impact. If properly implemented, these funding shifts can be essential steps in creating the conditions for the “hold and build” side of US strategy in the Afghan-Pakistan conflict, and restoring US credibility in the Arab-Israeli peace process and in a world that poll after poll shows the US as focusing on force and not aid or negotiations.

The President seems to have the right priorities. It is clear that both Secretary Gates and Secretary Clinton are prepared to work together towards these ends. But, these are areas where the Congress, the media, and think tanks should be ruthless in questioning the quality of planning and management, and demanding transparent accounting and measures of effectiveness. The last seven years have left a dismal track record and warned that the civil side of national security may be one of the worst managed aspects of the federal government and that good intentions are no substitute for successful actions.

Yet, nothing about past State Department, USAID, or Department of Defense aid efforts in such areas has shown that these agencies are capable of proper planning, setting real world priorities, suitable accounting, and establishing and reporting credible measures of effectiveness. The reporting of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction has shown all too clearly that this aspect of interagency operations in Iraq was little more than a wasteful national disgrace, and Secretary Clinton has already warned at just how bad the aid effort has been in Afghanistan.

If nothing else, it may be impossible to modernize the US security posture until the chaos, lack of focus, and waste in the foreign aid efforts in wars like Iraq and Afghanistan that Secretary Clinton has already warned about – problems which are exemplified by the lack of any integrated plans, budget and measures of effectiveness for State Department, DoD, and USAID aid efforts – are addressed.

Moreover, the new Administration has not yet touched on the broader problems in integrating US military programs into a balanced strategy that includes the civil side of US action overseas, and homeland defense. It is easy to call for “smart power” and a “comprehensive approach” at the conceptual level, but there are major problems in mission capability and/or budget overlaps or shortfalls in virtually every aspect of a messy and faltering US interagency effort.

In fairness, these issues were almost impossible to address in the President’s first 100 days. They may well require a fundamental reorganization of the US national security system, the role of the National Security Council and interagency process; and the development of new forms of integrated strategy, planning, programming, and budget documents. The fact is, however, that the new Administration has at best made a beginning tailored to the needs of the “AfPak” conflict.

“Accomplishments” versus Beginnings, Concepts, and Intentions

This long list of shifts in US national security policy and strategy only covers part of President Obama’s first 100 days. It does not include changes in the new Administration’s approach to issues like Cuba, its overall strategic posture toward Latin American or Africa, its concern with the impact of the global financial crisis on low income states, or even relations with the full range of key strategic partners and states – such as India.

It is equally important to stress that this list of “accomplishments” is largely a list of beginnings, concepts and intentions. It will be years before it will be fully clear what many really mean in terms of tangible actions and “facts on the ground.” Most of the issues that the Obama Administration has tried to deal with in its first 100 days are at least a quarter of a century old, and many date back for more than half a century.

There are many areas where the prospects for success in meeting the President’s goals are limited, or where outside pressures may force the US to change its policies and strategies. It is also a fundamental reality of every aspect of national security policy that good intentions are ultimately irrelevant unless they are followed by successful actions. Once again, a nation’s national security strategy – and indeed its security – is not defined by what it declares, but rather by what it does.