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“Unplanning” for Uncertainty: Reshaping Future Defense Plans

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Overview

This brief is a part of series prepared by the Burke Chair in Strategy on current issues in defense budgeting and strategy. Other briefs within this series include,

- “The Coming Challenges in Defense Planning, Programming and Budgeting”
- “The Uncertain Costs of War(s)”
- “The Macroeconomics of US Defense Spending”

This particular brief focuses on recent changes in and additions to the DOD’s planning priorities as laid out in the *2010 Quadrennial Defense Report (QDR)*. Moreover, this brief analyzes how planned outlays stated in the DOD’s *FY 2011 Budget Request* reflects or fails to reflect these stated planning priorities.

The 2010 QDR begins its strategic analysis by identifying the major threats and challenges facing the US. Enduring threats like terrorist networks, anti-access challenges, and proliferation of WMDs all retain their strategic prominence as major threats. The 2010 QDR, however, gives increasing emphasis to threat of asymmetric or “hybrid” warfare as well as the threat posed by the increasing availability of advanced technological capabilities, like satellite imagery and cyber attacks, to non-state actors (Slide 6).

A comparison of the 2006 QDR’s “Four Priority Areas” and the 2010 QDR’s “Six Key Missions” reveals that the DOD has tried to update its planning priorities to reflect the changing threat environment. The 2006 QDR set as DOD’s planning priorities four missions: defeating terrorist networks, defending the homeland, preventing nuclear proliferation and the highly vague mission of “shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads” (Slide 7).

Overview

In the 2010 QDR's "Six Key Missions," the ambiguous fourth mission is completely dropped, while other priorities are either added or expanded to better reflect the threats identified in the QDR (Slide 7). In summary, the DOD adopts three major doctrinal changes:

- First, in where the 2006 QDR only mention counterterrorism operations, drawing on recent experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan and Haiti, the 2010 QDR also recognizes executing counterinsurgency and stability operations as primary DOD planning priorities.
- Second, the 2010 QDR recognizes success in such operations is often heavily contingent upon the effectiveness of partner security by including building partner states' security capacities as a primary planning priority.
- Third and last of the significant priority changes, the 2010 QDR recognizes the growing threat of cyber information systems attacks by state and non-state actors as well as the increasing need for the DOD to improve US government information technology security.

Despite these efforts to align its planning priorities to the changing threat environment, the DOD has only achieved mixed success in aligning its planning priorities, as laid out in the 2010 QDR, with its budgeting priorities, found in the DOD's FY 2011 Budget Request.

The DOD's planning and budgeting priorities are congruent at a couple points (Slide 8). Funding for missile, aircraft and ship procurement and upgrades will see a steady increase in funding over the out years (FY 2012 – FY 2015), indicating that the DOD will continue to bolster capacity to "deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments" as it states in the 2010 QDR (Slide 10).

Moreover, the 2010 QDR states the DOD's plans to establish a Joint Task Force Elimination Headquarters in order to unify DOD personnel and resources devoted to stemming nuclear proliferation as well as to establish USCYBERCOM in order to unify the DOD's efforts to bolster national security against attacks in cyberspace.

However, at several other points the DOD's budgeting realities diverge sharply from its stated priorities (Slides 8-9). Despite recognizing the successful execution of counterinsurgency and stability operations as an integral planning priority, the budget for FY 2011 reveals that funding for Army aircraft procurement (composed of primarily rotary wing aircraft), special forces operations and intelligence capabilities will actually decrease in real terms relative to their FY 2010 funding levels (Slide 12).

Overview

Budgeting also raises serious questions about the priority given to the DOD's mission to bolster the security capacities in partner states; funding for Iraqi, Afghan and Pakistani security forces are all set to decrease in FY 2011 relative to FY 2010 (Slide 11).

Likewise, the 2010 QDR provides very limited operational analysis. In addition to defining the threat environment and strategic objectives (key missions), a coherent strategic environment requires clearly defined and actionable operations concepts to explain specifically how the DOD intends to achieve its strategic objectives.

The QDR goes into significant depth in explaining how it intends to operationalize the "key missions" of counterinsurgency operations and building partner security forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, the definition of applicable operational concepts for the other key missions are tabled for later review.

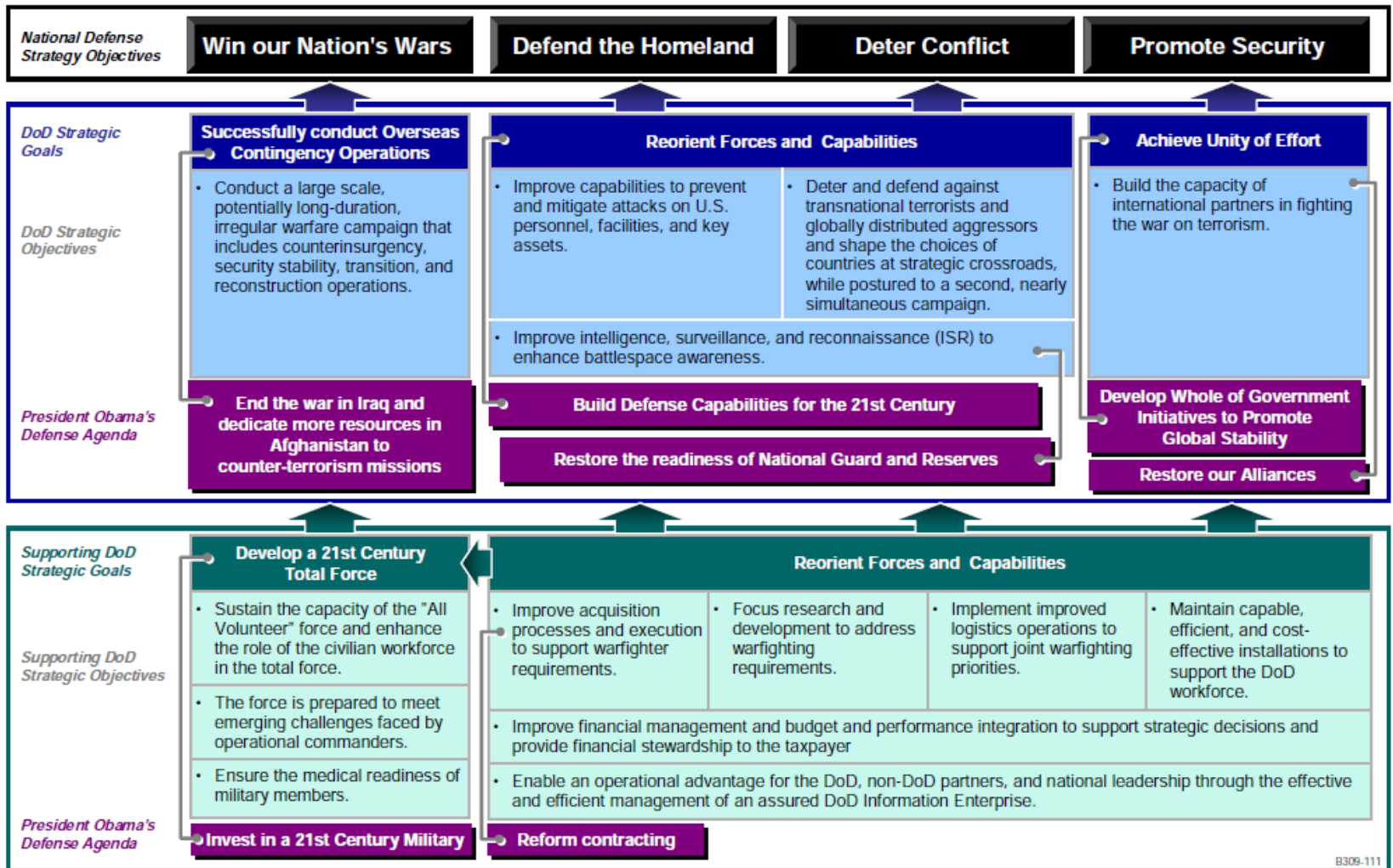
The QDR calls upon the Navy and Air Force to develop a new Air-Sea battle concept to address anti-access and area denial threats but does not hint at what that concept might be. Furthermore, the QDR states the DOD's intent establish command headquarters to unify efforts against nuclear proliferation and against cyber warfare, but, again, but does not go so far as to suggest actionable plans for defending against these threats.

In conclusion, the 2010 QDR and FY 2011 Budget Request continues the DOD's long-running mismatch between strategic objective and budgeting priorities. While the 2010 QDR does a markedly better job than its 2006 predecessor at defining the threat environment and the DOD's strategic objectives, it still fails in many respects to clearly and thoroughly explain how the DOD intends to achieve these objectives.

These failures to articulate clear operational concepts obfuscate any attempt by planners to identify necessary capabilities and force structure changes as well as how to prioritize amongst competing demands for different capabilities. This situation further complicates efforts by Congress and the DOD to "optimize" the military's force structure to achieve all six key missions in the midst of a campaign of fiscal "belt-tightening," in which the DOD may not be able to simply spend its way out of future force structure crises.

The Interplay of Pentagon Bureaucratic Priorities and President Obama's Priorities

Figure 2.14 DoD Strategic Goals and Objectives
Linkage to National Defense Strategy and President Obama's Defense Agenda



Graph adapted from: US Dept. of Defense. "Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request: Summary Justification". Dept of the Comptroller. 2009. pg 134.

Defining the Threat Environment

1. Terrorist networks
2. Anti-access challenges to the “global commons”
3. Proliferation of WMDs from rogue government and failed states
4. Increased use of asymmetric or “hybrid” warfare tactics to counter traditional US strength in conventional warfare
5. Increased capability of non-state actors to make use of advanced technological capabilities (e.g. cyber warfare and satellite imagery)

Evolution of the Pentagon's "Strategic Framework"

2006 QDR's "Four Priority Areas":

1. "Defeating terrorist networks"
2. "Defending the homeland in depth"
3. "Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads"
4. "Preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using WMD"

Vs.

2010 QDR's "Six Key Missions":

1. "Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home"
2. "Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations"
3. "Build the security capacity of partner states"
4. "Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments"
5. "Prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction"
6. "Operate effectively in cyberspace"

The Pentagon: Framework-Plans Mismatch

There is a need to match priorities with actual programs. Here are arguments that highlight discrepancies between “goals” and actual budgets to support such goals:

Priorities

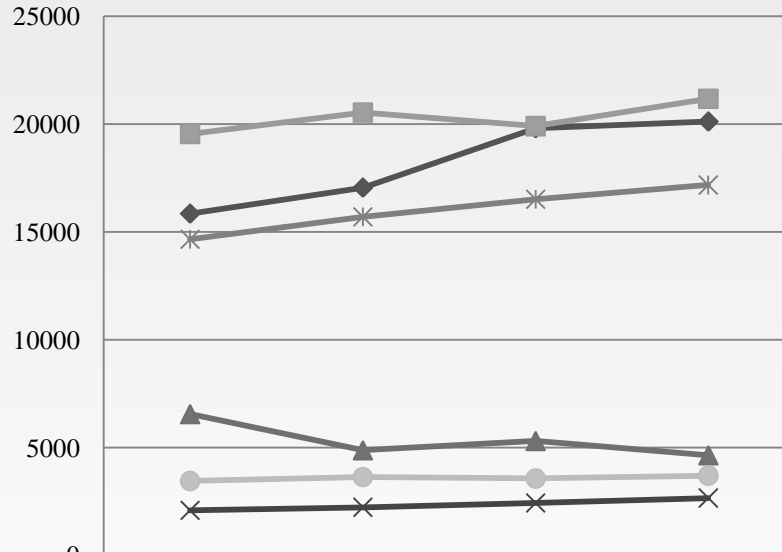
1. *Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home* ← This priority can be crowded out by unmanageable and rising O&M, VA, and other costs
2. *Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations* ← Funding for Army aircraft procurement, special forces operations, and intelligence are all set to decrease from FY 2010 to FY 2011
3. *Build the security capacity of partner states* ← Funding in support of partners’ security capacities down significantly across the board (See following slide)
4. *Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments* ← Missile, Aircraft and Ship procurement and upgrades see a steady increase in funding over the out years FY 2012 – FY 2015 (See following slide)
5. *Prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction* ← DOD is establishing a standing Joint Task Force Elimination HQ to unify DOD efforts toward nuclear disablement
6. *Operate effectively in cyberspace* ← DOD is establishing USCYBERCOM in order to unify DOD defense efforts against attacks in cyberspace;

Many Force Structure Changes Proposed in the QDR Are Not Seen in the FY 2011 Budget Request

- The 2010 QDR proposes a number of force structure changes, most of which are directly in support of the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Expanding rotary wing assets; adding a company of cargo helicopters to the Army's SF Aviation Regiment
 - Expanding Predator and Reaper UAV systems from 50 to 65 orbits by 2015
 - Increasing the number organic combat support and combat service support assets such as information support and intelligence analysts
- However, the FY 2011 Budget Request does not reflect these stated planning priorities
- In general, rather than shift the DOD's capabilities toward unconventional warfare capabilities, the FY 2011 Budget Request re-entrenches the DOD's traditional funding bias toward conventional warfare

“Unpreparing” to Deter and Defeat Aggression in Anti-Access Environments in the Out Years?

BA in FY 2011 Constant \$US Millions

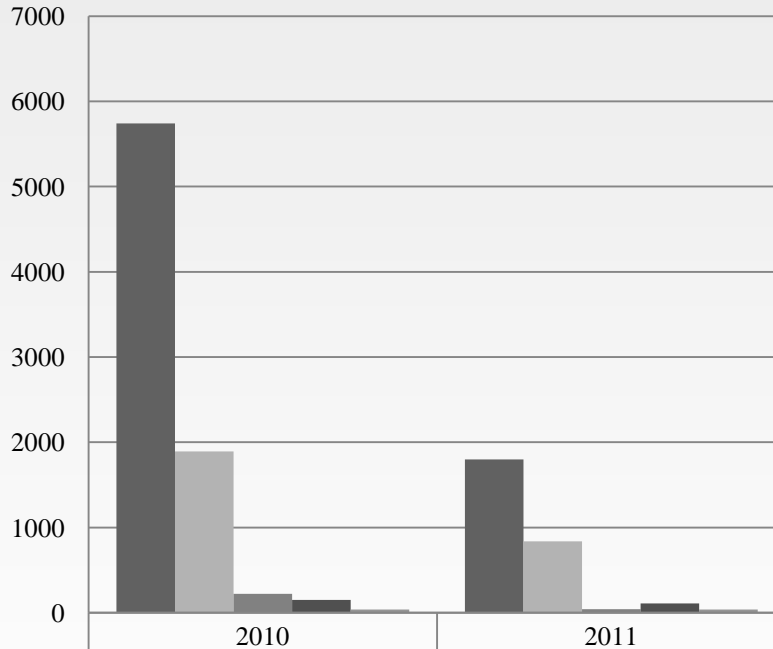


	2012	2013	2014	2015
—◆— Aircraft Procurement, AF	15841	17047	19802	20114
—■— Aircraft Procurement, Navy	19541	20525	19900	21168
—▲— Missile Procurement, AF	6555	4875	5306	4642
—×— Missile Procurement, Army	2087	2228	2430	2656
—*— Ships and Conversion	14649	15689	16513	17169
—●— Weapons Procurement, Navy	3446	3634	3565	3695

2012 - 2015 Total Delta	2012 -2015 Total %Delta
4273	27.0%
1627	8.3%
-1913	-29.2%
569	27.3%
2520	17.2%
249	7.2%

Lack of Funds to Build the Security Capacity of Partner States in FY 2011?

Outlays by Title in FY 2011 Constant \$US Millions

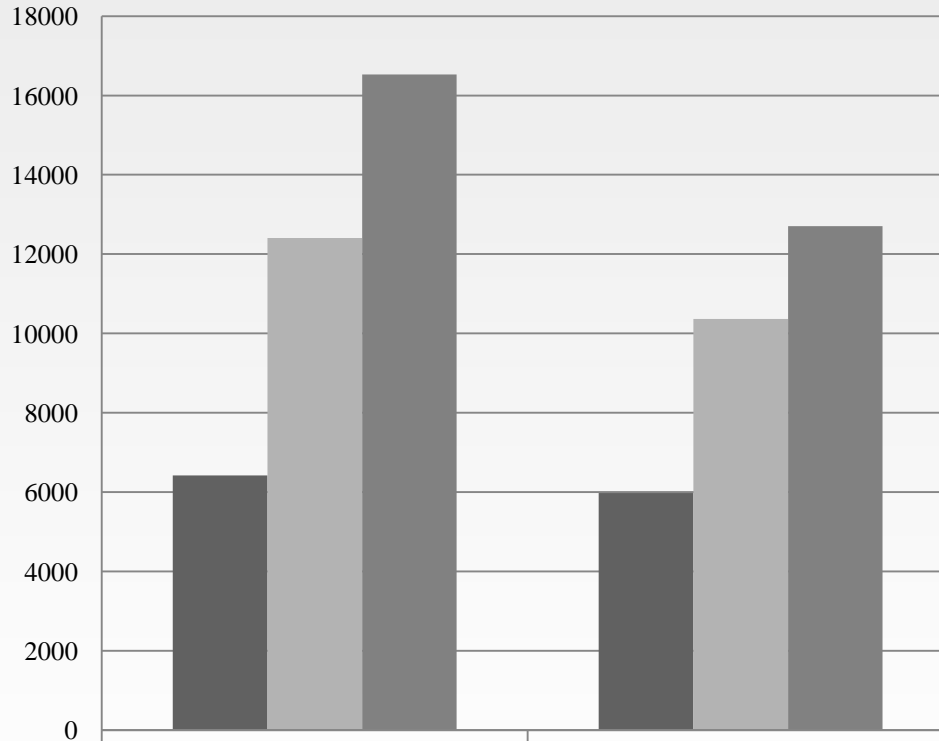


■ Afghan Security Forces Fund	5741	1799
■ Iraq Security Fund	1892	837
■ Pakistan Country Capital Fund	222	40
■ Humanitarian Assistance Fund	151	109
■ Host Nation Support Fund	36	36

Delta	% Delta
-3942	-68.7%
-1055	-55.8%
-182	-82.0%
-42	-27.8%
0	0.0%

Inadequate Funding of Counterinsurgency, Stability, and Counterterrorism Operations?

In Constant FY 2011 \$US Millions



■ Aircraft Procurement, Army	6417	5977
■ Special Ops Forces	12407	10361
■ C3, Intel & Space	16525	12705

Delta	% Delta
-440	-6.9%
-2046	-16.5%
-3820	-23.1%

Enduring Defense Planning Challenges

- Winning sustainable, consistent Congressional and public support for real world as well as affordable plans, programs, and budgets.
- Establishing a clear division of responsibilities to appropriate Defense, State and National Security officials when efforts are needed to create host country political accommodation, governance, development, and security forces.
- Creating a functional interagency process and partnering with civilian counterparts.
- Choosing among resizing and rebalancing US strategic commitments, forces, and/or budgets.
- Coming to grips with the need to conduct ideological and political warfare
- Accepting the reality that political legitimacy in counterinsurgency will be measured in local terms and not in terms of American ideology.

What Capabilities Are Needed?

- Korea: Precision strike/stealth, missile/air defense, intelligence, sea power, key land elements, extended deterrence.
- Taiwan: Sea power, ASW, precision strike/stealth, missile/air defense, intelligence, sea power, extended deterrence
- Iran: Counter-proliferation, defense against asymmetric naval threats, ASW, precision strike/stealth, missile/air defense, intelligence, sea power, extended deterrence
- Afghanistan: Far more limited exercises in counterterrorism and limited war.
- Strategic: Shaping the mix of nuclear, conventional, and defense.
- Intelligence and Net-centric: Meeting diversified global needs.
- Power projection: Increasing speed, sustainability, and capability with severe limits on numbers; avoiding breaking the force.

Executing Operations in Support of the “Six Key Missions” Will Require Improve Unity of Effort

- NSC: Interagency versus line authority.
 - Role of the Vice President’s office.
- Creating a focused, risk oriented foreign service.
- Integrating Homeland defense.
- What is the proper role of NDI and how should the intelligence community be defined.
- Solving the stability operation/nation building problem.
 - The art of strategic neglect.
- Redefining the role of Congress.

Success Requires International Unity of Effort in Addition to Domestic Unity of Effort

- Post-NATO modernism: Alliance of the willing and capable.
- Reliance on regional and local powers for what?
 - Regional deterrence, war fighting, containment, and counterterrorism.
 - Taiwan, South Korea
- Developing the forces (political systems and economy) of “failed states.”
- Dealing with international informal networks of non-state actors: Specifically Neo-Salafi Sunni Islamists.
- Counter-proliferation/Extended deterrence
- Cooperation in ideological battles, information warfare, and public diplomacy.

Concluding Remarks

- The 2010 QDR and FY 2011 Budget Request continues the DOD's long-running mismatch between strategic objective and budgeting priorities
- While the 2010 QDR does a markedly better job than its 2006 predecessor at defining the threat environment and the DOD's strategic objectives, it still fails in many respects to clearly and thoroughly explain how the DOD intends to achieve these objectives
- These failures to articulate clear operations concepts obfuscate attempts by planners to identify necessary capabilities and force structure changes as well as how to prioritize amongst competing demands for different capabilities
- This situation further complicates efforts by Congress and the DOD to "optimize" the military's force structure to achieve all six key missions in the midst of a campaign of fiscal "belt-tightening," in which the DOD may not be able to simply spend its way out of future force structure crises.