

TRANSCRIPT

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The Honorable Michelle Flournoy

Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

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Q: Take the subject of a sanctuary in Pakistan. Talk a little bit about how you view that, and I guess specifically to the point of whether there's a concern that that will eventually require direct US military action to deal with it.

A: I think the fact that we have the existence of a safe haven in Pakistan on the border with Afghanistan is one of the reasons why when we did our strategy review of this area we looked at this theater as an integrated theater of operations--Afghanistan and Pakistan together. Because each affects the other so profoundly. I think that said, I think the strategy calls for different approaches--integrated approaches but different approaches in each country.

I think in the Afghanistan context we are pursuing really for the first time a fully resourced counter-insurgency strategy that puts not only military troops on the ground but the full range of civilian experts and assistants as well, with the aim of really building up the Afghan capability, both security, governance, et cetera, to protect their own populations, provide for the basic needs of their people and in so doing marginalize the extremist elements there.

On the Pakistan side of the border you have a different situation which is that you have the Pakistani military beginning to step up to the problem, pursuing counter-offensive in the Swat Valley and elsewhere. What we're trying to do there is more acting in support in terms of providing assistance, equipment, training when requested, and lessons learned from our own experience with regard to counter-insurgency.

So we view this as an integrated whole, but I think the methods, the sort of details of the

strategy are going to vary in each place.

Q: How can you regard it as an integrated whole? I take that that that's a smart thing to do, but you do have this border that runs right down the middle of this integrated whole.

A: Yes, and when I say an integrated whole I mean that the enemy doesn't respect the border. The enemy's going back and forth across the border constantly. Problems on one side of the border beget problems on the other.

That said, we have two sovereign nations, as you rightly point out. And so our strategy on each side of that border has to be tailored to the unique conditions of each country. But in the end, the two pieces have to fit together and be synergistic, so that we make some progress. I think we're on the road to doing that.

Q: So you are optimistic that you'll be able to deal with that problem without a direct United States military role?

A: I believe that our focus will be providing the assistance to make Pakistan's military and Pakistan's civilian government and institutions effective. I do not anticipate large-scale boots on the ground for the United States.

Q: I wanted to follow up on that. I wondered if you were disappointed in the heavy-handed response of Pakistan in the Swat Valley? Their tactics were not the kind of counter-insurgency, light-handed approach. And what specific steps can Pakistan take to show that they have a long term commitment to beating down the militant threat?

A: I think the Pakistan military is really focused on the threat that it perceives from India. So it's a conventional force that's been trained in conventional warfare.

It's now being used to conduct counter-insurgency operations and to its credit, it's asked for help. It knows that it needs different kinds of equipment, different kinds of training, different kinds of orientation. I think that's going to take some time to help that reorientation happen, to build the necessary capabilities. But equally importantly, I think this is a situation that doesn't have a military only solution. The real issue is enabling the larger Pakistani government to be able to provide for the needs of the population in this area.

So when you look at US assistance, the biggest growth in our assistance in terms of what we requested from Congress is on the non-military side. It's providing economic assistance, education, health reform, trying to enable the new civilian government of Pakistan to be more effective in actually being able to address the needs of the population in that area and more broadly.

Q: Do you think the Pakistani military understands what it needs to do in the tribal areas, in the border areas, by sort of building up governance and doing that--Do they--

A: It's not a monolith. I think you can find commanders who get it and who want to take the institution in that direction and who understand that you don't just clear, you also have to hold and build. There are others who are more old school, who this is a new challenge for them. And it's difficult. So I think what we're trying to do is assist them where we're able to because the stakes are so great for us.

Q: Let's change the topic to detainee policy. There seems to be some effort to do away with Bush administration era policies--closing Guantanamo, releasing some of the Office of Legal Counsel memos; and then the military tribunals and some of the other, not releasing photos. Can you sort of walk us through why some elements of this are being disbanded and why some elements are being sort of maintained and what the process is?

A: I think the President and the Secretary, the administration as a whole has been very clear that we have to act according to our values. That security and American values are mutually supportive. I think the President's been very clear, saying mistreatment, abuse of detainees is never acceptable, it's deplorable, and it does not reflect the values of the United States or the values of the United States military, for that matter.

Second, he's been very clear, to ban the use of torture. He's been categorical. We will not torture, we will not tolerate torture. I think he's been very clear. And he's not only made the statement but we've followed up to make sure that the policies are clear, the doctrine is clear, the training is clear, so there can be no mistake about this issue.

He's also said we're going to close Guantanamo Bay. And we are going to, now the question is, it's easier said than done. It's a very challenging set of issues that we are working our way through, but the commitment is there and we are all standing behind that.

I think the policy is very clear and there have been very fundamental actions taken to implement that.

I think the issue of the photos specifically is that first of all, the photos are the result of investigations that have been completed and have yielded actions holding individuals responsible, accountable. So the release of the photos isn't going to do anything in terms of the accountability question. But the main question is, what do we think the reaction would be. I think the President became convinced that there were clear, the release of the photos could directly endanger American service personnel who are on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that that was too high a risk, actually having Americans killed as a result of this was just too high a price to pay. And the sort of larger implications that the [outlash] could create on the ground for those missions.

There's a very clear and unmistakable commitment to not allowing this kind of treatment in the future and to holding people accountable when it does occur, so there's

no change in that. On the major fronts the actions back that up. But I think the photo release was a very difficult decision, but the key factor was not willing to put service members' lives directly at risk as a result of this.

Q: One other piece that's in here which is the court filing that I guess changes the nomenclature from enemy combatant but still argues that the administration should be able to have indefinite detention of whatever we're calling them now.

I don't mean this to be pejorative, but it sounds like the administration is taking a very case by case look at each of these as opposed to the Bush administration which seemed to have ideological, I guess is the word, but a much more overarching view of what detainee policy should be which is anything and everything, all be damned to a certain extent, but it sounds like the Obama administration has a much more, I guess pragmatic is the word, more of a case by case basis when you're looking at the photos, when you're looking at indefinite detention. It doesn't seem like there's an overarching, other than the bright line of no torture and closing GTMO, it seems to be case by case. Is that unfair?

A: I think there is a pretty clear policy, but I think the challenge here is we're dealing with an inheritance. We're dealing with people who were taken into custody before, when different policies were in place. It's sort of sorting through the disposition of people who were apprehended under a different set of rules, applying a different set of standards. Now you inherit them and you're trying to apply a new set of standards. It's very complicated.

I'm not a lawyer. If you really want to get into the details of this I would encourage you to try to see Joe Johnson or folks at Justice or what have you. But I do think we have a very pragmatic, non-ideological approach in general to foreign policy, but I think this is just, it's a very complicated set of issues. We have a very strong set of principles that we use as a touchstone in each case, but there are just a lot of challenging details to work through and to stick with those principles.

Q: First on Iran, do you have insight into this new announcement of the launch of a [Shelgeal] II, a new surface-to-air missile?

A: I saw the news reports and I haven't been to the office, so--[Laughter]. I know as much as you do from watching CNN.

Q: The implication was this is a new, they said it's a new missile. What's the policy implications for the United States or is this just more of the same [inaudible]?

A: I think Iran's development of a variety of ballistic missiles, particularly those with medium and longer ranges is of great concern to us, particularly because of their interest in things nuclear. So there are UN Security Council Resolutions in place that deplore this kind of activity. So I do think it poses a security threat to the region and I think we

have to try to deal with it.

If I could just say a broader word about our Iran policy, I think what this administration is trying to do is present Iran with a very fundamental choice between staying on the current path they're on which is I think only going to hamper their security in the long term in terms of having the international community sort of push back on a lot of their behavior, their destabilizing behavior in the region, their sponsorship of terrorism and extremist groups, their development of nuclear technology; versus taking another path where if they were to reject support for terrorism, extremism, reject nuclear weapons, they could actually be on a path that would do a lot more for their ultimate security in terms of being integrated into the region, having normal relations with others, being recognized as a culture with a great history, a regional power that deserves prestige and respect, et cetera. So it's a very fundamental choice that they have to make. I think our engagement policy is really a means to present them with that choice and make it real to them.

Q: Can I ask a quick QDR question? In what respect, in what investment areas might the QDR make advances or cuts that we haven't already seen in the April 6th announcements? More to come, so to speak.

A: Too early to say. Right now we're in the stage of, we've identified a set of focus areas based on the national defense strategy and guidance from Secretary Gates, and we're really getting into the details of where do we need to enhance our capabilities for irregular warfare, for counter proliferation, for dealing with high end asymmetric threats and so forth.

So if I come back July 1 maybe I can answer that question, but we honestly are in the middle of the analysis trying to come up with [candidate] capabilities.

Q: Is it more likely this QDR will match the 1997 QDR where there were a number of major cuts and modifications? The B-2 was capped; JSTARS capped; F-22 cut?

A: Again, I think this QDR is going to continue the process of rebalancing that Secretary Gates has really begun in the FY10 budget. But I can't give you a sense of magnitude or scope yet because we're just not, we don't have any answers yet.

Q: As you know, Harry Reed said yesterday that he didn't want any prisoners from Guantanamo on American soil. Is that a realistic position?

A: I think that figuring out the disposition of the remaining detainees is going to be very challenging and there's not going to be any one answer. We are working with our allies to hope that they will take some of the detainees with nations where some of these people are from. I think there will be some that need to end up in the United States. I can't tell you how many, I can't tell you where, but we have a committed, a dedicated process to working through those details and we'll be dealing with it not only internal to

the administration, but obviously with leadership on the Hill and with interested Members on the Hill.

Q: Secretary Gates, as you know, said a couple of weeks ago there would be 50 to 100 here. He thought that was--

A: I have not seen any numbers. I can't give you a number. I think literally we're still working through, this is a case where you have to go case by case and look at the disposition of each individual.

Q: There's no update on whether it would be Leavenworth or Charleston or--

A: Not yet. The decision hasn't been made.

Q: I want to ask you a real big picture question which I assure you is not facetious. For about 20 years now the United States has been the world's super power. In your deliberations over national strategy are you thinking that that's a good status to preserve, or perhaps it's time to rebalance with the other countries, maybe become a first among equals in the alliance, or balance out more with Russia, China, India, maybe take some of the responsibility off the US shoulders?

A: I think the fact that America's position in the world is fairly unique, it is a fact. But I think this administration, when you look at the full range of security challenges we face, whether it's terrorism, proliferation, economic security issues, climate change, pick your challenge, there's not a single one that the United States alone can deal with effectively.

By definition you need coalitions and partners to deal with these challenges. So I think we are uniquely positioned to play a leadership role in many cases in bringing together alliances and coalitions to tackle some of these tough problems.

At the same time, I do think the world is becoming a more multi-polar place and you have the rise of other powers and you have the rise of important regional players who will play leadership roles in their regions. So what this is pushing us to is, again, a more pragmatic strategy that's focused on building partnerships to deal with specific challenges around the world.

Q: But do you see the need for the United States to continue having a substantially more dominant military than any other country?

A: I think as a nation with both a global interest and a global leadership role to play, yes, I do believe that our military needs to remain second to none. But what that means is changing. This is why we're conducting the QDR.

The world watched Desert Storm and I think most understand that if you try to take the United States military on head on in a conventional manner you're going to lose. That's

driven others to invest in highly asymmetric approaches aimed at undermining our strengths and exploiting our weaknesses. So that is the world that we have to adapt to and that the military has to adapt to.

Q: Now that the Indian elections are over, what steps would you like the Indian government to take that would make it easier for the Pakistanis to pull back from the border physically, and then philosophically shift towards counter-insurgency and not the traditional threats?

A: I would love to see the Indian government and the Pakistani government reengage in confidence building measures and discussions about Kashmir and about other areas of difference, shall we say. I think there's a lot that can be done to lower tensions, and frankly, they had done a lot to lower tensions before the Mumbai attacks. So I would like to see that process restarted. I think that would go a long way to enabling the Pakistani government and the Pakistani military to focus on the real, the most urgent existential threat they face which is the threat from within.

Q: Do you intend to put a lot more pressure on the Indians [inaudible]?

A: That's kind of out of my lane. You can ask the State Department that.

Q: A German official [inaudible] but his background really is manhunting. How do you square that with the [inaudible] need to address all these non-military [inaudible]? And how do you see his new leadership there actually changing or improving our understanding of our strategy and what our implementation of our strategy is there?

A: I think that General MacCrystal and General Rodriguez together as a leadership team really collectively have a lot of counter-insurgency insight and experience. I think they obviously understand the direct action piece of this. But I think frankly General MacCrystal's time on the Joint Staff in particular, I mean I think he has a much broader view of the sort of lessons that we've learned over the past several years, particularly in Iraq and also in Afghanistan in terms of how to conduct successful counter-insurgency. So I think they understand this requires a whole government approach. The center of gravity is protecting the population even as you seek to go after the enemy. And I think that they will very quickly put together a new campaign plan that has those emphases and that makes very good use of the additional resources that are being put on the ground.

I was personally very excited to see this change, as I think these are two up and coming leaders within the US military who really get it about what needs to be done and will bring a lot of perspective and energy to their jobs.

Q: Do you see, will we see specifics say by July or whenever about how many joint security [inaudible]--

A: You have to let them get there first. Assuming they make it through the confirmation process and they arrive, hopefully in June, I think the first task will be to sit down with Ambassador Eikenberry and other civilian entities on the ground and really come up with a joint integrated campaign plan of how we're going to approach this.

And it may well result in some, I expect it will result in some changes of approach on the ground, and particularly, again, in how the civilian side of the equation is integrated.

The PRTs in Afghanistan to date have been largely military manned. You're going to see a shift in that. You're going to see a shift in trying to bring Afghan civilian resources to bear, UN civilian resources to bear. A much more integrated approach on the part of not only the US but ISAF and the rest of the international community that's there. And in a lot of cases putting the Afghans in the lead. The Afghans have a very good national development strategy but we haven't been really focused on it. We haven't fully focused our efforts on implementing it.

Q: I wanted to follow up on Guantanamo. The growing opposition on the Hill among Republicans and now several Democrats too, to bringing any detainees to the United States, what affect does that have on the Pentagon's conversations with allies who might take some of these detainees?

Also a question on the actual funding in the supplemental. Congress of course has canceled that altogether. What affect does that have on efforts to close Guantanamo by January?

A: When we are asking allies to do their fair share in dealing with this challenge, we have to do our fair share. I think this is a case where we need to ask members of Congress to sort of take a more strategic view. Many of these members call for the closure of Guantanamo and we need their partnership in making that possible. So we are going to continue, this is an ongoing conversation. We will continue to work with them to find solutions that will work.

Q: On the funding issues, wouldn't the \$80 million--\$50 for [inaudible] and \$30 for DOJ--if that's nixed out of the supplemental which it looks like it's about to happen this week, what does that mean for the closure plans by January?

A: I don't know. I haven't had a conversation with the Comptroller to understand exactly how that will affect things, whether there are other ways to reprogram. I just don't know. Sorry.

Q: A question about the QDR as well. You mentioned that you're delving into sort of a key part of the process. I'd like to ask you about the scenarios that the department is going to be using for this stage of the process.

How important are the scenarios that you select to the outcome? And can you say

something about the decision to introduce alternative scenarios?

A: I think the scenarios are an important tool but only one tool in the analysis in the QDR. What they help us to understand, individually each scenario embodies a set of military challenges that we can test ourselves against, but we're also looking at scenarios in combination. So if you had multiple simultaneous events going on, at what point do you stress the force and in what way? So I think we look at them collectively as well.

So they are an input. The results of that work will be an input. They're not, they don't determine outcomes, they don't dictate decisions, but they will help frame some of the issues that we want to look at more closely with further analysis.

The choice to introduce a sort of second track, if you will, of analytic work was really a lesson, a best practice that we took from the last QDR. One of the things that we did when we started was look at past QDRs and what worked well and what didn't and why, and one of the best practices we identified was the use of a red team in the last QDR which was sort of a separate group that was relatively unconstrained, that was allowed to work at some of the same problems to see, to have a second set of eyes and ears, a second set of opinions on what the department needed to do. That was very helpful in the last QDR. So we wanted to create something similar, have a little more unconstrained, out of the box set of scenarios and people from the outside who could take a fresh look at these challenges and give us their insights to make sure we don't become victims of group think.

Q: Was it running in parallel?

A: Uh huh.

Q: Can you say anything about the timeline for the review at this point? When you hope to have--

A: The review goes all the way through until when we submit the FY11 budget. That's when the formal report is done. But to the extent we want to get out of the review insights that help frame and guide decisionmaking for the program in FY11, we're aiming to have those insights by the summer timeframe so that we can influence the program review for '11. So that's the timeline, internal timeline, we're really driving towards, as [inaudible] of the work being done as possible so that we can take it into the program review.

Q: Late summer?

A: Yeah.

Q: What about the force sizing construct of two MCOs? Is that going to be retained or is that an issue for discussion?

A: That is on the table for discussion. It's something that will be informed by the scenario work and the rest of the analysis. It is a surrogate for talking about this question of how do you allocate risk. When you can't do everything equally well and you have to make choices about where to place emphasis and where to accept risk, I think the force sizing or shaping construct becomes sort of a guidepost, guiding planners for when I have to make those choices kind of what's my conceptual framework for doing that? So that will be one of the main products of the QDR, a new force sizing and shaping construct.

Q: Can you say anything about how the force sizing construct that you inherited is inadequate and why it needs to be assessed right now?

A: I think the main reason is that the security environment continues to change. Our knowledge of our own capabilities and where the force is stressed, where we need to invest more continues to change. I think all of those things will influence the discussion.

Q: In the last QDR one of the beliefs was that an attribute of a super power was the ability to handle two at a time, not just one. Does that still apply?

A: What I would say is I think what reality shows is we have to be able to do multiple things at a time. We are involved in a global campaign against violent extremism. At the same time we are engaged in Iraq. At the same time we're engaged in Afghanistan. And oh by the way, we're dealing with piracy. And oh by the way, we're helping allies deal with their problems. And so forth.

I think we're trying to capture not just sort of how many things, the numbers issues, but the diverse range of the kinds of challenges we may be called on to deal with at one time.

Q: Back on Pakistan. You said at the outset that the Pakistani military is beginning to step up to what we have described as the real [inaudible] threat. What gives you confidence that they really are stepping up? That there's been a fundamental recognition within the senior leadership of the Pakistani military that this is something that they really have to do? And are you concerned that elsewhere within the Pakistani government there are people just sort of telling the US what we want to hear?

A: I don't think Pakistan is a monolith. I think you can find a broad range of opinions there about the severity of the threat, what needs to be done, et cetera. I can tell you that my impression of the civilian leadership of the government is that they are very concerned and very committed to addressing this problem. I think the fact that the military has begun this offensive, that they've talked openly about their aspirations to continue the offensive, both in time and geographically, and that they're asking for help to do that, those are all important signs that they are trying to address this challenge.

The other thing I think we shouldn't discount is the impact that attacks in Lahor, in

Islamabad, against the cricket team, I mean this threat has come home to the Pakistani heartland in a way that is new and different and it has gotten the attention of the Pakistani populace and the Pakistani leadership in a way that is new and different. So I do think we have an opportunity here to offer assistance at a time when it is going to be, I think there's greater political will on their side to use it.

Q: What is a realistic number that the department is hoping still to get allies [inaudible]? [Inaudible] in particular.

A: I don't know. [Laughter].

Q: It seems to be very complicated.

A: That's why I don't know.

Q: If none can go to the US, which I know is a temporary position that you're hoping to change, but if this doesn't work, if not, I guess my question is can you give us an assessment of are you still optimistic that the Europeans would take more than what they take already which I think is only two, or they've agreed to take essentially only two?

A: I am optimistic that all of us will take more than we've agreed so far. [Laughter].

Q: Is it possible--

A: You're right. This is a challenge that will require all of us to step up and make hard choices on. Those choices haven't been made yet. But if we all want to get to the goal of closing Guantanamo and turning the page in how we deal with this issue, we all have to step up and make those hard choices. I can't tell you who's going to make what choice or for how many, but we're going to keep working this issue very hard.

Q: Is it realistic to meet the timeline of closing Guantanamo in a year if Congress persists in its position that no prisoners can be transferred to the US?

A: I don't want to offer any sort of definitive judgment, in part because I also want to stay in my lane. I deal with the policy dimensions of this, but when it comes to the negotiations on specific issues like this and so forth, I really do defer to my legal beagle colleagues and others. So I'm sorry.

Q: I want to ask about [inaudible]. In what specific way [inaudible]?

A: I think one of the ways in which it's different is that we have a defense strategy in place and a very experience sitting Secretary in place so this QDR very quickly reached pretty clear consensus internally and interagency on what the directions were, what the guidance was, what the priorities were. So normally you have a brand new

administration, a lot of people coming to this for the first time and it takes a lot of time to get to the point, where we were there very early in the process. That's an advantage in that you have more time to try to get to the, so what does that mean, what are the implications of those priorities?

I think the second thing that makes this different is we are very consciously trying to affect the program budget decisions in '11. This is not some separate process. This is creating a strategic framework to drive that process.

The third thing I'd highlight is the involvement of the senior leadership. Some QDRs have been sort of bottom-up staff exercises. This one has not. Secretary Gates is very engaged. Secretary [Inaudible] is very engaged. This is a leader-driven process and that will make a difference too, in terms of making the results stick.

Q: [Inaudible], does that mean that [inaudible]?

A: The department has many stakeholders. The services, the combatant commanders, and so forth, and all of them have a seat at the table. This is a leader driven process, but it's also a very well vetted process, so they are meeting regularly to review the work that's coming out of the working groups, the analysis and so forth. So they all have a seat at the table to make their concerns and their views known.

Q: Admiral Mullen said the other day that he was very concerned about the effects of civilian deaths on our strategy in Afghanistan. The Pakistani army's move into Swat seems to look an awful lot like exactly the type of counter-insurgency effort you don't want to run. Driving civilians from their homes, there are a number of reports that large numbers of civilians are dying. Are the Pakistanis effectively making things worse, driving the Taliban into southern Afghanistan at a time when we don't have our troops there, and how bad is it?

A: I think we are very concerned about the humanitarian situation on the border. As you know, the US has just begun to do its part in terms of providing relief and assistance along with the rest of the international community to try to address the needs of the IDPs.

We are offering assistance to the Pakistani military to help them, actually I would say to the Pakistani government writ large to help them address the security and basic needs of the population, the sort of hold and build parts of the counter-insurgency.

But we're in very early days of this. I think this will take time.

I don't have any specific information on exactly the cross-border effects. Again, it's early days. But I do think we have to work with the Pakistanis to ensure that the long term, we help them to be more successful in protecting their population and marginalizing the Taliban and extremists from them. The more effective the Pakistani government can be

in providing basic services and security there, the less interested many of these local populations will be in hosting the Taliban. Again, this is not a weeks long project, this is a long term effort that will take some time.

Q: Is there a case to be made for funneling much of our aid to the Pakistani National Police as opposed to the military?

A: I think our assistance is diversified across not only the military but the Frontier Corps. We have some assistance targeted on building police forces, building the capacity of the Pakistani government to deliver other forms of aid--economic, health, education, et cetera. So it's got to be a full [inaudible], but again, it's going to take some time.

Q: A follow-up on the Iranian missile issue and then a real question.

On the nuclear issue, there have been people who have said that the Obama administration's cuts to missile defense come at a time when North Korea and Iran are aggressively developing missiles and [inaudible] the dangerous sort of move to back away. I'm particularly curious about the European site and what you think is going to happen with that, whether that will ultimately then go away, and do you site it somewhere else?

A: I wouldn't describe what's in the budget as cuts. I think what Secretary Gates decided was, a shift of emphasis. We are sort of finishing out the national missile defense interceptor program, the GBI, at the sort of current number because we believe that's adequate against the sort of rogue threat, which is quite limited in primarily North Korea.

The shift in resources was to focus on theater defense and tactical defense. So defense of our allies abroad against primarily medium range threats and defense of our forces deployed in the field. So if you actually look at the funding streams there, those investment streams are actually getting plussed up in many cases. Things like SM3, THAAD and so forth.

The third site is still the subject of review. We are looking at it both in terms of what we need to protect against the Iranian threat to Europe, but we're also looking at the full range of technological solutions. Are there better ways to do this? And importantly, can we do this in a cooperative manner with Russia?

So we are looking at a range of options, interagency. We're going to be talking about those with the Russians and with our European allies. And we hope to come to some resolution on that in the next several months. In the mean time the money for the third site that was not spent in '09 is going to carry over and it's available once we make a decision on whether and how to go forward.

Q: On the broader question of arms sales in general, from the defense industry point of

view, seeing a flatter curve as far as US defense spending and also in terms of possibly even a decline, many are looking now to international competitions to sell their systems. Do you have a sense of whether the Obama administration will follow the general policy of supporting exports? Do you anticipate any change in terms of where US arms will be sold?

A: I guess I think we are, from a policy perspective, looking at this more through the lens of what we talked about earlier, which is how can we help partners build their capacity to be effective in dealing with problems? And so we are going sort of country by country and region by region, trying to assess needs and requirements, and have that sort of strategic perspective as a basis or a policy guideline, if you will, for what we provide to whom.

So we don't have a sort of arms sale policy as much as more a sense of commitment to building partner capacity and doing that on a strategic basis, that tries to take a sort of requirements based approach. So rather than trying to take a given weapon system and sort of hawk it around the world, we're trying to actually say what is--If we want to strengthen moderate states in the Middle East and their ability to cope with threats from Iran, for example, what does that look like as a regional architecture and as a regional set of initiatives? Based on that, what can we offer? What can our allies offer and so forth?

Q: You said at the outset that for the first time in Afghanistan we're pursuing a fully resourced counter-insurgency strategy. Certainly it's more resources are going to be poured in than in the last nine years, but it's significantly less than what we poured in both on the military and civilian side in Iraq. So what [inaudible]?

A: A couple of things. First of all, there are parts of the country that are relatively calm, fortunately, so I don't think you need the same sort of force ratios and level of effort everywhere equally. Our concentration is very much, at least initially, going to be in the south and in the east, but even in the east, because we concentrated resources in the last year, we've actually made a lot of progress in the east.

So I think if you look at where the area of greatest challenge is, and we're focusing our resources there, I think the resourcing in those areas is going to be quite substantial.

In addition we have allies. We're going to have something like 35,000 non-US troops alongside us. We have an increasingly capable Afghan military so there are Afghan resources to be brought to bear as well. We are partnering with them wherever possible.

It's certainly a better resourced strategy. I think that once we go through the next year, we have new leadership on the ground, we will have a new campaign plan, they'll give us a new assessment of whether they need more, less, different. I think this is going to be an evolving challenge of matching resources to strategy and changing conditions on the ground.

Q: Going back to Pakistan. What are you doing to fill the concern from some Members of Congress who say that Pakistan's ISI, it's unreliable and playing an active role in Afghanistan's opium distribution?

A: I think we are talking very frankly and candidly at multiple levels with the Pakistani government about any activities that we see them undertaking that we think are not helpful. And while also supporting them in their efforts to reform their own institutions.

Q: Are you having open talks with them about this? Are you giving them updates?

A: Yes, there are lots of different channels through Congress in terms--there's official testimony, but there are a lot of people meeting with staffs and Members to address these concerns behind closed doors as well.

Q: I wanted to ask again about the decision to block release of the torture photos. You said today--photos depicting detainee abuse. You said today and the President has said that in talking about the concern that it could lead to increased American casualties. I understand that fear, but is it just that? Is it just a fear that that might happen? Or do you have any specific indications that American casualties necessarily would go up if these photographs were released? They said in the Pentagon [inaudible] that the release of them would lead to increased [inaudible] in Vietnam. [Inaudible] a study there was no indication that happened.

A: I think the fact is that we have a more recent experience with the Abu Ghraib photographs and the uptick in violence that caused, the uptick in extremist recruiting that fueled, the uptick in threats to US service members on the ground. We are also in an election season in Afghanistan. We're heading into an election season in Iraq. So you will have I think the political pressure in those domestic contexts to sort of fuel an understandable response of outrage will be there and could further inflame the situation. We're also in a very delicate moment in Iraq where we're pulling out of urban centers. We're at a very delicate moment in Afghanistan where we're in the process of deploying forces that are not fully there and fully ready to deal with--

So I just think the combination of the timing and the very real threat to the lives of real Americans who are putting everything on the line, and given that these are cases that have been prosecuted and closed. The release of the photos doesn't actually affect the--

Q: Body of knowledge about--

A: I think again, the commitment to doing everything in our power to make sure, to try to ensure that this kind of abuse does not take place again, that is what we're focused on. I think the judgment of the President, and I agree with this, is that the very real risk to not only military members but civilians on the ground, Americans on the ground, in both Iraq and Afghanistan and probably elsewhere in the Muslim world, it was just too

high to take on at this time for this purpose.

Q: On Guantanamo, is there a policy contradiction if there is a decision to continue to [inaudible] definite detention somewhere else? So you close Guantanamo but you just move the concept of Guantanamo somewhere else? Or is there a firm policy commitment not to embrace the idea of [inaudible] detention?

A: I don't think it's been put in those terms. I think the desire is to provide due process to as many of these detainees as possible. Again, I don't want to play lawyer here. I'd rather you talk to Jay Johnson about the details of kind of the legal framework or the legal policy.

Q: In kind of a general principle, would you rule out--

A: I would say, again, I'd rather defer that to people who have been more directly involved in the interagency working group. The way we divide up labor internally, I don't sit on that particular group and I don't want to speak for them at this point.

Q: Each of the first QDRs institutionalized one way or the other the [inaudible] an independent look--NDP in '97, Secretary Rumsfeld's one might say leadership driven study groups in '01, and the red team. It seems to me the subject in each of those experiences was that you wanted, you assumed the building had an institutional bias toward the MCO and you wanted to be sure the other perspectives were brought to bear at a very high level.

Secretary Gates for the last 18 months has made it very clear that he's perfectly capable of offsetting any institutional bias to the MCO and that he is willing to pull the trigger, not to say go full automatic to do so. [Laughter].

In light of that is there a case to be made at this time, however you institutionalize the outside perspective, is there a case to be made that at this time you want to be sure you get somebody who forces the MCO problem at a, somebody with the chops of a Paul Van Riper or someone like that, who late in the game will say, but Mr. Secretary, are you sure you thought through this and this isn't the exotic but rather the--

A: I think this time, I think the primary purpose of this sort of red team effort is to introduce sort of a different range of scenarios, some of which actually are very high end and very intensive and they're beyond the scenario set that's been developed inside the building so far.

And most importantly, to be able to tap talent that doesn't work for the federal government. There are some incredibly knowledgeable, thoughtful, insightful people in the think tank world and former government officials who we just want to have a mechanism to bring them into the process and benefit from their wisdom and insight. To me that's the most important thing. It's a way to open up the process and to go to

find expertise wherever it resides, whether it's in the government or whether it's outside.

Q: Should we all buy Andy Krepinevich's book?

A: I would encourage everyone to read Andy Krepinevich's book but not because there's any particular link to the QDR.

Q: You talked about building partner capacity and the Secretary has talked about a 100 wing air force among the various allies. A sticking point for Australia and Japan is they very much want the F-22. Do you anticipate engaging with Congress to possibly make that available to them?

A: The honest answer is we haven't gotten to that particular issue yet.

Q: The clock is running.

A: I know of their interest and it's an issue that will probably get addressed in the context of the QDR but we haven't gotten there yet.

Q: We're out of time.

END TEXT