

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH MICHAEL NACHT, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR GLOBAL STRATEGIC AFFAIRS, AND KATHLEEN HICKS, DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY OF DEFENSE VIA TELECONFERENCE SUBJECT: QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW (QDR) AND BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE REVIEW (BMDR) TIME: 10:00 A.M. EST DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2010

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LIEUTENANT JENNIFER CRAGG (Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): I just want to welcome everyone to the Department of Defense's Bloggers Roundtable for Wednesday, January (sic) 3rd. Again, thank you for everyone staying on the line.

As you know, my name is Lieutenant Jennifer Cragg, with the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating the call.

A note to the bloggers on the line. Please clearly state your name and organization you're with prior to asking your question. And also, if you have to place your phone on hold, please leave the roundtable and call back in; we'll hear your hold music. And if possible, place your phone on mute as well.

As you know, our two guests are Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs Dr. Michael Nacht and Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks.

Both Dr. Nacht and Ms. Hicks are going to discuss the QDR and the BMDR. So without further ado, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Nacht to start with opening remarks, and we'll go straight to questions.

Sir, the floor is yours.

MR. NACHT: Thank you. Actually, I'll turn it over to Dr. Hicks, which she'll start with the QDR first.

MS. HICKS: Well, thank you all very much this morning for your patience as you waited. I apologize for that.

I'm just going to say a few words about the QDR. I'm sure by now you've had a chance to look at the report, and I'm sure you have some pretty targeted questions.

But just to give you a sense of how we framed the report, we really focused on our two major charges as the Department of Defense: first, delivering first-class capabilities to our men and women in uniform and, second, being responsible stewards of American taxpayer dollars. And we believe the QDR fills both of those requirements.

Our focus in the QDR was really providing a defense strategy that rebalances capabilities and reforms DOD processes and institutions.

As you will have seen in the report, we put top priority on prevailing in today's conflicts and we also stress the importance of three other key priority objectives.

The first is prevention and deterrence; the second is moving beyond planning for conventional contingencies and preparing for a wider range of challenges; and the third is elevating the need to preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force, which we believe is the most important pillar of America's defense and deserves to be a defense objective unto itself.

Just some highlights in the report. Obviously, we established some force-planning guidance that has been the subject of a lot of interest. We've looked to ensure U.S. forces are sized to conduct a range of operations in overlapping time frames.

We do not walk away from a two-major-theater-war approach, but we provide a lot more guidance to the services in terms of the particular sets and combinations of contingencies for which they need to be prepared. Another area, obviously, is our focus on efforts to take care of our people. That's also a major subject for the FY '11 budget, and clearly was a subject in FY '10 as well.

Another I would mention is of course the emphasis in the report on close collaboration with counterparts at home and abroad. We are very much invested in growth and capability expansion for expertise in the civilian sector here at home.

And we are cognizant of the fact that we work side by side with our allies in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and that we -- it behooves us to invest in those relationships.

The last is, obviously, the QDR report has an entire section on reforming how we do business, and I can speak to any of the particular issues that may be of interest to you there.

In reforming the institutions, we focused really on setting an agenda looking forward for the Department over the next four years, and I think you'll see progress on each of those items -- some this year, some may take a little longer. But you'll see that, really, as an agenda that comes to fruition over the course of several years.

With that, let me turn it back to Dr. Nacht for a few words.

MR. NACHT: Thank you.

Again, also, my apologies for running late this morning.

As you know from reading the BMDR, there are basically six key points. Let me just summarize them.

We have an aggressive effort to defend the homeland against limited ballistic missile attack by having missile defense systems in Alaska and at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. So defense of the homeland against limited attack is a core element of our missile defense strategy.

The other core element is against regional threats, which are the threats that are growing -- threats to U.S. forces, to allies and to partners. And that is under the rubric of the phased adaptive approach, which received recognition in the fall when we -- the president announced a decision to develop and then begin to deploy such a capability in Europe.

And this approach is applicable to other regions of the world, including Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia.

The systems we're planning to deploy will only be deployed after their effectiveness and reliability have been determined through a very rigorous testing program, under the most realistic conditions. We're going to also develop new capabilities that are fiscally sustainable over the long term so that we don't go through major ups and downs in the missile defense budget. It's not helpful to the sustainment of what we term capability.

We're also going to emphasize development of flexible capabilities, because the threats are uncertain and we have to be able to adapt quickly as the threats change.

And a key element of all this is expanded international cooperation. So we're engaged in extensive discussions and negotiations with our closest allies and other partners so that we're all on the same wavelength as these systems reach full-scale development and then begin to be deployed.

Now I'm --

LT. CRAGG: I think with that, we're ready for your questions.

MR. NACHT: -- ready for your questions.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, ma'am.

Sean was first on the line, so Sean, please go ahead.

Q Yes, sir, ma'am, this is Sean Gallagher of Defense Systems and BulletsandBytes.com.

I wanted to ask first, Dr. Hicks, if you could drill down a little bit on the cyber aspects of the QDR and how the thinking there was affected by recent cyber attacks, both in the civilian and the military sector, particularly what was recently announced over the U.K. with attacks via USB devices, and how that linked into the issue of cooperation outside of DOD with external partners.

And how you plan on addressing -- or, how the QDR formats addressing those issues in terms of sustaining the network connections you need to do that in collaboration.

MS. HICKS: Okay, thank you for that question.

Let me say, obviously -- and let me take the last part first, which is we are very cognizant of the fact that the Department of Defense provides some specialized expertise in the cyber domain. And by the way, I'm going to let Dr. Nacht also respond on this. This is actually within his GSA responsibilities.

But on the QDR piece, we're very cognizant of the fact that working with partners is critical, both here at home where DOD has a limited role vis-a-vis protection of Defense networks and working with other agencies here, and then overseas, sharing information with allies and partners.

The QDR focus for cyber really is, first, helping to propel forward the establishment of Cyber Command, and ensuring we have a locus within the Department that really takes seriously as its first mission the growth of cyber expertise within DOD so it can partner effectively with these other institutions.

And second, ensuring that we begin down the path of a vision and a strategy for cyber -- under Cyber Command and hand in hand with OSD -- to set out the range of DOD missions and responsibilities in a whole-of-government context.

I'm going to turn it over to Michael to add on.

MR. NACHT: Yes, just a couple of additional points.

The role of cyber command is to defend the Department of Defense information networks. It's the dot-mil network, not the dot-gov network or the dot-com network. Although if asked by the Department of Homeland Security or the White House to assist in protection of the dot-government network, we would -- we are prepared to help.

We're consolidating these capabilities in CYBERCOM. CYBERCOM will stand up once the director has been confirmed. The president has nominated General Keith Alexander to be that director; his confirmation hearing is pending.

We are also developing a broader cyber strategy for CYBERCOM and the Department, and we are engaging them in the interagency under the leadership of Howard Schmidt, who was the newly named cyber coordinator in the White House, because so many different agencies have key stakes in cyber defense.

So it's both a whole-of-government approach; it's also very much an effort to protect the dot-mil networks.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, ma'am; thank you, sir, and thank you, Sean.

Grim, you are next. Please go ahead.

Q Yes. Good morning, ma'am and sir.

I wanted to ask you about the role that you see for increased interagency cooperation as, for example, the State Department's intended smart power reforms and how you're looking ahead towards trying to cooperate with increased expeditionary partners of that type.

Thank you.

MS. HICKS: Thank you very much.

The QDR strategy explicitly speaks to the need to grow both the expertise and resource base for civilian partners in the interagency.

We look not just at the -- overseas piece. We also look at how well we partner at home. But given your question, I'll focus just on the expeditionary piece.

There is, as you may know, a quadrennial diplomacy and development review under way at the State Department. Prior to their beginning that review, they worked very closely with us on the QDR to ensure that we were appropriately fitting the DOD partnership in a context of a broader foreign and national security policy.

So the language you see in the QDR very much reflects a joint DOD-State and, actually, National Security Council viewpoint of how these pieces fit into a holistic national security strategy and budget.

Out of the QDDR from the State Department, I think you will see a growing level of planning, strategic planning, in terms of how they assess the size and capacity and capability sets that they need to grow to match with the other elements of the interagency.

And so I think you'll see some more data in terms of the civilian expeditionary workforce coming out of State, whether it's the Civilian Response Corps or something else, and I think you'll see much more in terms of the right alignment of authorities and responsibilities and dollars when it comes to issues like foreign assistance.

So QDR was first out of the gate. We worked very closely in partnership with State, but I think much more is to come in the State Department's own review, which we in turn will play a very important role in, just as they played an important role in our review.

Q Thank you very much.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Grim.

Taylor, please go ahead.

Q Yes. Hi, this is Taylor Kiland. I write for Examiner.com and the Navy Memorial's Navy-Log-Blog.

I have a question about the information-sharing plans between DOD and the VA. I'm looking at some of the line items in the QDR and I'm wondering who's taking the lead on this, whether it's DOD or VA, and if there's any plan to partner, say, with the private sector on any of these initiatives.

MS. HICKS: I would defer answering that to Bob Hale, our comptroller, to our comptroller team. That level of detail is in the budget.

I don't know which agency has the lead. I know the secretary very much likes to point to the improvements made in partnering between DOD and VA, and this is one of those initiatives where I think we feel we can provide a lifetime-of-service complement of capabilities from DOD to VA.

Q Okay, thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Taylor.

Greg, you are next.

Q Yeah. Greg Grant from Military.com.

Curious to know what contribution the red team -- I believe it was General Mattis and Andrew Marshall. What was their contribution to the final QDR product? And if you could elaborate, perhaps, on some of the scenarios or kind of conceptual ideas that they looked at.

MS. HICKS: Sure. What -- the secretary looked to the red team to first and foremost assess the security environment and look at a broad range of inputs that are coming either out of the intelligence community or elsewhere, to see if we had really, inside the Department, captured correctly the range of challenges on the security environment. So that was the first and foremost input provided by the red team.

They also provided the secretary some insights in terms of the capabilities they believed, given that security environment, were necessary for the Department to invest in. And those very much were

influential in terms of how we ultimately put together the enhancements for the force that are represented in the QDR.

Q And a quick follow-up. Why is the term irregular warfare so absent in this QDR, versus the 2006 QDR? I'm just curious to know what the thinking is there.

MS. HICKS: Sure. Sure. Irregular warfare is a very valid term that we use inside the Department. It has had some trouble translating outside the Department in terms of what we really mean. So we didn't so much walk away from the use of irregular warfare as try to be much more concrete and descriptive in terms of the elements of irregular warfare that we intend to convey.

And that's why you see specific mention of things like stability operations, counterintelligence -- I'm sorry, counterterrorism -- and counterinsurgency, which are three of the major elements of what, inside DOD, we often call irregular warfare.

So you'll see us talk much more concretely in terms of the piece parts of that, so we can be very clear to our allies and partners and to the American public what it is we mean.

Q All right. Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Greg.

Nadia, you are next, please.

Q (Inaudible.) In QDR, there is -- I think it addressed the anti-access and denial capability in some environment, challenging, like from Iran and China. But why -- new power projection capabilities from these countries are not addressed in the QDR?

And the second question is that recently U.S. approved PAC-3 arms, part of the package, to arms to Taiwan. I wonder how that fit in to the missile defense in this region?

Thank you.

MS. HICKS: Good. And let me take the first part, and I'll leave the second for Dr. Nacht.

Just to clarify, you are asking why we mention the power projection capabilities of various countries, or the anti-access capabilities of various countries in the QDR?

Q Yeah. I'm -- my question is that you in the QDR, anti-access and denial capability of some country were mentioned as a new challenge, but the power projection of these countries were not. So I wonder why.

MS. HICKS: I don't think there is a why on that. We focused on our ability to project power to protect our allies, and the anti-access

capabilities others may have or may develop certainly help their own ability to project power.

So it's simply a frame -- the frame in which we address the issue is about U.S. and allied capabilities to protect their interests, and the legitimate concerns we have about those capabilities over the long run. Obviously, that is a major theme of the QDR. It was a theme in the 2006 QDR to some extent as well. We are continuing to look at space, cyber, advanced air defense systems, ballistic and cruise missile growth and, of course, the ability for states to transfer such technology to other states or to non-state actors, which just poses a potentially increasing problem as we move out into the 15- to 2-year time frame.

So we looked really at what U.S. capabilities we need to counter those types of approaches that could definitely affect our ability to protect our interests.

(To Mr. Nacht.) Want to take on the --

MR. NACHT: Well, just a small comment to add.

Obviously, the United States, to implement its national security strategy, has forward-deployed capabilities around the world and is also very reliant on space and cyber.

To those who are desirous of limiting or impeding our capabilities, they have or are developing what we're calling anti-access and asymmetric capabilities.

So our document is focusing on the kinds of capabilities that we're going to have to face and defeat if we're going to be able to sustain our strategy.

MS. HICKS (?): Do you want to --

Q Okay. How about the second question?

MS. HICKS: Can you repeat it one more item?

MR. NACHT: Could you repeat that again, please.

Q I mean, U.S. recently approved the sale of PAC-3 to Taiwan. That's also part of the anti-missile system.

I wonder how that will fit in, you know, U.S. overall missile defense strategy in that region.

MR. NACHT: Yes. Well, that's what's sometimes called the lower-tier system. Our study is focusing on ballistic missile defense upper-tier systems, against short-, medium-, intermediate- and, if necessary, intercontinental-range ballistic missiles.

So, yes. I think that the Patriot sale is part of a long-standing U.S. policy to support Taiwan without in any way seeking to

threaten the Chinese, a nuclear deterrent or anything of that sort -- the Patriot has no capability to do. It's purely a defensive system.

Q So it's for lower-tier -- MR. NACHT: Yes.

Q Okay. Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir; thank you, ma'am, and thank you, Nadia.

(Exchange aside regarding time remaining.)

LT. CRAGG: Let me start back with Sean. He was first.

Sean, please go ahead.

Q Thank you. I wanted to ask about the issue of information sharing and intelligence collection.

In the last QDR there was a great deal of emphasis on the need for new technology, and I know that a lot of that technology -- there's been a lot of advancements in that technology in the last four years.

But I wanted to get -- see if there's a reason why there was less of an emphasis on that particular area within the QDR.

And along with that, I wanted to ask about the issue of situational awareness in the BMDR. I didn't see that addressed in the document.

MS. HICKS: Okay, thank you. On the first piece on the QDR, I'm hard pressed to see it as an area of lowered emphasis.

The secretary has, through the QDR and then through the FY '11 budget, vastly increased -- in '10 as well, the number of orbits that we are providing via Predator and Global Hawk.

So the QDR definitely sets the tone for that. There's a significant amount of attention to ISR. There is also quite a bit of attention to TPED and to our ability to actually analyze the intelligence we have.

We know that's an area we have a huge amount of data coming in. We have a strong need for improvements in our ability to analyze that intelligence. Those investments are represented in the budget and, again, are referenced in the QDR.

It's largely put in the context in the QDR of the wars we're in today. But very important to point out that the future is now, in many cases. These capabilities will be very important for us across the spectrum of conflict in the future.

So growing our orbits right now from 50 to 65 and potentially upward, depending on what we're learning about our -- what the max is

of our need for intelligence -- information collection, excuse me, to ISR platforms, that's really the growth path set in place by the QDR and was a significant area of initiative in this year.

(To Mr. Nacht.) Do you want to answer on -- he had a question on information sharing on BMDR?)

MR. NACHT: Well, I would just say that the implementation of the phased adaptive approach in different regions requires, at its essence, the networking of sensors.

In other words, we'll have multiple sensors in order to get as much information on the launch of an attacking ballistic missile as possible, as quickly as possible, so that we can try to shoot it down, with as many shots as possible. So it's a networking of the sensors and interconnecting the sensors with the interceptors.

We've made a lot of advances in technology in the last 10 years. There have been a number of proven successes already in the testing program. It's a challenging effort, but we think we definitely are able to do this, and that involves, then, complex -- (inaudible).

And it also involves close cooperation with our allies -- (inaudible).

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, Sean.

Let's go to Grim. You're next.

Q Yes, thank you.

I would like to ask about the counter-smuggling, particularly with WMD, issue as you have worked it into your planning.

MR. NACHT: Well -- this is Dr. Nacht again.

On countering WMD, we have a very comprehensive program looking at everything from seeking to interdict the transfer of nuclear weapons, nuclear materials, technologies, from proliferators to other states and even to sub-national groups.

We are also seeking to monitor and interdict where possible biological and chemical agents and the capabilities that support the development of those agents.

We have very much supported the proliferation security initiative, which is a major interdiction capability in which scores of nations have cooperated. This has been successful in East Asia and in other parts of the world. So that's a core element of what we're doing with counter-WMD.

It also involves very intense intelligence sharing among a number of key governments and agencies, because this is a global

phenomenon. And we can't be restricted in where we look and where we seek to find these activities.

Q Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, sir.

Taylor, please go ahead.

Q I have a question about the deployment tempo objectives that are outlined in the QDR.

You said that you're working towards increasing time spent between deployments to two years at home for every one deployed for active-duty servicemembers, and five years demobilized for every one year mobilized for Guard and Reserve units.

And it seems like that will be a challenge, given the deployment needs of the services. How do you balance that?

MS. HICKS: Sure. That's a great question.

Let me answer it in a near-term sense and then talk a little bit about our planning for the long term, because the QDR does cover a 20-year time frame.

In the near term, we know we're taking risk and we will have challenges to meet that goal. One of the key items we try to make clear in the QDR is that we are not willing to take risk on succeeding today and prevailing in today's conflicts.

And we therefore knowingly take some risk on our other objectives, and preserving and enhancing the force is one of those that, clearly, we are not at a level of long-term sustainment for that.

We are attempting to mitigate risk in that area. We've been very impressed with the resiliency of our forces, but we don't take it for granted. And we have a lot of investments in FY '11 to try to care better for families and for servicemembers.

Having said that, there is actually a pathway here, and the responsible drawdown of forces in Iraq is an important piece of that.

There is some estimates from the Army and the Marine Corps in terms of how they think that will play out in a time line of when forces will be able to meet those 1:2, 1:5 ratios. And I defer to them to give you the specifics of that time line, but only to say that the evolution of the environment is a key piece of how we get to that level.

Looking out long term, we put a lot of focus on ensuring that the size of the force and the way the force is comprised, which in many cases includes a focus on the key enablers that are often in short supply, like civil affairs units, ISR, helicopters.

We put a lot of emphasis on ensuring that we could maintain our ability to execute the defense strategy over the long term at sustainable force levels. So all of our planning assumptions for the future do assume having force levels that are at a reasonable tempo over the long term.

There are, of course, periods of time and various contingencies that could arise over the next 20 years that put us in a situation like we're in today where we're in multiple theaters, and we may be having to do some mobilization beyond what we normally would do -- selective call-up and other efforts -- that would mitigate risks to the force. And also, we might have to reduce deployment, our dwell time below what we would like.

But what we've laid out really is a sustainable path that tries to minimize those periods of time and to increase the capacity of key enablers and other force elements that would be particularly strained during such times.

Q Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, ma'am, thank you, sir, and thank you, Taylor.

Okay. Greg, please go ahead.

Q Yeah. One of the main criticisms so far on the QDR is that it focuses too much attention on the current wars, and neglects the high-end, asymmetric threats, the larger kind of contingencies.

And the criticism is that this is supposed to be a forward-looking document, and so it should have put more attention on those emerging threats, such as China and all. Just would like to hear your response to that criticism, if I could.

MS. HICKS: Sure. It would be nice if we lived in a world with no operational requirements and we could, as we did in the '90s, simply focus forward. We couldn't do that. It would be irresponsible to do that.

We have men and women in harm's way, and I don't think the American public or their representatives would very much appreciate our ignoring the realities. Having said that, the QDR explicitly spends a lot of time and energy on these longer-term threats, one key aspect of which is this high-end threat area, which we have generally talked about in terms of anti-access, area denial and the limitations it may present to U.S. power projection capabilities.

I've spoken a bit about that already. All I can say is there -- I've been through many QDRs; there's never a lack of criticism. (Chuckles.) And I challenge those who criticize to actually cite where we have not met that challenge.

There (are ?) key investment lines laid in. We have an extremely strong and adaptable force. We have a whole section of the QDR that talks about the evolution of the force. And we have -- again, we have laid out both the pathway and an investment stream that explicitly takes into account the need to deal with those threats.

Q And quickly, the air-sea concept.

MS. HICKS: Yes.

Q Is that something that will emerge soon? Is that -- it's going to be further out? Could you just -- where do you see that going?

MS. HICKS: Sure. I think we're going to have some input back soon, in this year, on where that's going, if it's -- obviously, it's in the area of operational concepts, so given that, I think it just depends on quickly it evolves.

I do think it's a key piece of looking at the landscape of power projection in the future. Capability platforms are extremely important, but they're not terribly useful without a really coherent, integrated concept of how to operate.

And so we're pushing very much full-steam on not just platforms, but also on basing and resiliency of basing, and overall concepts of how we operate in those kinds of regions.

So I think you will see the effects of that analysis. You've already seen some of it in this QDR and in the '11 budget, and I think you'll see more in '12.

Whether we have a completed solution in '12 or not, I think remains to be seen.

Q Okay. Great. Thank you for your time.

STAFF: I think we have time for one more.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. The last person on the list is Nadia. I know someone had dropped off, so Nadia, are you still on the line? I believe -- going once, going twice -- I believe she had dropped off.

So I want to make sure; I'll go around the room. Anyone have one more question? (No audible response.) Okay, I'll take that as a no.

Sir, I'll turn it back over to you. Dr. Nacht and Dr. Hicks, if either one of you would like to end with closing thoughts, we'll wrap up today's roundtable.

The floor is yours.

MR. NACHT: Well, I'd just say I appreciate very much the opportunity for us to exchange views on these issues, and I hope that

we've been responsive and helpful to your understanding of what it is the Department is trying to do.

And I particularly want to congratulate Dr. Hicks for a masterful job in the production of the Quadrennial Defense Review.

MS. HICKS: Well, and again, thanks to all of you. And I'd like to congratulate Dr. Nacht -- (laughs) -- on the BMDR and for the forthcoming NPR and other reviews that he's --

We may be over the hump on QDR, and he's only part way through. So I'm sure you'll be hearing more from his team.

Thanks again for your time.

MR. NACHT: Thank you.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you, ma'am. Thank you, sir.

Thank you for all the bloggers. Administrative note, you can access the transcript as well as the audio file if you visit www.dodlive.mil/bloggerroundtable.

Thank you, everyone.

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