

Contact: Natalya Anfilofyeva**April 6, 2009****GATES FIRES OPENING SALVO IN THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S
DEFENSE REVIEW**

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' programmatic decisions today generally align with the strategic direction laid down in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and confirmed in the 2008 National Defense Strategy. While the Department has articulated a new strategic approach in recent years, it postponed many hard decisions necessary to harmonize the defense program with that strategy. Secretary Gates' announcements represent an important step toward better aligning the Department's program with its strategy.

Secretary Gates also announced a broad shift away from reliance on contractors to government civil servants inside the Department of Defense. The announced build-up of 20,000 civil servant acquisition professionals, as well as the planned conversion of 13,000 support service contractors to government civil servants is a striking reversal of decisions made in the late 1990s/early 2000s to increase the contractors' role in the department.

Today's decisions set the stage for the upcoming QDR. Secretary Gates' remarks highlighted several issues that must still be addressed. Among them:

- **The Army's Ground Vehicle Modernization Program:** By cancelling the vehicle component of the Future Combat Systems, and demanding a return on investment for the \$25 billion spent on Mine Resistant and Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs), Secretary Gates is clearly expecting a thorough review and rethinking of the Army's plans for future ground combat vehicles in the upcoming QDR.
- **The Air Force's Long-Range and Short-Range Aircraft Plans:** Secretary Gates halted development of the next generation bomber (NGB) until its operational requirements and the maturity of the underlying technologies can be assessed. On the other hand, he accelerated the buy of the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter. This will produce an Air Force that is best able to operate over short ranges with small payloads. This decision will likely be debated in the upcoming QDR.
- **The Navy's Large Surface Combatant Program:** Secretary Gates announced the delay of the next generation cruiser program (CG(X)) and outlined a tentative way forward for the Navy's guided missile destroyer program. The QDR will need to rationalize future requirements and create a sustainable long-term building program for large surface warships.
- **Navy's Amphibious Landing/Seabase Fleet:** Secretary Gates delayed the purchase of further *San Antonio*-class Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) and the development of the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP), postponing final decisions on these programs until requirements could be further developed and understood. This should be addressed in the 2009 QDR.

By articulating a National Defense Strategy last year, announcing important programmatic decisions today, and outlining issues he intends to address in the QDR, Secretary Gates has set the stage for a far-reaching and much-needed review of the Nation's military posture.

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