

**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS**  
**19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ARAB-U.S. POLICYMAKERS CONFERENCE**

*“Arab-U.S. Relations: Going Where?”*

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2010**

**RONALD REAGAN BUILDING & INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**"REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES – EVOLVING CONCERNS"**

***SPEAKER:***

**Dr. Kathleen Hicks** – Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Forces  
Department of Defense.

## REGIONAL SECURITY – DR. KATHLEEN HICKS

[Dr. Anthony] We are pleased to have the Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans and Forces, all of which are germane to the issues of how effectively one can achieve the goals of security and stability. Kathleen Hicks.

[Dr. Kathleen Hicks] Thank you all, very much. Thank you for having me today. I see I have come at a time of flux in the conference so we'll just pass right through that.

First of all thank you to Dr. Anthony for hosting me, for Dr. Winship for arranging my participation, and especially to the ambassador for his kindness in switching time slots.

It's very good to have an opportunity to speak to an audience of stakeholders in a region that is so critical to U.S. national security interests and to of course global peace and posterity.

I will speak today to those issues of national interests, our view of the security environment and then the defense objectives capabilities and relationships and reforms we think are necessary to carry those out. I think it's important to start with the caveat, I am what is called in Washington politely a generalist. This is not to be confused in any way with a "general." Rather it's to imply quite correctly that I do not come to you as an expert in your region or in any other particular region, rather I'm trained as a strategist and force planner and I will defer all of the pressing questions of the day on regional dynamics and relationships to other speakers.

So with that let me start but I defining for you where we begin with strategy development in the Defense Department, because that is, of course, with the President's view of national security. In the 2010 national security strategy President Obama laid out four enduring U.S. national interests that really guide how we think about defense in all regions of the world.

The first of those enduring interests is the security of the United States, its citizens and U.S. allies and partners.

The second is a strong, innovative and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity.

The third is respect for universal values at home and around the world.

Finally an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security and opportunity through stronger cooperation in order to meet global challenges.

To protect these interests it is important to note that we as the administration put a premium on strengthening international institutions in galvanizing collective action. Our defense strategy therefore is designed to contribute toward whole of government and allied and partner solutions to meeting these interests that I have outlined for you, and the security landscape that we face is quite daunting.

Our view of the geopolitical environment begins with the wars we are in today, which we do not see as aberrations but rather harbingers of a dynamic and complex future landscape. The rise of new powers, the growing influence of non-state actors, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and a series of global trends, other global trends continue to pose profound challenges to international security. These strategic trends, we believe, will have important operational implications for which our forces must be prepared. And I'll mention four of those key implications here.

First. Warfare is increasingly difficult to categorize along a conventional spectrum or any linear spectrum. Adversaries, we believe, will employ innovative methods always, as they always, have to offset traditional strength. Today that can involve populations, proxy forces, cyber attacks and other forms of coercion including energy coercion, anti-access capabilities, or new innovative operational concepts we have not yet defined.

Second. Recent security trends highlight the need for international security cooperation to maintain stability and access throughout what we call the global commons. The global commons are the connective tissue of the international system and they are challenged today by piracy, anti-satellite missile tests, and then also of course in the cyber domain, cyber attacks.

Third. There are significant and growing challenges to U.S. power projection capabilities. Today North Korea and Iran compose significant ballistic missile threats to forward deployed forces, access through allies and partners. China is developing ballistic and cruise missiles as well as advanced air defenses, cyber and space capabilities, advanced fighters and even new attack submarines. Iran in addition, also has fast attack naval craft and all these capabilities I have mentioned can easily spread to other actors. Hezbollah's acquisition of unmanned systems and Manpads [man portable air defense systems] from Iran as an example of such a spread of technology.

Fourth. As we have all seen too clearly over the past decade, state weakness can create at least as many challenges for our forces as state strength. Weak states heighten the risk of ethno-sectarian strife, they create terrorists sanctuaries, regional tensions and even humanitarian crises.

Our strategy for the US military's role in this environment is rooted in the President's and the Secretary and Defense's common vision for our need to rebalance defense capabilities and reform defense institutions to these ends.

You saw this vision first expressed in the President's fiscal year 2010 defense budget. The 2010 Annual Defense Review which will be completed early this year built on this momentum and also provided the strategic framework that's relevant to today's wars and future challenges.

Our strategy essentially identified four priority objectives that we seek to pursue.

The first is that we put top priority on prevailing in today's conflicts. We owe our people in harms way nothing less than first priority.

Second we strive the importance of prevention and deterrence as a key pillar of our strategy. Moving beyond planning for conventional contingencies we look to prevent those contingencies today.

Third we look to prevail across a wide spectrum of plausible future conflicts. This could be defense of the homeland, supporting civil authorities in the homeland, countering weapons of mass destruction, cyber attacks and anti-access challenges to our power projection capabilities, closure of sea lines of communication. There are many, many challenges on the future landscape that can come together in coherent concepts of operations from potential adversaries for which we need to be prepared.

And our final priority objective is to elevate the need to preserve and enhance the All Volunteer Force, which we believe is the most important pillar of American defense over the long term.

Based on these objectives there are two key conclusions that we take away for force planning.

First. We have to have U.S. forces that are flexible and adaptable to confront a very wide range of plausible worries and challenges.

Second. By and large, it's not the size and might of our major force structure element that are limiters today of U.S. force flexibility in near or the long-term. But by and large it is the need for more and better what we call enabling capabilities.

Let me give you some examples. Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, rotary wing aircraft into today's conflicts, language skills, improvements in these areas and niche areas such as power projection capabilities at the very high end will expand the range and duration of our operations.

The bottom line of our force planning approach is this, just as today's forces are operating in Iraq, Afghanistan, previously in Haiti and elsewhere around the world we must be ready and able to project power in multiple regions of the world at the same time using a range of air, land, sea, cyber and space capabilities.

There are a couple of areas of focus we took from this it in terms of rebalancing our force. I'm often speaking not only to this but also to the emphasis we put on strengthening relationships and a brief amount on reforming the defense institutions that support our strategy.

First. What does rebalancing the force mean? First, it means two things. One is balancing across time spectrums. As I mentioned, we are focused primarily today and prevailing in the conflicts that we are in. Over time we seek to shift that emphasis as the responsible drawdown in Iraq allows and our strategy in Afghanistan supports, into prevention and future preparation efforts.

Secondly, rebalance means about changing the focus of the force as I said before, this is not primarily about massive shifts in U.S. debt defense planning and spending, it's about improving

key enablers that can help in areas, capabilities areas, that can make pivotal differences in the future.

Let me give you some examples. The first is succeeding in counter insurgency stability, in counter terrorism operation. In Iraq for example a portion of the Operation New Dawn mission is to continue to train, equip, advise and support the Iraqi security forces and to conduct partner counterterrorism operations. Our new Advise and Assist Brigades, train Iraqi security forces to include the Army, police, and border patrol and each is tailored, of those AABs is tailored to meet the needs of the varying operations requirements in Iraq.

The AABs partner with the ISF, they share intelligence and coordinate intelligence operations and they synchronize operational information.

The second key area is building security capacity of partners. I'll speak about this more later so I'll defer examples.

The third that I highlight is to deterring and defeating aggression in what we term anti-access environment. These are environments where forces from other countries are able to keep us from protecting our interests, our allies or from intervening in conflicts close to their borders. Doing so requires accelerating development of long-range strike and other systems and enhancing the resiliency of our infrastructure, particularly our forward infrastructure.

Another area I would highlight is preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction where we believe the Department of Defense needs to expand its biological threat reduction program, in order to secure vulnerable, also, excuse me, secure vulnerable nuclear materials, make sure we are researching countermeasures and increasing our emphasis in defense on nontraditional agents.

And the final area to emphasize is operating effectively in cyberspace where the United States Department of Defense has recently stood up a U.S. cyber command and is working very much with interagency partners to establish a way ahead for national cyber security.

I want to put a little emphasis on strengthening relationships.

[Building Alarm Sounds – Room is Evacuated]

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