



## *“Gallant Quest”*

### **Twenty-fourth Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum Examines U.S. Energy Security**

—EXERCISE SUMMARY—

**July 15, 2008:** Eight Members of Congress were joined by representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense; the Joint Staff; the Departments of Energy, Homeland Security, State, and Treasury, as well as experts from the National Defense University for an in-depth discussion of the short- and long-term strategic decision-making challenges the U.S. faces with regard to energy security. Exercise *Gallant Quest*, hosted by the Strategic Policy Forum (SPF) within the National Defense University’s Institute for National Strategic Studies in Washington, DC, posited events that could severely interrupt global energy supplies with profound implications for both U.S. national security and the world economy. This 24<sup>th</sup> Strategic Policy Forum prompted participants to consider the best strategies for managing and preventing emerging energy crises. Throughout the exercise, participants responded to a series of events that threatened global energy supplies, including manmade production shortfalls, naturally-occurring events, and foreign government actions.



**The Honorable Robert Wilkie  
opened *Gallant Quest*.**

The Honorable Robert Wilkie, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, representing the Secretary of Defense, opened the *Gallant Quest* exercise. In his remarks, Mr. Wilkie underscored former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld’s rationale for creating SPF exercises, an idea that originated with the recommendation from former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Democratic House Speaker Thomas Foley.

Over the course of the exercise, participants gained a better understanding of the strategic implications of the United States’ continued over-dependence on foreign sources of oil, a condition which leaves the U.S. vulnerable to political and economic manipulation by oil exporting nations. Several themes emerged from the discussion, including the importance of: developing specific policy recommendations to mitigate the economic and security risks associated with U.S. dependence on imported fossil fuels; fostering cooperation among energy consumer nations during major energy supply disruptions; and rigorously assessing the intent and capabilities of energy supplier nations that threaten to use their resources to achieve political ends.



**Executive Branch participants share their insights and expertise with the Congressional participants throughout the exercise.**

In the plenary discussion following the exercise, Congressional participants noted the importance of working toward a more global vision of energy security; participants emphasized that a U.S. energy strategy must account for the current international realities, and that to truly achieve sustainable energy security on a global scale, consumer and producer nations must all work together toward a common objective. While this was noted to be a very difficult goal, participants generally agreed that international cooperation was the best approach for ensuring that U.S. national security interests were protected while maintaining U.S. access to affordable energy supplies.

Mr. Peter Verga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas Security Affairs, offered concluding observations on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. In his remarks, Mr. Verga underscored the importance of the Strategic Policy Forum program and offered that it will be a great asset to the new Congress and the next Administration in the upcoming year.

*Gallant Quest* was the Strategic Policy Forum's last scheduled Washington, DC exercise in 2008. SPF crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of the Department of Defense, are designed to provide Members of Congress the kind of realistic crisis simulation that already existed for senior national security officials in the Executive Branch, both to enhance their understanding of complex contingencies but also as a bridge to working across the seams of government. The total number of Congressional visits to SPF exercises now stands at 213, with 142 Members of Congress attending at least one exercise. For further information, please contact Colonel Lou Ortiz, USAF, Director, Strategic Policy Forum, at (202) 685-2394, or by e-mail at [ortizl3@ndu.edu](mailto:ortizl3@ndu.edu); or Dr. Margaret McCown, at (202) 685-2855, or by e-mail at [mccownm@ndu.edu](mailto:mccownm@ndu.edu).

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