

A Comprehensive Blueprint with Lingerin Issues

By any measure, the seven official studies surveyed in the preceding pages are extensive and wide ranging in the issues that they raise and the departures that they promote. Together, they put forth fully 671 pages of analysis for launching the national security strategies and defense plans of a new administration, a total that far surpasses the comparable publications of other incoming administrations for more than the past two decades. All of these studies are excellently written and cogently argued. They succeed in their core task of providing high-level, path-setting guidance to U.S. Government departments and agencies on creating new-era strategic goals and implementing agendas. In the process of providing an unusual degree of transparency, they offer the American people, as well as foreign countries, a great deal of material to chew on and digest. Regardless of whether their key judgments are accepted or rejected, those who read these studies will come away with a better sense of what the administration is thinking and where it proposes to lead the United States and the world.

Each of these seven studies is important in its own right and deserves to be read and evaluated on its individual merits. Equally important, they should be read and judged collectively because they combine to create a comprehensive blueprint for guiding how future strategies, policies, and plans are to unfold in ways intended to be mutually reinforcing and to produce cumulating results. This blueprint is not heavily infused with ideology from either end of the U.S. political spectrum. Instead, it comes across as mostly centrist, pragmatic, and technical in its thinking, but with features

that have left some liberals perceiving too much conservatism at work, and some conservatives perceiving too much liberalism. Taken as a whole and judged in strategic terms, this blueprint can help promote bipartisan consensus in the field of national security strategy and defense planning. However, to the extent that it triggers partisan debate, it illustrates the difficulties of building full-fledged bipartisanship in today's polarized political climate.

A Blueprint of Continuity and Change. The seven studies form a comprehensive blueprint because they perform different functions that are designed to interlock in complementary ways. Essentially, the National Security Strategy of 2010 (NSS 2010) provides the political foundations for a new U.S. strategy that employs American economic renewal and a whole-of-government approach as engines for driving an assertive, refocused strategy of engagement abroad. A blend of continuity and change, this new strategy is focused on such top strategic priorities as strengthening homeland defense, defeating al Qaeda and succeeding in Afghanistan, preventing further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), making the Middle East more secure, and building improved alliances and partnerships. These are all part of a larger effort aimed at creating a cooperative international order for handling common security challenges. Mainly preoccupied with articulating an integrated set of goals, this new strategy is both hopeful and ambitious. It not only employs multiple instruments, including diplomacy and civilian assets for comprehensive approaches in turbulent places, but it also acknowledges a need for strong U.S. military forces to help achieve national goals in peace, crisis, and war. By providing this political foundation for U.S. national security strategy, the NSS 2010 creates a framework for determining how the five subsequent studies, which mainly focus on military and defense issues, can be incorporated into the comprehensive blueprint.

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report aspires to provide a new approach to U.S. defense planning that can serve the new national security strategy. Aimed at pursuing four strategic goals by strengthening U.S. military forces for six high-priority missions, it calls upon the Department of Defense (DOD) to pursue an agenda of rebalance and reform in

ways that devote special attention to improving capabilities for current wars while remaining attentive to longer term imperatives. Its top priorities for rebalancing include defending the U.S. homeland, succeeding in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations, building the security capacity of partner states, improving U.S. military capabilities for performing in antiaccess environments, preventing WMD proliferation, and operating effectively in cyberspace. It calls for future U.S. military forces that are flexible and adaptable in ways enabling them to handle a wide spectrum of contingencies, including two concurrent major operations. Although it cancels or scales back several expensive weapons acquisition programs, its reform agenda is focused on making DOD efforts in that area more effective, timely, and affordable.

Although written as a criticism of the QDR Report, the congressionally mandated QDR in Perspective (QDRP) Report is valuable as a complementary contribution because of the heightened attention that it devotes to force-sizing constructs, the need for a larger Navy, long-term modernization of U.S. forces, and vigorous reforms to the weapons acquisition process. It also calls for changes to the interagency process in ways that will enhance strategic planning at the onset of each administration. Together, the QDR Report and QDRP Report in particular provide a framework for judging how U.S. conventional forces should be improved and how new regional security and deterrence architectures are to be built.

The Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) Report complements the QDR Report and QDRP Report by providing a new strategy toward U.S. nuclear forces and preparations. It is focused on preventing WMD proliferation and WMD terrorism, reducing the role of U.S. nuclear forces in national security strategy, maintaining strategic deterrence and stability at reduced force levels, strengthening regional deterrence, reassuring allies and partners, and maintaining a safe and effective nuclear arsenal. As part of a large set of policies for reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. strategy and preventing WMD proliferation, it strengthens already existing assurances that U.S. nuclear weapons will not be used against nonnuclear states that comply

with Non-Proliferation Treaty provisions. In addition, it introduces the new and distant goal of ultimately achieving a world without nuclear weapons. For the long period until this goal can be accomplished, the NPR Report is attentive to U.S. requirements for capable nuclear forces at lower levels than now. It endorses the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) reduction of U.S. and Russian forces to 700 strategic delivery vehicles and 1,550 warheads and calls for even larger reductions in subsequent negotiations. But it also calls for retaining a sizable triad of intercontinental ballistic missiles, ballistic missile submarines and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers, for modernizing them in moderate ways and for strengthening management of the nuclear arsenal.

Of the five defense studies, the Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR) Report puts forth the biggest change and newest thinking of all. Rather than continue solely with the Ground-based Midcourse Defense program aimed at defending the U.S. homeland from ballistic missile threats posed by such countries as North Korea and Iran, it proposes instead to broaden the ballistic missile defense effort by deploying significant numbers of SM-3 interceptors to defend regional allies and partners in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Judged in historical and strategic terms, this missile defense program is truly a sea-change in U.S. defense strategy with wider implications. The BMDR Report proposes to blend enhanced missile defenses with U.S. conventional forces and nuclear commitments to provide integrated military forces for underwriting efforts to create new security and defense architectures in all three regions. It suggests that as the contributions of missile defenses as well as U.S. and allied conventional forces increase, nuclear forces and commitments can play a reduced role. Consequently, the BMDR Report ushers into existence a new era for U.S. thinking about how best to achieve security and stability in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Whereas all of these defense studies largely focus on U.S. military preparedness efforts, the *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement* (ASDE Report) focuses intently on how to energize the defense efforts of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies in Europe. Written to

help advise NATO on how to write a new strategic concept, it calls upon NATO strategic planning to address new-era missions in Europe and distant regions. It proposes a set of changes aimed at enhancing the NATO ability to protect its exposed borders and to defend against such new-era threats as missile attack, terrorism, and cyber attacks. In addition, it calls upon the Alliance to improve its military forces and capabilities for expeditionary missions, embrace comprehensive approaches, and broaden its cooperation with partners from multiple regions. The effect is to give NATO plenty of new ideas and departures to think about as it charts the future over the coming decade.

The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) Report puts forth a lengthy, intensive analysis of how U.S. civilian power should be increased, how diplomacy and development policies in troubled regions should be carried out, and how internal Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) structures and operations should be reformed. Provided it is strongly implemented, it will enhance the capabilities of State and USAID to operate effectively in the coming years. The effect is to give the State Department and USAID a demanding but promising agenda to carry out in future years.

Lingering Issues. The comprehensive blueprint created by the seven official studies leaves lingering issues and controversies in its wake, all of which create reasons for further analysis aimed at resolving them in ways that further strengthen the blueprint while eliminating gaps and inconsistencies:

- The NSS 2010 may be so hopefully ambitious in its global designs that it overly discounts the constraints facing the United States, and fails to adequately treat the risks of potential major power competition. In addition, it fails to address future U.S. strategy in the Middle East if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, and does not provide long-term political and strategic concepts for guiding security affairs in Europe and Asia.
- The QDR Report is so preoccupied with handling near-term priorities that it fails to give full attention to long-term imperatives including

U.S. force requirements, joint operations, and modernization. In addition, its call for creating new regional security architectures seems focused on handling military forces in the absence of larger political purposes and designs.

- The QDRP Report is attentive to long-term force sizing, modernization, and acquisition reform, but it fails to illuminate how a larger Navy and a more ambitious modernization effort are to be funded.
- Although the QDR Report and QDRP Report urge enhanced security assistance for troubled states, they do not provide strategic design concepts for determining how the forces of allied countries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East are to be improved, made more interoperable with U.S. forces, and integrated to perform common deterrence and defense missions.
- The NPR Report does not provide sufficient analysis of whether its complex approach to preventing further WMD proliferation and nuclear terrorism will succeed. While it provides a viable triad under New START provisions, it does not specify how far additional reductions can be taken.
- The BMDR Report puts forth a new and ambitious strategy for deploying regional missile defenses, but this strategy is highly dependent upon successful SM-3 development programs as well as the willingness of allies and partners to cooperate in the enterprise.
- The ASDE Report articulates an ambitious agenda for improving and reforming NATO, but it was issued before the emerging wave of European defense spending cuts, which will affect how NATO's future is best handled.
- The QDDR Report puts forth an ambitious agenda for U.S. diplomacy and development policies in troubled areas, but it does not set clear priorities in these areas or articulate a new-era agenda for how classical diplomacy is to be carried out.
- All of the official studies on U.S. national security strategy and defense planning assume that adequate budget resources will be available to carry out their future policies and programs. Growing political pressures to reduce Federal deficits partly by cutting expenses are

calling this assumption into question. Once firm decisions are made about potential budget cuts to national security programs, careful reviews of these programs and their associated policies likely will be needed. A key bottom line, noted by the NSS 2010, is that sustained growth by the U.S. economy will be critical to carrying out the coming future national security agenda.

Future Analytical Challenges. In addressing these lingering issues, future analyses and studies will be well focused if they include the following topics:

- how U.S. national security strategy can best be adapted if the future world proves less tractable than now hoped, and if serious competition emerges among the major powers, including with Russia and China
- how U.S. national security strategy and defense plans can best adapt if efforts to prevent further WMD proliferation and nuclear terrorism do not adequately succeed
- how a containment, deterrence, and defense strategy can best be pursued in the Middle East if Iran acquires nuclear weapons and how democratization of the region can best be pursued in an era of revolutions against tyrants
- how new-era political concepts for guiding security affairs in Europe and Asia can best be designed in ways that provide appropriate strategic guidance for handling future military commitments and related military and security issues
- how U.S. conventional forces can best be sized, configured, and modernized for the long haul in ways that are effective and affordable, and that maintain adequate capabilities for both hybrid warfare in the Middle East and high-tech deterrence and defense missions in Asia
- how future U.S. overseas forces are to be sized and designed in ways that help lead NATO in Europe, perform new-era missions in the Middle East while keeping a suitably low political profile, and achieve key security goals in Asia while adapting to China's growing anti-access and area-denial capabilities
- how new-era nuclear commitments, conventional forces, and missile defenses are to be blended together in all three regions to provide

extended deterrence, reassurance of allies and partners, and crisis response capabilities

- how future U.S. nuclear forces are to be sized and structured if future negotiations produce deeper reductions than envisioned by New START
- how adequate U.S. forces and improvements are to be funded and prioritized, along with enhanced civilian capabilities and homeland security assets, in an era of tight interagency budgets and scarce resources
- how U.S. allies and partners can best be approached to elicit their support for the new regional missile defense strategy and deployments, and how shortfalls in SM-3 can best be handled
- how NATO improvements can best be pursued in an era of shrinking European defense budgets in ways that pursue reforms, efficiencies, and adequate deployable forces and capabilities
- how the forces and capabilities of allies and partners in Asia and the Middle East can best be improved and integrated in ways that produce interoperability with U.S. military forces and enhance common deterrence and defense efforts
- how the State Department's Office of Under Secretary for Political Affairs and its Bureau of Political-Military Affairs should be reformed to carry out new-era classical diplomacy.

Bottom Line. Individually and collectively, the seven official studies go a long way toward equipping the new U.S. national security strategy and defense plans with sound intellectual capital, including goals, policies, and improvement priorities. But they do not preclude the need for further thinking, analyzing, and refining. Indeed, they open the door to a new era of studies and analyses whose dimensions are now only beginning to be understood. Meeting this challenge will be a key part of handling the security, defense, diplomatic, and development agenda ahead.