

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
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1. Panetta Announces Fiscal 2013 Budget Priorities (01-26-2012)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26, 2012 – Spending priorities in the forthcoming fiscal 2013 defense budget request call for reductions in the end strength of the Army and Marine Corps, an increase in special operations forces and maintaining the number of big-deck carriers, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said here today.

The Pentagon's budget topline request is set at \$525 billion for fiscal 2013 with an additional \$88.4 billion for overseas contingency operations -- mostly in Afghanistan. This is down from \$531 billion and \$115 billion, respectively, in this fiscal year.

Defense Department officials used the new defense strategy guidance that President Barack Obama announced earlier this month to shape the budget request, the secretary said.

The budget seeks to minimize the impact of cuts on personnel accounts. Service members will receive their full pay raises in fiscal 2013 and 2014, Panetta said. "We will achieve some cost savings by providing more limited pay raises beginning in 2015," he added.

Health care is another important benefit, and one that has far outpaced inflation. Changes to health care will not affect active duty personnel or their families, Panetta said.

"We decided that to help control growth of health care costs, we are recommending increases in health care fees, co-pays and deductibles for retirees," he said. "But let me be clear that even after

these increases, the cost borne by military retirees will remain below the levels in comparable private-sector plans.”

Overall, the request puts DOD on the path to save \$259 billion over the next five years and \$487 billion over the next 10. Panetta called the budget “a balanced, complete package” that keeps the American military the pre-eminent force in the world.

It is a balanced package, the secretary said, because while some programs are eliminated or delayed, others are increased. The budget looks to re-shape the military to be more agile, quick and flexible that incorporates the lessons learned in 10 years of war, he added.

Increasing the number of special operations forces is key to the plan, Panetta said, and special operators will begin to shift back to their traditional pre-9/11 mission of instructing local forces.

The request puts the Army on a path to drop to 490,000 soldiers and the Marine Corps to 182,000 Marines over five years. Currently, the two services have 562,000 and 202,000 active-duty members, respectively. The secretary noted this is still higher than the numbers on 9/11.

The budget treats the reserve components very carefully, Panetta said. After a decade of being an integral part of America’s wars, the reserve components will not go back to being a strategic Cold War-era reserve. The reserves will be the nation’s hedge against the unexpected, the secretary said.

“We are making only marginal reductions in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard, and no reductions in the Marine Corps Reserve,” the secretary said. “The Air Force will make balanced reductions in the Air Guard that are consistent with reductions in the active component and Air Force Reserve.”

The request also calls for more base realignments and closures, and a “BRAC-like” authority to recommend changes to military retirement. “But the president and department have made clear that the retirement benefits of those who currently serve will be protected by grandfathering their benefits,” Panetta said.

The budget maintains the current U.S. focus in the Central Command region and increases American commitment to the Pacific Command area of operations. The request looks to maintain the Navy’s current 11 aircraft carriers and 10 carrier air wings, Panetta said. It will also maintain the current Marine and Army posture in the Asia-Pacific region, and will base littoral combat ships in Singapore and Bahrain.

The budget will eliminate two forward-based Army heavy brigades in Europe. Instead, brigades will rotate in and out of the area. The United States and European allies also will look to share costs for new capabilities such as the alliance ground surveillance program.

The Navy will retire seven older cruisers and two amphibious ships early, and the Air Force will eliminate six tactical air squadrons.

The budget sinks more money into technologies to prevail in an anti-access, aerial-denial scenario and will fund the next-generation bomber and modernization of the submarine fleet.

The F-35 joint strike fighter is key to maintaining domain superiority, and the military remains committed to the program, Panetta said. “But in this budget, we have slowed procurement to

complete more testing and allow for developmental changes before buying in significant quantities,” he added.

The budget will maintain all legs of the nuclear triad -- bombers, ICBMs and submarines -- and will invest in significantly more capability in the cyber world, Panetta said.

Panetta stressed the budget is based on strategy and will shape the force for the future. While the pain of cuts will be felt across the country, he said, it will also ensure a strong, agile military for the future.

The budget must pass Congress, and the secretary said he hopes members of Congress understand the strategy and nuances of the budget.

“My hope is that when members understand the sacrifice involved in reducing the defense budget by half a trillion dollars, it will convince Congress to avoid sequestration, a further round of cuts that would inflict severe damage to our national defense for generations,” Panetta said.

Biographies:

[Leon E. Panetta](#)

Related Sites:

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2. Rice Urges Security Council to Back Arab League Plan for Syria (01-26-2012)

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Susan Rice has urged the U.N. Security Council to support the Arab League’s plan to mediate a political transition in Syria that would pave the way for the departure of President Bashar al-Assad from power.

“We welcome the Arab League’s ... efforts to facilitate a transition and broker a political solution to the more than 10 months of brutality by the Assad regime,” Rice said in remarks to the Security Council in New York January 24.

The Arab League, consisting of 22 member states, has sent monitors to Syria to assess the turmoil in which thousands have died in a government crackdown on protesters since March 2011. The league has formulated a plan for al-Assad to hand over power to his vice president, Farouk al-Shara, who would be tasked with forming a unity government with the opposition. The head of the Arab League, Nabil al-Arabi, and Qatar’s Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani intend to go to New York in the coming days to seek the Security Council’s support for their plan.

“It is long past time that this Council pass a strong resolution that supports the Arab League’s efforts to end the crisis and restore peace to Syria,” Rice said.

The U.S. envoy also voiced support for efforts by Jordan’s King Abdullah to restart a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians in coordination with the Quartet, a diplomatic group consisting

of the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia that promotes peace between the two sides.

“We are now at a critical juncture. The government of Jordan deserves our gratitude for facilitating reengagement by the parties,” Rice said. “It is imperative that we do everything we can to contribute to the success of this pathway.”

Rice condemned incitements to violence and terrorist attacks on civilians in Israel, including rocket attacks from Gaza, and urged Israel to step up its efforts to “deter, confront and prosecute anti-Palestinian violence and extremist hate crimes.” She repeated the U.S. policy that it does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity.

With regard to Lebanon, Rice again called for the disarming of Hezbollah in keeping with previous U.N. Security Council resolutions and expressed support for the Lebanese Armed Forces for their role in maintaining stability in Lebanon.

3. U.S. Seeks Halt to Production of Nuclear Weapons Materials (01-24-2012)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — At the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, the United States called for a worldwide halt to the production of materials used in the making of nuclear weapons.

“A verifiable end to the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons is necessary if we are to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons,” Assistant Secretary of State Rose [Gottemoeller said January 24.](#)

Gottemoeller, who is the assistant secretary for arms control, verification and compliance, is in Geneva for the opening week of the Conference on Disarmament’s 2012 session. She spoke for the United States at the first plenary session, in which she pressed for the immediate start of talks on a fissile material cutoff treaty. Fissile materials are the raw and refined materials that are used in producing nuclear weapons.

“Some states have already declared a moratorium on such production, but others have not. Some, such as the United States, have reduced their military stocks of fissile material, whereas others are actively engaged in further production,” Gottemoeller said.

While the path to a nuclear-free world has many steps, Gottemoeller said, one of the first steps is halting the manufacture of the materials necessary to make nuclear bombs.

Gottemoeller reviewed U.S. arms control accomplishments since the last opening session of the 65-nation Conference on Disarmament, which is the premier multilateral disarmament forum. The forum has fostered treaties banning biological and chemical weapons, as well as underground nuclear weapons testing. The last major weapons treaty the conference implemented was the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The 2011 New START Treaty between the United States and Russia entered into force on February 5, 2011. It will eventually reduce the Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals to their lowest levels since the 1950s.

In addition the U.S.-Russian Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA) and its protocols also entered into force in 2011, Gottemoeller told the conference. That agreement commits the United States and Russia each to dispose of no less than 34 metric tons of excess weapons-grade plutonium, which is enough material in total for approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons.

Gottemoeller said that the five Nuclear Weapon States — the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France and China — have begun regular talks on verification issues and confidence-building measures related to nuclear disarmament, which is part of their commitment to carry out obligations in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In addition, the United States has been a leading nation in publicly declaring its nuclear stockpile numbers; participating in voluntary and treaty-based inspections measures; working with others on military-to-military, scientific and laboratory exchanges, sponsoring weapons site visits and briefing others on U.S. nuclear programs and disarmament efforts, she said.

Gottemoeller told delegates at the conference that President Obama has committed the United States to securing ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and “we have been engaging the United States Senate and the American public on the merits of the treaty.”

Earlier in the opening session, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appealed to the nuclear disarmament forum to end a deadlock on disarmament measures and advance efforts to curb weapons proliferation. In a message read to the conference by the head of the U.N.’s Geneva office, Ban said: “I urge you to seize this moment, when the world is focused intently on advancing disarmament goals.”

[Ban said](#) that the 65-nation Conference on Disarmament has not produced anything substantial since the 1996 CTBT. He appealed to the world’s main nuclear disarmament forum to move forward after years of deadlock, warning the forum that it is “in danger of sinking.”

“In 2012, the future of the Conference will be under the spotlight as never before. Lamenting the constraints of the rules of procedure or the ‘absence of political will’ can no longer suffice as explanations for any further lack of progress,” Ban said.

Gottemoeller told the conference that the road will remain blocked until all members are convinced that beginning talks on treaties is in their national interest, or at least are not harmful to those interests.

On January 25, Gottemoeller travels to Vienna to meet with treaty partners and discuss arms control-related issues of mutual interest, including the future of conventional arms control in Europe.

4. Obama, Clinton and Geithner Welcome New EU Sanctions on Iran (01-23-2012)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner welcomed new European Union sanctions on Iran, measures agreed to by the organization's Foreign Affairs Council in an effort to increase the pressure on Tehran to address concerns surrounding its nuclear activities.

"I applaud today's action by our partners in the European Union to impose additional sanctions on Iran in response to the regime's continuing failure to fulfill its international obligations regarding its nuclear program," Obama said in a January 23 statement.

Clinton and Geithner also welcomed the decision by the European Union "to ban imports of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products, freeze the assets of the Iranian central bank, and take additional action against Iran's energy, financial and transport sectors."

The secretaries said in a joint statement January 23 that the new measures mark "another strong step in the international effort to dramatically increase the pressure on Iran" to address the global community's "serious and well-founded concerns" that the country's civilian nuclear program is being used as a cover for the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Clinton and Geithner said the European Union's action is consistent with steps the United States previously has taken and with new U.S. sanctions on Iran that President Obama signed into law December 31. Those sanctions, they said, strengthened the impact of existing measures by targeting transactions with Iran's central bank and providing strong incentives to reduce Iran's ability to earn revenue from its oil exports.

The secretaries said renewed pressure from the European Union "will sharpen the choice for Iran's leaders and increase their cost of defiance of basic international obligations."

Clinton and Geithner said the United States and its international partners remain committed to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

"That is why we have pursued a dual-track policy that puts pressure on Iran to engage seriously in discussions with the international community on its nuclear program," they said. But to date, Iran has failed to take advantage of the offer of engagement and has continued to violate the standards set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Concerns about the program "have only been heightened by Iran's inability to explain how its nuclear program is, as it claims, exclusively peaceful in nature or to provide any credible response to the IAEA's November 2011 report that detailed the potential military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program," Clinton and Geithner said.

Representatives from the IAEA are scheduled to visit Iran later in January to evaluate the country's nuclear program. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said January 23 that the agency "has been in and out of Iran for years and has yet to be fully satisfied with regard to Iran's program."

She emphasized that the IAEA will be going “in a constructive spirit” and “asking Iran to display the same attitude.” The agency will be seeking answers to a significant number of questions regarding Iran’s program as well as access to the country’s nuclear facilities.

5. Fact Sheet: U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction Program in Iraq (01-20-2012)

The United States has invested more than \$209 million in Iraq since 2003 toward the clearance and safe disposal of landmines, unexploded ordnance, and excess conventional weapons and munitions. The goals of the U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) Program in Iraq are to protect victims of conflict through innovative Risk Education and Victims Assistance projects; to restore access to land and infrastructure by introducing innovative mechanical technologies and Mine Detection Dogs (MDD); and to promote Iraqi development of its humanitarian mine action capabilities.

2011 Accomplishments

During Fiscal Year 2011, the Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs provided \$22 million in Iraq for CWD efforts that:

- Cleared landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) from more than 3.9 million square kilometers of land across Iraq, which has revitalized economic and agricultural development throughout the nation.
- Destroyed more than 50,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance.
- Provided outreach education to more than 30,000 Iraqi men, women and children about potential dangers from landmines or unexploded ordnance in their communities.
- U.S.-funded partner initiatives include:
 - Danish Demining Group (DDG). DDG implemented U.S.-funded clearance operations that returned nearly nine million square meters of land to communities for safe use for agriculture, grazing, infrastructure and development in central and southern Iraq.
 - Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). With U.S. support and funding, the GICHD is conducting an assessment of Iraq’s mine action capabilities and will develop a development plan for Iraqi training and capacity development.
 - Information Management and Mine Action Programs (iMMAP). With U.S. support, advisors continue to provide operational management, strategic planning, and Victims’ Assistance support. iMMAP conducted five workshops, 13 training courses, and trained 146 students in a variety of information management, data collection, and mapping. In addition, iMMAP also trained 82 rehabilitation technicians to treat thousands of landmine/unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive device (IED) victims.
 - Iraq Mine/UXO Clearance Organization (IMCO) Central/Southern Iraq. As a result of clearance operations, IMCO returned over 2.5 million square meters of land to local communities. The recent delivery of the MineWolf 370 mechanical machine is expected to accelerate clearance of contaminated or suspect hazardous areas.

- Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI). In partnership with IMCO, MLI plans to expand the MDD program in southern Iraq and establish the first rehabilitation/vocational training facility in southern Iraq for survivors of incidents involving landmines and unexploded ordnance.
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG) Northern and Central CWD. As a result of minefield and Battle Area Clearance, MAG has returned close to two million square meters of land to local communities for safe use for agriculture and economic development.
- Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA). Technical Advisors were provided to the Regional Mine Action Center - South (RMAC-S) to assist the RMAC-S in fulfilling its role as a regulatory body that is able to coordinate, monitor and regulate mine action activities. This project has enabled the RMAC-S to implement a Non-Technical Survey (NTS), which is designed to provide a more accurate picture of the mine/ERW situation in southern Iraq.
- RONCO Consulting Corporation. RONCO continued to provide secure transportation and accommodation in the center and south for all U.S-funded conventional weapons destruction partners and local staff.
- Spirit of Soccer (SoS). In partnership with other implementing partners, SoS expanded its mine/UXO risk education projects throughout Iraq. The SoS is implementing innovative projects using soccer as a means to promote education and outreach to children regarding risks from landmines and unexploded ordnance.

Despite significant progress, much work remains. An estimated 1,863 square kilometers (719 square miles) of land in Iraq are reported to contain as many as 20 million landmines and millions more pieces of unexploded ordnance, according to the United Nations. As many as 1,670 Iraqi cities, towns and villages remain at risk from explosive hazards. Surveys indicate that agricultural land is particularly at risk for landmines and unexploded ordnance, making clearance an economic necessity for communities to regain their livelihoods as well as a security priority for Iraq's future.

The United States is the world's single largest financial supporter of efforts to clear unexploded ordnance and landmines. Since 1993, the United States has invested in peace and security with more than \$1.9 billion in support toward conventional weapons destruction efforts in 81 countries. To learn more about the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement's CWD programs, visit www.state.gov/t/pm/wra .

6.U.S. Response to Russia's Report on Detention at Guantánamo Bay (01-19-2012)

United States Mission to the OSCE
Response to the Russian Federation on the Continued Operation of the
Guantánamo Detention Facility
As delivery by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 19, 2012

We thank the delegation of the Russian Federation for raising the issue of the continued operation of the Guantánamo Bay Detention Facility and provisions of the recently enacted National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (NDAA). We value an open debate, both in this forum and

in the media, and are actively engaged in protecting the right of free expression, even when it's critical of us.

In response, I would like to stress the core values of the United States and the principles guiding our response to the threat of international terrorism. President Obama has stated unequivocally that this serious threat must be countered "with an abiding confidence in the rule of law and due process; in checks of balances and accountability." This has been and remains the consistent policy of this Administration.

The Obama Administration made clear to Congress that it did not seek any change to detention authorities present in existing law. Consistent with this position, Section 1021 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (NDAA) affirms the existing authority of the executive branch to detain persons covered by the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) [Public Law 107-40; 50 U.S.C. 1541 note]. As limiting provisions in Section 1021 confirm, it does not create any new detention authorities. The United States Supreme Court has recognized that the AUMF grants the President the authority to detain individuals pending the cessation of the conflict covered by that statute, and lower courts have repeatedly reaffirmed this authority.

Under Section 1021(e), the bill may not be construed to affect any "existing law or authorities relating to the detention of United States citizens, lawful resident aliens of the United States, or any other persons who are captured or arrested in the United States." The Obama Administration strongly supported the inclusion of these limitations in order to make clear beyond doubt that the legislation does nothing more than confirm authorities that the Federal courts have recognized as lawful under the 2001 AUMF. Moreover, the Administration will not authorize the indefinite military detention without trial of American citizens. Doing so would break with our most important traditions and values as a Nation. In signing the NDAA, President Obama affirmed his intent to interpret Section 1021 "in a manner that ensures that any detention it authorizes complies with the Constitution, the laws of war, and all other applicable law."

I also note that the President has established by Executive Order, and Section 1023 of the NDAA reaffirms, a process of periodic review for certain detainees at Guantánamo Bay to ensure that their detention "is carefully evaluated and justified." The NDAA does not alter key features of the review process described in the President's Executive Order, which provides that detainees may be assisted by counsel (in addition to an appointed personal representative), and permits the detainee to introduce any relevant information to the review board, among other provisions.

The Administration has made clear that closing Guantánamo is in the interest of our national security and is continuing its efforts to close the facility. Progress has been made under this and the previous Administration. However, given U.S. legislation in place, it is clear that it will take some time to fully close the detention facility at Guantánamo Bay. Since the beginning of this Administration, we have transferred 67 detainees to numerous destinations, including the transfer of 40 detainees to third countries. In addition, in that time frame, four detainees have been convicted in either Military Commissions or federal court.

Mr. Chairman, let me assure you that the government of the United States remains committed to upholding its OSCE commitments and its obligations under applicable international law in its struggle against the terrorist threat, as it does in all other areas.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.