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So Now Obama Wants Defense Reform

By [Jason Sigger](#) on 04/14/2011 – 5:31 pm PDT -- [Headlines](#)

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National Defense magazine reports that President Obama has recognized that our defense program is way overextended, and it's now time to develop long-term strategic objectives for national defense. [Tweets Sandra Erwin](#), "Obama calls for fundamental review of DOD missions a year too late. The 2010 QDR was supposed to do that." [Serious military analysts are skeptical](#).

"Without a change in strategy, cuts in spending are worse than doing nothing," said Christopher Preble, director of foreign policy studies at the libertarian Cato Institute.

The absence of "strategic choice" is the reason why decisions about where to cut defense spending have been nearly impossible to make, said Gordon Adams, American University professor and former director of the Office of Management and

Budget. Cutting the defense budget should not be about doing the same with less, Adams said.

A serious strategic review would have to determine what missions to scale back, so the military could be downsized accordingly. Only then can major cost savings be achieved, Adams contended. “At the end of the day, it’s about policy makers restraining their impulse to use the military in the reckless way it’s been used in the past 20 years.”

Meanwhile, the right wing will flip out over any proposed cuts in defense. Faced with [Obama’s announcement of cutting \\$400 billion over a ten-year period](#), Thomas Donnelly loses it and [accuses the president of “gutting defense.”](#)

Indeed, it will be very difficult to ‘do it again’ on the modernization accounts; there’s not too much left to cut or stretch out. And further reductions in the size of the force, particularly among American land forces, is a way of asking those in uniform to again to more with less.

What’s also likely to be in the ‘do it again’ category is the pace of military operations. The president pretends he will conduct a “fundamental review of America’s missions, capabilities and role in a changing world” as though he can alter fundamental facts about the international system – the world, for better or worse, will not function in the same way as American military power wanes – like an investment portfolio. Nor has he, in the White House, acted much differently than his predecessors.

Yes, the defense budget has doubled in ten years, but Donnelly only sees an anemic shadow of the former war machine that took Iraq and Afghanistan down. Despite huge operating costs and spiraling acquisition costs, all must be maintained, nay, more money spent. He would believe that the world will still force the US military to invade its regions to maintain Freedom and Democracy for America, and Democrats are the only ones who live in an illusion as they plan out military budgets. What a world.

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