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WASHINGTON, D.C., MAY 27, 2010 – The Center for a New American Security's national security experts released the following statements regarding the Obama Administration's National Security Strategy:

NATHANIEL FICK, Chief Executive Officer: "The National Security Strategy makes clear that military power is simply one result of the many other factors that undergird American strength, including an economic system that enables firm creation and growth, immigration policies that allow the United States to attract and retain the world's best talent and our education system. Only if we get these fundamentals right will the United States have the resources and standing to defeat al Qaeda, combat nuclear proliferation and assemble the coalitions necessary to confront the complex security environment that lies ahead."

JOHN NAGL, President: "The Obama Administration's National Security Strategy displays an impressive understanding of the new threats and challenges America faces in this new century. It recognizes that America is stronger when it fights alongside its allies and helps our partners build their own capacity to combat the threats we share - from Al Qaeda to climate change to cyber attacks. Building our partners' capabilities can help prevent wars and is the key to victory when we do have to fight."

KRISTIN LORD, Vice President and Director of Studies: "President Obama presents a compelling and ultimately optimistic vision for America's role in the world. The strategy's tone contrasts starkly with the 2006 National Security Strategy of his predecessor, which began simply, 'America is at war.' But the challenge for President Obama will be to actually realize the strategy's vision. The strategy depends on other nations to share the burdens of global leadership – but what if they shun this role? It depends on an expanded role for diplomacy and development – but do our civilian agencies have resources commensurate with this charge and does our Congress have the will to provide them? It calls for America to spread democratic values through the power of our example – but more than 18 months into the administration the United States continues to operate the prison at Guantanamo Bay. And it calls for America to engage the world's peoples, whose support is necessary to build the international order the president seeks – but our government does not yet have in place the robust public engagement strategy and institutions required to win this public support. Until the administration addresses these admittedly daunting challenges, its vision will remain just that: a vision."

LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID BARNO, USA (Ret.): "President Obama's National Security Strategy offers a sweeping view of American leadership and renewal in a changing world. Its central emphasis on the necessity of rebuilding American economic strength as the cornerstone of our strength abroad resonates in a period of deep economic uncertainty. While noting the pressing security challenges of today – war in Afghanistan, tensions with Iran, violent extremism – it eyes a longer horizon with a focus on strengthening America's enduring global leadership role. Significantly in a world of growing disorder, it maintains a commitment to American military superiority, while rightfully outlining the need to balance the military instrument with more capable diplomatic and development tools. In many important ways, this document provides a Grand Strategy for the United States looking ahead to an uncertain and turbulent century. Its core challenge will be in marshaling the will to effect the requisite changes in government bureaucracy – both in Congress and the executive – implicitly needed to deliver its on its promise."

PATRICK CRONIN, Senior Advisor and Senior Director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program: "The Obama Administration has carefully recalibrated U.S. strategy in the world. The National Security Strategy provides a clear statement of important ends and some of the ways and means by which they might be realized. The questions now are: Can this strategy be implemented? Can the Administration preserve U.S. power? What is the United States prepared to do if engagement fails or partners come up short?"

RICHARD FONTAINE, Senior Fellow: "President Obama's new National Security Strategy is already being interpreted as a major break with his predecessor's approach. But for all of its rhetorical distancing, there is much more continuity - with Bush and with the other presidencies in modern times - than not. The transatlantic relationship is still the cornerstone of American international engagement. The gravest danger to America comes from weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists. The United States still reserves the right to act unilaterally and does not rule out preemption, even if we do not trumpet that fact. America will maintain military superiority, promote democracy, isolate Iran and North Korea, and counter violent extremism. We will work against the Taliban and with the Iraqis. There are a few differences in substance, and many in tone. But it would be wrong to say that this is either a stark break with the past or merely Bush redux. It is more America redux. The realities of the international system and continuing American interests still inform the majority of U.S. foreign policy, irrespective of administration. The new strategy less breaks with these and instead pledges to do things more effectively than in the past. Time will tell."

TOM RICKS, Senior Fellow: "The proof of the National Security Strategy will be in the execution, which rarely rises to the level of the prose in the report. Generally these documents prove to be lists of aspirations rather than genuine strategies that state who we are, what we want to do, how we want to do it, and what resources we will use to do it."

ROBERT KAPLAN, Senior Fellow: "The military rise of China, the phenomenon of radical Islam, and nuclear proliferation are obvious national security concerns. An equally important one is that more people will be killed or made homeless by Mother Nature than almost at any time in human history. This is because of absolute rises in urbanized populations in seismically and climatically fragile regions, particularly along littorals. And the response to these catastrophes will often be military."

ABRAHAM DENMARK, Fellow: "This is the first National Security Strategy that recognizes the complexity of the challenges the United States will face in the 21st century, and formulates a strategy that is up to the task of sustaining American security and prosperity. The strategy recognizes that today's strategic environment is not one that is dominated by a single threat, but is rather a complex mix of challenges and opportunities on a global scale. In addition to traditional armed conflicts and terrorist threats, the president has recognized that non-traditional issues such as climate change, pandemics, and challenges in the global commons will be central to preserving our national security in the 21st century. This strategy also recognizes that globalization is driving the creation of a multipolar world in which American leadership, as much as its dominance, will be a key force in sustaining our security. It embraces allies, partners, and coalitions as necessary elements of a global approach to address global problems and defeat global threats. In this way, the president has returned the international system, which was created and protected by Americans for several generations, to the center of America's national security strategy."

ANDREW EXUM, Fellow: "Considering the financial crisis from which our country is still emerging, I am surprised there is not more in the National Security Strategy about the environment of scarcity in which the United States now operates. Strategy is, in part, about setting goals, prioritizing those goals, and matching resources to each goal. Aside from the section about spending tax-payer money wisely - which seems more about reducing fraud, waste and abuse than anything else - there seems to be little acknowledgment that the United States might not be able to pursue all of our national security goals as vigorously as we might like in part due to spending constraints. I'm still trying to understand how the acknowledgment that the United States must address its deficit to ensure our future security squares with a bold statement like 'the United States of America will continue to underwrite global security.' That is an especially bold claim considering the fact that this document seems to consider security to include not just physical security but economic security, food security, medical security and addressing problems of governance and reducing poverty outside America's borders. This document leaves me unsure of what the administration's true priorities are heading into the rest of its term in office."

CHRISTINE PARTHMORE, Fellow: "This National Security Strategy sets U.S. power in the long term at an important new place: at the intersection of natural resources and national security. At its heart, this document gets right that addressing energy, climate change, scarcity and environmental concerns can provide useful tools for engagement, for building governance and economic strength in partner nations, and for national security broadly. However, in many cases this will be more complicated than this strategy indicates. Clean energy and climate change-based engagement with Indonesia, for example, must account for that country's often contradictory goals of both producing and preserving its natural resources. The United States may wish to form cooperative relationships in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and around Africa and Latin America, to address water, energy, food and demographic stresses, but China is swiftly moving to do the same. This strategy's objectives of managing supply chains and maintaining access to scarce commodities, if not planned carefully, could lead to minerals policies that run counter to its emphasis on human rights, transparency in trade and rule of law. It is new to give natural resources challenges such a prominent role in mainstream U.S. strategic planning, as this National Security Strategy does. As such, mapping out new plans and ways of doing business to accommodate issues surrounding energy, climate, food and

