

Special US Senate Election Questionnaire

Primary Election: December 8th, 2009

General Election: January 19th, 2010

The following questionnaire was distributed to all candidates for the Special US Senate Election to raise their awareness of peace issues, including nuclear nonproliferation, US-Iran relations, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the “War on Terror”. This special election is being held to fill Senator Edward Kennedy’s seat.

The complete responses returned by each of the candidates are compiled below (by name, in alphabetical order). Mass Peace Action has not received a questionnaire from State Senator Scott Brown after attempts to contact his office, and was unable to reach Candidate Jack E. Robinson.

This guide was produced for educational purposes and is not meant to be construed as an endorsement of any candidate or political party.

Nuclear Nonproliferation

1) The Future of International Nuclear Weapons Policy

President Obama has emphasized his commitment to negotiating a renewal of the START treaty with Russia by the end of 2009. Earlier, several prominent former public officials (Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, Sam Nunn and William Perry) called for a “world free of nuclear weapons” and urged the United States to lead an international effort toward a multilateral, verifiable plan with strong enforcement mechanisms.

Do you support negotiating with Russia for deep reductions in our nuclear arsenals and taking further practical steps to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons?

Yes: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

“I support negotiating multilateral verifiable reductions in nuclear weapons. I recognize that verifying reductions poses serious political and technical challenges for which I would work to seek solutions.”

Martha Coakley:

“I support President Obama’s recent efforts to further reduce global nuclear weapons stockpiles through negotiations with Russia, and believe it is the right step towards the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. This goal will only be achieved through a multilateral and concentrated global effort, and it is critical that the United States takes a leadership role.”

Alan Khazei:

“Yes. I strongly support the vision of moving toward a world free of nuclear weapons. I was proud and honored to be a founding signatory of the “Global Zero” compact to eliminate nuclear weapons from the beginning of their effort, and I have worked closely with Bruce Blair and Matt Brown to build a campaign committed to this goal. I spoke at and participated in their inaugural conference in December 2008 in Paris, France. As a Senator, I would make this issue a top priority and work to galvanize a citizen movement to accomplish this goal, as well as calling for multilateral negotiations, including with Russia, for deep reductions in our nuclear arsenals.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“By making deep cuts in their arsenals, the United States and Russia could demonstrate that the leaders of the countries with huge numbers of nuclear weapons were taking serious steps towards a nuclear-weapons free world and significantly lowering the possibility of future nuclear conflicts, accidental or otherwise. Such a stance would give these nuclear states much greater moral suasion in their efforts to persuade other nuclear states to stand down, and to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons. I support the goal expressed by the Kissinger/Schultz/Nunn/Perry “Towards a Nuclear Free World” proposal. By eliminating all state-owned nuclear weapons, we can forestall the horror of a working weapon falling into the hands of a non-state group, significantly reducing the possibility of any terrorist use of nuclear weapons.”

2) A Nuclear Test Ban

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, first opened for signatures in 1996, would ban all nuclear weapons tests. The CTBT has been signed by 180 states and ratified by 148. The U.S., along with China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, and Israel, has signed the treaty but the Senate has not ratified it.

Would you vote to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty?

Yes: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

“I support ratification of the CTBT and engagement with other nations to prevent nuclear proliferation. I note, however, that the treaty has not effectively prevented several of the signatory nations from seeking to develop nuclear weapons.”

Martha Coakley:

“As Senator, I will support the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The U.S. has not tested a nuclear explosive device since 1992 and nuclear tests are no longer necessary to maintain the safety and reliability for our existing nuclear stockpiles. Furthermore, we have made the technological advances necessary to detect any violations of the treaty. The ratification of this treaty will demonstrate our commitment to reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear devices, and will be a significant impediment to the development of nuclear weapons in other countries.”

Alan Khazei:

“It is unacceptable that the United States has waited so long to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and I believe its ratification should be a top priority for the administration and the Senate. As a Senator, I would work to motivate citizens to support and advance the treaty.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“Our country should have ratified this treaty years ago. I will vote to ratify this treaty.”

3) The Future of the U.S. Nuclear Stockpile

Some claim that our aging nuclear stockpile is becoming less reliable, and that therefore new weapons are needed. In 2005 Congress adopted the Reliable Replacement Warhead. A study on plutonium released by the JASON Defense Advisory Panel, however, provides clear evidence that our stockpile remains reliable, that most U.S. plutonium pits “have credible minimum lifetimes in excess of 100 years,” thus undercutting the arguments in favor of the RRW. Even our oldest warhead will be reliable for at least 70 years.

Former Senator Sam Nunn, former Defense Secretary William Perry, and others have therefore openly opposed the RRW, maintaining that not only is the weapon not needed, but also that to such countries as Iran and North Korea it appears hypocritical for the U.S. to build new nuclear weapons. While President Obama has not included funding for RRW in his 2010 budget request, Defense Secretary Gates and some members of Congress still support stockpile modernization.

Do you favor or oppose building new nuclear weapons, including the Reliable Replacement Warhead?

Oppose: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

“This question poses, again, both technical and political question. Until we achieve a “world free of nuclear weapons,” I would insist on maintaining a credible US deterrent. I voted for the recently approved FY10 department of Defense Authorization which did not contain funds for RRW.”

Martha Coakley:

“I oppose the building or development of new nuclear weapons, which would be counterproductive to the goals of reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles, preventing the spread of nuclear capability, and ultimately ridding the world of nuclear weapons altogether.”

Alan Khazei:

“I am strongly opposed to building new nuclear weapons systems. Instead, to assure our national security, I strongly support efforts like the Cooperative Threat Reduction

Program, initiated by Senators Nunn and Lugar, to greatly reduce the dangers posed by nuclear stockpiles and other materials in Russia and the former Soviet states. Unless we fully fund the programs and work to control nuclear material, it is virtually inevitable that terrorists eventually will gain access to a nuclear weapon. This is the single greatest security threat we face, and as a Senator I would push the appropriations process to ensure these critical programs are sufficiently funded. This is the most cost-effective way to protect our security.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I oppose the building of new nuclear weapons, including the Reliable Replacement Warhead. As mentioned above, I support a policy of moving toward a world with no nuclear weapons. The manufacture of new nuclear weapons, even in the name of reliability, would be a move in the opposite direction, and could easily provoke other countries into launching similar programs, starting a new round in the nuclear arms race. Until we no longer need a reliable nuclear deterrent, we should continue to monitor our existing weapons. But since the JASON Defense Advisory Panel has found that existing plutonium pits should be workable for many decades, I would use that time to reduce the number of weapons to the point where there were none, or so few that the reliability of those remaining weapons was no longer a critical concern in our defense policy.”

Iran

4) US-Iran relations

Despite the standoff between Iran and the U.S. and its allies over Iran’s nuclear program, and questions about the legitimacy of the June presidential election in Iran, the Obama administration has begun to negotiate directly with the Iranian government.

What diplomatic tools or approaches would you suggest for engaging Iran about its nuclear program? Would you continue to deal directly with Iran and if so would you set any preconditions for negotiations? Under what circumstances, if any, would you use military means to deal with Iran’s nuclear programs?

Michael Capuano:

“I support the President’s willingness to negotiate with Iran without preconditions. The bellicosity of the previous administration utterly failed to prevent Iran from enriching uranium and from developing long, middle and short range missiles, and that failure has had grave consequences. I believe that a nuclear-armed Iran would endanger the peace of the Middle East and of the world. It would predictably prompt a nuclear arms race among the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, possibly with Turkey and Egypt also. It would thus greatly increase nuclear proliferation and also the likelihood that nuclear weapons would become available to non-state actors. We should be prepared to offer Iran the usual incentives, bi-lateral and multi-lateral aid and direct investment in its infrastructure and industry. Perhaps [we could] also [offer] a commitment not to seek regime change, though many Iranians may themselves be seeking that goal in the

aftermath of [the] June elections. I believe we must be prepared to impose tougher sanctions (see below) if diplomacy fails. It is premature to specify what would suffice to assure the world that Iran has renounced its nuclear ambitions, but I would vote to authorize the use of force only as a last resort.”

Martha Coakley:

“A nuclear-armed Iran is a grave danger to the Middle East as well as a threat to America’s national security and our interests in the region, particularly while thousands of our troops remain therein. Our goal should be to make Iran’s nuclear programs more transparent and open to the international community and subsequently subject to international law. We must prevent Iran from obtaining functioning nuclear weapons.

Iran has operated in disregard for the international community and international law in sharing information about its nuclear ambitions. These stall tactics, indulging half-hearted efforts at the negotiating table that are simply publicity ploys, cannot continue. The international community must remain diligent in holding Iran accountable for their actions and not allow them to remain defiant in the face of the international spotlight currently upon them. A nuclear-armed Iran should not be condoned by the world-at-large.

However, I commend the Obama Administration’s efforts to engage Iran in direct bilateral talks, and believe that a multilateral approach to Iran’s nuclear program can bring a long-term solution. The Obama Administration needs to reach out to our Allies as well as those in good graces with Iran’s regime, such as Russia and China, to encourage them to participate in multilateral talks, not only to help put the management of their nuclear program under broader international purview, but also to make it more likely that Iran will be forthcoming and transparent about its nuclear plans. In addition, it makes countries accountable for their dealings, both commercially and militarily, with Iran.”

Alan Khazei:

“My father is an immigrant from Iran, who came to America in the 1950’s, leaving behind a dictatorship for the freedom, ideals and opportunity that America provides and stands for. Consequently, I have personal knowledge and great interest in U.S. relations with Iran, Iran’s role in the region, Iran’s history and culture, and more. I believe that in the Senate, I would offer unique knowledge and experience on this issue.

We are at a key moment in U.S.-Iranian relations, and in relations between Iran and the West. It is essential that we pursue a comprehensive foreign policy strategy with our allies that does everything possible to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, as this could lead to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, which would be devastating not only for the region, but for the world and the cause of nonproliferation.

It is best for the U.S. to pursue a coordinated strategy with our lead allies, due to our history of negative intervention in Iran, from our CIA working with the British Government to overthrow Mossadegh in 1953 to our support of Saddam Hussein during

the Iran-Iraq war. We cannot let the current regime led by Ayatollah Khamenei and Ahmadinejad use the U.S. as a whipping boy to stir up support in the country. The regime has lost a great deal of legitimacy due to the fraudulent elections, the murder of peaceful protesters in the streets and the raping and torturing of people in prisons.

Seventy percent of the Iranian people are under the age of thirty. They were not even born when the revolution happened. Many Iranians love Americans and, as the protests clearly showed, want freedom and democracy. The right comprehensive strategy, using all of the tools we have available to us, can yield productive results for the U.S., the region, and the world”.

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I support the Obama administration’s decision to begin face-to-face negotiations with Iran without preconditions, but I do not believe that we should view this situation as being just a conflict between the United States and Iran. I support the administration’s efforts both within the U.N. and elsewhere to build alliances with other governments; without such alliances, there is little reason for Iran to worry about the effects of sanctions.”

5) Sanctions on Iran

Many members of Congress support bills that would impose additional sanctions on Iran, including the prohibition of gas imports.

Do you support such sanctions? If so, why and specify what kind of sanctions.

Yes: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

“I have co-sponsored, HR 2194, the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act of 2009, which calls for stiffer sanctions if diplomacy fails to achieve its goal – that Iran no longer seeks nuclear weapons and agrees to IAEA, or other multilateral verification. Iran has huge oil deposits but limited refining capacity, so these sanctions might be effective. To be effective, sanctions must be multi-lateral, and HR 2194 also calls for concerted diplomacy to involve other nations in this effort.”

Martha Coakley:

“I believe diplomacy should be our avenue for addressing Iran’s nuclear program. However, Iran has not been forthcoming with information about its nuclear capability to the United States or the international community. I will not rule out additional sanctions unless Iran exhibits more of a willingness to work the world community to dispel the fears that it is developing nuclear weapons.”

Alan Khazei:

“Historically, several countries—such as Libya—have been persuaded to abandon their nuclear program. Such persuasion has been possible by strategic diplomatic engagement that combines the joint application of sanctions with a face-saving way forward that

preserves the country's interests in security, prestige, and goals for regional influence. I would thus support a strategy of sanctions against Tehran if the country does not restrain its nuclear program. Sanctions might include restricting travel, restricting international banking and, limiting foreign investments, or cutting off gas supplies. In exchange for abandoning its nuclear program, Iran might then be enticed by its inclusion in regional security talks, the suspension of sanctions, guarantees of a secure supply of reactor fuel for purely civilian purposes, and a clear path forward toward normalized relationships with the West."

Stephen Pagliuca:

"I am in favor of using all the diplomatic tools at our disposal to persuade Iran not to cross the nuclear threshold. I support sanctions including the prohibition of gasoline imports and other materials necessary to keep the industrial underpinnings of Iran's nuclear program intact. However, I do not favor sanctions on medicine; we are not at war with Iranian families and their children and we know now that such sanctions caused great suffering for years in Iraq."

The War in Iraq

6) Residual Forces in Iraq

President Obama's current plan would leave approximately 50,000 troops in Iraq after August of 2010 for such "limited missions" as counter-terrorism, training and embassy protection.

Do you support leaving a residual force in Iraq? If so, how many troops and for what purpose?

Yes: Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

No: Capuano

Michael Capuano:

"I voted against authorizing the use of force against Iraq. I did not believe Iraq to be in any way responsible for 9/11. Nor did I think the evidence presented that Saddam Hussein was stockpiling weapons of mass destruction sufficed to justify military action."

I have called for a withdrawal of US forces from Iraq for some time. I would oppose leaving a residual combat force. If the Government of Iraq asked for assistance with training its army or security forces, I believe such a request should be considered."

Martha Coakley:

"I believe that the decision to invade Iraq was incorrect, and I would have voted against the 2003 military authorization. Now that our troops are there, however, I believe that we have a responsibility to the Iraqi people to support their young democracy as their government assumes the full duties of providing security for its citizens. As we speak, Iraqis continue to face sectarian tensions, unacceptable levels of violence and insufficient

governmental capacity to address every threat. I feel that our forces have an important role to play addressing these issues, primarily by funding local capacity and working with Iraqi officials. I support the general timetable that President Obama has outlined, and I will work to see that American troops are withdrawn in a way that respects their well-being and security, as well as the safety and sovereignty of the Iraqi people.”

Alan Khazei:

“I strongly opposed the Iraq War. At the same time, we will need to leave behind for a period of time a contingent of U.S. troops—between 5,000 and 20,000—to perform essential, non-combat functions. Such activities include protecting the U.S. embassy and training Iraqi security personnel.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I’ve been a vocal critic of ever going into the war in Iraq. I don’t believe that the United States can solve other countries’ historical internecine conflicts through military engagement. We must bring our troops home as soon as possible. I opposed the war in Iraq because I believed that our military efforts should have been focused on finding Osama bin Laden and destroying the al Qaeda terror network in Afghanistan. President Bush rushed us into an ill-advised war without a plan to win the peace or a comprehensive exit strategy. I support leaving a residual force in Iraq to protect U.S. civilians engaged in economic development projects. I favor setting clear benchmarks for reducing the size of that residual force as rapidly as possible.”

The War in Afghanistan and the “War on Terror”

7) Military Solutions

President Obama is considering whether to send additional troops to Afghanistan. Eight years of war there have resulted in almost 900 American deaths and countless Afghan civilians killed, with many more wounded, maimed, or made homeless. Reports from Afghanistan indicate that women's rights are still not protected and that the Taliban appears to be growing.

Do you believe that there is an effective military approach to the situation in Afghanistan? If yes, what do you believe US goals there are and how would you define victory? Do you support the escalation of troops in Afghanistan? How large an additional force would you vote for?

No: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

“Military approaches alone will clearly not suffice. I voted to authorize the use of force against Afghanistan after its Taliban rulers refused to take action against al Qaeda which had staged an unprovoked attack on the United States, killing thousands of our fellow-citizens. I remain, however, concerned about the conduct of our operations there, and I have traveled to Afghanistan and met, not just with general[s] and high officials,

but also with soldiers in the field, and Afghan leaders at the tribal and national level. I am a co-sponsor of HR 2404 which would require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress outlining an exit strategy for US military forces in Afghanistan. In September I joined 50 of my colleagues in the House in a letter to the President urging him to reject a troop increase.

It may not be useful to speak of “victory.” An acceptable end to our operations there would be the certainty that sanctuary would not again be provided to forces seeking to renew their attacks on the United States or our allies. The proximity of nuclear-armed Pakistan makes this an essential matter of national security.”

Martha Coakley:

“The situation in Afghanistan is dire and we must come to a peaceful, stable solution. We cannot allow Afghanistan to become a breeding ground for terrorists who wish to do us harm. Our goal in Afghanistan should be, as it always had been, to fight Al Qaeda to keep America safe from terrorist threats. Any loss of American and Afghan lives is a tragedy, and I am deeply troubled by the Taliban’s growing influence.

I think any increase in military presence has to be very carefully considered. While General McChrystal’s plan for 40,000 troops should be taken seriously, given the staggering complexity of the situation, this step would require a realistic assessment of whether a military solution will yield the best results. At the moment, this question remains uncertain, and I am deeply concerned about putting more lives at risk and escalating violence. I believe strongly that any change in military strategy must include specific, measurable goals and realistic, concrete plans to achieve them.”

Alan Khazei:

“I have spent my life in civilian service, but have not been in the military. I have many friends, however, who have put their life on the line for our country. The most difficult decision an elected official can make is to put troops in harm’s way.

I do not support an increase in troops in Afghanistan. We need to adopt a comprehensive foreign policy strategy, not just a military strategy. I am not surprised that Gen. McChrystal wants more troops because our people are dying at the highest monthly rates since the war started, but I believe that there are other steps we should take. We must better clarify our mission, set concrete goals and objectives, be honest about the costs in American lives and treasure, implement a time line, and develop an exit strategy. Most of all, we have to convince the American people to support our policy going forward. Because history has shown that if the American people do not support our involvement in foreign conflicts, they are not sustainable. Finally, we need a greater focus on aid and development, in recognition of the fact that there is no purely military solution to the problems in Afghanistan”.

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I am wary of sending more troops to Afghanistan without a compelling strategy that outlines how they will be used and the strategic goals their deployment will support. My

instinct is that we should look at drawing down our forces in Afghanistan as opposed to building them up. I am a firm believer in counter-terrorism, as opposed to counterinsurgency. If our goal in [Afghanistan] is to deny terrorist networks the ability to organize and attack our interests, then we need to understand that many of these terrorists are no longer in Afghanistan; they are in Pakistan, Kashmir, and Somalia. In order to fight terrorists effectively we need to maintain the agility and resources to combat them wherever they arise. By increasing our commitment to Afghanistan, I worry that we are putting our brave men and women in danger without a definable and achievable purpose. I need to hear from the commanders on the ground before making a final determination, but I don't think that the war in Afghanistan is accomplishing our objective of ending international terrorism."

8) Non-Military Solutions

President Obama's strategy emphasizes the need for a "civilian surge" of experts and aid workers to help with development, as well as regional diplomacy with such stakeholders as Iran, Russia, India and Pakistan. *Do you agree with these goals? What development and aid programs do you support?*

Yes: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

"A "civilian surge" would be vastly preferable to a military surge. That said, experts and aid workers can make important contributions to both material and social infrastructure; but it is essential that the Afghans themselves take ownership of the results – roads, markets, schools, and clinics. I am confident Afghans will defend projects in which they have participated. Regional diplomacy is clearly essential also, and in the interest of all nations of the region."

Martha Coakley:

"I think a "civilian surge" in critical regions is [an] admirable goal, but it is one that can only be fulfilled if we have the assurances we need about the potential success and safety of aid workers, as well as their sourcing. Even though there are many civilian workers willing to serve, they cannot do so if we cannot guarantee their security and confidently focus their efforts where they can be truly effectual."

Alan Khazei:

"I support President Obama's strategy emphasizing a "civilian surge." Having been in Afghanistan for 8 years, the US has already engaged in much needed aid and development work, including building infrastructure and growing local institutions. However, much more is needed. We must continue our engagement in Afghanistan with a comprehensive, smart power strategy that engages all aspects of our national capabilities, not just the resources of the Department of Defense. A purely military solution won't work.

An essential aspect of a smart power strategy is regional diplomacy. The U.S. can't solve entrenched challenges alone, but must look to engage neighbors and allies in a collective

effort. Without this coordination, our actions will ultimately be ineffective. I have always looked towards coalitions to solve the pressing challenges we have here at home, and it is an approach that I would strongly advocate as Senator.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I support emphasizing assistance with development as a key element of U.S. foreign policy across the world. (See answer 10 below). The international community has set goal after goal for providing more aid to developing countries, and time and again, we have fallen short of those goals. Other industrialized countries devote a significantly greater percentage of their GDP to foreign aid than the United States. I see supporting development as the key to building a more peaceful world. And in light of the threat of global warming, we should be investing heavily in helping these countries develop clean energy sources that do not further raise the levels of CO2. In deciding what development programs to fund, I would emphasize programs that focus on improving the lives of women and girls. Women must have access to affordable family planning; the success of U.S. conservatives in cutting off these family planning funds was tragic. And girls must be given equal access to education. Improving the status of women is one of the most powerful ways in which the U.S. can strengthen grassroots economic development.”

9) *Air Strikes*

Recent US air strikes that have killed hundreds of Afghan and Pakistani civilians highlight the perils of using air power in civilian areas. President Obama seems ready to continue air strikes, even though they have plunged many families into poverty and increased resentment of the United States, contributing to instability. Pakistani authorities report that drone attacks in Pakistan since 2006 have killed only 14 Al Qaeda leaders but 687 civilians.

Do you agree with President Obama that air strikes and drone attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan are necessary?

Michael Capuano:

“As a member of Congress it is not my role to dictate military tactics to the Commander-in-Chief. My concern is a moral one: that all our military operations be conducted mindful of their impact on civilians. Civilian deaths are always tragic and we must do all we can to minimize them. I am encouraged that, in the aftermath of the tragic September 4 NATO strike on Taliban fuel trucks, the commander of US forces in Afghanistan ordered limits on strikes in populated areas and required our forces to prioritize protection of civilians as well as protection of our troops.”

Martha Coakley:

“Every civilian death is a tragedy. Indiscriminate aerial attacks are not a good strategy to reduce terrorist threats or build the trust of the Afghan people, which is why President Obama and General McChrystal have stated that such strikes are not in our best interest and should be stopped. I support the recent changes in policy that makes protecting civilians a priority.

The U.S. is attempting to maintain a delicate balance; pursuing and eliminating the militant extremists, including the Al-Qaeda leadership, without inflaming the Pakistani relationship our countries currently enjoy.”

Alan Khazei:

“I am concerned about airstrikes in Afghanistan and the loss of civilian life that accompanies such attacks. We are at risk of losing the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. I am in favor of continuing the US drone program into Pakistan, as it has been effective in taking out key Al Qaeda leadership. We need to be tough on Al Qaeda, and as long as they have an active presence in the region and there is actionable intelligence, we must act.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I believe that air strikes and drone attacks can play a valuable role in counter-terrorism efforts but oppose their use as a general strategy in any counter insurgency. Additionally, such attacks should only be used in cases when they are coupled with specific and credible intelligence. Accidental attacks upon innocent civilians cost us the support of the Afghan people, and our military should operate under very strict rules of engagement.”

Military Budget

10) The 25% Solution

Representative Barney Frank has proposed a 25% cut in the military budget, which has increased steadily almost every year, the funds to go for such needs as health insurance, education, and the environment.

Do you agree that such a reduction in military spending is feasible and desirable?

No: Capuano, Coakley, Khazei, Pagliuca

Michael Capuano:

“I disagree with my friend Barney Frank on this. I do not support an across-the-boards 25% cut in the budget of the Department of Defense. If monies were spent on better pay and better training for our men and women in uniform, or on better equipment to keep them safe, I would support it. I am confident that we can maintain the forces we need and also meet our compelling domestic priorities.”

Martha Coakley:

“We should eliminate wasteful military spending to focus on the current threats to our national security. I am in support of making cuts where they are practical and would not impede the function of our national defense, but it is reckless to pick an arbitrary number in order to reduce spending. We need to make sure our troops have the resources they need to stay safe.”

Alan Khazei:

“I believe the U.S. needs comprehensive military reform. We are still organized to respond to Cold War threats with outmoded weapons systems. We fundamentally need to adjust our strategies to respond current asymmetric threats such as terrorism and insurgencies. I fully support the decision to end the tactically obsolete F-22 aircraft program, and it is clear that there are other systems that are outdated or ineffective and must be put to a close. We must fund our military at a level that will safeguard our security, and we must also be more aggressive in rooting out wasteful spending.

It will take enormous effort to continue such reforms in a system with such highly entrenched interests. For this reason, I am refusing to take any PAC or lobbyist money, which has proven to be a barrier to reform. As Senator, I will make decisions based only on the interests of the citizens of Massachusetts and the American people.”

Stephen Pagliuca:

“I support reducing the size of our military budget. There is no doubt that there are substantial savings to be had in the U.S. military budget. Far too much money still flows to programs which were designed to fill the needs of the Cold War that ended in 1989. We could start with the programs which Congress continues to fund over the opposition of the Department of Defense. But the real potential savings would come from changing our foreign policy from the Bush doctrine of pre-emptive wars and going it alone to a foreign policy that put much greater emphasis on non-military spending. The U.S. defense budget has more than doubled since 2001, and our country is responsible for almost half of the world’s entire military spending. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars are costing hundreds of billions dollars and leaving a legacy of death and injury among members of our military and civilians in those two countries. I believe that in the interest of furthering the peaceful development of all the countries of the world, the United States should negotiate with the other major weapons powers to reduce their military budgets by a fixed amount per year and put the savings into a “global Marshall Plan” fund. As to Congressman Frank’s round number of 25%, his office is unable to supply any documentation on how Congressman Frank came up with the number, or what programs he would cut or reduce. I accept the number as a metaphor for the substantial savings that we could realize from a more sensible approach to defense budgeting. In the absence of such documentation, as a Senator I will seek substantial cuts in the defense budget, coupled with implementing a less military-oriented foreign policy.”