

Rep. Allen West says the military cuts outlined by President Barack Obama at the Pentagon Thursday show "incompetence" in understanding the nation's national security needs and the defense strategy is not "coherent." The Florida Republican — a former army lieutenant colonel — also told Fox News' Greta Van Susteren he believes the nation's military leaders were ignored in the Obama administration's defining a military direction.

"We're not talking about a coherent national security strategy — what the president laid out is very dangerous and it really does show incompetence in understanding national security strategy," West said. "He did not talk about how we go forward on the 21st century battlefield — the ability to engage, deter, and strike the enemy when necessary. We cannot sit around and say we won't fight a second combat operation because the enemy has a vote in this.

"And what we need to be able to do is sit down and look at our geographical area of responsibility, and start examining the threat for the next 10 to 20 years, and come up with the requirements, and capability, and capacity that our military needs to be able to meet these threats," he said. "Because if we continue to go down this path — after World War II we gutted the military to such a degraded state that the first Army battalion that showed up on the battlefield in Korea was absolutely decimated — I don't want to see that type of things happen to my friends and also one of my relatives that's still serving in the military."

West said the administration cannot take a "one-size-fits-all" approach to the nation's military needs and operations, and noted the administration's strategy shows military leaders were probably not consulted in devising the defense cuts.

"I can tell you that is probably the case — I have heard some rumination to that effect," West said. "The guidance he gave was not oriented towards how we have a strategy to contend with threats across the world — it was more so based on a budget analysis.

"One thing that troubles me is [Iranian President] Mahmoud Ahmadinejad next week will travel through Latin America, South America, and coming up through Central America — we are on the crux of having a 21st century Cuban missile crisis that could threaten us in South Florida," he said. "We cannot disengage and leave the staunch ally in the Middle East, which is Israel. But yet we see an Arab Spring that began a year ago has now turned into an Arab Winter — so those are the types of things we have to evaluate.

"We haven't talked about the threat from North Korea now that they've had the transition in leadership," West continued. "And of course we know that China is developing the strategic navy and air forces."

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