

CDR: Fact Sheet

House Armed Services Committee

September 20, 2005

- The Committee Defense Review (CDR) is an independent, bipartisan review of national security threats and the military capabilities required to address those threats.
- The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) review will draw from the full spectrum of resources available, including government officials, past strategic documents, existing modeling and simulation tools, outside experts, and committee members' own experience and knowledge.
- The committee is engaging in a comprehensive dialogue with security experts from the intelligence, academic, and think-tank communities.
- The CDR will examine which U.S. military tools can best protect our interests at home and abroad.
- The goal of this process is to produce a focused, well-researched report that reflects a bipartisan committee view of the military capabilities we need for the future, a view that is independent – of the Defense Department, of partisan politics, of external influences – and that will help the committee determine its future priorities.
- While the committee and Congress do much of this work on a routine basis as part of the annual budgeting process, the committee's review has broader purposes.
 - HASC members will be better prepared in February 2006 to assess the analytical strengths and weaknesses of the Department of Defense Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), a comprehensive study of strategy, force structure, and resources that Congress has required the Department to conduct.
 - Having been through a similar, albeit less detailed process, the committee will have a firmer analytical foundation to agree or disagree with Defense Department's findings, and identify issues of concern that the QDR may omit or treat superficially.
 - The committee's review may help build a national consensus about defense strategy and resources. Our intention is to gather a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives on current and future threats to U.S. national security, real and hypothetical, and to build a consensus on how our 21st century security structure can best address them.
 - The committee may well find that it concurs with many of the findings and recommendations of the QDR, which would lend bipartisan support to the Department's study. We may also find areas of disagreement, either because we assess and prioritize threats differently or because we reach different conclusions about how those threats should be handled.
 - The committee's defense review will improve our ability to assess future budget requests more critically and help set agreed-upon committee priorities for the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act.

- Congress is an independent branch of the Federal government. We form our own opinions and reach our own judgments based on a host of factors. The committee review establishes a rigorous group process.
- Democracy requires Members of Congress to represent their constituents, but the CDR is structured to build a broader, national view. In that, the committee's review will be unique in Congress, much as the Department's review is unique in the executive branch.
- The CDR is not a "mini QDR," nor will it be a report designed to attack or defend the QDR.
- We recognize that we cannot replicate the Defense Department's manpower, planning experience, or analytical expertise – nor do we want to.
- While we applaud the thoroughness of the Department's review, Congress has a responsibility to reach its own conclusions about how best to defend the American people. Because the committee has developed a bipartisan process, we expect to develop recommendations that address the security needs of the American people regardless of politics.
- The Congressionally-mandated QDR's scope covers more than ten separate, distinct, and important issue areas, while the supporting analyses and assumptions are reviewed in high detail. The scope of our review is significantly narrower, focusing on threats and the capabilities needed to address them, but will not examine these issues in the same detail.
- When completed, the committee's defense review will strengthen Congressional decision-making by stepping back from the rigorous demands of the legislative process and giving Members a greater opportunity to consider our long-term defense needs.
- Everyone should welcome such a unique and bipartisan initiative in the service of U.S. national security.