

The Quadrennial Defense Review: Goals and Principles

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Mr. Chairman, Representative Skelton and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to come before you on a subject of national importance: that is the goals and principles of the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review or QDR.

The original purpose of the QDR was to assess the relationship between our strategic appetites, as reflected in such documents as the National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy, and the military forces and capabilities we laid on the table to satisfy those wants. But the QDR was in reality more than this, even in 1997 when the first QDR was written and certainly is today. It is the only forum for debate on the basic nature of military power, the relationship between military power and political purpose and the methods for measuring the adequacy of military capabilities. Secretary Rumsfeld understands the power of the QDR process and uses it as an instrument for stamping the Pentagon leadership's vision of the future nature of warfare on the U.S. military. So much so that the 2005 National Defense Strategy, for all practical purposes, is a codification of the ideas laid out in the 2001 QDR.

It is vitally important, therefore, that the Congress – and this committee in particular – undertake a very careful and thorough review of the 2005 QDR. In many ways the QDR is the most significant security document this Administration will produce. The 2005 QDR is also particularly significant in the context of the events that have taken place since the 2001 document was published. As many have noted, this is the first wartime QDR. Also, it is the post-Katrina QDR.

The press of current events creates a strong temptation on the part of both those producing the QDR and those who evaluate it to focus on the near-term. This would be a mistake. The single most important lesson of the recent past is that it is difficult to predict the future with certainty.

Another lesson of Afghanistan, Iraq and Katrina is that there are many ways to combine capabilities into an effective force. This is particularly important in light of the circumstances in which the U.S. military will be called on to perform a mission and the range of constraints they are likely to face. Political sensitivities, collateral damage concerns, geographic realities, surprise and lack of time are all constraints with differing impacts on the mission.

A third lesson is that it is not numbers but quality, integration, intelligence, speed and agility that matters in conflict. Jointness works. While this means that redundant capabilities can be reduced it also means that as the individual Services become more dependent on capabilities resident in the others those redundancies may turn out to be vital for the successful operation of the joint force.

In addition, it takes decades to create military capabilities. I am not speaking simply about research and development or procurement of weapons systems and the industrial base to support acquisitions. There is doctrine, operational concepts, tactics. There is organization and training. Eliminate a capability because it does not seem relevant at the moment and it may be nearly impossible to repair the damage once circumstances have changed.

It is for these reasons, uncertainty about the future, the need for flexibility and the importance of a broad mix of forces that the 2005 QDR has continued on the path of the 2001 QDR by taking a capabilities-based approach in its force assessments.

Although I support a capabilities-based approach to the QDR, there is reason for caution. Particularly in view of our tendency to use models to assess the very complex and dynamic environment of force employment, there is a danger that we will come to believe that capabilities can be readily traded and rearranged like baseball cards to create the perfect fantasy force. Not all capabilities are equal. Some exert a disproportionate influence on adversaries beyond any measure of tons of ordinance delivered or targets serviced.

I am very concerned about the concept of “overmatch” that has apparently crept into the QDR methodology. Overmatch in QDR terms means excess. What they are talking about are military advantages, both strategic and operational, that have been and remain central to the ability of U.S. forces to shape the strategic environment in ways conducive to our interests and, when necessary, fight in a manner of our own choosing.

An example of the problem inherent in the concept of overmatch is U.S. tactical air power. Air dominance is the sine qua non of success in modern military operations. Without absolute control of the air operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom would have been quite different, if they could have been pursued at all. Without air dominance, the U.S. military can do nothing else. Once air dominance is achieved, the full weight of U.S. air assets can be fully applied as a joint capability. Furthermore, tactical air airpower is a fungible asset. It can transition seamlessly from establishing air dominance to interdicting hostile forces, to providing air and missile defenses and conducting close air support.

So-called overmatch capabilities were created and sustained because they were and remain absolutely vital to DoD’s ability to achieve its strategic objectives and to engage in conflicts in a manner we prefer. Overmatch capabilities can dissuade potential adversaries from acquiring certain capabilities or channel their acquisitions in directions we find less threatening. An excellent example of this is the fleet of nuclear attack

submarines created during the Cold War. For years U.S. and NATO planners worried about the threat that the Soviet submarine fleet would pose to the trans-Atlantic shipping lanes in the event of hostilities. The United States engaged in a competitive strategy, matching our strength against their weakness, our SSNs against their ASW. The Navy deployed its superior submarine capability, its overmatch, in Northern waters to threaten the Soviet fleet at home. The Soviet reaction was to pull back, spending enormous effort to protect bastions that we never planned to attack.

Clearly, overmatch was a good thing in this instance. Moreover, I doubt that existing models and analytic tools can adequately reflect the many ways that a capabilities overmatch can be applied to deter, dissuade or defeat an adversary.

I would urge the Committee to look skeptically at any attempts by the QDR to reduce our so-called overmatch. I have spoken about tactical air power. What other capabilities erroneously might be deemed to suffer from overmatch? The SSN force is one. Our advantage in undersea warfare is decisive and, with proper care and investment in both platforms and advanced technologies, will endure for decades to come. Airlift is a third.

Another question that Committee should ask about the QDR is, does it sustain and further the transformation of the U.S. military. The tendency at present is to shortchange transformation in order to support the current demands of the war fighters. While this is appropriate for current planning, the QDR is about the long-term.

It is important to recognize the revolution that has already happened. Looking across the expanse of U.S. military capabilities there are great changes underway that will ensure an effective and even superior military capability for decades to come. The concern that I would like to communicate to you is the danger of allowing the trajectory DoD is on to be shaped by near-term concerns and demands in such a way that would threaten the future force.

The United States Army is fighting a war and simultaneously transforming. It needs to be supported in both endeavors. It should not have to choose between resetting the current force and transforming to a future one. The Army is making investments in capabilities such as the Stryker that will support a campaign-quality force that is expeditionary, flexible and joint. It also means a range of C4ISR capabilities to enhance battle space knowledge and connectivity to the rest of the Joint Force. It includes the restructuring of Army aviation, which will result in more than 1,000 new platforms and new programs such as the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter and Light Utility Helicopter. Finally, it includes a new logistics system that will reduce the in-theater footprint while simultaneously enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the supply chain.

I would note that the Marine Corps is pursuing a similar path with its investment in the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) and the V-22 Osprey, in particular. Taken together, these capabilities will enable the Marine Corps to operate and exploit

advantages, dare I say overmatch capabilities, in C4ISR, lift, intelligence and tactical mobility.

The Army's plan is designed to establish a balance between current and future investments in such a way as to provide capabilities with which the Joint Force can meet any of the possible threats envisioned in the QDR. The elements in this plan – resetting the force, going to a modular design, rebalancing the Active/Reserve mix, stabilizing the force, restructuring Army aviation, transforming logistics and revolutionizing training – form an integrated, even synergistic solution set. To eliminate or significantly change any one element could cause the entire program to unravel. Completing the full set of reforms is necessary if the Nation is to have an Army for the range of missions and severity of threats that are likely to arise in the future.

The QDR process also needs to recognize and account for the Army's growing dependence on joint capabilities. To make itself lighter and more expeditionary, the Army is reducing its organic fire support capabilities and will rely more on air and missile assets from the other Services. The Army is also dependent on the Air Force to provide air dominance, theater-level signal and imagery intelligence and adequate lift. The QDR must ensure that in its effort to balance risk it does not undermine the Army's efforts to become a more effective part of the Joint Force.

The transformation of the National Guard must also be protected against the natural reaction to Katrina which is to focus it more on the homeland security mission. The National Guard, particularly the Army Guard, is transforming from strategic reserve into an operational force. If the United States is to remain a world power there is no other choice but to change the role of the National Guard. General Blum and the Guard Bureau are doing an excellent job of restructuring the Guard so that it can meet both its overseas and homeland commitments.

The Air Force is considered by many analysts to be the Service most likely to be reduced as a result of the QDR. There is the erroneous belief that airpower is not relevant to homeland security or the global war on terrorism and that the likelihood of conventional conflict has diminished to the point that many of the classical attributes of air power are no longer relevant. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Moreover, the Air Force transformation program promises to enhance its capabilities to support joint force requirements and create a future force capable of meeting a wider range of threats. Some of these future capabilities, such as the new Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) aircraft, also could provide critically needed capabilities for homeland security.

I have already spoken of some of the key capabilities of the Air Force that need to be protected as enablers of the joint force and tools for shaping the strategic environment. So let me just note few additional capabilities that should be given attention in the QDR. The first is space. Space provides the domain in which to deploy the kinds of long-dwell intelligence assets needed for the war on terror, countering WMD threats and dealing with future conventional adversaries. The high ground is also critical for the conduct of

network-centric operations. The value of near-space should be carefully examined to augment or even replace some higher-orbiting assets

The future of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) should figure prominently in any QDR. Whether it is Air Force systems such as the Global Hawk, or those such as the Eagle Eye and Scan Eagle that will support the Army and Marine Corps, UAVs are becoming ubiquitous. In fact, the QDR should not discuss UAVs alone but autonomous platforms that could take on the role of a future strategic bomber, loiter over the battlefield to deliver munitions or even provide resupply to forward deployed units.

The future of the Navy is directly tied to its ability to maintain its strategic advantages while addressing the challenges posed by new threats. Naval forces are extremely flexible. These advantages are power projection from the sea, missile defense, undersea warfare and sea control. If lost, none of these could be easily replaced.

I would note the role that Naval units played in providing rapid relief during last year's tsunami in Southeast Asia and the current role of the Navy in supporting Katrina relief efforts. Investments in Naval forces provide benefits well beyond their combat power.

I would sum up my view of the principles that should guide the QDR and inform your assessment of it this way. First, do no harm. Second, preserve enduring U.S. military advantages. Third, protect critical transformational programs that are the future of a strong U.S. military.

I would like to conclude with a few observations. The military dimension of the war effort cannot bear the burden of inadequate strategies and ineffective execution of plans in the other dimensions of this multifaceted conflict. The drive for a rapid and decisive outcome on the battlefield must not be motivated by the need to balance a failure to adequately explain the nature of the current conflict or otherwise sustain the public's will to pursue it.

The role of the U.S. military going forward has to be appreciated against the backdrop of what is already a twenty-year conflict. The military, at present, is struggling to stem the tide that has been flowing in favor of global terrorism since the early 1990s. The military is recapturing territory lost to terrorism. It is also seeking to prevent the recrudescence of the threat in potential sanctuaries. The United States has yet to reach the tipping point that will mark a qualitative shift in the struggle in its favor.

At the same time, while the future is uncertain, the sources of conflict are not. Resource issues, new ideologies, struggles for self-determination, historic rivalries and the rise of new powers are all likely to provide fuel for international tensions and future conflicts. Despite what some argue, the rise of terrorism on the international stage has not led to a diminution of the power of nation states. Indeed, one of the most serious potential threats of the future may be the nation state allied with terrorist organizations. Such a

threat will require robust capabilities for homeland security, counter-terrorism and conventional war.