



# Quadrennial Defense Review 2010: Overview and Implications for National Security Planning

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May 17, 2010

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

[www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)

R41250

## Summary

On February 1, 2010, the Defense Department released a report on the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), a legislatively mandated assessment of defense strategy and priorities. The review is the sixth full scale assessment of U.S. defense policy since the end of the Cold War, beginning with the 1990 Base Force analysis and the 1993 Bottom-Up Review and continuing with QDRs completed in 1997, 2001, 2006, and 2010. These official reviews have been supplemented by assessments of independently chartered panels.

The four QDRs reflect an ongoing evolution of strategic thinking away from planning for smaller versions of Cold War-era conventional conflicts, on the model of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and toward planning to cope with a much more diverse array of challenges. By the time of the 2006 and 2010 QDRs, the basic strategic assumptions guiding military planning had shifted dramatically. One premise is that no future adversary is likely to confront U.S. conventional, Cold War-era military capabilities directly. Instead, any foe, ranging from violent, radical non-state terrorist groups to a technologically advanced near-peer competitor, will try to exploit weaknesses in U.S. defenses through asymmetric means. A related premise is that the notion of a spectrum of conflict, ranging from unsophisticated insurgents or terrorists at the low end to sophisticated national armies at the high end, is becoming blurred, with “low-end” terrorist groups using advanced technologies and near-peer competitors likely to use indirect means of attack.

The 2010 QDR concludes that changes in the global security environment require some adjustments in the balance of investments among elements of the U.S. military force posture. It argues for an emphasis, first of all, on prevailing in current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and against Al Qaeda elsewhere. It revises force planning to put diverse, overlapping scenarios, including long-duration stability operations and defense of the homeland, on a par with major regional conflicts in assessing the size and composition of the force. And, it calls for new investments in critical joint missions, including countering “anti-access strategies” aimed at defeating U.S. power projection forces; building the capacity of partner states; and ensuring access to cyberspace. The 2010 report also proposes measures to reform institutional procedures that it sometimes describes as “relics of the Cold War,” including acquisition, security assistance, and export control processes.

Critiques of the current and earlier QDRs raise a number of issues: Is the review overly constrained by budget limitations? Does it make sufficiently disciplined choices among the many priorities it cites? Does the focus on current conflicts come too much at the expense of preparations for future conflicts? Does the review realistically assess threats from Russia and China? A fundamental issue is whether the quite radical reassessment of global security challenges in recent QDRs has been matched by sufficiently far-reaching changes in the composition of the force.

A question for future QDRs may be whether the reviews should be tasked to address broader security policy issues as a means of assessing defense plans in a more complete context. Potential policy issues to address include when to use military force, the effects of global financial trends on U.S. defense plans, the effects of domestic economic and budget trends on defense resources, the evolution of alliances to reflect post-Cold War era challenges, the prospects for more cooperative global security rules and institutions to enhance security, and the integration of U.S. defense planning with broader, interagency policies to address global trends.

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## I. Introduction

On February 1, 2010, the Defense Department released a report on the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review,<sup>1</sup> a legislatively mandated assessment of defense strategy, force structure, weapons programs, and operations designed to guide defense programming, operational planning, and budgets projected as far as twenty years ahead. The 2009-2010<sup>2</sup> exercise is the fourth Quadrennial Defense Review carried out under that name and the sixth comprehensive reexamination of U.S. defense policy since the end of the Cold War. It was preceded by earlier QDRs completed in February 2006, September 2001, and May 1997; by the Bottom-Up Review conducted at the beginning of the Clinton Administration and completed in May 1993; and by the Base Force analysis carried out by the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the George H.W. Bush Administration in 1990 and described in congressional testimony in 1991.<sup>3</sup> These official reassessments have been supplemented by reviews conducted by independently chartered panels, including the 1995 Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, the 1997 National Defense Panel that followed the 1997 QDR, and the 1998-1999 Commission on National Security/21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The 2010 QDR was formally conducted from April 2009, when Secretary of Defense Robert Gates issued guidance on the main tasks of the exercise,<sup>4</sup> through the writing and release of the report on the review on February 1. The QDR report, though quite extensive, is not the main result of the process. Officials who have participated in the review say, rather, that its value lies in having the senior leadership of the Department systematically assess defense strategy, force planning, and programs with a relatively long view ahead.

Ultimately, the review resulted in concrete decisions on a broad range of program and policy matters. Much of the 2010 QDR report is devoted to listing initiatives intended to improve capabilities to accomplish critical missions. The QDR also resolved a number of policy matters that have been ongoing topics of discussion within the Defense Department. This CRS report provides an overview of the 2010 QDR, partly with a view toward putting matters the QDR addresses into the context of the ongoing evolution of defense policy, and partly in an effort to identify issues for future QDRs or for a broader review of national security strategy.

## Preview of Key Issues

A recurring question in assessments of the QDR process is to what extent successive QDRs have helped the Defense Department to keep up with changes in the international security environment. Previous QDRs have often been criticized because it has been difficult to trace significant changes in defense policy to the results of each review. If, the critics argue, one of

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 2010, online at [http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR\\_as\\_of\\_12Feb10\\_1000.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/qdr/images/QDR_as_of_12Feb10_1000.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> The current QDR is often referred to, particularly in legislation, as the “2009 QDR,” since it was carried out mainly in calendar year 2009. QDRs are more commonly identified by the date on which the final report was released, and this CRS report follows that precedent.

<sup>3</sup> See the Bibliography appended to this report for citations and links.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Defense Press Release, “DOD Begins QDR, NPR Processes,” April 23, 2009, online at <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=12627>; and Department of Defense, “2010 QDR Terms of Reference Fact Sheet,” April 27, 2009, online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/d20090429qdr.pdf>.

Congress's goals in mandating quadrennial reviews was to encourage a more radical rethinking of defense policy, it is hard to see it in the results of each successive QDR. A contrary view is that, to the extent successive QDRs have redefined global security challenges, changes in force planning in the future may eventually catch up with the evolution of defense strategy.

In describing trends in global security, the new QDR differs quite significantly from QDRs prior to 2006, and the 2010 QDR breaks some new ground even compared to its immediate predecessor. As a guide to force programming, however, the outcome of the 2010 QDR appears rather conservative. Through FY2015, the QDR anticipates only minimal changes in force structure, and it does not lay out a force structure beyond the end of the current six-year defense planning period at all.

### **Changing Perspectives on the Global Security Environment**

Looking at the cumulative results of post-Cold War defense reviews, beginning with the 1990 Base Force analysis and the 1993 Bottom-Up Review and culminating in the 2010 QDR, the net effect has been a substantial change in the conceptual underpinnings of U.S. defense strategy. In retrospect, the outcome of the 1990 and 1993 reviews was mainly to provide a rationale for not dismantling U.S. military capabilities after the Cold War, as the nation had done following World War I and World War II, and, many argue, after the Vietnam conflict. Both the Base Force analysis and the Bottom-Up Review argued for maintaining essentially a scaled down version of Cold War-era forces. Following the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Bottom-Up Review differed from the Base Force analysis in that it did not identify a requirement to be able to reconstitute forces in the event of a renewed threat. Neither provided a basis for substantially redirecting priorities or for making major changes in the organization of the military services.

Reviews at least since the 1995 report of the Commission on Roles and Missions, however, have progressively expanded the range of challenges for which planners see a need to prepare. The four QDRs, in 1997, 2001, 2006, and 2010, can perhaps best be seen as snapshots of an ongoing evolution of strategic thinking away from planning for smaller versions of Cold War-era conventional conflicts, on the model of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and toward planning to cope with a much more diverse array of challenges and responsibilities. By the time of the 2006 and 2010 QDRs, the basic strategic assumptions guiding military planning had shifted dramatically. One premise is that no future adversary is likely to confront U.S. conventional, Cold War-era military capabilities directly. Instead, any foe, ranging from violent, radical non-state terrorist groups to a technologically advanced near-peer competitor, will try to exploit weaknesses in U.S. defenses through asymmetric means.

Moreover, even terrorist groups may use advanced technology to carry out attacks, and competing nations might use irregular means to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. So the notion of a spectrum of conflict, ranging from unsophisticated insurgents or terrorists at the low end to sophisticated national armies at the high end, is becoming blurred. As Secretary Gates explained,

the black-and-white distinction between irregular war and conventional war is an outdated model. We must understand that we face a more complex future than that, a future where all conflict will range along a broad spectrum of operations and lethality. Where near-peers will use irregular or asymmetric tactics and non-state actors may have weapons of mass destruction or sophisticated missiles as well as AK-47s and RPGs. This kind of warfare will

require capabilities with the maximum possible flexibility to deal with the widest possible range of conflict.<sup>5</sup>

Planners now discuss “hybrid threats” that combine means of attack across the whole spectrum of conflict in almost any confrontation.<sup>6</sup> The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the spread of cyberwar capabilities further complicate, and, perhaps, multiply the dangers.

A key conclusion of the new QDR is that operations short of a major regional conflict may be at least as demanding, and therefore at least as important in determining the size and composition of the force, as requirements for short-duration, high intensity wars. Operations short of a major regional conflict include what one QDR briefing refers to as “foundational activities,” such as permanent and rotational forward deployments and engagement with other nations to prevent and deter conflict. Homeland defense missions, small-scale peacekeeping operations abroad, and foreign military training activities may also cumulatively require the assignment of a substantial number of troops. The QDR report particularly emphasizes the point that long-duration stability or counter-insurgency operations, even if they involve fewer troops than a major conflict, can be especially demanding. Operations such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan require a very large standing force to provide a sufficient rotation base for deploying forces abroad without overly straining combat units and personnel.

The 2010 QDR concludes that changes in the global security environment require some adjustments in the balance of investments among elements of the U.S. military force posture. It argues for an emphasis, first of all, on prevailing in current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and against Al Qaeda elsewhere. It also elevates maintaining the quality of the all volunteer force to the level of a strategic objective in itself. It puts particular emphasis on managing the impact on military personnel and their families of a long-duration conflict, with repeated rotations of forces abroad. For future planning, it calls for new initiatives in a number of joint mission areas, including homeland defense, countering weapons of mass destruction, the ability to project power into key regions of the globe in the face of challenges to U.S. access, building the capacity of partner nations to defeat terrorism, and means of ensuring access to cyberspace.

## **Key Questions**

At least two key questions follow, however, from the rather radical reassessment of the global security environment in the last two QDRs. The obvious issue is whether new security challenges require not only marginal shifts in the balance among defense programs, but more far-reaching changes in the composition of the force. The 2010 QDR endorses no such major changes in force posture, though it hints that some may become matters of discussion in the future.

A second and perhaps even more fundamental issue is to what extent the QDR should address broader trends in the international security environment that affect the role of military power in

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<sup>5</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, “Remarks by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.,” April 15, 2009, online at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4403>. Secretary Gates made similar remarks on April 16 at the Army War College, and on April 17 at the Naval War College.

<sup>6</sup> The concept of hybrid threats was initially discussed by retired Marine Lt. Col. Frank Hoffman and has since been referred to repeatedly by senior defense officials, including Secretary of Defense Gates. For a discussion, see Frank G. Hoffman, “Hybrid Threats: Reconceptualizing the Evolving Character of Modern Conflict,” Strategic Forum, Institute for National Security Studies, National Defense University, No.240, April 2009.

global affairs and the relationship of military power to other means of U.S. influence. As the QDR report acknowledges, global security relations are being reshaped not just by novel threats, but by many other developments, including the shift of global financial resources to Asia; the growing influence of new powers including the BRIC states, Brazil, Russia, India, and China; the global reach of non-state actors; the further weakening of already fragile states; lowered barriers to acquisition of dangerous technologies, particularly weapons of mass destruction; potential resource scarcity; climate change; demographic trends; and the rapidity with which new diseases can spread. The QDR report discusses how some of these developments may affect defense planning, but it does not generally explain defense planning in the context of broader policies needed to adapt to these trends.

Moreover, the QDR report affirms that many global security challenges, including proliferation and terrorism, can only be addressed through multilateral cooperation, but the report discusses collective security largely by reaffirming the value of current regional relationships rather than by discussing the potential value of expanded cooperative security arrangements. Even if the latest QDR ultimately leads to significant changes in the U.S. defense posture, a key question is whether the QDR fully reflects the implications of the global environment that it identifies or whether a more comprehensive assessment of national security policy is necessary.

## **Outline of this Report**

This CRS report (1) cites the legislative mandate for the QDR and reviews legislative requirements for a number of related reports; (2) outlines the results of the 2010 QDR; (3) identifies what is new in the 2010 review and discusses how thinking on key matters has evolved; (4) reviews some common criticisms of the 2010 QDR and of the QDR process; (5) discusses whether the quite radical changes in the nature of conflict that the 2006 and 2010 QDRs describe have been reflected in sufficiently far-reaching changes in defense plans and programs, and (6) concludes with a discussion of matters that future QDRs—or a more extensive interagency study—might address more fully as a means of putting defense planning into the context of a broader perspective on U.S. national security.

Readers interested only in a substantive discussion of the QDR, or who are already familiar with the legislative background of the QDR and with the statutory requirements for related reports on nuclear, missile defense, and space policy, may want to skip over Section II, that provides a detailed discussion of statutory requirements, and begin with Section III, that provides an overview of the QDR. Those familiar with the QDR report may want to skim Section III and focus more on Sections IV, V, VI, and VII, that together constitute a more substantive discussion of policy issues, beginning with an assessment of what is new in the 2010 QDR. This CRS report sometimes restates certain key points in order to allow readers with extensive background on the QDR to focus on sections of most interest to them without having to review matters with which they are familiar.



## II. Legislative Mandate for the QDR

Under current law,<sup>7</sup> the Secretary of Defense is required every four years, in the year following a presidential election, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to “conduct a comprehensive examination ... of ... national defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program and policies of the United States with a view toward determining and expressing the defense strategy of the United States and establishing a defense program for the next 20 years.” This exercise, known as the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), is required

(1) to delineate a national defense strategy consistent with the most recent National Security Strategy prescribed by the President pursuant to section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 404a);

(2) to define sufficient force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program ... required to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy;

(3) to identify (A) the budget plan that would be required to provide sufficient resources to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk, and (B) any additional resources (beyond those programmed in the current future-years defense program) required to achieve such a level of risk; and

(4) to make recommendations that are not constrained to comply with the budget submitted to Congress by the President pursuant to section 1105 of title 31.

The statute further requires that the Secretary provide a report on the QDR to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees no later than the following February, when the President’s annual budget is due to be delivered to Congress.<sup>8</sup> The report is required to address 16 specific topics, plus “any other matters the Secretary considers appropriate.” The topics required to be addressed, quoted in full, include:<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The current QDR requirement is in Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 118. Congress originally required a QDR in the FY1997 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 104-201, and made the requirement permanent as a part of Title 10 in the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 106-65. For the current full text of the requirement, see **Appendix A**.

<sup>8</sup> The FY1997 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), P.L. 104-201, required that a QDR be conducted in 1997 and that the Secretary provide a report by May 15, 1997, unless the Presidential election in 1996 results in the selection of a new President, in which case the deadline, and other deadlines in the legislation, would be extended by three months. The FY2000 NDAA, P.L. 106-65, required a report on the QDR “not later than September 30 of the year in which the review is conducted.” The FY2003 NDAA, P.L. 107-314, amended the statute to require a report “in the year following the year in which the review is conducted, but not later than the date on which the President submits the budget for the next fiscal year to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31.” 31 USC 1105(a) requires the budget to be submitted by the first Monday in February.

<sup>9</sup> The FY1997 NDAA, P.L. 104-201, specified most of these topics to be addressed in the original 1997 QDR. The FY2000 NDAA, P.L. 106-65 added topic 2, requiring a definition of U.S. national security interests, and expanded what is now topic 4 to include statements regarding force readiness and regarding levels of engagement in operations other than war and smaller-scale contingencies. The FY2003 NDAA, P.L. 107-314, added what is now topic 15, regarding the role of the Coast Guard. The FY2007 NDAA, P.L. 109-364 added what is now topic 9, regarding the type and number of specific platforms, and topic, 16 regarding homeland defense and civil support missions.

- (1) The results of the review, including a comprehensive discussion of the national defense strategy of the United States, the strategic planning guidance, and the force structure best suited to implement that strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk.
- (2) The assumed or defined national security interests of the United States that inform the national defense strategy defined in the review.
- (3) The threats to the assumed or defined national security interests of the United States that were examined for the purposes of the review and the scenarios developed in the examination of those threats.
- (4) The assumptions used in the review, including assumptions relating to—
  - (A) the status of readiness of United States forces;
  - (B) the cooperation of allies, mission-sharing and additional benefits to and burdens on United States forces resulting from coalition operations;
  - (C) warning times;
  - (D) levels of engagement in operations other than war and smaller-scale contingencies and withdrawal from such operations and contingencies; and
  - (E) the intensity, duration, and military and political end-states of conflicts and smaller-scale contingencies.
- (5) The effect on the force structure and on readiness for high-intensity combat of preparations for and participation in operations other than war and smaller-scale contingencies.
- (6) The manpower and sustainment policies required under the national defense strategy to support engagement in conflicts lasting longer than 120 days.
- (7) The anticipated roles and missions of the reserve components in the national defense strategy and the strength, capabilities, and equipment necessary to assure that the reserve components can capably discharge those roles and missions.
- (8) The appropriate ratio of combat forces to support forces (commonly referred to as the “tooth-to-tail” ratio) under the national defense strategy, including, in particular, the appropriate number and size of headquarters units and Defense Agencies for that purpose.
- (9) The specific capabilities, including the general number and type of specific military platforms, needed to achieve the strategic and warfighting objectives identified in the review.
- (10) The strategic and tactical air-lift, sea-lift, and ground transportation capabilities required to support the national defense strategy.
- (11) The forward presence, pre-positioning, and other anticipatory deployments necessary under the national defense strategy for conflict deterrence and adequate military response to anticipated conflicts.
- (12) The extent to which resources must be shifted among two or more theaters under the national defense strategy in the event of conflict in such theaters.

(13) The advisability of revisions to the Unified Command Plan as a result of the national defense strategy.

(14) The effect on force structure of the use by the armed forces of technologies anticipated to be available for the ensuing 20 years.

(15) The national defense mission of the Coast Guard.

(16) The homeland defense and support to civil authority missions of the active and reserve components, including the organization and capabilities required for the active and reserve components to discharge each such mission.

(17) Any other matter the Secretary considers appropriate.

The FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 110-181, enacted in January, 2008, also requires the next QDR, i.e., the one due in February 2010, to

examine the capabilities of the armed forces to respond to the consequences of climate change, in particular, preparedness for natural disasters from extreme weather events and other missions the armed forces may be asked to support inside the United States and overseas.

The same provision requires the national defense strategy and the national security strategy completed after January 2008

(A) to assess the risks of projected climate change to current and future missions of the armed forces;

(B) to update defense plans based on these assessments, including working with allies and partners to incorporate climate mitigation strategies, capacity building, and relevant research and development; and

(C) to develop the capabilities needed to reduce future impacts.

The national security strategy that the law refers to is required to be prepared annually by the White House. The national defense strategy that the law refers to is required by the original Quadrennial Defense Review statute as part of each QDR (see below for a further discussion).

## **Additional Reports Related to the QDR**

In addition to the QDR, Congress has established a substantial number of other reporting requirements on national security policy for the Defense Department and for other agencies. Amendments to the QDR statute require an assessment of the QDR by an independent panel, a Government Accountability Office (GAO) review of the extent to which the QDR fulfills some aspects of its statutory guidance, and additional DOD reports on the force structure analysis carried out during the QDR and on overseas basing plans. Other legislation requires that the White House prepare a National Security Strategy report on which the QDR is to base a statement of national defense strategy—in practice, the Defense Department released separate National Defense Strategy documents in 2005 and 2008. Congress has added additional requirements for separate reports on missile defense, nuclear weapons, and space policy, and it has required the Department of Homeland Security to carry out a Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and the Department of State to conduct a Quadrennial Development and Diplomacy Review.

## **Associated Reports Required by QDR Legislation**

In addition to the report on the QDR, the QDR statute has been amended to require four associated reports.

- Concurrent with delivery of the QDR report, the Secretary of Defense is required to provide the congressional defense committees with a classified annex describing the analyses used to determine the military force structure needed to carry out the defense strategy and any changes from the previous quadrennial defense review in minimum requirements for major military capabilities. This annex has been delivered to the appropriate congressional committees.
- Within 90 days of the report's release, the Government Accountability Office is tasked to deliver a report on the extent to which the QDR complies with the statutory requirement in 10 U.S. Code 118, subsection (d) that directs the QDR to address 16 specific topics (the legislative language identifying these topics is quoted in full in the following section of this CRS report). GAO released the required report on April 30, 2010.<sup>10</sup>
- Also within 90 days of delivery of the QDR report, the Secretary of Defense is required to provide the congressional defense committees with a report detailing how the review will affect the status of overseas base closure and realignment plans, the development and execution of master plans for overseas military deployments, and any recommendations for additional closures or realignments of military installations outside of the United States.
- In addition, an independent panel, with members selected by the Secretary of Defense and by the chairs and ranking minority members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, is established to carry out an assessment of the QDR, with an interim report due within 90 days of the release of the QDR—i.e., by May 1, 2010—and a final report due by July 15. The independent commission is tasked to assess “assumptions, strategy, findings, and risks” in the report on the QDR; to conduct an independent review of alternative force structures; and to compare the cost of alternative forces with the cost of the defense program recommended by the QDR.<sup>11</sup> The statute specifically directs the independent panel to “include analyses of the trends, asymmetries, and concepts of operations that characterize the military balance with potential adversaries, focusing on the strategic approaches of possible opposing forces.”

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Quadrennial Defense Review: 2010 Report Addressed Many but Not All Required Items*, GAO Report GAO-10-575R, April 30, 2010, online at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10575r.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> The appointment of an independent panel following each QDR was required by the FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 109-364. The FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 111-84, revised the composition and tasks of the independent panel following the 2009-2010 QDR to include congressionally appointed members and to address additional matters. These changes apply to the 2009-2010 QDR only.

## **National Security Strategy, National Military Strategy, and National Defense Strategy Reports**

### *White House National Security Strategy Report*

The QDR statute stipulates that “each quadrennial defense review shall be conducted so as—(1) to delineate a national defense strategy consistent with the most recent National Security Strategy prescribed by the President pursuant to section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 404a).” The requirement for the President to issue a National Security Strategy report was established by the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, P.L. 99-433.<sup>12</sup> The statute requires the White House to issue a report within 150 days of the beginning of a new Administration and annually thereafter.

In practice, except for the first National Security Strategy report, which was published in 1987, no Administration has met the deadline for issuing an initial report, and the requirement for annual reports has not always been followed. From 1987 to 2000, the Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Clinton Administrations submitted reports in each year except 1989 and 1992. During the George W. Bush Administration, the White House produced two national security strategy statements, one in September 2002 and a second in March 2006.<sup>13</sup> The Obama Administration has not yet completed its initial report, though preparation of the National Security Strategy was carried out in parallel with the QDR, and a report is expected to be released soon.

### *National Military Strategy Report*

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, prepared reports on the National Military Strategy of the United States in 1995 and again in 1997, though there was no legislative requirement for it.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, the FY2004 National Defense Authorization Act established a permanent requirement for the Chairman of Joint Chiefs to prepare a biennial report, due on February 15 of each even-numbered year, “containing the results of a comprehensive examination of the national military strategy.”<sup>15</sup> The report is required to delineate a national military strategy consistent with the most recent National Security Strategy and Quadrennial Defense Review, and to include a description of the strategic environment; regional threats; threats posed by terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and asymmetric challenges; U.S. military

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<sup>12</sup> For the full text of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, see [http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=2&ved=0CA8QFjAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Facquisition.navy.mil%2Fcontent%2Fdownload%2F5326%2F24165%2Ffile%2Fpubl%252099-433%2520Goldwater-Nichols01Oct1986.pdf&ei=1z-eS5LEMIP78AbA-fs7Cg&usg=AFQjCNF6rXMFZkKAarDxB8\\_71wLpNNZT3Q&sig2=V0kToaR1PiIjsKBojxoDYQ](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=2&ved=0CA8QFjAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Facquisition.navy.mil%2Fcontent%2Fdownload%2F5326%2F24165%2Ffile%2Fpubl%252099-433%2520Goldwater-Nichols01Oct1986.pdf&ei=1z-eS5LEMIP78AbA-fs7Cg&usg=AFQjCNF6rXMFZkKAarDxB8_71wLpNNZT3Q&sig2=V0kToaR1PiIjsKBojxoDYQ).

<sup>13</sup> The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002 online at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/nss.pdf>; and The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 16, 2006, online at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> General John M. Shalikashvili, *National Military Strategy: A Strategy of Flexible and Selective Engagement*, Department of Defense, February 1995, online at [http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nms\\_feb95.htm](http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nms_feb95.htm); General John M. Shalikashvili, *National Military Strategy, 1997: Shape, Respond, Prepare Now—A Military Strategy for a New Era*, Department of Defense, 1997, online at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nms/>.

<sup>15</sup> FY2004 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 108-136, November 24, 2003, Section 903. The requirement is codified as Subsection 153(d) of Title 10 U.S. Code. Section 153 delineates the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

objectives; strategy that contributes to meeting the objectives; an assessment of the adequacy of forces to successfully execute the strategy; and an assessment of allied contributions. As part of the review, the Chairman is also required to assess the risks in executing the strategy, and to report the assessment, through the Secretary of Defense, to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. The first subsequent report, dated 2004, was publicly released in March 2005, along with a National Defense Strategy report prepared by the Secretary of Defense.<sup>16</sup>

### ***National Defense Strategy Required as Part of the QDR***

A statement of U.S. national defense strategy is not required as a separate document. The only statutory requirement is the mandate that the QDR “delineate a national defense strategy” and that the report on the QDR include “a comprehensive discussion of the national defense strategy of the United States.” The first two QDR reports contained statements of defense strategy. In 2005, however, the Defense Department released a separate National Defense Strategy document, which served as a basis for the 2006 QDR.<sup>17</sup> DOD has since continued the practice, releasing a revised National Security Strategy statement in June 2008 in advance of the 2009 review process that concluded with the 2010 QDR report. Though it was prepared during the Bush Administration, the 2008 National Defense Strategy (NDS) articulated themes that were reflected in the strategic priorities of the 2009-2010 QDR, though with some significant changes in emphasis.

DOD officials have said that the absence of a new National Security Strategy statement was not a significant constraint in preparing the 2010 QDR, in part because the reappointment of Robert Gates as Secretary of Defense provided continuity in defense planning and in part because the White House, through the National Security Staff, was consulted at every stage of the review process. In the absence of a new National Security Strategy document, guidance in carrying out the QDR was drawn from DOD’s National Defense Strategy, which was published in June 2008.<sup>18</sup>

The extent to which the 2010 QDR breaks new ground in defining strategic objectives and in identifying critical missions is discussed later in this report. This report also discusses at some length whether future QDRs might benefit from a broader discussion of global security policy as a means of putting defense policy into a more complete context. One question is whether the National Security Strategy, though cited in law as a foundation for the QDR, is timely enough, or detailed enough as a statement of policy to provide a full perspective on the role of military power as an element of national security policy.

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<sup>16</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Richard B. Myers, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America: A Strategy for Today, A Vision for Tomorrow, 2004*, Department of Defense, March, 2005, online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf>. For an announcement of the release, see Department of Defense News Release, “Department of Defense Releases the National Defense and the National Military Strategies,” March 18, 2005, online at <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=8318>.

<sup>17</sup> For the 2005 document, see U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, March 2005, online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, June 2008, online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/2008%20National%20Defense%20Strategy.pdf>.

## **Nuclear Posture, Missile Defense Policy, and Space Posture Reports**

In addition to the national security strategy report and to the four reports that are directly associated with the QDR, separate statutes require the Defense Department and other agencies to prepare three additional reports addressing specific aspects of U.S. defense and security policy in more depth, including—

- *A Nuclear Posture Review*, which is required to discuss the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. military strategy, the number and composition of nuclear delivery systems required to implement U.S. strategy, and the nuclear weapons production capabilities and warhead stockpiles needed to support U.S. policy. The report was required to be delivered concurrently with the report on the QDR, was then delayed until March 1, and was finally released on April 6, 2010.<sup>19</sup>
- *A Ballistic Missile Defense Review*, which is mandated to assess missile defense strategy and objectives, missile threats, the process for determining missile defense requirements, and standards for assessing the military utility, operational effectiveness, suitability, and survivability of U.S. missile defense systems. A report on the review was required by January 31, 2010, and was released along with the QDR report on February 1.<sup>20</sup>
- *A Space Posture Review*, which is required, first, to define requirements and objectives for space situational awareness, space control, space superiority, force enhancement, space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and the integration of space- and ground-based equipment; second, to describe planned acquisition programs related to these objectives; third, address future systems required to meet requirements; and, fourth, to assess the effect of the space policy on proliferation of weapons capable of targeting objects in space or objects on Earth from space. The report was due by December 1, 2009, but has been delayed, and officials now expect to complete it in the fall of 2010.<sup>21</sup>

While DOD addresses the results of these studies in separate reports, DOD carried out its work on them in parallel with work on the QDR, and officials say that work on each is reflected in the results of the QDR and that the QDR, in turn, informed each of them. The fact that the Nuclear Posture Review and the Space Posture Review were delayed is reflected in the QDR as well. The QDR report, for example, discusses the Administration’s intent to consult with allies about “tailored, regional deterrence architectures” combining forward presence, conventional military capabilities, missile defense, and a “continued commitment to extend our nuclear deterrent.” The QDR report asserts that this tailored deterrence will “make possible a reduced role

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<sup>19</sup> Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 6, 2010; available online at <http://www.defense.gov/npr/docs/2010%20Nuclear%20Posture%20Review%20Report.pdf>. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review was required by Section 1070 of the FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 110-181, January 28, 2008. Previous NPRs were conducted in 1994 and 2002.

<sup>20</sup> The BMD Review was required by Section 234 of the FY2009 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 110-417, October 14, 2008. The BMD report was released along with the report on the QDR on February 1, 2010. Links to the report on the review and associated material are available online at <http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/>. The report on the review, U.S. Department of Defense, *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*, February 2010, is online at [http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630\\_for%20web.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> The space posture review is required by Section 913 of the FY2009 Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 110-417, October 14, 2008.

for nuclear weapons in our national security strategy.<sup>22</sup> But it defers any detailed discussion of the rationale for that conclusion to the Ballistic Missile Defense Review and the Nuclear Posture Review.

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<sup>22</sup> 2010 QDR Report, p. 14.



### **III. Overview of the 2010 QDR**

The 2010 QDR report begins with a forceful assertion that has become almost a mantra in statements by Secretary of Defense Gates and other senior defense officials for the past couple of years. “[W]e must recognize” says the opening of the Executive Summary, “that first and foremost, the United States is a nation at war.”

That precept is echoed throughout the report and it is reflected in the two central themes of the review. First, the report says, the Defense Department must rebalance its priorities to put more emphasis on support for forces engaged in current operations; to institutionalize capabilities for counterinsurgency, stability, and counter-terrorism operations; and to counter emerging challenges to U.S. military capabilities. Second, the report asserts, the Defense Department must reform its ways of doing business to be more agile, innovative, and streamlined in adapting to the diverse challenges of a rapidly changing international security environment and in using limited resources efficiently.

#### **Rebalancing Defense Priorities**

On the theme of rebalancing priorities, the report discusses the need to allocate resources and manage risk among four strategic objectives:

- Prevail in today’s wars;
- Prevent and deter conflict;
- Prepare to defeat adversaries and succeed in a wide range of contingencies; and
- Preserve and enhance the all-volunteer force.

Ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, says the report, will continue to determine the size and composition of major elements of the force for several years. Preventing and deterring conflict, and thus avoiding the need to resort to arms, the report says, is a hallmark of U.S. policy, which requires the integrated use of diplomacy and development assistance as well as the maintenance of military forces sufficient to discourage challenges to peace and security. If threats materialize, the report says, U.S. forces must be able prevail in a varying types of operations in multiple theaters in overlapping time frames and against efforts to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. Through war games and simulations designed to stress planned capabilities, the QDR tested the ability of U.S. forces to succeed in a wide range of operations occurring nearly simultaneously. The emphasis on sustaining the all volunteer force by managing overseas rotations, by ensuring adequate health care, and by expanding family support, is identified in the QDR report as a critical objective in itself.

The most extensive discussion in the QDR report is devoted to measures to improve capabilities in six joint mission areas that officials conclude should be the focus of particular attention:

- Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home;
- Conduct counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations;
- Build the capacity of partner states;

- Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments;
- Prevent the proliferation of and counter weapons of mass destruction; and
- Operate effectively in cyberspace.

The identification of such a diverse array of key missions reflects the breadth of challenges that the Defense Department now recognizes as a basis for planning. These mission areas have evolved from similar lists in the 2006 QDR and 2008 National Defense Strategy, but with some key differences that are discussed later in this report.

## **Reforming Defense Business Practices That Are “Relics of the Cold War”**

On a par with the theme of rebalancing investments, the QDR report discusses the need to reform DOD’s ways of doing business. The report identifies six specific areas of reform:

- Reforming Security Assistance
- Reforming How We Buy
- Institutionalizing Rapid Acquisition Capability
- Strengthening the Industrial Base
- Reforming the U.S. Export Control System
- Crafting a Strategic Approach to Climate and Energy

The report’s discussion of reform echoes to a considerable degree its treatment of the need for forces to be flexible enough to adapt to a new and rapidly evolving variety of threats. Similarly, the report says, DOD’s business practices need to be redesigned to adapt more quickly and flexibly to rapidly changing requirements.

**Security Assistance:** In providing security assistance to foreign partners, the report says, current processes reflect a Cold War-era framework in which the goal was to assist allies in modernizing their long-term military capabilities in a manner that would reinforce cooperative planning and encourage the adoption of common technologies. Officials complain that a Cold War-era programming and budgeting cycle, that takes two years or more to reallocate resources, is not responsive enough to keep up with the pace of global change or flexible enough to provide tools needed to give timely support to allies in combating highly adaptive, immediate threats.<sup>23</sup> The National Security Council has initiated a comprehensive review of security assistance, the report says, and the Administration expects to propose significant statutory revisions when the review is completed. In the mean time, the Defense Department is streamlining its internal processes for managing foreign military sales, and DOD is working with the State Department and the Agency for International Development (USAID) to integrate defense and development assistance and to

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<sup>23</sup> Under Secretary of Defense Michèle Flournoy, Interview on the Charlie Rose Show, PBS, March 27, 2010: “The mechanisms we use to actually build that capacity are all from the Cold War. They’re slow. They’re bureaucratic. They’re unresponsive. They’re meant to deliver large numbers of big platforms over many years, not near term equipment that somebody who’s under attack needs tomorrow.”

use available flexible funding, such as global “train and equip” authorities granted to the Defense Department, to support critical initiatives.

**Acquisition:** Similarly, the weapons acquisition process, the report says, still largely follows Cold War-era practices in which the goal was to maintain an advantage over a technologically advanced enemy that was always assumed to be pursuing new capabilities and that could be over-matched only by remaining at the cutting edge of new technology. New challenges require, instead, a more selective process of establishing requirements based on a more realistic assessment of evolving threats. Moreover, the report says, the acquisition process should ensure that new technology is mature enough to warrant proceeding ahead at each milestone of weapons development. And the process also should be able to respond much more rapidly to new requirements evolving from unexpected developments.

**Rapid Acquisition:** As to rapid acquisition, the Defense Department, the report says, has been able to acquire new capabilities required in current conflicts quickly—counter IED systems, for example, and mine resistant, ambush protected (MRAP) vehicles—only by by-passing the regular budgeting and procurement process. Now, says the report, DOD needs to institutionalize the flexibility to identify new threats, establish requirements for systems able to respond, allocate resources to the new programs, and carry out procurement and fielding of new capabilities rapidly and efficiently.

**Export Controls:** The U.S. system of export controls, the report says, is also “a relic of the Cold War.” It was designed largely to limit Soviet access to advanced technologies with potential military applications at a time when such technologies could be segregated, so some degree at least, from commercial developments. Now, however, the system has become overly complicated, and it “impedes cooperation, technology sharing, and interoperability with allies and partners.” It has become, says the report, “an impediment to U.S. security.” The report says that the Administration will, at some point, propose not just incremental changes in laws and regulations governing high technology exports, but a comprehensive reform of the system with a view toward making necessary limits enforceable without hindering U.S. international competitiveness and cooperation with allies.

**Industrial Base:** This is the first QDR to discuss at any great length measures to strengthen the defense industrial base. Notably, the QDR discussion focuses more on second and third tier producers than on large prime contractors. The discussion also identifies a need to ensure that critical suppliers, including small technologically innovative start-up firms and the large traditional systems integrators, can get access to adequate sources of capital from financial markets.

**Climate Change and Energy Policy:** Finally, the report discusses a strategic approach to climate change and energy policy as part of a defense reform agenda, though both matters have implications that go well beyond means of improving DOD business practices. A discussion of the impact of climate change on the Defense Department is required by law. The FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act included a provision requiring the next White House National Security Strategy report and the next National Defense Strategy, to include a comprehensive discussion of the effects of climate change on DOD facilities, capabilities, and

missions.<sup>24</sup> The 2010 QDR report includes an extensive discussion of climate change that appears to be intended to meet the requirements of the statute.<sup>25</sup>

Intelligence assessments, the report says, conclude that climate change could deepen global poverty, exacerbate water and other resource shortages, further weaken already fragile governments, accelerate the spread of disease, and create more demands for humanitarian and disaster assistance. Climate change, the report says, may multiply the burdens on already fragile societies because regions of the globe likely to be most adversely affected overlap to a large degree with regions that are already resource poor and suffer from poor governance. These likely effects, the report concludes, do not require any fundamental changes in defense planning but, rather, reemphasize the need to be able to respond flexibly to a wide variety of unplanned and to some degree unexpected developments. The report also says that climate change may also affect DOD bases and other facilities, particularly because rising sea levels could threaten a number of major installations.

Energy security is a high priority for the Defense Department, says the report, in part because energy, particularly fuel, is a significant and growing budget cost and, in part because energy supply is a potential source of vulnerability to asymmetric attack. The report says that the Defense Department will focus more effort on improved energy efficiency as a means of increasing the range and endurance of forces in the field and of reducing the need to divert combat forces to protect energy supply lines. The report also points to measures designed to improve the security of energy supplies for key facilities and missions, and the report identifies several efforts to diversify the sources of energy available for military forces.

## **“Strengthening Relationships” with Regional and Intra-Governmental Partners**

An extensive section of the QDR report is devoted to a discussion of U.S. security relationships with foreign nations and of Defense Department cooperation with other U.S. agencies. It includes a region-by-region assessment of shared security interests with other nations, a somewhat more specific region-by-region overview of the U.S. military presence abroad, and a brief discussion of cooperation with other U.S. agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, the State Department, and the Agency for International Development.

The region by region discussion of shared security interests mainly reaffirms the importance of existing alliances and also includes brief, generally positive statements about relations with Russia and China. For the most part, the discussion is quite cursory, and it does not address problematic matters, such as the burden-sharing issues that Secretary Gates and others have raised in NATO or negotiations over bases in Japan.

With regard to Russia, the report cites shared U.S. and Russian interests in countering proliferation and terrorism, mentions arms control negotiations, and promises continued

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<sup>24</sup> See Section 951 of the FY2008 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 110-181, January 28, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> As discussed earlier in this report, a statement of national defense strategy is required by the QDR statute as part of each QDR report. In 2005 and 2008, however, the Defense Department published national defense strategy reports in advance of the 2005-2006 and 2009-2010 QDRs. Since the law requires a national defense strategy statement as part of each QDR report, the requirement that the next national defense strategy include a discussion of climate change should probably be seen as requiring that it be addressed in the 2009-2010 QDR.

discussions on missile defense and about the Arctic. The report also affirms, though without providing any context, that the United States “will continue to engage with Russia’s neighbors as fully independent and sovereign states,” a clear, though not overtly confrontational statement to the effect that Russia should not expect U.S. acquiescence to a separate sphere of influence in what Russians often call the “near abroad.”

With regard to China, the report notes that China’s rising global influence is “one of the most consequential aspects of the evolving strategic landscape;” says that China’s growing military capabilities “could enable it to play a more substantial and constructive role in international affairs;” and affirms, in language similar to that in many official U.S. statements for many years, that “The United States welcomes a strong, prosperous, and successful China that plays a greater global role.” The statement also criticizes China for a lack of transparency about its military development plans and decision-making processes and concludes that this raises “legitimate questions” about China’s future conduct and intentions. It concludes that relations with China must be “multidimensional,” which is as close as the discussion comes to treating China’s growing military capabilities as a potential threat. The report does not mention Taiwan.

In general, the QDR report does not identify particular nations as posing threats to security, nor does it specifically refer to “Islamic” terrorism. The Administration’s approach, rather, is to discuss potential threats in abstract terms, choosing not to say anything—even in a report on defense planning—that could alienate potential support or undermine efforts to ameliorate conflicts and build cooperation.

In similarly general terms, the QDR report also says that defense plans must be coordinated with measures to build multilateral regional security systems. “The presence of U.S. military forces overseas,” says the report, “can be a powerful catalyst for promoting multilateral approaches and regional security architectures that serve both U.S. and partner states’ interests.” Similarly, within the U.S. government, the report says, defense planning must be part of a collaborative policy-making process. “Global defense posture,” the report says, “is a key means of communicating U.S. foreign and security policy and thus must be closely coordinated throughout the national security community.”

In discussing collaboration with other U.S. agencies, the report reaffirms DOD support for greater investments in the capabilities of the State Department and U.S. AID, saying that civilian agencies need to develop the ability to operate alongside military forces in operations abroad. The report agrees that the Defense Department is not the most appropriate agency to build the civilian institutional governance capabilities of foreign partner nations, but also says that it will take more time for U.S. civilian agencies to develop their capacity to take the lead. Similarly, the report says, the Defense Department should generally play a supporting role in responding to domestic security challenges, with the Department of Homeland Security in the lead.

## **Risk Management Framework**

The QDR statute requires the report on the QDR to identify the budget plan required to “provide sufficient resources to execute successfully the full range of missions” called for in the defense strategy at a “low-to-moderate level of risk.” It also directs the Secretary of Defense to assess risk in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and it requires that “That assessment shall define the nature and magnitude of the political, strategic, and military risks associated with executing the missions called for under the national defense strategy.” The statute further requires that the QDR report to Congress include “a comprehensive discussion of the national defense

strategy of the United States, the strategic planning guidance, and the force structure best suited to implement that strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk.” And it requires that, “Upon the completion of each review . . . , the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall prepare and submit to the Secretary of Defense the Chairman’s assessment of the review, including the Chairman’s assessment of risk and a description of the capabilities needed to address such risk.”

## **Risk Assessment in Recent Defense Planning**

The concept of assessing and balancing risks has a long pedigree in defense planning. By its very nature, from the most basic tactical level to the realm of global grand strategy, military planning involves assessing risks. To the extent that resources are not sufficient to provide certainty of success, military plans and operations involve accepting varying degrees risk and deciding whether one course of action is, in view of what is at stake, worth the likely cost in blood and treasure, or is too risky to undertake, or whether another course of action would entail more or less risk.

In setting overall priorities, the Defense Department has long attributed varying degrees of risk to its global plans. For many years until the mid-1980s, the Joint Chiefs appended to each year’s defense program an assessment of what was called the “minimum risk force,” meaning a force large enough and well-equipped enough to be able to accomplish all the mission objectives identified in current defense plans with a minimum risk of failure. Even in the mid-1980s, however, after defense spending had climbed by about 40% above inflation over a five year period, the minimum risk force remained about half again as large, and easily half again as expensive, as the force that was being planned. At that point, the Defense Department stopped assessing the minimum risk force.

Under current law, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is required to submit to the Secretary of Defense an annual assessment of “the nature and magnitude of the strategic and military risks associated with executing the missions called for under the current National Military Strategy.” The Secretary is then required to forward the assessment, with or without comments, to the congressional defense committees.<sup>26</sup> Conclusions of the report, known as the “Chairman’s Risk Assessment,” are often reflected in subsequent congressional testimony by the JCS Chairman and other senior officers, and the report is often reflected in comments by Members of Congress.<sup>27</sup> The Chairman’s Risk Assessment generally focuses on short-term military readiness. In recent years, a recurring theme, reportedly, has been that ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan entail an increased risk in responding to major regional conflicts. Increased risk does not mean that U.S. efforts would fail, but that operations would take longer and casualties would likely be higher than otherwise would be the case.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The “Chairman’s Risk Assessment” is required by Section 153(b) of Title 10 U.S. Code. The requirement was established by Section 1033 of the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 106-65, October 5, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Jason Sherman, “Mullen Sees ‘Elevated Risk’ in Executing National Military Strategy,” *Inside the Navy*, September 29, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> For a recent discussion, see Department of Defense New Transcript, “Media Availability with Secretary Gates en route to Kansas City, Missouri,” May 7, 2010, online at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4621>: “. . . one of the things I go back and forth with on the services is their assessment of risk. The risk isn’t in terms of whether you can accomplish the mission; the risk is in terms of whether you can accomplish the mission in the timeline that the plan calls for. So the risk is to the plan, not getting the job done. And so—but when somebody says there is significant risk, or high risk, if we don’t buy all of these or all of those, what that means is there is risk in achieving the planned mission within the time frame and at a cost that’s been laid out.”

## **Risk Assessment in the 2010 QDR**

To the extent that forces invariably fall short of a the level needed to keep risks to a minimum, DOD planners have to determine where to accept relatively greater risk of failure and where to invest more to reduce unacceptable risks. The 2010 QDR report includes a quite extensive discussion of risk management, following a framework that was first articulated in the 2001 QDR. The report identifies matters that may pose relatively high risks to the Defense Department's ability to accomplish its objectives in four categories:

- Operational risk, which assesses the ability of the force to execute current, planned, and contingency operations successfully with acceptable human and material costs;
- Force management risk, which examines DOD's ability to recruit, retain, train, and equip the All-Volunteer Force in the near term, midterm, and long term;
- Institutional risk, which measures the capacity of DOD management and business practices to plan for, enable, and support the execution of key missions; and
- Future challenges risk, which judges the capacity to execute future missions successfully, and to hedge against shocks, with particular attention given to the ability to field superior capabilities and to deter or defeat emerging threats in the mid- and long-term.

In each of these areas, the report highlights matters that could worsen risks, and it identifies improvements in DOD capabilities and processes that, it says, may be needed to mitigate shortcomings.

**Current operational risk:** To manage current operational risks, the report says, the Department must provide more "enabling" capabilities, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) systems, more vertical lift aircraft, better electronic warfare capabilities, and better cultural and language skills. Limitations on support from allies, the report says, may impose higher risks on U.S. forces, and the United States must build the capacity of indigenous partner states to manage their own security. The report also cites cyberspace is an area of growing danger. Notably, the report does not discuss the extent to which current large-scale operations in Iraq and Afghanistan may limit the availability of forces for other missions and, accordingly, increase risks if a new conflict should arise.

**Force management risk:** To contain force management risk, the report says, DOD must manage the strain on forces imposed by ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the quality of DOD health care is good at present, increasing costs pose a risk in the future. The extensive use of reserve forces as part of the operational rotation base in current operations requires a thorough reexamination of the role of reserve components.

**Institutional risk:** Institutional risk includes the prospect that the acquisition process may be unable to deliver capabilities when needed and at acceptable cost. The acquisition process appears to be especially poorly suited to keep pace with rapid advances in information technology. And the current industrial base, the report says, is focused too narrowly on 20<sup>th</sup> century weapons platforms and may be ill-suited to meet future requirements for competition, innovation, and the rapid acquisition of new capabilities.

**Future challenges risk:** To address the risk associated with future challenges, the report says, the Department must follow through on improvements in capabilities to accomplish key missions identified throughout the QDR report. In addition, the report says, the difficulty of anticipating future threats poses a risk that forces may be unprepared for suddenly appearing new dangers, so the Defense Department must improve the analytic capabilities of the intelligence community and hedge against uncertainty in its force planning. The report notes that developments in science and technology may also make it more difficult for the United States to maintain a competitive advantage across the whole spectrum of defense capabilities. To mitigate such risks, the report says, requires a planning process that addresses not only traditional defense capabilities, but also areas of technology not unique to defense requirements but that may have major effects on security.

Along with this brief, though quite blunt analysis of the four categories of risk identified in the 2001 QDR, the 2010 report adds a discussion of “strategic, military, and political” risk, which the QDR statute specifically mentions. As the report puts it,

strategic risk constitutes the Department’s ability to execute the defense priority objectives in the near term, midterm, and long term in support of national security. Military risk encompasses the ability of U.S. forces to adequately resource, execute, and sustain military operations in the near- to midterm, and the mid- to longer term. In the international context, political risk derives from the perceived legitimacy of our actions and the resulting impact on the ability and will of allies and partners to support shared goals. In the domestic context, political risk relates to public support of national strategic priorities and the associated resource requirements in the near term, midterm, and long term.

The risk management discussion closes by briefly noting that the QDR addressed these matters and concludes that “the Department is positioned to successfully balance overarching strategic, military, and political risk between the near to midterm and the mid- to long term, as well as across the full range of military missions required to protect and advance national interests.”



## **IV. What's New in the 2010 QDR**

The 2010 QDR does not represent a stark break with earlier defense strategy and plans, and it reflects, in particular, a considerable degree of continuity with the 2005 National Defense Strategy, the 2006 QDR, and the 2008 National Defense Strategy, all prepared after the attacks of 9/11 and the beginning of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The 2010 QDR is new in some important ways, however. Most apparently, it reflects Secretary Gates' insistence that prevailing in current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is the first priority in military planning. It also puts an emphasis on support for military personnel and their families, on the premise that the quality of the All-Volunteer Force is an essential pillar of long-term military strength.

### **Deemphasizing Two Major Regional Conflicts in Force Planning**

To the extent the new QDR differs from its predecessors in other ways, the changes mainly reflect the continuing evolution of official strategic thinking away from a focus on smaller, regional versions of a conventional, armor-heavy, high-tech, force-on-force conflict on the model of Cold War conceptions of a war in Europe, and toward planning for a much more varied array of challenges. The QDR does not abandon the requirement, originally laid out in the 1993 Bottom-Up Review, that forces should be able to defeat aggression by conventionally-armed regional powers in two geographically separate theaters occurring nearly simultaneously. The 2010 QDR, however, no longer treats the two-war requirement as the fundamental factor in determining the composition of the force. Rather, as the report explains,

U.S. forces today and in the years to come can be plausibly challenged by a range of threats that extend far beyond the familiar "major regional conflicts" that have dominated U.S. planning since the end of the Cold War. We have learned through painful experience that the wars we fight are seldom the wars that we would have planned.... Because America's adversaries have been adopting a wide range of strategies and capabilities that can be brought to bear against the United States and its forces, allies, and interests, it is no longer appropriate to speak of "major regional conflicts" as the sole or even the primary template for sizing, shaping, and evaluating U.S. forces. Rather, U.S. forces must be prepared to conduct a wide variety of missions under a range of different circumstances.

Secretary Gates explained the decision to deemphasize the two war requirement as a matter of capturing the real-world complexity of current defense planning. As he put it,

[O]ne of the steers that I gave to the folks working on the QDR was that I felt that, for some time, the two-major-theater-of-operations construct was out of date, that we are already in two major operations. What if we should have a homeland disaster? What if we have another encounter? What if we have a Haiti? The world is very much more complex than when the two-MCO concept came together in the early 1990s. And what I wanted to convey was a much more complex environment, in which you may have to do not just two major conflicts, but a broad range of other things, as well, or, perhaps in the future, one of those conflicts and then a number of other contingencies. So I just felt that construct was too confining and did not represent the real world that our country and our military forces are going to face in the future.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Department of Defense Transcript, "DoD News Briefing with Secretary Gates and Adm. Mullen from the Pentagon," (continued...)

To be sure, the two major war requirement never reflected an assumption that conventional regional conflicts were the only threats for which forces needed to be prepared. Rather, the premise of the 1993 Bottom-Up Review was that forces sufficiently strong and deployable enough to prevail in two nearly simultaneous wars would also generally be capable of responding to what were regarded as less demanding challenges. Moreover, the 1997 and 2001 QDRs put considerable emphasis on identifying and correcting shortfalls in capabilities to sustain other kinds of operations.

The 1997 QDR articulated a strategy that was quite broad. It recognized that military forces were normally deployed to “shape” the international security environment, and it said that forces should also be able to “respond” quickly in a wide range of missions, including multiple smaller scale contingency operations, such as peacekeeping in the Balkans. The third element of the strategy was to “prepare” for future, more demanding conflicts that could reflect revolutionary changes in military technology. The two war requirement remained, the QDR report said, the “*sine qua non*” of defense planning.<sup>30</sup> But the review also specifically recognized the strain that long-duration smaller operations could impose on the force, and it identified a number of “low density, high demand” capabilities as a focus of increased investment.

For its part, the 2001 QDR announced a new “force sizing construct” that went considerably beyond the two-war requirement. The new construct, said the QDR report,

explicitly calls for the force to be sized for defending the homeland, forward deterrence, warfighting missions, and the conduct of smaller-scale contingency operations. As a result, the construct should better account for force requirements driven by forward presence and rotational issues. It will also better address requirements for low-density/high-demand (LD/HD) assets, enabling forces (e.g., transport aircraft), and active and reserve force-mix issues.

The shorthand for the new construct was the “1-4-2-1 strategy”: 1, defend the homeland; 4, deter conflicts with forward deployed forces in four major regions; 2, halt aggression in two regions simultaneously; and the other 1, decisively defeat an adversary in one of those theaters.

The 2010 QDR pointedly does not endorse any easily summarized set of metrics for determining the size and makeup of the force. Rather, the review tested the ability of planned forces to respond flexibly and effectively when confronted with “several scenario combinations” that were intended to stress capabilities. Examples of scenarios with overlapping operations include,

- A major stabilization operation, deterring and defeating a highly capable regional aggressor, and extending support to civil authorities in response to a catastrophic event in the United States.
- Deterring and defeating two regional aggressors while maintaining a heightened alert posture for U.S. forces in and around the United States.

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(...continued)

February 1, 2010, online at <http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4549>.

<sup>30</sup> “A force sized and equipped for deterring and defeating aggression in more than one theater,” said the report, “... is the *sine qua non* of a superpower and is essential to the credibility of our overall national security strategy.” U.S. Department of Defense, Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, May, 1997, p. 12. An on-line version of the 1997 report, divided into sections without pagination, is available at <http://www.fas.org/man/docs/qdr/>.

- A major stabilization operation, a long-duration deterrence operation in a separate theater, a medium-sized counterinsurgency mission, and extended support to civil authorities in the United States.

Planning for two major wars remains as an element of the new process, but the Defense Department now sees other requirements as equally important in shaping the force.

## **Capabilities for Key Missions**

Much of what is new in the 2010 QDR is in recommendations for improvements in six joint mission areas:

- Defend the United States and support civil authorities at home;
- Succeed in counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations
- Build the capacity of partner states;
- Deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments;
- Prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction; and
- Operate effectively in cyberspace.

By comparison, the 2006 QDR focused its recommendations for improvements on four priority areas:

- Defeating terrorist networks.
- Defending the homeland in depth.
- Shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads.
- Preventing hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring or using WMD.

Changes that most stand out include, in the 2010 QDR, a new focus on defeating efforts by potential foes to prevent U.S. access to key regions, a new focus on cyberspace, and a new focus on building the capacity of partner states. The 2006 QDR discussion of shaping the choices of “countries at a strategic crossroads” is dropped. The 2006 QDR focus on defeating terrorist networks is replaced by a somewhat broader mandate to institutionalize capabilities for counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations. Also, the 2010 QDR report does not describe such missions as elements of a “long war” against terrorism, or against violent Islamic extremism. And there are also some changes in the ways in which homeland defense and measures to counter weapons of mass destruction are discussed.

## **Defeating Anti-Access Strategies**

For those who have followed debates over defense strategy since the end of the Cold War, the 2010 QDR discussion of measures to defeat anti-access threats is one of the most significant new themes in the review. The current U.S. ability to project substantial military power far around the globe is unique. Few other nations can deploy any significant amount of force at a distance at all, no others can project enough power to defeat a major regional power except over fairly short land routes, and none can independently sustain the deployment of large numbers of forces to non-contiguous regions over a long period of time. The U.S. ability to project power is the bedrock of

U.S. alliances in Europe and Asia, and it is the key to U.S. efforts to bolster stability in other important regions as well. Such capabilities are also expensive. The cost of power projection capabilities is the main reason why U.S. defense spending dramatically exceeds that of any other nation.

Following the end of the Cold War, regional conflicts became a focus of U.S. strategic planning, and a number of serious and well-regarded American strategists warned that the U.S. ability to project power to key areas—particularly East Asia and the Persian Gulf—could be put at risk by a determined regional power. Andrew Marshall, the Director of Net Assessment in the Defense Department, and retired Army Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Krepinevich, an alumnus of the Net Assessment Office who has directed the Center Strategic and Budgetary Assessments since the early 1990s, have long argued that “anti-access” or “area denial” strategies could pose a major asymmetric challenge to the critical U.S. ability to operate effectively in distant regions.<sup>31</sup>

Their argument is that nations such as China or Iran could use a variety of simple and sophisticated technologies to target U.S. forward bases in nearby nations and naval forces operating relatively close to shore. Overseas ground bases may be increasingly vulnerable to ballistic missile, cruise missile, and bomber attacks. Naval forces, particularly aircraft carriers and other service combatants, may be increasingly vulnerable to anti-ship cruise missiles; modern, quiet diesel electric submarines; smart mines that can be activated on command and maneuvered into place; small, fast boats laden with explosives; or, at the high end of the technological spectrum, ballistic missiles with maneuverable warheads that can be redirected in flight to strike moving ships.

Anti-access threats have been highlighted more and more frequently in recent years. In 1997, the National Defense Panel, which was appointed to review the first QDR, and on which Krepinevich served, identified anti-access strategies as one of a number of asymmetric challenges which, the panel recommended, should be accorded much more attention in defense planning.<sup>32</sup> During the 2006 review process, a QDR “red team” headed by Marshall and assigned to prepare an independent assessment, also addressed anti-access threats and reportedly recommended a cut of as much as one-third in short-range fighter aircraft.<sup>33</sup> In 2002, in a major war game, called “Millennium Challenge,” that modeled a conflict in the Persian Gulf, the “Opposing Force” (OPFOR) commander, retired Marine Lieutenant General Paul van Riper, succeeded in doing extensive damage to notional U.S. naval forces in the region by launching attacks from swarming, explosives-laden small boats and anti-ship cruise missiles. The Office of Naval Intelligence has recently released unclassified reports on Iranian and Chinese naval capabilities that point to considerable investments by each nation in anti-access capabilities.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the evolution of the concept, starting in the Office of Net Assessment, see Andrew Krepinevich, *Why AirSea Battle?*, Washington: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, February 19, 2010, online at [http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20100219.Why\\_AirSea\\_Battle/R.20100219.Why\\_AirSea\\_Battle.pdf](http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20100219.Why_AirSea_Battle/R.20100219.Why_AirSea_Battle.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Report of the National Defense Panel, December, 2007, online at <http://www.dtic.mil/ndp/FullDoc2.pdf>, pp. 12-13.

<sup>33</sup> See Jason Sherman, “QDR Spares Fighter Cuts, but Pentagon Still Considering Tactical Aircraft Consolidation,” *InsideDefense.com*, January 31, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Office of Naval Intelligence, *The People’s Liberation Army Navy: A Modern Navy with Chinese Characteristics*, August, 2009, online at [http://www.nmic.navy.mil/Intelligence\\_Community/docs/china\\_army\\_navy.pdf](http://www.nmic.navy.mil/Intelligence_Community/docs/china_army_navy.pdf) and Office of Naval Intelligence, *Iran’s Naval Forces: From Guerilla Warfare to a Modern Naval Strategy*, Fall 2009, online at [http://www.nmic.navy.mil/Intelligence\\_Community/docs/iran\\_navy\\_forces.pdf](http://www.nmic.navy.mil/Intelligence_Community/docs/iran_navy_forces.pdf).

The 2010 QDR makes a number of recommendations for improving capabilities to counter anti-access strategies, including

- Develop a joint air-sea battle concept;
- Expand future long-range strike capabilities;
- Exploit advantages in subsurface operations;
- Increase the resiliency of U.S. forward posture and base infrastructure;
- Assure access to space and the use of space assets;
- Enhance the robustness of key ISR capabilities;
- Defeat enemy sensors and engagement systems; and
- Enhance the presence and responsiveness of U.S. forces abroad.

These initiatives may, over time, entail some substantial new investments. Long-range strike forces might include a new manned or unmanned bomber, perhaps armed with long-range cruise missiles for stand-off attacks. It is likely to be a major new investment in future years. To exploit advantages in subsurface operations, the QDR report says, “The Navy is increasing funding for the development of an unmanned underwater vehicle that will be capable of a wide range of tasks.” How significant a new program this might become is as yet unclear. Measures to defeat enemy sensors and engagement systems include development of offensive “electronic attack” capabilities, which remain highly classified.

The Defense Department has not specifically discussed what is being considered in developing a new air-sea battle concept, but it also might involve new investments in, for example, such systems as carrier-based, long-range, unmanned strike systems. Conversely, it is conceivable that studies of the concept could be used as a rationale for limiting Air Force and Navy spending on the grounds that better optimized joint planning will reduce some requirements. Missile defense may be a major and expensive part of measures to protect forward deployed forces. All told, the anti-access measures addressed in the 2010 QDR appear likely to entail some major new initiatives.

## **Counterinsurgency, Stability, and Counterterrorism Operations**

The 2010 QDR’s treatment of counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations (COIN, Stability, CT) reflects a number of significant shifts in emphasis compared to earlier strategic assessments. The 2010 QDR report does not refer to the “Global War on Terrorism,” which was the last Administration’s term. Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere are now referred to rather drily as “Overseas Contingency Operations” rather than parts of a single global war. The 2010 QDR report also does not refer to the “long war,” also a staple of the prior Administration’s analysis, and though it frequently identifies “extremism” or “violent extremism” as a source of instability, it does not specifically mention “violent Islamic extremism” as a threat.

It is particularly notable that the 2010 QDR report does not refer to “irregular warfare,” which was discussed in the 2005 National Defense Strategy and in later strategy documents as one of four kinds of security challenges facing the United States—the others being “traditional,”

“disruptive,” and “catastrophic” challenges.<sup>35</sup> This by now familiar “four challenges” framework for classifying dangers to U.S. security has, at least in this 2010 QDR report, been replaced by a discussion of more specific kinds of missions, with an emphasis on the broad range of operations that U.S. forces might be called upon to carry out.

In part these changes appear to reflect Secretary Gates’ judgment that distinctions between irregular warfare and other kinds of challenges do not capture the complexity of a security environment in which “near-peers will use irregular or asymmetric tactics and non-state actors may have weapons of mass destruction or sophisticated missiles.”<sup>36</sup> In a January 2009 *Foreign Affairs* article, Secretary Gates wrote:

When thinking about the range of threats, it is common to divide the “high end” from the “low end,” the conventional from the irregular ... In reality ... the categories of warfare are blurring and no longer fit into neat, tidy boxes. One can expect to see more tools and tactics of destruction—from the sophisticated to the simple—being employed simultaneously in hybrid and more complex forms of warfare.<sup>37</sup>

The QDR analysis of overlapping scenarios reflects the premise that all four kinds of challenges may have to be confronted simultaneously, and might even be dimensions of a single conflict.<sup>38</sup>

In addition, the terminology used in the 2010 QDR appears to reflect the outcome of quite extensive efforts by military strategists to develop new doctrine for counterinsurgency, stability, counterterrorism, and related operations. In 2005, the Defense Department issued a formal instruction that defined stability operations as “a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct with proficiency equivalent to combat operations.” In 2006, the Army and Marine Corps jointly published a new counterinsurgency Field Manual that subsequently contributed to revised strategic approaches in Iraq in 2007 and now in Afghanistan. In October 2008, the Army produced a new Field Manual on stability operations.<sup>39</sup> Subsequently,

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<sup>35</sup> The “four challenges” framework was first briefly mentioned publicly in March 2004 in a congressionally mandated report on base closures, entitled, “Report Required by Section 2912 of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, as Amended through the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003,” (March 2004), available online at [http://www.defenselink.mil/brac/docs/04\\_0\\_body032403.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/brac/docs/04_0_body032403.pdf). The framework was later discussed in March 2005 in Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 2004, (March, 2005), available online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/Mar2005/d20050318nms.pdf>. The presentation that initially drew some public attention to the concepts was in a briefing for the Department of Defense “Senior Level Review Group,” entitled “A Framework for Strategic Thinking,” (August 2004), not released publicly by the Defense Department and restricted as “For Official Use Only,” but available online at <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/dod/framework.pdf>. The briefing was first discussed in Thomas E. Ricks, “Shift from Traditional War Seen at Pentagon,” *Washington Post*, September 3, 2004, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> See Secretary Gates’ speech at the Air Warfare College on April 15, 2009, cited above.

<sup>37</sup> Robert M. Gates, “A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 2009, pp. 28-40.

<sup>38</sup> Disruptive threats, in particular, may be elements of an anti-access strategy in an otherwise quite “traditional” regional conflict, or could be reflected in cyber war, in anti-satellite attacks, in sabotage of transportation or communications systems even in the U.S. homeland in the event of almost any violent confrontation. Dangers to the homeland could span the range from disruptive to catastrophic threats.

<sup>39</sup> Department of Defense Instruction DODI 3000.05, “Stability Operations,” initially issued in November 2005 and reissued on September 16, 2009, online at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf>; Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency: FM 3-24*, December 2006, online at [http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/coin/repository/FM\\_3-24.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/coin/repository/FM_3-24.pdf); Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Stability Operations: FM 3-07*, October 2008, online at <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/Repository/FM307/FM3-07.pdf>.

a December 2008 DOD directive defined irregular warfare in a manner that encompassed counterinsurgency, stability and other activities:

IW can include a variety of steady-state and surge DoD activities and operations: counterterrorism; unconventional warfare; foreign internal defense; counterinsurgency; and stability operations that, in the context of IW, involve establishing or re-establishing order in a fragile state.”<sup>40</sup>

Collectively, the outcome of the Defense Department’s effort to articulate doctrine for each of these kinds of operations is a means of institutionalizing the lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other post-9/11 military activities. By discussing COIN, stability, and CT operations separately, the 2010 QDR appears to be drawing attention to the evolution of DOD doctrinal thinking about these issues.

A change that may be far more politically controversial is the Administration’s rejection of the “war on terrorism” terminology. Substantively, it appears to reflect the Administration’s premise that defeating global terrorist groups requires not only military, intelligence, and law enforcement measures to destroy their leadership and infrastructure, but also and perhaps mainly other means of weakening their appeal. As John Brennan, the senior counterterrorism advisor in the National Security Staff commented last year,

It needs to be much more than a kinetic effort, an intelligence, law enforcement effort. It has to be much more comprehensive. This is not a 'war on terror.' ... We cannot let the terror prism guide how we're going to interact and be involved in different parts of the world.<sup>41</sup>

This may be an area in which the QDR could have benefited from a broader discussion of policy. It might have been valuable not only to address counterterrorism policy in general, but also to have discussed in some depth the role of military power in addressing evolving security challenges relative to the role of other instruments of influence.

Programmatically, most of the specific initiatives in the QDR to bolster the COIN, stability, CT mission involve an increase in resources to “enhance” current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such measures include increases in helicopters, UAVs, intelligence and analysis capabilities, counter IED technologies, and AC-130 aircraft gunships.<sup>42</sup> This is a direct reflection of Secretary Gates’ emphasis on prevailing in current wars.

The QDR report also identifies some longer-term initiatives, including the conversion of one heavy Army brigade combat team (BCT) into a Stryker brigade—such brigades use wheeled Stryker armored vehicles for mobility. The report says that “several more BCTs” may be converted “as resources become available and future global demands become clearer.” This is one

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<sup>40</sup> Department of Defense Directive 3000.07, “Irregular Warfare (IW)”, December 1, 2008, online at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300007p.pdf>. It also defined IW as “A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary’s power, influence, and will.” This is a refinement of earlier definitions—the 2006 QDR report defined irregular warfare as simply as “conflicts in which enemy combatants are not regular military forces of nation-states.”

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Spencer S. Hsu and Joby Warrick, “Obama’s Battle Against Terrorism to Go Beyond Bombs and Bullets,” *Washington Post*, August 6, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> “UAVs” refers to unmanned or unpiloted aerial vehicles, particularly used for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. IEDs are improvised explosive devices, including roadside, car, and truck bombs.

of a number of areas in which the relatively radical reassessment of the strategic environment in this and previous QDRs may be interpreted as a rationale for more sweeping changes in force structure than any QDR to date has ventured to propose.

The report also discusses very generally measures to improve strategic communications, which refers to efforts to gain support for U.S. security goals by appealing to critical foreign audiences effectively. The report adds that DOD initiatives to “improve language and cultural capabilities and to increase educational and training programs that prepare our people to work in and among foreign populations,” are critical elements of a strategic communications capability. This is an area in which a broader, inter-agency oriented assessment of policy may be of value.

Collectively, these measures do not appear to reflect a diminished effort to “defeat terrorist networks” or to prevail in what had been called the “long war” against terrorism. On the contrary, the 2010 QDR appears determined to bolster capabilities for the kinds of operations the Defense Department has been engaged in since 9/11, including COIN, stability, CT, and related activities such as foreign internal defense (i.e., direct support to foreign militaries). The 2010 QDR reflects both the Secretary’s emphasis on current conflicts and the considerable evolution of doctrinal thinking in the military. What were once regarded as less demanding missions are now seen as core responsibilities with major implications for force planning and investments.

## **Building the Capacity of Partner States**

The QDR report’s discussion of capacity building is closely related to the evolution of military planning for COIN, stability, and CT operations. The discussion is by no means entirely new. Much of the terminology and many of the programmatic measures that the 2010 QDR report discusses were initiated in the last Administration and addressed in the 2006 QDR. Moreover, the 2006 QDR identified “building partnership capacity” as one of five areas in which the Defense Department would develop follow-on “road maps” to refine policy.<sup>43</sup>

It is new, however, to elevate the discussion of capacity building to the level of a critical mission and to assert as forcefully that it will become progressively more important in the future. The 2010 report says that “As U.S. forces draw down in Iraq and make progress toward building stability in Afghanistan, more capacity will be available for training, advising, and assisting foreign security forces in other parts of the globe.” The extent of the requirement is so great, the report concludes, that it cannot be met by special operations forces, some of which have long been assigned to train foreign militaries, but must also be assigned to general purpose forces:

Many governments facing active or latent threats from violent extremist groups would welcome tailored advisory assistance from the United States.... Although special operations forces will be able to meet some of this demand, especially in politically sensitive situations, U.S. general purpose forces will need to be engaged in these efforts as well. The deploying units will require specialized training and preparation for these operations.

In addition to measures to strengthen the ability of general purpose forces to provide support to foreign militaries, other initiatives include the reform of security assistance to be much more flexible and responsive, including measures to facilitate more rapid transfers of materiel to other

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<sup>43</sup> The other areas were Department institutional reform and governance, irregular warfare, strategic communications, and intelligence.



countries, more language and cultural training for military personnel in general, and additional steps to support UN and other multilateral peacekeeping efforts. The report also calls for the expansion of DOD programs established in the past two years to strengthen “ministerial-level” governance in key nations. This is a potential matter of discussion in Congress, since it appears to expand further the Defense Department’s role in areas of foreign policy that have traditionally been mainly the State Department’s responsibility.

The requirement that general purpose forces—particularly in the Army—be prepared for foreign military assistance missions as well as for the full range of combat missions and for stability, counterinsurgency and related activities, may, again, draw into question whether changing perceptions of the security environment should entail more far-reaching changes in defense posture than the QDR has proposed. In situations such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where large numbers of U.S. combat troops are deployed, and where training of large numbers of foreign military forces is an urgent task, it might be necessary to assign training responsibilities to deployed regular combat units. Moreover, in those cases, partnering of U.S. combat units with indigenous forces may be of significant value.

To the extent U.S. forces are not so heavily, directly engaged in combat operations, however, the case for assigning foreign assistance missions to general purpose forces may be more debatable. In a number of hearings, House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton has expressed doubts about the ability of troops to retain the specialized skills needed for stability and counterinsurgency operations, for training and support of foreign militaries, and for high intensity combat without much more training that Army plans for.<sup>44</sup> A number of strategists, including some of the Army’s leading thinkers about counterinsurgency and stability operations, have called for the Army to create either specialized advisory and assistance brigades specifically organized and trained to support foreign militaries or, “constabulary” units for large scale stability operations.<sup>45</sup> Unless the Army was larger, however, this would require reducing capabilities for more traditional missions. For its part, the Army has, instead, adopted a plan to augment selected, deploying infantry brigades with additional personnel for training, security, and economic infrastructure development.<sup>46</sup> It has also used contractors extensively for foreign military training.

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<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Representative Skelton’s questions in a House Armed Services Committee Hearing on the Quadrennial Defense Review with the co-chairs of the QDR Independent Panel on April 15, 2010: “The question I put to you about being able to do the full- spectrum really bothers me, and I know you think that a soldier can be trained to do something other than his main occupation in the military in three weeks or so. We should explore that a little bit more in your final determination. It really does worry me that we’ve found ourselves in the horns of a dilemma with fantastically trained troops to do one thing, and they be thrown into another situation where they would be very, very unfamiliar.”

<sup>45</sup> John A. Nagl, *Institutionalizing Adaptation: It’s Time for a Permanent Army Advisor Corps*, Washington: Center for a New American Security, June 2007, online at [http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/Nagl\\_AdvisoryCorp\\_June07.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/Nagl_AdvisoryCorp_June07.pdf). Nagl was one of the authors of the Army-Marine Corps counterinsurgency Field Manual. See also Don M. Snider, “Let the Debate Begin: The Case for a Constabulary Force,” *Army Magazine*, June 1998; Andrew Krepinevich, *Transforming the Legions: The Army and the Future of Land Warfare*, Washington: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2004, online at [http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20040114.Transforming\\_the\\_L/R.20040114.Transforming\\_the\\_L.pdf](http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20040114.Transforming_the_L/R.20040114.Transforming_the_L.pdf); and Andrew Krepinevich, *An Army at the Crossroads*, Washington: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, November, 2008, online at [http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20081117.An\\_Army\\_At\\_The\\_Cro/R.20081117.An\\_Army\\_At\\_The\\_Cro.pdf](http://www.csbaonline.org/4Publications/PubLibrary/R.20081117.An_Army_At_The_Cro/R.20081117.An_Army_At_The_Cro.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Kris Osborn, “New U.S. Army Unit Adds Stability-Ops Troops,” *Defense News*, March 10, 2009.

## **Shaping the Choices of “Nations at a Strategic Crossroads”**

A review of what’s new in the 2010 QDR involves not only what has been added, but also what themes in earlier QDRs have been, to some degree at least, deemphasized. The 2006 QDR report included an extensive discussion of measures to “shape the choices of nations at a strategic crossroads,” which the 2010 QDR report drops. In general, the 2006 QDR discussion encompassed measures to dissuade other nations, particularly “major and emerging powers” from challenging U.S. security interests, and it proposed engaging in cooperative endeavors instead.

Among nations at a strategic crossroads, the report mentioned nations in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Latin America. It discussed in particular, what it saw as progress in extending democracy in the Middle East, and it pointed to Libya’s announcement that it would abandon its nuclear weapons program as a success. It also identified India, Russia, and China as the key major and emerging powers.

With regard to Russia, like the 2010 QDR report, the 2006 report mainly focused on shared U.S. and Russian interests, but, unlike the 2010 QDR, it also expressed concern about “the erosion of democracy in Russia, the curtailment of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and freedom of the press, the centralization of political power and limits on economic freedom.” An extensive discussion in the 2006 report was devoted to concerns about China’s military buildup, which explicitly concluded that

Chinese military modernization has accelerated since the mid-to-late 1990s in response to central leadership demands to develop military options against Taiwan scenarios. The pace and scope of China’s military build-up already puts regional military balances at risk.

In response, the 2006 report says, the United States must take a balanced approach that integrates new powers into the international system as constructive partners, but that also seeks “to dissuade major and emerging powers from developing capabilities that could threaten regional stability, to deter conflict, and to defeat aggression should deterrence fail.” It specifically highlights measures to defeat anti-access strategies and it identifies as critical a number of capabilities that the 2010 report says should be improved in order to defeat anti-access challenges, including “undersea warfare capabilities,” though there is no mention of a new, unmanned underwater vehicle; “prompt and high-volume global strike;” and integrated short- and intermediate-range ballistic missile defense. “The aim,” says the 2006 report, “is to possess sufficient capability to convince any potential adversary that it cannot prevail in a conflict and that engaging in conflict entails substantial strategic risks beyond military defeat.”

Some analysts read into the analysis in the 2006 QDR an argument that the United States should maintain a sufficient degree of strategic predominance to convince potential competitors that it is of no use to make big investments in military capabilities, since the United States will retain the ability to overmatch any buildup. The 2006 report does not explicitly make such an argument, however. Rather, for the most part, the 2006 report discusses investments in key capabilities as “prudent hedges against the possibility that cooperative approaches by themselves may fail to preclude future conflict.”

Substantively, the 2010 QDR differs from the 2006 report in focusing somewhat less on across-the-board military capabilities to maintain a military advantage and more on specific measures to counter efforts by potential competitors to challenge U.S. capabilities through asymmetric means. The anti-access challenge is seen as one of a number of areas in which U.S. forces might be

vulnerable, and which even an enemy without the ability to compete directly with the United States might seek to exploit as a means of evening the odds. The 2010 report does not discuss potential threats from specific nations in as much detail as earlier reports on strategy, but it is somewhat more specific in identifying the technological nature of potential challenges and measures to counter them.

## **Cyberwar**

The 2010 report identifies the ability to operate successfully in cyberspace as one of six critical mission areas in which it proposes efforts to bolster capabilities. Moreover, the 2010 report identifies cyberspace as a critical part of the “global commons” on a par with air, sea, and space realms of interchange. It cites secure and open access to the global commons as a critical interest of the United States that is shared with other responsible actors around the globe. Defending against disruptive cyber attacks has been discussed in earlier strategy documents for many years—the 1997 QDR report mentioned “attacks via information warfare” as one of several asymmetric threats that would receive increased attention and the 1997 National Defense Panel report mentioned cyber-attacks as a danger to U.S. information dominance, proposed greater efforts to defense access to cyberspace, and even warned against cyberterrorism as a specific threat.

The 2010 QDR puts greater emphasis on cyberwar, however, than any review in the past. It reflects a growing awareness of the dependence of military forces on cyberspace for the management of information even in wartime, an awareness of the vulnerability of military and civilian information systems to disruption, and the exponential growth of assaults on cyber systems.<sup>47</sup> It also reflects experience with efforts by a number of nations to experiment with cyberwar. The 2010 QDR treats cyberspace, in effect, as a new theater of warfare, and elevates the importance of planning to cope in it.

## **Homeland Defense**

The 2010 QDR report agrees with the 2006 report in identifying homeland defense and protection against weapons of mass destruction as critical focuses of attention. The 2010 report identifies some new measures to improve capabilities in each area. For homeland defense, the QDR reorganizes DOD chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) response teams to correspond to more quickly and to add capabilities. It also builds on current National Guard plans to establish Homeland Response Forces (HRFs) in each of the ten Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions. It also enhances efforts to develop and deploy standoff radiological detection equipment.<sup>48</sup>

These measures reflect a great deal of continuity with earlier defense plans to contribute to homeland defense in support of other agencies, most of which are incorporated into the

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<sup>47</sup> See Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn, III, “Remarks at the Defense Information Technology Acquisition Summit,” November 12, 2009, online at <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1399>.

<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of homeland defense initiatives and some of the WMD-related steps discussed below, see John P. Caves, Jr., “Countering WMD in the 2010 QDR,” *CSWMD Proceedings*, March 11, 2010. The article is based on remarks by Mr. Caves at a National Defense University Symposium on the Quadrennial Defense Review held on March 10 and 11, 2010.

Department of Homeland Security. To the extent the 2010 QDR reflects a new perspective, it is in the premise that the U.S. homeland is no longer, as it was even in the middle the last century, a sanctuary in the event of U.S. involvement in conflicts abroad. Rather, the QDR report implies, the global reach of new technologies may turn the U.S. homeland into a theater of operations, and measures to protect the homeland, therefore, must be planned for as part of any major conflict. Many of the scenarios that the QDR studied, included homeland defense missions as critical responsibilities that the Defense Department must be able to manage while engaged in operations abroad.

## **WMD Countermeasures**

The 2010 report's treatment of measures to "prevent proliferation and counter weapons of mass destruction (WMD)" also reflects more continuity than change compared to earlier strategy statements. The 2006 QDR directed that an Army command be expanded to operate as a rapidly deployable command element of WMD elimination missions. The 2010 QDR establishes this as a standing joint task force.<sup>49</sup> The 2006 QDR addressed measures to tag and track nuclear materials, and cited the Bush Administration's Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict shipments of WMD-related material. The 2010 QDR calls for improved nuclear forensics to identify the source of nuclear material if used in a weapon, and it cites President Obama's proposal to securely "lock down" all weapons-grade fissile material within four years.

Where there have been significant changes in WMD policy, the 2010 QDR report largely leaves any discussion to the report on the Nuclear Posture Review, which was due along with the QDR report, but that was finally released on April 5, 2010. The 2010 QDR report does not specifically address steps toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, which the President called for at a major speech in Prague on April 5, 2009.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by President Barack Obama, Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic," April 5, 2009, online at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Barack-Obama-In-Prague-As-Delivered/).

## V. Common Criticisms of the QDR

The Base Force analysis, the Bottom-Up Review, and the four QDRs have generated considerable debate. Often, the criticisms of successive reviews have at least as much to do with the perspectives of the critics as with the logic of the reviews. Some commentators consistently think that reviews have led to too small a military force, others to a force too large. Reformers who think the acquisition process is flawed or corrupt argue that reviews to date have simply confirmed a continuation of business as usual. The technology-driven elements of the force, they say, have become progressively less relevant to real defense requirements, and forces are less ready for war at ever increasing cost. In the past, some complained that defense policy was losing its focus on major wars because it was diverted by missions in Somalia or the Balkans that had little to do with U.S. security. Today, that criticism is echoed to some degree by those who object to a strategy that explicitly accepts greater risk in capabilities for traditional, state-on-state conflicts. Many warn that China or Russia, like resentful, rising, and ambitious powers in the past, may pose the gravest long-term threats to peace, and complain that the current QDR neglects the danger.

A persistent line of criticism, reflected to a considerable extent in the 1997 National Defense Panel report and pursued further in a number of subsequent commentaries, argues that QDRs have been too slow to adapt to new, non-traditional threats to security and to the danger of asymmetric threats that exploit U.S. weaknesses. Force planning has been even slower to adapt, in this view, than formal statements of strategy. That critical view is addressed at some length in the following section of this report, which discusses whether quite radically new assessments of the international security environment in recent QDRs may warrant more far-reaching changes in defense posture than the Defense Department has so far been willing to accept.

While critical reviews of the current QDR and its predecessors cover the gamut, and are often diametrically at odds with each other, a few recurring themes stand out, including the following:

- The current QDR, like some of its predecessors, is too constrained by budgets and does not, therefore, adequately address shortfalls in critical military capabilities;
- A contrary view, that the current QDR, like some of its predecessors, fails to make necessary choices among major programs;
- While a focus on current wars is appropriate, the 2010 QDR puts too little emphasis on investments in conventional forces needed to prepare for future threats;
- The current QDR is too timid in its characterization of threats from Russia and China, and underplays tensions with China in particular;
- The delay in issuing a White House National Security Strategy statement left the QDR without sufficient guidance on strategic priorities;
- The current QDR does not clearly show how force plans are derived from its assessments of strategy, so it is hard to understand the rationale for maintaining a force of the current size and composition;

- QDRs are, by law, required to look ahead twenty years, but the current QDR appears to have a much shorter time horizon and says little about long-term planning.

## **Planning Based on Budget Constraints Rather than Strategy**

Perhaps the most common criticism of earlier defense reviews, beginning with the Bottom-Up Review, holds that they were little more than budget drills, designed to justify cuts in programs needed to fit defense plans into a constrained budget, rather than exercises in strategic planning. From the beginning, some of the sponsors of QDR legislation in the Congress quite clearly intended QDRs to be, if anything, the opposite. The original QDR statute was written in 1996 and revised in 1999, when the predominant view on the Armed Services Committees, if not in the rest of Congress, appeared to be that defense budgets had fallen too low, and that weapons procurement funding, in particular, needed to turn up substantially to recapitalize the force. Many legislators clearly wanted QDRs to make a case for spending more on defense. Over time, the QDR statute has been revised to become more and more explicit in requiring that reviews should not be budget constrained.

The “Military Force Structure Review Act of 1996,” the subtitle of the FY1997 National Defense Authorization Act that mandated the 1997 QDR, required the review to address the budget, but only in very general terms:

The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall complete in 1997 a review of the defense program of the United States intended to satisfy the requirements for a Quadrennial Defense Review as identified in the recommendations of the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces. The review shall include a comprehensive examination of the defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program and policies with a view toward determining and expressing the defense strategy of the United States and establishing a revised defense program through the year 2005.<sup>51</sup>

The 1997 QDR explicitly acknowledged that resource constraints were an underlying premise of the review. The report on the review said that the assessment first identified evolving threats, risks, and opportunities in national security; developed a defense strategy; identified required capabilities; defined programs and policies needed to sustain such capabilities; and assessed alternative approaches reflecting a different balance between investments in current, short-term readiness and the development of long-term capabilities. The strategy called for a military posture able to shape the international security environment, respond to the full spectrum of current requirements, and prepare for future threats. The report also said:

Finally, the Department's plans are fiscally responsible. They are built on the premise that, barring a major crisis, national defense spending is likely to remain relatively constant in the future. There is a bipartisan consensus in America to balance the federal budget by the year 2002 in order to ensure the nation's economic health, which in turn is central to our fundamental national strength and security. The direct implication of this fiscal reality is that Congress and the American people expect the Department to implement our defense program within a constrained resource environment. The fiscal reality did not drive the defense

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<sup>51</sup> FY1997 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 104-201, September 23, 1996, Section 923(a).

strategy we adopted, but it did affect our choices for its implementation and focused our attention on the need to reform our organization and methods of conducting business.<sup>52</sup>

Following the 1997 QDR, the section of the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act that established a permanent requirement for quadrennial reviews laid out a rather classical, idealized view of the planning process in which budgets were to be derived from force plans, which were, in turn, to be derived from strategy, though it did not explicitly rule out a consideration of resource constraints. In the revised statute, the QDR was required

(1) to delineate a national defense strategy consistent with the most recent National Security Strategy ...; (2) to define sufficient force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program ... required to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy; and (3) to identify ... the budget plan that would be required to provide sufficient resources to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk, and ... any additional resources (beyond those programmed in the current future-years defense program) required to achieve such a level of risk."<sup>53</sup>

Defense budgets increased substantially from FY1999 on, and the subsequent 2001 and 2006 QDR reports did not explicitly discuss budget constraints as a factor shaping defense choices. Neither advocated substantial increases in planned spending, however. Moreover, as discussed further below, rather than propose simply adding capabilities, the 2006 QDR called for shifting resources to some degree away from capabilities for traditional state-on-state conflicts and toward preparations for a broader array of challenges, at least implicitly accepting limits on resources.

Following the 2006 review, the FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act amended earlier language specifically to prohibit the QDR from being constrained by the budget, adding a provision that required the QDR

to make recommendations that are not constrained to comply with the budget submitted to Congress by the President...<sup>54</sup>

Congress's intent in mandating that the QDR make budget recommendations that are derived from strategy; that will sustain a force sufficient to execute all the missions required by the strategy at a low to moderate level of risk; that will identify additional resources necessary to reduce risks; and that may not be constrained by the Administration's budget plan is, therefore, quite clear. It is not so clear, however, exactly how the statutory requirement can be expected to affect how QDRs are carried out.

The requirement that the Defense Department propose a budget plan that is not constrained to comply with the President's budget is difficult for any Secretary of Defense to comply with. Ultimately, within the Executive Branch, the White House will decide how much to propose for defense in part by balancing defense with competing demands in other parts of the budget, and

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<sup>52</sup> Department of Defense, *The Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, May 1997, "Secretary's Message," online at <http://www.fas.org/man/docs/qdr/msg.html>. In conversations with the author of this report, participants in the 1997 review have said that that the exercise began without specific budget guidance, but funding assumptions were soon specified.

<sup>53</sup> FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 106-65, October 5, 1999, Section 901(a).

<sup>54</sup> FY2007 John Warner National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 109-364, October 17, 2006, Section 301(c)(3).

neither a Secretary of Defense, nor a military service chief, would likely survive long by openly challenging a President's decision.<sup>55</sup>

Leaving such dynamics aside, some defense planners object to the premise that effective strategic thinking can be carried out without considering realistic resource constraints from the start. At its root, they argue, strategy is about how to allocate resources to accomplish policy objectives, and objectives themselves may be adjusted in view of what it is possible to achieve.<sup>56</sup> For the QDR to be useful to the Defense Department, in this view, it must provide guidance in establishing priorities among defense programs based on an assessment of urgent and less urgent challenges to U.S. security based on realistic expectations about funding.

On these grounds, Robert Hale, the current Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller, directly took issue with the premise that effective defense planning can be conducted without initially taking resource constraints into account:

I would personally argue that there is no such thing as requirements without some kind of fiscal constraints. The whole ... process of determining a defense budget is the process of trading off risks against how much you're willing to spend. Obviously, if we had infinite resources, there'd be no risk, but that clearly is never going to be the circumstance. So I almost think you always—you have to balance risk against dollars.

And the way I think we've done that, while obeying the law with the Quadrennial Defense Review, is to make it—and the term we use is “resource informed.” We didn't say, “You have just so much money.” But the people doing the QDR were involved with the budget process. They knew generally what our resource levels were going to be, and I think that clearly informed the choices that they made. So it was not budget-constrained, as required by law, but I think it was resource- informed, and should be. And I think the process works fine. I don't think we need additional legislation.<sup>57</sup>

Hale's perspective is reflected in the discussion of strategic priorities in the 2006 and 2010 QDRs. The four challenges framework that the Defense Department developed in the run up to the 2006 QDR made the case that resources should be shifted to some degree away from capabilities for traditional conflicts, in which the United States possessed a secure advantage, and toward

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<sup>55</sup> The one obvious exception might be Caspar Weinberger, who openly disputed OMB budget decisions in the mid-1980s, though even he lost the argument. On its face, the requirement seems to reflect a premise that defense spending should take priority over other demands in allocating resources. That view has seldom, if ever, prevailed in the United States in the post-World War II era. For a discussion of defense budget politics in the 1950s, see Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). Huntington's preface cites the Janus face of national policy which looks in two directions, one toward the international environment and one toward the realm domestic political priorities. Both are equally important, he said.

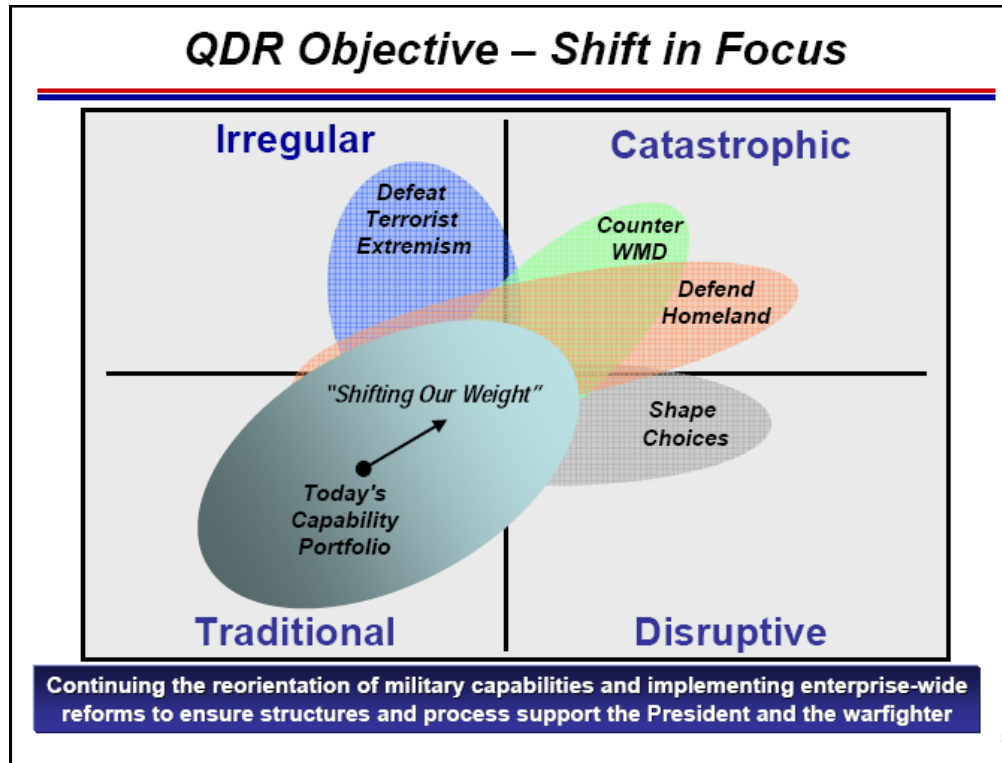
<sup>56</sup> The Defense Department's “Dictionary of Military Terms,” JP 1-02, defines strategy as “A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives.” For a thorough discussion of strategic planning, see John M. Collins, *Military Strategy: Principles, Practices, and Historical Perspectives* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's Incorporated, 2002). Collins, a former senior specialist at CRS, posits a six step strategic process: (1) Specify national interests, (2) appraise opposition, (3) define politico-military objectives, (4) devise strategies to achieve objectives, (5) allocate resources to cover requirements without intolerable risk, (6) ascertain whether resources are sufficient and, if not, consider alternatives. “Few strategists,” he says, “quibble about the sequence of steps 1 – 3 (ends and threats thereto), but whether step 4 (ways) should precede step 5 (means) incites disputes.... Both views are correct.”

<sup>57</sup> “Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable With Undersecretary Of Defense (Comptroller) And Chief Financial Officer Robert Hale Via Teleconference, Subject: The Defense Department Budget For Fiscal Year 2011,” Tuesday, February 2, 2010, online at <http://www.dodlive.mil/files/2010/02/0202hale.pdf>.



capabilities to cope with irregular, disruptive, or catastrophic challenges, which were more likely to materialize or to which the nation was more vulnerable. **Figure 1**, taken from a DOD briefing on the 2006 QDR, graphically illustrates the proposed reallocation of resources among the four challenges that DOD had identified.

**Figure 1. 2006 QDR Four Challenges Framework for Setting Priorities**



**Source:** Department of Defense, Briefing Slides on the 2006 Quadrennial Review, February 3, 2006, online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/Feb2006/d20060203qdrslides.pdf>.

The 2010 QDR is based on a similar premise. The risk associated with current conflicts, and risks arising from the likely hybrid, asymmetric nature of future conflicts, are relatively high, the assessment concludes, while risks arising from traditional threats are relatively low. In this view, the Defense Department can afford to accept somewhat greater risks, therefore, in traditional, conventional warfare capabilities where U.S. forces maintain a substantial advantage, in order to reduce risks from asymmetric attacks to which forces may be more vulnerable.

As it turned out, as the QDR was being conducted, there proved to be some flexibility in adjusting budget trends. According to one of the coordinators of the 2010 QDR, the review began with an assumption that future base defense budgets would be essentially flat, with no growth for inflation.<sup>58</sup> The Administration's FY2011-FY2015 base budget plan, however, provides growth of

<sup>58</sup> See Hon. David Ochmanek, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense-Force Planning, Transcript of Meeting with the Defense Writers Group, July 28, 2009: "The analysis we've done in the QDR to date took as an assumption that there would be zero real growth in defense spending across the FYDP. That was an assumption to drive the analysis," online at <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/DWG/Documents/2009/July%202009/072809Ochmanek.pdf>.

about 1 percent above inflation each year in overall DOD funding, reflecting adjustments that were made in discussions about the budget at the end of 2009, which presumably reflected the main conclusions of the QDR.

That is not a large change in the short term, although, if sustained over several years, it would amount to a substantial increase in resources. Many congressional critics of the QDR clearly feel that such increases are inadequate. They point to apparent shortfalls in inventories of Navy and Air Force fighter aircraft, to a QDR decision not to deploy as many amphibious ships as the Marine Corps says it requires, to quite substantial cuts in major weapons programs that Secretary Gates announced in April 2009, and to additional cuts announced in the QDR report. They see such reductions not as a result of new strategic priorities, but as a result of budget constraints imposed outside the defense planning process.

## **Failure to Establish Realistic Priorities**

A contrary view is held by those who argue that the QDR does not reflect a realistic perspective on budget constraints and does not establish clear priorities. In this view, federal budget deficits are likely to impose stringent limits on defense spending in the long term. While resources, from this perspective, are sufficient to sustain an effective force, to do so requires much more extensive trade-offs between programs designed to cope with current and future dangers on the one hand, and inherited programs built to meet Cold War-era threats on the other. As one commentary argues,

The QDR places some emphasis on rebalancing defense resources toward the capabilities needed to fight and win today's wars—but the FY 2011 budget does not fully reflect this emphasis. The QDR does call for greater investment in technology to defeat improvised explosive devices, more helicopters and special forces, and more unmanned aerial vehicles, all of which have direct relevance to the troops on the ground. But according to Secretary Gates's own estimates after eight years of war in Afghanistan and nearly seven in Iraq, the FY 2011 defense budget represents a shift of only 7 percent to 10 percent of spending to today's missions and needs, while 40 percent is allocated toward weapons that can fight all types of wars. That leaves half the budget still devoted to threats from a bygone era.<sup>59</sup>

In this view, the Defense Department should sustain increases in the size of the Army and Marine Corps; invest more in equipment for forces engaged in counterinsurgency and stability operations, such as force protection, communications, and transportation equipment; scale back purchases of weapon systems for conventional warfare; and reallocate resources to fully fund the costs of expanding ground forces and of resetting forces following the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>60</sup>

Commentators taking this view appear to be particularly critical of the planning scenarios used to test the capabilities of the force. Although the QDR claims to make a case for shifting resources

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<sup>59</sup> Lawrence J. Korb, Sean Duggan, Laura Conley, "Quadrennial Defense Review Fails to Match Resources to Priorities," Center for American Progress, February 4, 2010, online at [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/qdr\\_fail\\_resource.html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/qdr_fail_resource.html).

<sup>60</sup> Lawrence J. Korb, Peter M. Juul, Laura Conley, Major Myles B. Caggins III, Sean E. Duggan, *Building a Military for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: New Realities, New Priorities* (Washington: Center for American Progress, December 2008), online at [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/12/pdf/military\\_priorities.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/12/pdf/military_priorities.pdf).

away from capabilities for conventional conflict, in this view, the requirements that it establishes are still based on out-of-date planning for major wars:

The QDR ... does not prioritize the missions that the military must be prepared for. The document states that “successfully balancing [DOD’s priorities] requires that the Department make hard choices on the level of resources required as well as accepting and managing risk in a way that favors success in today’s wars,” yet it also notes that “U.S. forces must be prepared to conduct a wide variety of missions under a range of different circumstances.” In other words, the QDR promises to make tradeoffs but asserts that DOD must be capable of confronting every contingency.<sup>61</sup>

This perspective appears to put a very high priority on preparations for counterinsurgency, stability, and counterterrorism operations, echoing statements by Secretary Gates and others to the effect that the wars the nation is in now are representative of the kinds of conflicts that are most likely in the foreseeable future. This view appears to put less emphasis on what have been called “high-end asymmetric threats.” The 2010 QDR, in contrast, emphasizes not only challenges to U.S. security from insurgencies or terrorist groups, but also potential challenges posed by future peer or near peer competitors who, like less advanced competitors, would try to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities in the event of a conflict. A case can be made that the 2010 QDR broadens the list of challenges to U.S. security even more than some of those who criticize it for not setting priorities would have it. This could argue either for more resources for defense, or for more far-reaching efforts to eliminate outdated capabilities in order to reallocate resources to respond to new high-end dangers such as anti-access strategies and cyberwar.

## **A Diminished Focus on Future Challenges**

In a hearing immediately after the QDR was released, Representative Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, the Ranking Minority Member of the House Armed Services Committee, expressed a view that has been reflected in a number of subsequent criticisms of the QDR:

While we commend the department for its laser focus on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I believe efforts to make balance a fixture in the QDR in the out year budget is short sighted and puts the department on the wrong path to the next 20 years. Choosing to win in Iraq and Afghanistan should not mean our country must also choose to assume additional risk in the conventional national defense challenges of today and tomorrow.

Last April we received a glimpse of the cost of balance when the secretary announced over \$50 billion in cuts to defense programs. This year the impact is more subtle, but I fear more severe. As I told the secretary yesterday in my view the QDR understates the requirements to deter and defeat challenges from state actors. And it overestimates the capabilities of the force the department would build.<sup>62</sup>

As Representative McKeon’s statement reflects, the debate about long-term defense planning has to do, in part, with recommendations Secretary Gates made in April 2009 to eliminate funding for several major weapons programs and with some similar, follow-on decisions in the QDR. Major program cuts include terminating the Navy DDG-1000 and CG-X shipbuilding programs,

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<sup>61</sup> Korb, Duncan, and Conley, cited above.

<sup>62</sup> Hon. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon, House Armed Services Committee, Hearing on the 2009 Quadrennial Defense Review, February 4, 2010, from CQ Transcripts.

stretching out planned procurement of new aircraft carriers to one every five years; terminating the F-22 aircraft program after buying 183 aircraft; halting production of C-17 airlift aircraft; and terminating the transformational communications satellite (TSAT), VH-71 Presidential Helicopter, and Air Force Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) helicopter programs. Other issues have to do with apparent shortfalls in some systems, including the number of Navy fighter aircraft. There has been some debate, as well, about the number of amphibious ships for the Marine Corps, about whether the planned shipbuilding rate can be financed with available budgets and whether the Navy can sustain its goal of 313 ships, and about developing an alternative engine for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The debate is not just about program terminations, however. There is a much broader dimension to the argument, as well. Ever since the Bottom-Up Review, some have doubted the ability of U.S. forces to manage more than a single major combat operation at a time. Many question, even today, whether the United States could manage a major conventional conflict in Korea, for example, with so many troops committed in stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Senior officers answer that the United States would prevail, but only with higher casualties and only by effectively eliminating the ability to rotate deployed forces out of Iraq and Afghanistan on schedule.<sup>63</sup> If that is so, the critics ask—if current forces would find another conflict so difficult to cope with—how can the Defense Department conclude that capabilities for traditional conflicts are more than adequate? Moreover, according to some press accounts, the military service chiefs, initially at least, did not concur with parts of the 2008 National Defense Strategy that called for taking “additional acceptable risk” in traditional military capabilities in order to bolster capabilities for irregular conflicts.<sup>64</sup>

For his part, Secretary of Defense Gates plays down such concerns:

All told, this year’s National Defense Strategy concluded that although U.S. predominance in conventional warfare is not unchallenged, it is sustainable for the medium term given current trends. It is true that the United States would be hard pressed to fight a major conventional ground war elsewhere on short notice, but as I’ve said before, where on Earth would we do that? We have ample, untapped striking power in our air and sea forces should the need arise to deter or punish aggression—whether on the Korean Peninsula, in the Persian Gulf, or across the Taiwan Strait. So while we are knowingly assuming some additional risk in this area, that risk is, I believe, a prudent and manageable one.<sup>65</sup>

More generally, in his view, Congress’s continued support for current programs, and its skepticism about efforts to redirect investments, is a symptom of a deep-rooted inertia that he sees as a barrier to necessary changes in priorities:

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<sup>63</sup> Representative McKeon posed a question about DOD’s two-war capabilities in the February 4, 2010, hearing on the QDR cited above. Vice Admiral Stephen Stanley replied, “Another operation in the near term the size of a Korea would ... require the nation to mobilize.... It would take away our ability to rotate the forces even ... as we are now.... Would we still prevail? Yes. Would there be increased losses? Yes.”

<sup>64</sup> Jason Sherman, “Gates Approves New Defense Strategy over Objections of Service Chiefs,” *InsideDefense.com*, June 12, 2008 (also in *Inside the Pentagon*, June 19, 2008). See also Josh White, “Gates Sees Terrorism Remaining Enemy No. 1: New Defense Strategy Shifts Focus From Conventional Warfare,” *Washington Post*, July 31, 2008, p. 1; Carlos Muñoz, “Official Proposes Interagency Oversight: Rehorn: Irregular Warfare Shift Among Services Is Acceptable Risk,” *Inside the Pentagon*, October 23, 2008; Greg Jaffe, “A Single-Minded Focus on Dual Wars: Defense Secretary Is Reorienting the Military to Meet U.S. Troops’ Needs Now,” *Washington Post*, May 15, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Remarks at the National Defense University, September 29, 2008, transcript online at <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1279>.

Support for conventional modernization programs is deeply embedded in our budget, in our bureaucracy, in the defense industry, and in Congress. My fundamental concern is that there is not commensurate institutional support—including in the Pentagon—for the capabilities needed to win the wars we are in, and of the kinds of missions we are most likely to undertake in the future.<sup>66</sup>

In all, Secretary Gates has posed as a far-reaching a critique of the defense planning process as any senior official since President Eisenhower warned against “the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.”<sup>67</sup> He has expressed frustration not only with a reluctance in the military services to devote resources to current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also about the institutional conservatism of the military services at a time when, in his view, the nature of war is rapidly changing. Early in his tenure as Defense Secretary, he felt it necessary to prod the Air Force very aggressively to allocate more reconnaissance UAV resources to Afghanistan, an effort he later described as “like pulling teeth.”<sup>68</sup> He has pointed to past cases of resistance to new initiatives, such as Air Force delays in developing with the CIA an unmanned aerial vehicle for surveillance, as representative of similar barriers to change today.<sup>69</sup>

Ultimately, the debates over program terminations and over the priorities enunciated in the 2006 and 2010 QDRs reflect a quite profound, underlying dispute. Secretary Gates has been particularly forceful in arguing that current processes are not sufficiently adaptable to changing security requirements. Others question the wisdom of major shifts of resources away from current capabilities, which they see as the bedrock of U.S. military power and national security.

## **Downplaying Threats from Russia and China**

As discussed above, compared to previous strategy statements, the 2010 QDR report does not include critical comments about Russia’s record on human rights and democratization, and it includes only a very brief expression of concern about the lack of transparency in China’s military plans and intentions. In a hearing shortly before the QDR report was released, Representative McKeon expressed a concern that the QDR would not be realistic about China:

When we receive the QDR, I will be looking closely at any changes to the [Defense] Department’s assessment of China. My fear is that we will downgrade the China threat in an attempt to justify last year’s and future cuts to key defense programs.<sup>70</sup>

Some commentaries after the report was released see evidence of efforts to downgrade the Chinese threat in changes in the language of the QDR report between a draft circulated for comment in December 2009 and the final version of the report released on February 1, 2010. Apparently reflecting a review by other agencies and by the White House, the final version

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell Address,” January 17, 1961, online at <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/dwightdeisenhowerfarewell.html>.

<sup>68</sup> For a thorough account of the UAV episode, see Greg Jaffe, “A Single-Minded Focus on Dual Wars: Defense Secretary Is Reorienting the Military to Meet U.S. Troops’ Needs Now,” *Washington Post*, May 15, 2009; for “pulling teeth,” see Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, remarks at the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, April 21, 2008, cited above.

<sup>69</sup> Also see Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, remarks at the Air War College, April 21, 2008, *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> John T. Bennett, “McKeon Fears 2010 QDR To Scale Back ‘China Threat,’” *DefenseNews.com*, January 13, 2010.

deletes comments about China that were very similar to those in the 2006 QDR and the June 2008 National Defense Strategy statement.<sup>71</sup>

The change in tone has, however, received less attention than might have been expected, perhaps because many of the recommendations for force enhancements in the QDR reflect a concerted effort to counter high-end asymmetric challenges that have been identified with China. These include many measures to cope with anti-access strategies, measures to counter anti-satellite systems, and cyberwarfare initiatives.

For its part, the Administration's approach appears to be determined by the very high priority the President accords to efforts to gain cooperation from Russia and China on arms control and non-proliferation, reflected in the "New START" treaty agreed to on March 27, 2010, and signed in Prague on April 8; on global measures to tighten the security of bomb-grade fissile material addressed at the Washington Nuclear Summit on April 12-13; and, perhaps most importantly, on efforts to gain Russian and Chinese support for sanctions against Iran's nuclear program. Officials insist that the government continues to express its concern about human rights, democratization, and military intentions in private meetings.

## **Lack of a National Security Strategy, Unclear Connection Between Strategy and Plans, Absence of Long-Term Planning**

Three additional criticisms of the QDR are closely related:

- The delay in issuing a White House National Security Strategy statement left the QDR without sufficient guidance on strategic priorities;
- The current QDR does not clearly enough show how force plans are derived from its assessment of strategy—indeed, some would argue the QDR does not endorse any specific force plans at all, but simply lists existing force levels as a given, and
- QDRs are, by law, required to look ahead twenty years, but the current QDR appears to have a much shorter time horizon and says little about long-term planning.

### **Delay in release of National Security Strategy report**

As discussed above, current law requires the White House to issue a statement of National Security Strategy within 150 days of the start of a new presidential term and annually thereafter. No new Administration has issued a report so early in its tenure, however, and the George W. Bush Administration did not attempt to issue annual reports but, rather, issued only two in its eight years in office. Obama Administration officials insist that the absence of a national security strategy report did not limit the QDR, in part because of the continuity of planning with Secretary Gates remaining in office, in part because of extensive previous experience of the senior officials in the Office of the Under Secretary for Policy who directed the QDR, and in part because of

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<sup>71</sup> John Bennett, "China Language Softened in Final Version of QDR," *Defense News*, February 7, 2010, p. 8; and Bill Gertz, "Inside the Ring," *Washington Times*, February 18, 2010, p. 8.

regular consultations with the White House and other agencies throughout the preparation of the QDR.

As discussed in the concluding section of this report, some might argue that the QDR would benefit from more extensive discussions of broader security issues, and that this might be facilitated if national security strategy statements were available first. That depends, though, on how thorough the national security strategy is. For the most part, past statements have been very broad statements of global objectives, without much discussion of the strategy for attaining them. If future statements are similar, some might argue that they would be of limited value in providing guidance.

Whatever the merits of those arguments, it may be difficult to address the issue legislatively. The deadline for QDRs has already been progressively pushed back, from May for the initial 1997 QDR, to September 30 for the 2001 QDR, and to the first Monday in the following February for subsequent QDRs. If a QDR is to help provide guidance in an Administration's defense budget planning, its main results preferably should be available no later than the fall of an Administration's first year in office, when the Defense Department is completing plans for defense programs that will begin in on October 1 of an Administration's second year and continue for four more years into the future. A delay would mean the QDR would not have an influence on program plans, except possibly at the margins, until the budget that will take effect on October 1 of an Administration's third year. In effect, it would shape defense programs only in a President's final 15 months of a four-year term in office. If national security strategy statements are, as it appears, too difficult to produce within five months, then QDRs will likely have to be carried on without them.

An additional practical issue is that it now takes several months for a new Administration's political appointees, who lead the relevant agencies, to be selected, reviewed, formerly nominated, considered by the Senate, confirmed by the Senate, and sworn into office. The few senior officers who are in place early in an Administration's tenure, most often have very high priority, critical issues immediately on the agenda. The time needed to provide guidance on a new, comprehensive statement of national security strategy, to establish procedures for writing and reviewing the report, and to resolve interagency issues, may not be readily available, and officials responsible to carry out the work may not all be in place until well into a new President's first or even second year in office.

### **Unclear connection of strategy and force structure**

Congressional committee Members and staff have expressed a concern that the 2010 QDR does not clearly enough show how force plans are derived from strategy, and some might argue that the QDR does not endorse the planned force posture at all. Representatives Skelton and McKeon, the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the House Armed Services Committee, reportedly wrote a letter to the QDR review panel asking it to consider the force structure recommendations of the QDR. They noted that the QDR recommends that "the United States essentially maintain our present force structure for the midterm or the future years defense plan." A committee aide commented that "'We need greater discussion linking threats to the force planning construct to the force structure. Members had a difficult time understanding how in this QDR—despite the threat-environment changing and the force-planning construct expanding—the force structure remained unchanged.'"□

This is by no means a new issue. The QDR statute was amended in the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act to require that the report on the 2009-2010 QDR be supplemented by a classified report to the congressional defense committees on the “analysis used to determine and support the findings on force structure” in the QDR and “a description of any changes from the previous quadrennial defense review to the minimum military requirements for major military capabilities.”<sup>72</sup> DOD provided the required report and briefed congressional defense committee staff and Members on the QDR analysis, but questions about the analysis apparently remain. The underlying issue is whether changes in force posture continue, as in the past, to lag behind changes in strategic priorities identified in successive QDRs.

A close reading of the QDR report finds no overall endorsement of the planned force structure at all, though the report supports a number of new initiatives to improve capabilities for specific missions. The QDR report includes a quite detailed list of the force structure that is planned under the current Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) that extends through FY2015. But the statement that introduces the list appears remarkably unenthusiastic:

Taking into account the demands of a dynamic and complex security environment, the requirements of U.S. defense strategy, the need for enhancements to key capabilities across a wide range of missions, and the need for forces with sufficient aggregate capacity to meet the criteria laid out above, DoD has determined that U.S. forces, for the duration of the FY 2011–15 Future Years Defense Program (FYDP), will conform to the general parameters outlined below.

Moreover, even that restrained a statement says nothing about force requirements beyond the end of the current planning period.

Rather than provide a rationale for planned forces, the statement seems designed to leave open the possibility that the Secretary of Defense may raise questions about requirements for elements of the force at some point in the future. In a speech to the Navy League on May 3, 2010, Secretary Gates raised questions about the need for the amphibious assault capabilities of the Marine Corps and the number of aircraft carriers in the Navy.<sup>73</sup>

### **Lack of long-term planning**

A related complaint is that the QDR did not look as far ahead as twenty years, as the statute mandates. When asked about the QDR’s time horizon, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy replied,

In terms of a longer term perspective, our scenarios did look out into the future; 2016 was one snapshot, 2028 was another. And we pulled those insights forward to really focus on refining the plans for the FDYP [Note: the “Future Years Defense Plan” that extends through FY2015]. That said, once you get beyond the FDYP . . . for capability investment. Trying to map out 30 years of force structure is extremely difficult, given that the world will change,

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<sup>72</sup> FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 111-84, October 28, 2009, Section 1052.

<sup>73</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Remarks as Delivered, Navy League Sea-Air-Space Exposition, Gaylord Convention Center, National Harbor, Maryland, Monday, May 3, 2010, online at <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1460>.



your capability opportunities will change, lots of things will change. So their vision is very clear in the near to mid-term, and it is more aspirational in the long term.<sup>74</sup>

The QDR report did not discuss the impact of long-term trends on defense plans, however, so it did not provide any insight into the assumptions that the Defense Department used in its 2028 sets of scenarios. Long-term projections of trends are often done for planning purposes. Often projections start from the simple premise that current trends continue, which, though never true, at least provides a starting point for discussion. With that as a base, it is possible to discuss excursions that could present more challenges for national security, or that could be more benign. Even a continuation of current trends, such as the dramatic growth of China's economy, would have profound effects on global security.

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<sup>74</sup> House Armed Services Committee, "Hearing on the 2009 Quadrennial Defense Review," February 4, 2010, CQ transcript. "FYDP" refers to the Future Years Defense Plan, which projects funding for the next five or six years. The current FYDP extends through FY2015.



## **VI. Are QDRs Far-Reaching Enough?**

Taken as a whole, discussions of security challenges in successive QDRs appear to represent a considerable evolution of official thinking over time. The 1990 Base Force analysis and the 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR) were intended to provide a rationale for maintaining strong military capabilities as the Cold War came to an end. The BUR established the requirement that U.S. military forces should be able to prevail in two nearly simultaneous regional conflicts comparable to the war with Iraq. For future planning, it put an emphasis on continuing to maintain a substantial technological advantage over potential adversaries. Planners did not neglect post-Cold War requirements for capabilities to manage other kinds of operations, but they concluded that forces able to prevail in two major wars would also be able to meet less demanding requirements.

### **The Evolution of Strategic Thinking in QDRs**

By the time Congress enacted the original QDR requirement in 1996, however, that premise was being very widely questioned. Ongoing, long-term U.S. military missions in Bosnia and later in Kosovo, plus enforcement of no-fly zones in Iraq, were straining the Army and Air Force, neither of which was organized to sustain long-term rotational deployments abroad. The 1997 QDR addressed the strains caused by what it called “smaller scale contingency operations” at some length and proposed several measures to ameliorate them.<sup>75</sup> It also recognized as a basic element of strategy a requirement that military forces be employed to “shape the international security environment,” which demanded forward deployments and military engagement in non-conflict situations to improve ties with foreign nations and prevent regional conflicts. On the whole, however, the 1997 QDR was mainly reactive. It addressed strains on the force from current operations rather than anticipating fundamental changes in the character of future challenges.

The 2001 QDR, released just after the attacks of 9/11 but prepared before then, emphasized the need to build a full range of capabilities to cope with often unpredictable dangers. It added to the two-war requirement a mandate to protect the homeland from potentially catastrophic attacks and to maintain an effective deterrent presence in four critical regions of the globe. The resulting 1-4-2-1 planning construct was, however, largely an effort to characterize the demands of current deployments plus the inherited two-war strategy. The requirement to halt aggression in two regional conflicts and prevail in one remained little changed from the BUR, while the 1997 QDR focus on shaping the security environment was refined into the four regions requirement. The requirements of smaller scale contingencies were, to some degree, played down. The 2001 QDR discussed the need to transform the force to meet unexpected future challenges, but transformation was largely defined as continued pursuit of new technologies. The force planning construct was not significantly new.

The 2006 and 2010 QDRs much more fully reflected the implications of the 9/11 attacks and the lessons of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, and also ventured somewhat further. The 2006 QDR adopted the “four challenges” framework, and concluded that investments should be shifted from means of engaging in traditional, conventional force-on-force conflicts, in which

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<sup>75</sup> Among other things, it identified so-called low density-high demand units; mandated additions to some of the more highly stressed forces, including military police and civil affairs teams; made offsetting reductions in other units; and undertook systematic studies of the burdens of recent and ongoing contingency operations on military personnel.

the United States appeared likely to sustain a significant margin of superiority for the foreseeable future, and toward irregular, disruptive (i.e., asymmetric attacks on U.S. vulnerabilities), and catastrophic (WMD attacks on the homeland) challenges. The 2010 QDR goes a considerable step further, characterizing future challenges to U.S. security as most likely to be shaped by efforts of possible adversaries to exploit potential U.S. weaknesses rather than to confront U.S. traditional military capabilities directly,

In sum, the evolution of strategic concepts in successive QDRs has amounted to a quite substantial change in perspective over time. What has now become a major shift in perceptions of the international security environment, however, was undertaken in relatively small steps, each of which was largely reactive. Each defense review made adjustments to the conclusions of its predecessors, mainly to capture the impact of demands on the force created by unanticipated operations.

Advocates of more far-reaching changes in defense policy might conclude that the process could have gone faster. As evidence, the 1997 National Defense Panel (NDP), which Congress established to provide input to the 1997 QDR and to carry out an independent assessment of defense policy following it, appears to have anticipated many, though by no means all, of the fundamental strategic precepts that the 2010 QDR has embraced. The NDP's final report emphasized themes that have now become familiar—above all, the prospect that future foes would not challenge U.S. conventional military power directly, but would instead use asymmetric means to exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. The panel warned that critical U.S. capabilities, particularly the ability to project power far around the globe from bases in distant regions and naval forces offshore, would be increasingly at risk because of the diffusion of advanced technologies. To cope with the anti-access challenge, the panel recommended new programs, including the development of long-range strike systems and the conversion of ballistic missile submarines to launch cruise missiles against targets ashore. The Defense Department later adopted the conversion proposal and is now considering long-range strike alternatives. The NDP also recommended substantial annual investments in experimental exercises to identify rapidly evolving challenges and test responses to them. Although it did not anticipate large-scale, long duration counterinsurgency and stability operations, it included a very broad assessment of security related global trends. It cited transnational threats, including global terrorism, as a potential challenge, and it emphasized urban warfare, potential threats to homeland security, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the vulnerability of space-based systems, and threats to information systems, now referred to as cyberwar, as critical issues.

In retrospect, some would say that the 1997 NDP report articulated many key aspects of a vision of the global security environment that was only much later adopted by the 2006 and 2010 QDRs. For its part, though the NDP members credited the 1997 QDR for making progress in addressing current challenges, the NDP report was quite critical of the Defense Department for not adjusting rapidly enough to accelerating changes in the nature of potential conflicts. Critical as it was, the NDP also received a respectful hearing from senior leaders—the authors of the QDR—inside the Pentagon. But even though the NDP report did not go unheeded, the evolution of subsequent assessments of strategy in successive QDRs appears, by comparison, to have been relatively cautious.

## **Changes in Service Organization from 1998 to 2003**

As cautious as the progression of strategic thinking has been, the evolution of military organization and planning may appear to have been even more incremental. Moreover, while the

strategic precepts outlined in strategy reviews may have affected reorganization plans in each of the services, it has been hard to see a direct connection between the strategic precepts expressed in each successive QDR and changes in organization that each of the military services pursued separately in the period from 1997 to 2003. During that period, the Air Force, Army, and Navy, each adopted a significant change in organization and operational planning. Each of these changes was adopted independently from the QDR process, though the 1998 Air Force reorganization was derived, in part, from recommendations in the 1997 QDR.

- In 1998, the Air Force undertook to make overseas rotational deployments more predictable and the makeup of deployed forces more adaptable by assigning each of its tactical aircraft units to one of ten Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF) packages, each comprised of a mixture of air superiority, attack, and support wings. Each AEF would be available for deployment for three months out of each 15 month period.
- After several years of discussion, in 2001, the Army announced a fundamental redesign of its force structure, with “modular” brigades rather than division-sized units as the building blocks of the force. The brigades were organized to deploy independently or as part of larger, flexible force packages with other brigades. Headquarters and support units previously assigned to divisions were now allocated to the brigades. A key aspect of the modular redesign was that units would be fully manned in peacetime, so that they could be deployed without wholesale mobilization of individual reserves and without having to fill out units with personnel drawn from other, non-deploying parts of the Army. Like the Air Force AEF plan, the redesign was intended to make the Army into a more “expeditionary” force that could more readily be deployed in a wide range of smaller scale operations, including multiple engagement activities and peacekeeping missions, without disrupting personnel patterns across the entire service.
- In 2003, the Navy adopted a new plan for deploying aircraft carriers and associated surface combatants called the Fleet Response Plan (FRP). Prior to 2003, the Navy based its deployments on requirements established many years earlier to maintain constant or periodic forward presence in major regions of the globe, including the North Atlantic, Mediterranean, Eastern Pacific, and Indian Ocean, including the Persian Gulf. In the event of a crisis, however, only a limited number of carriers were available to respond rapidly in any one region. The Fleet Response Plan was adopted to reflect requirements that the Navy be able to surge forces into conflict regions in support of joint operations. It calls for six carrier strike groups to be able to respond anywhere around the globe within 60 days and two more within 90 days.<sup>76</sup>

While the Air Force reorganization can be seen as a relatively timely response to the strains discussed in the 1997 QDR, Army and Navy changes lagged significantly behind. In light of this history, policymakers may wish to consider whether similar or even more radical changes in service organization may be warranted by the evolution of defense strategy in the 2006 and 2010 QDRs. To be sure, there have been some significant changes in organization in the military

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<sup>76</sup> See CRS Report RS21338, *Navy Ship Deployments: New Approaches—Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke. See also U.S. General Accounting Office, *Military Readiness: Navy's Fleet Response Plan Would Benefit from a Comprehensive Management Approach and Rigorous Testing*, GAO Report 06-84, November 2005.

services recently. Some were decided during the 2006 and 2010 QDR reviews, including a substantial increase in the size of special operations forces. Others, though decided on apart from the reviews, are consistent with thinking reflected in the QDRs, including much more attention to homeland defense missions, which is reflected in many steps, such as the establishment of the Northern Command, a new combatant command with responsibility for continental defense. The recent establishment of a cyber command similarly reflects thinking highlighted in recent QDRs.

## **More Far-Reaching Changes in Posture to Reflect QDR Strategy**

Are similar, or even more radical changes in organization and investment warranted, particularly by the judgment reflected in recent QDRs that future adversaries will pursue asymmetric advantages over U.S. vulnerabilities rather than directly confront traditional U.S. military strength? Several aspects of the current U.S. force posture might be at issue.

### **Additional measures to bolster homeland defense**

The 2010 QDR hints, though it does not quite directly conclude, that the U.S. homeland is no longer, as it was well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a sanctuary from conflict abroad. Rather, the QDR discussion of scenarios involving attacks on the homeland, among other things, suggests that the United States itself may very likely be subject to attack in the event of a major regional confrontation abroad, either by terrorist groups infiltrating the nation or by long-range strike with adversaries using more advanced technologies. Recent QDRs have put a great deal of emphasis on homeland defense, mainly identifying measures to bolster DOD support for domestic agencies in disaster response, though there has been some attention, as well, to direct defense. The 2010 QDR's description of the evolving threat may raise questions about whether changes may be warranted. Potential changes might include adjustments in command arrangements to clarify responsibilities for defensive missions both ashore and in adjacent ocean areas; measures to ensure communications in and around the homeland in the event of disruptive satellite or cyberattacks; additional steps to ensure continuity of military command arrangements in various scenarios; and special equipment needs of National Guard and other forces likely to be directly called upon.

### **Implications of anti-access strategies for forward deployed forces**

The 2010 QDR identifies a number of initiatives to combat anti-access strategies, but it does not propose reductions in forces, such as short-range theater aircraft either forward deployed in theater or on aircraft carriers, that might be increasingly vulnerable.<sup>77</sup> Instead, the QDR proposes measures to better defend forward deployed forces, as well as investments in long-range strike capabilities and underwater systems to work around the problem. The QDR also discusses the development of a new air-sea battle concept, but with very little public discussion of even the main matters at issue. Some independent analysts see the challenges as much more immediate than Administration officials. Andrew Krepinevich, for example, describes U.S. power projection

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<sup>77</sup> Secretary of Defense Gates did, however, discuss the potential increasing vulnerability of surface ships as one of a number of possible reasons for reducing the number of aircraft carriers in the fleet in his May 3, 2010 speech before the Navy League, cited above.

capabilities as a “wasting asset,” while officials in DOD’s policy office have concluded that blue water power projection capabilities will remain “without peer for some time.”<sup>78</sup>

If assessments associated with the discussion of the air-sea battle concept conclude that anti-access/area denial strategies might rapidly become more effective in forcing shorter-range U.S. forces away from regions of conflict, the resource implications could be substantial. Less investment in shorter-range systems may be warranted, though carriers, in particular, remain critical for a number of other missions. Much more investment might be needed in, for example, longer-range air- or even space-based strike systems, particularly for use in the early stages of a conflict; much improved intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and long-range and loitering strike systems to target mobile ballistic and cruise missile launchers; a substantial increase in submarines and submarine launched weapons; defenses against ballistic and cruise missiles in very large numbers; and, perhaps, new investments in air-launched anti-missile systems to reduce unfavorable cost exchange ratios in defending against ballistic warheads with current technologies.

### **The balance between heavy ground forces and other capabilities**

The 2010 QDR directs that one Army heavy armored brigade be converted by FY2013 into a lighter, more mobile Stryker brigade, and the QDR report notes that additional conversions may be directed in the future. If, as Secretary Gates has insisted, two major regional wars are no longer regarded as the predominant requirement in determining the size and composition of the force, then a potential follow-on question may be whether even larger reductions in heavy forces may be warranted. A substantial reduction in heavy ground forces would entail accepting greater risk in responding to some simultaneous acts of aggression in two regions. But, as Secretary Gates asked, is the real-world likelihood of that inherited planning scenario sufficient to warrant such heavy investments in forces to counter it?<sup>79</sup> The 2010 QDR deemphasized the two-war requirement, but it seems hard to some observers to detect the results of its demotion in force planning. Large investments in heavy ground forces were inherited from the Cold War, when the central planning requirement was a land war against a continental power as the adversary. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, unless the Russian threat rematerializes, the main great power challenge may be in Asia, which is primarily a naval theater.

Resources saved from reducing heavy ground forces might be reallocated in a number of ways, depending on assessments of strategic priorities. Heavy forces might be replaced more rapidly by accelerating the deployment of brigades equipped with new, lighter armored vehicles being developed in place of the now canceled ground vehicle element of the Army’s Future Combat System. To the extent requirements for large rotational forces for long duration counterinsurgency and stability operations are seen as permanent, more light Army forces might be called for. Alternatively, a balance of new investments in measures to defend access to the global commons—air, sea, space, and cyberspace—which the QDR discusses at some length, may be more valuable. As an alternative to heavy ground forces, greater investments in air launched

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<sup>78</sup> Andrew F. Krepinevich, “The Pentagon’s Wasting Assets,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August, 2009, Vol. 88, Issue 4; Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley, “The Contested Commons,” *Proceedings of the U.S. Naval Institute*, Vol. 135, No. 7, July 2009.

<sup>79</sup> See of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Remarks at the National Defense University, September 29, 2008, cited above.

strike capabilities might improve flexibility, on the one hand moderating at least to some degree the increased risks associated with a two-war scenario, while also being of value in other missions.

### **Specialized forces for foreign internal defense**

The 2010 QDR cites building the capacity of partner states as one of its six priority joint mission areas. The QDR report discusses the importance of ongoing security cooperation activities, including bilateral and multilateral training and exercises, foreign military sales (FMS) and financing (FMF), officer exchange programs, and education of foreign military officers at U.S. military schools. It cites security force assistance (SFA) as an increasingly critical mission, pointing as models to training of Afghan and Iraqi military forces by partnering with U.S. units training and advisory assistance with smaller numbers of U.S. troops in the Philippines; and training and equipment assistance for counterterrorism operations to security forces in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and Colombia.

The report does not, however, discuss the debate within the Army over proposals to expand the number of specialized advisory and assistance units, beyond those already long established in special operations forces. Those proposals have been rejected by Army leaders, with the service electing, instead, to strengthen the advisory assistance capabilities of general purpose forces. As the Army puts it, the service expects all elements of the force to be capable of operating effectively across the full spectrum of military missions. The QDR cites plans to add 500 “train-the-trainer” personnel across all four services to qualify regular military combat units to provide assistance to partner militaries. It also discusses measures to increase language and cultural training, enhance regional expertise, support ministerial level training in certain key nations, and expand efforts to support UN and regional security organizations.

If the mission is as critical as the QDR strategy judges it to be, a potential question is why it seems more important not to reduce the number of general purpose forces than to develop specialized security force assistance units. When large numbers of U.S. combat units are deployed, as in Iraq and Afghanistan, the security assistance mission may well be an organic part of the campaign strategy, and partnering with allied security forces a responsibility of regular, deployed units. In other nations, however, with some exceptions, training is most often contracted out, rather than being carried out by U.S. military personnel. An issue for future QDRs may be whether security force assistance requires specialized skills that are not likely to be fully developed by units assigned to multiple missions, and whether security force assistance will be, in effect, a secondary priority if assigned to general purpose forces.

A precedent to this discussion may be in the debate in the 1980s over special operations forces. Congress established a separate Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in 1987 because it was concerned, first, that situations requiring the use of special operations forces were not uncommon, and, second, that the unique value of special operations forces was under-appreciated by regional combatant commanders who saw special operations as an adjunct to campaign plans for large-scale regional operations rather than as critical capabilities in themselves.<sup>80</sup> Today, some Special Operations Forces specialize in foreign military assistance, but most are assigned to direct action combat functions. Opponents of establishing additional specialized security assistance units think

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<sup>80</sup> SOCOM was established by the FY1987 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 99-661, November 14, 1986, Sections 1311 and 1312.



that regional commanders fully appreciate the importance of building partner capacity, so a case for separate advisory and assistance units may be less compelling. Others insist that experience in building direct relations with foreign militaries may be valuable enough to warrant independent specialties.

### **The case for adding capabilities to meet new challenges**

One conclusion from the strategic assessment in the QDR may be that additional capabilities, and perhaps additional forces, are needed, instead of rebalancing limited investments. The QDR strategy does not eliminate the two-war requirement inherited from the Bottom-Up Review. Rather it identifies additional kinds of threats that require different capabilities. The QDR plays down the importance of longstanding “traditional” requirements by asserting that the risk of conventional state-on-state, force-on-force conflict has diminished while other risks have grown. The discussion of strategy in the QDR, however, may seem to some to imply just the opposite—that future near-peer competitors will add to their traditional capabilities concerted efforts to identify and exploit U.S. vulnerabilities. Anti-access strategies, for example, might supplement, rather than replace means of carrying out regional aggression. Cyberwar measures to disrupt U.S. communications systems would be a prelude to conventional attacks. In this view, the prospect of hybrid warfare is not a reason for reducing capabilities to overmatch traditional challenges. Rather, efforts by potential technologically advanced adversaries to use asymmetric means of attack are a rationale for maintaining existing advantages and adding countermeasures to cope with new means of defeating U.S. forces.



## VII. Should the QDR Address Broader Security Issues?

The Quadrennial Defense Review is not what the 1995 Roles and Missions Commission proposed when it urged a periodic reassessment of security policy. The Commission recommended a quadrennial national security review managed by the National Security Council rather than a Defense Department exercise.<sup>81</sup> The Congressional mandate, however, required the Defense Department to carry out quadrennial reviews to address defense strategy, force structure, and resources, and not security policy in general, which, presumably, is left to be defined by the annual White House National Security Strategy reports that were required by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act.

Successive QDRs have consequently been described by some observers as “stovepiped” exercises, addressing only certain sets of security issues, recently supplemented by similarly stovepiped reviews of diplomacy and development policy by the State Department and U.S. AID, and of homeland security policy by the Department of Homeland Security. Defense officials acknowledge as much,<sup>82</sup> but also insist that the 2010 QDR was carried out in close collaboration with other agencies and with the White House, so that it reflects broader security policy perspectives. A less critical way of describing the QDR, the QDDR, and the QHSR, would be to say that each, appropriately, stays in its lane.

The QDR report often asserts the need to focus on preventing and deterring conflicts before they start, on cooperating with partner states through bilateral and multilateral alliances, on strengthening civilian agencies, on better interagency coordination, and on a “whole-of-government” approach to security. The report also acknowledges that global financial developments; the diffusion of advanced technology; limits on energy and other resources; the health of the environment; the effects of climate change; demographic trends; ethnic and cultural divisions; and the pace of global communications all shape the evolving security landscape in complex ways.

While it is not the legislatively mandated role of the QDR to define policy on all these overlapping matters, policy-makers may wish to consider whether it would be worthwhile for the QDR to consider how selected, broader national security matters affect the role of military power in general and key aspects of defense policy more specifically. The principal policy matters that directly shape defense planning include

- When and under what conditions to use military force;

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<sup>81</sup> An extensive study of national security policy-making sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and co-authored by now Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michèle Flournoy, also recommended that each new Administration should “Conduct a Quadrennial National Security Review (QNSR) to develop U.S. national security strategy and determine the capabilities required to implement the strategy.” Clark A. Murdoch and Michèle A. Flournoy, Principal Investigators, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase II Report: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, Washington: CSIS, July 2005, online at [http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/bgn\\_ph2\\_report.pdf](http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/bgn_ph2_report.pdf).

<sup>82</sup> See questions posed to Under Secretary of Policy Michèle Flournoy in the February 4, 2010 House Armed Services Committee Hearing, cited above.

- Effects of global financial trends on long-term security planning;
- Effects of long-term domestic economic and budget trends on defense planning;
- The effect of growing costs of personnel, operations, and acquisition on long-term defense plans;
- The evolution of Cold War-era alliances in the post-Cold War era;
- Global cooperation and global rules of behavior on proliferation, terrorism, human rights, and democratization;
- The integration of defense and non-defense responsibilities in national security policy.

## **When to Use Military Force**

The 2010 QDR report includes a page-and-a-half discussion of “America’s interests and the roles of military power.” U.S. interests, it says, include “security, prosperity, broad respect for universal values, and an international order that promotes cooperative action.” The nation will advance these interests, it says, by strengthening its domestic foundations, and by the integrated use of all elements of national power. It states that America’s interests and the U.S. role in the world require “Armed Forces with unmatched capabilities and a willingness on the part of the nation to employ them in defense of our national interests and the common good.” The nation will seek to pursue its interests “through cooperation, diplomacy, economic development and engagement, and the power of America’s ideas and values,” but it will also use force “when absolutely necessary.” Whenever possible, the United States will use force “in an internationally sanctioned coalition with allies, international and regional organizations, and like-minded nations,” but it will also “retain the ability to act unilaterally and decisively when appropriate.” The report also says

Despite those who disregard the rules of the international system, the United States must remain a standard-bearer in the conduct of war. The United States will maintain and support international norms by upholding the Geneva Conventions and by providing detainees and prisoners of war the rights and protections afforded to them under international law.

The report concludes that any decision to “commit forces to hostile environments should be based on a consideration of U.S. and allied interests, including treaty commitments, and the likely costs and expected risks of military action.” And it says that “America’s men and women in uniform should never be put at risk absent a clear mission and a realistic and sufficiently resourced plan to succeed.”

As a brief statement of policy, this discussion touches on the main, commonly-made points at a level of generality that may raise few objections. It does not, however, address issues, such as the occasions that may warrant the preemptive use of force, that have been more contentious, and some legislators and other policy-makers may expect the QDR to define policy on matters that are important subjects of debate. As part of a review that urges a substantial shift in priorities to address fundamental changes in the nature of global challenges to security, the discussion of the use of force in the QDR report may appear, by comparison, to lag behind the current state of play on the issue.

A more complete and up-to-date discussion might address at least four questions:

- **What is the role of military force in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction?** In its first National Security Strategy report, issued in June 2002, the George W. Bush Administration explicitly argued that military force may be used preemptively to prevent hostile nations or groups from acquiring the ability to threaten the United States with nuclear weapons.<sup>83</sup> The issue at the time was Iraq's WMD program, which turned out not to have been a real danger. Now Iran's nuclear weapons program is seen as a grave threat. There has been an extensive debate about the likely effectiveness of military attacks on Iran's nuclear infrastructure and about the consequences of attacking it. The 2010 QDR report does not discuss preemption, though it says that the United States reserves the right to use military force unilaterally to protect U.S. interests. A more extensive discussion of circumstances that would warrant the use of force might address when threats are grave enough to require military action, what makes a threat "imminent" enough to justify preemption, what degree of confidence is needed in intelligence estimates of potential threats to determine the degree of danger, what the likelihood of success and consequences of an action might be, what the consequences of inaction might be, whether effective alternatives are available, and what effects unilateral military action might have on efforts to construct a more cooperative, rule-based international order.
- **What is the role of military force in protecting human rights, particularly in cases of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and government collapse?** The United States intervened in Somalia from 1990 to 1994 to deliver humanitarian assistance and restore stability in a failed state, but then withdrew; subsequently did not act in Rwanda to halt a genocide; sent forces into Haiti to return an elected government to power and restore order; later intervened, though only after much hesitation, in Bosnia and Kosovo, with European allies, to halt ethnic cleansing; and has since supported regional peacekeeping operations in Liberia, the Congo, Sierra Leone, and Darfur, but has not been willing to commit U.S. troops directly. Spreading democracy was one rationale for the invasion of Iraq, but systematic human rights violations elsewhere have not led to U.S. military interventions. The reasons for intervening in some cases but not others might be seen as an important enough issue for future QDRs to consider.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> "The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. We will build defenses against ballistic missiles and other means of delivery. We will cooperate with other nations to deny, contain, and curtail our enemies' efforts to acquire dangerous technologies. And, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed." "The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction—and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively." The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, introduction, p. 15.

<sup>84</sup> The Clinton Administration addressed the use of U.S. military force in what it termed "peace operations" in several venues, including its first National Security Strategy statement in July 1994 and in a doctrinal speech by then-Secretary of Defense William Perry in 1995. The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* July 1994, p. 49; Secretary of Defense William Perry, "The Ethical Uses of Force," Remarks at the U.S. Naval Academy, April 18, 1995. In addition, a more extensive discussion is in The White House, "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations," May 1994.

- **What are the lessons of military operations aimed at regime change in Iraq and Afghanistan, particularly with regard to the demands of post-invasion stability operations?** U.S. planning for military operations in Afghanistan and later Iraq does not appear to have fully anticipated the extent of measures necessary to reestablish order in the aftermath of the initial military operations, the difficulty of overcoming insurgencies that followed the initial invasions, or the burdens on U.S. military forces of subsequent responsibilities to maintain order, build new governmental institutions, and rebuild or create working economies. Faced with an unexpected insurgency in Iraq, the Army and Marine Corps felt compelled to resurrect and rewrite older—some would say long-forgotten—doctrinal thinking about counterinsurgency operations. In the absence of sufficient institutional support from other agencies, the military found itself taking on responsibilities for governance and economic assistance that it had not initially expected to handle. One task for future QDRs might be to discuss processes for planning military operations to ensure that alternative views to those of senior political leaders are considered; that security in the aftermath of an operation is addressed in mission planning; that the legal authority to govern a defeated nation is planned for and has clear lines of responsibility and oversight; that adequate management and financial oversight mechanisms are established; that either military or other agency or combined capabilities can quickly be put in place to manage the reconstruction of governance and the economy; and that decision-makers address the long-term sustainability of an operation before deciding to act.
- **What is the role of the military power, relative to that of trade, diplomacy, development assistance, adherence to universal values, and communications, in promoting stability, preventing wars, strengthening allies and partners, and expanding global cooperation in security affairs?** Defense planners are the first to acknowledge in general that other means of influence are more important than military power in promoting security. General John Abizaid, as commander of the Central Command, for example, said that the war on terrorism was 20 percent military and 80 percent other. But in practice, security-oriented perspectives of defense officials may sometimes clash with other points of view in shaping foreign policy. Defense officials have often been critical of constraints on the provision of security assistance to nations perceived as important to U.S. security interests, including Indonesia and Pakistan, because of human rights, anti-proliferation, and other policies. Recently there have been debates in Congress over provisions that expand the Defense Department's role in providing security related economic assistance, military training, and other aid to foreign nations. One task for future QDRs might be to discuss the Defense Department's perspective on priorities in building security relationships with partner nations, on regional measures to coordinate policy among agencies, and on engagement with potential partners and adversaries.

The 2010 QDR report also briefly alludes to past discussions of conditions that should be met whenever U.S. military personnel are sent in harm's way. The mission should be clear, it says, and a realistic and sufficiently resourced plan to succeed should be in place. These comments reflect a historical discussion that recalls debates over the lessons of the Korean war and Vietnam, the "Weinberger Doctrine" which set restrictive conditions on the use of force following the failed 1983 mission in Lebanon, the critical response to those conditions by then Secretary of State George Shultz, the "Powell Doctrine" that called for force to be used decisively to

accomplish clear objectives, and later efforts by then-Secretary of Defense William Perry to address when military forces might be committed to uphold less than vital U.S. interests under certain circumstances.<sup>85</sup> President Obama made a significant contribution to this discussion in his Nobel Peace Prize address on December 10, 2009.<sup>86</sup> More recently, Joint Chiefs Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen added his own reflections on the use of military power in a speech at the University of Kansas on March 3, 2010.<sup>87</sup> One task for future QDRs might be to address the principles at issue in this longstanding and continuing discourse.

## **The Effect of Global Financial Trends on Security**

U.S. intelligence assessments have recently directed increasing attention to the security implications of global financial trends. Early last year, the Director of National Intelligence warned that the most immediate short-term threat to stability, in the intelligence community's view, was the global financial crisis, which was already beginning to foster instability and that might aggravate potential sources of conflict and weaken the U.S. ability to respond.<sup>88</sup> A year earlier a long-term intelligence community assessment prepared every five years said that one of the most consequential developments of the next fifteen years and beyond would be the continuing shift of global financial strength to Asia.<sup>89</sup> China's economy, the report noted, will likely be larger than that of the United States by 2036, and some more recent assessments, following the global recession, put it as early as 2020.<sup>90</sup> Collectively, the economies of the "BRIC" states (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) may exceed those of the traditional G7 economic powers not much later.<sup>91</sup>

The QDR report briefly mentions some of these trends, but it includes no discussion of their implications for defense policy. Historically, economic crises have sometimes led to internal instability in powerful nations that, in turn, has fostered aggressive military adventures. Germany in the 1930s is an extreme example. The development of effective multilateral means of stabilizing the global economy is commonly regarded as one of the great success stories of post-World War II institution-building. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, some see the construction of more flexible

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<sup>85</sup> These and other statements are collected in an archived CRS report, last updated in 1995, that is available to congressional offices on request. That report is: Stephen Daggett and Nina Serafino, "The Use of Force: Key Statements by Weinberger, Shultz, Aspin, Bush, Powell, Albright, and Perry," CRS Report 94-805F, updated December 5, 1995.

<sup>86</sup> The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President at the Acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize," Oslo City Hall, Oslo, Norway, December 10, 2009, online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize>.

<sup>87</sup> Landon Lecture Series Remarks, As Delivered by Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, March 3, 2010, online at <http://www.jcs.mil/speech.aspx?ID=1336>.

<sup>88</sup> Dennis Blair, Director of National Intelligence, "Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Statement for the Record," February 12, 2009, online at <http://intelligence.senate.gov/090212/blair.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, Washington, D.C., November 2008, [http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF\\_2025/2025\\_Global\\_Trends\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf).

<sup>90</sup> "A new report by PriceWaterhouseCoopers predicts that China could overtake the United States as the largest economy as early as 2020." Katrin Bennhold, "As China Rises, Economic Conflict With West Rises Too," *New York Times*, January 27, 2010.

<sup>91</sup> A Goldman-Sachs projection in 2004 estimated that the cumulative GDPs of the BRIC states would exceed those of the G7 by 2050. That projection, too, has since been moved forward. The G-7 nations are the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The G-8 adds Russia.

and adaptive new trade and financial institutions as essential means of bolstering global stability. The incorporation of more nations into the global economy may be a means of promoting a fundamentally more secure international order.

The implications for military planning are indirect, but potentially important. To some observers, the value of economic cooperation with rising powers like China reinforces the case for pursuing, to the extent possible, the resolution of disputes over security matters through negotiation and the expansion of security cooperation.<sup>92</sup> Some hold that the incorporation of isolated and impoverished nations into the global economy may be as important as building the internal security capabilities of their governments. This may be a factor in providing assistance to fragile states, to the extent that overinvestment in military hardware might weaken economic prospects. At the same time, one rationale for maintaining military power may be to hedge against the unexpected appearance of new security threats due to economic dislocations.

The growth of China's economy has some more direct implications for military planning as well. China's military investments to date have mainly been focused on capabilities for regional conflicts, though it is also extending the range of its naval forces as well. As China's economy and technological capabilities grow, the task of overmatching Chinese military strength in Asia, at such a distance from the United States, will likely become more difficult. The QDR might address some of the implications of these prospects, which might include reemphasizing the importance of alliances with other nations in the region, efforts to resolve regional disputes peacefully, the reinforcement of global norms which reject the use of force to impose a resolution of disputes, and steps to encourage China's cooperation in global security matters.

## **The Effect of Domestic Economic and Budget Trends on Defense Planning**

Defense budgets are shaped in part by trends in the overall federal budget. In the 1980s, as budget deficits climbed to more than six percent of GDP in 1983, Congress undertook a number of measures to reduce spending, including some changes in Social Security, and to raise revenues, including a tax increase in 1983 and a tax reform measure in 1986 that cut rates but expanded the tax base enough to result in a net increase in tax payments. Those measures did not do enough to rein in rising deficits, however, and in November 1985, Congress enacted the first version of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Deficit Control Act. The measure reflected a political decision not to exempt defense from limits needed to bring federal budget deficits under control. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act imposed automatic cuts in spending if Congress failed to enact legislation sufficient to reach progressively smaller deficit targets over the next five years. The automatic cuts exempted Social Security, limited reductions in Medicare and Medicaid to 2 percent, and allocated overall across-the-board reductions 50 percent to defense and 50 percent to non-defense programs. Subsequently, defense spending declined in real terms for the next 14 years in a row—reflecting the end of the Cold War and not just budget pressures—turning up again only in FY1999, when budget surpluses briefly reappeared for the first time in a generation.

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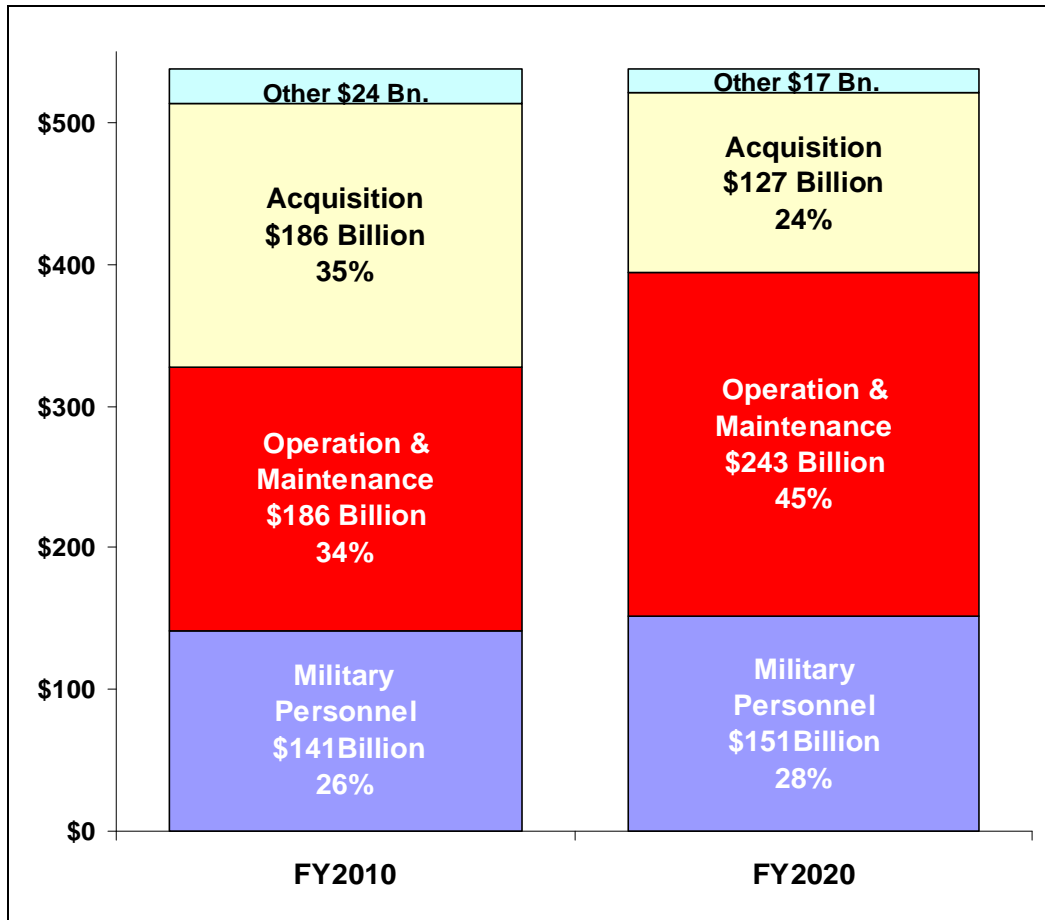
<sup>92</sup> Deputy Secretary of Defense James Steinberg has stated the case for “mutual reassurance” as perhaps the central element of U.S. China policy. See Deputy Secretary of State James B. Steinberg, “Administration’s Vision of the U.S.-China Relationship,” keynote address at the Center for New American Security, September 24, 2009, online at <http://www.state.gov/s/d/2009/129686.htm>.



With baseline budget deficits now comparable as a percentage of GDP to those in the mid-1980s, deficit control measures are again on the agenda, and a commission has been established to recommend measures to bring spending and revenues into balance. The task will become progressively more difficult as members of the Baby Boom generation retire and to the extent medical costs continue to rise. In the pending, FY2011 budget request, defense and other security spending have been exempted from a freeze on discretionary spending. But growth in defense remains relatively modest—about 1 percent per year above inflation through FY2015 in the current plan. Whether Congress and the current and next Administrations will continue to exempt defense from budget cuts or make decisions that would cause defense spending to decline, as it has in the past under similar budget circumstances, is uncertain. A slow recovery from the economic recession could make the short-term budget situation more challenging, which might put defense spending on the table, along with other parts of the budget, sooner, rather than later.

The QDR report does not directly address long-term budget trends, although the review took budget trends into account. As a starting point, the QDR reviewed defense priorities on the premise that baseline budgets would be essentially flat for the remainder of the current planning period, through FY2015. Subsequently, however, the Administration decided to support modest growth in the defense total. Future QDRs might be tasked to assess what the tradeoffs might be with alternative levels of long-term spending. Assuming a freeze in spending, for example, if military personnel and operating costs continue to grow in line with recent trends, funding for weapons acquisition would decline by more than 30%, in real terms, over a ten year period (see **Figure 2**, below). The result might be to lead the Defense Department to consider reductions in the size of the force in order to protect funding for force modernization. Real growth in defense spending, by comparison, would allow increased investments in specific capabilities. Future QDRs might be tasked to address what the priorities would be if more funds were available.

**Figure 2. DOD Base Budget with No Real Growth: FY2010-FY2020**  
(constant FY2010 dollars in billions)



Source: CRS based on the FY2010 base defense budget.

Notes: Assumes growth in Military Personnel accounts equal to the average growth in the Employment Cost Index over the past 25 years of 0.7% per year above base inflation. Assumes growth in Operation and Maintenance accounts of 2.7% per year above base inflation, which is the average rate of growth in the base defense O&M budget per active duty troop since the end of the Korean War.

## Cost Growth in Elements of the Defense Budget

The QDR report also did not address factors that have driven up the cost of defense substantially in recent years and the implications for long-term budget plans. Although one of the initial issue groups established at the start of the QDR process was directed to consider “cost drivers” in the defense program, such matters were not cited in the QDR report. In recent years, costs of most components of the defense budget have climbed substantially, making it progressively more difficult to sustain planned programs within projected budget limits. Six factors, in particular, have driven up the cost of defense:

- Military personnel costs increased by about 45% above inflation, measured by the consumer price index, over the ten years from FY1999 to FY2008. Increases include catch up pay raises of ½ percent above the Employment Cost Index in nine of the past ten years, three rounds of larger pay raises for mid-grade

- personnel, substantial increases in the basic allowance for housing to fully cover off-base housing costs, and major increases in retirement benefits including defense-provided medical coverage for 65-and-older retirees, concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans disability benefits, and the elimination of offsets of retiree survivor benefits for those qualifying for social security;
- Operation and maintenance costs relative to the size of the force have continued to grow, since the end of the Korean War, at a pace of between 2.5% and 3.0% per year above inflation, apparently at odds with trends in operating costs in most parts of the private sector;
  - Costs of new weapon systems have grown at an accelerating rate compared to costs of earlier generations of systems, with the result that current levels of acquisition funding purchase much smaller numbers of weapons than in the past, which has slowed the pace at which the force is being modernized;
  - Growth in costs of major acquisition programs compared to initial cost estimates has also become greater in recent years in spite of efforts to oversee service procedures and develop independent cost estimating procedures. The net effect on budgets is large enough to constitute an independent cause of overall cost growth—GAO calculates cumulative cost growth approaching \$300 billion in current major defense acquisition programs;<sup>93</sup>
  - Increases in the size and equipment requirements of ground forces, reflecting the demands of rotational deployments abroad and an awareness of greater requirements for equipment for force protection, transportation and communications; and
  - The addition of new capabilities to cope with asymmetric challenges, including space and cyber defense, missile defense, homeland defense, and force projection measures.

Taken together, the growth of costs has made it more difficult even for historically high defense budgets to sustain the planned force. Moreover, the current long-term defense plan does not include funding set asides for some extremely costly programs, including replacements for Trident missile submarines and new bombers or other long-range strike systems. The QDR might be tasked to consider measures to rein in cost growth, including alternative military compensation systems, efficiency measures in operations and supply management, reform of the requirements process to limit cost increases for new generations of weapons, and better cost estimation procedures.

## **The Evolution of Cold-War Era Alliances**

The QDR report includes, as noted earlier, an extensive discussion of regional alliances and forward deployments of military forces. It avoids, however, an assessment of strains on current alliances, and it does not discuss measures that may be needed to revitalize alliances for the post-

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<sup>93</sup> Government Accountability Office, *Defense Acquisitions: Assessment of Selected Weapon Programs*, GAO-08-467SP, March 31, 2008 and Government Accountability Office, *Defense Acquisitions: Assessment of Selected Weapon Programs*, GAO-09-236SP, March 30, 2009. GAO also released an update in March 2010, but it did not include new data because the Defense Department did not prepare a revised Future Years Defense Plan in 2009.

Cold War world. While much of the QDR focuses on the evolution of global challenges away from traditional Cold War kinds of conflict, and on reforming Cold War era ways of doing business, the review did not appear to address an alliance structure much of which is, similarly, an inheritance of the Cold War, and that some may conclude should be reformed to meet contemporary needs.

In addressing alliances, the key theme of the QDR, adopted from earlier reviews, is the need to develop tailored systems of deterrence in critical regions. A recurring refrain is the need to remain sufficiently engaged and to maintain sufficient military capabilities in every region to reassure allies that the United States is a dependable partner. Future QDRs might address some more problematic issues in managing alliances in the contemporary environment. Issues include

- **Burdensharing:** NATO has adapted to the Cold War era by adopting policies that focus on out-of-area operations, even in distant regions such as Afghanistan. But President Obama and Secretary Gates, among others, have expressed concern about declining popular support in Europe for the use of military power, declining allied defense budgets, the failure of some allies to build deployable forces for current missions, and limits imposed for political reasons on the missions of forces deployed in Afghanistan. In Asia, some allies have supported U.S. counterterrorism operations more than others. U.S. bases on Okinawa have been an issue with the new Japanese governing party. Future QDRs might address what the United States hopes for and expects from allies in addressing global security issues.
- **Regional policy issues:** In almost all regions, significant policy issues with important allies may need to be managed more intensively if not finally resolved. In Europe, for example, France at times has been very supportive of United States security interests, deploying a large number of troops to Afghanistan and, earlier, during the Persian Gulf War in 1990-1991. But France has often been at odds with the United States on issues such as sanctions on Iraq before 2003, the U.S. decision to invade Iraq, and, more generally, on the extent to which Europe should pursue a more independent security policy. In Asia, Taiwan has sometimes moved toward declaring independence from China, while longstanding U.S. policy recognizes that both the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Peoples Republic of China (Beijing) accept that China is one nation and asserts a U.S. interest in ensuring that issues between be resolved without resort to force. In the Middle East, U.S. officials have declared that a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinian authority is vital to U.S. security interests, but progress in reaching an agreement has been difficult. Relations with key Arab states have been strained, at times, over their policy toward Israel, human rights, and democratization. In South Asia, Indian-Pakistani relations are a constant source of tension and interfere with key U.S. security goals. In Latin America, Brazil is developing into a global power and is not always supportive of U.S. policy goals. In Africa, governance remains a persistent problem. Other significant issues trouble almost every region. Future QDRs might address both opportunities and challenges in managing regional alliance relations as a critical element of security policy with direct effects on defense plans.
- **Relations with former Cold War adversaries:** NATO was created as a bulwark against Soviet aggression, and it is widely considered one of the great success stories in global history. The current question is how to adjust the alliance to

improve post-Cold War stability in the region. NATO has expanded to the borders of Russia, and the United States is deploying a missile defense system aimed at defending U.S. forces and allies from missile attacks from outside the region. Russia has objected to both policies, and there are other sources of tension in relations with Russia as well. Future QDRs might address how to encourage expanded cooperation from Russia and how to integrate it into cooperative security systems without, in doing so, backing away from important principles. In Asia, bilateral U.S. alliances intended to deter China were established during the Cold War, and continue to be a critical pillar of U.S. security policy. Engagement with China in regional defense measures has increased to some degree in recent years. Future QDRs might address mechanisms through which China could be encouraged to resolve regional disputes peacefully, cooperate in common areas of interest, which might include security of the global commons, and become more transparent in its security planning, all without, again, abandoning long-standing U.S. security commitments in the region.

## **Global Security Cooperation and Global Rules of Behavior**

A related set of policy issues concerns efforts to foster a more cooperative global security order in which global rules of behavior are enforced through common action by leading powers. The QDR report cites “an international order that promotes cooperative action” as a primary U.S. interest, and says that the United States will achieve its interests by “engaging abroad on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect, and promoting an international order that advances our interests by reinforcing the rights and responsibilities of all nations.” The report also offers assurances that the United States will adhere to current global norms, including the Geneva conventions, in conducting military operations, and will seek, wherever possible, multilateral sanction for the use of force, while reserving the right to act unilaterally. The report does not discuss at any length, however, measures either to strengthen existing multinational collective security mechanism or to build new systems of rules to promote security.

Some may argue that, on the whole it is more appropriate for the Defense Department to refer to policy statements by the President or the Secretary of State to provide guidance on the role of collective security measures in promoting global security. An alternative perspective is that there are a number of related matters on which the Defense Department has sometimes articulated its own perspectives, and which future QDRs might address more fully. These include

- **Support from allies and from major powers such as China and Russia in enforcing global rules on proliferation and terrorism:** Sanctions against Iran in response to its nuclear weapons program is an alternative to military action, and enforcement of nonproliferation rules may be a critical measure of the state of relations among the major world powers. Defense planning is directly affected by the effectiveness—or ineffectiveness—of measures to enforce global rules. In a classified memo, Secretary Gates has reportedly addressed follow-on policies if sanctions are not effective.<sup>94</sup> Future QDRs might address the manner in which the

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<sup>94</sup> See David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, “Gates Says U.S. Lacks Strategy to Curb Iran’s Nuclear Drive,” *New York Times*, April 18, 2010, published on line on April 17, 2010, and Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger, “Gates Pushes Back on Report of Memo About Iran Policy,” *New York Times*, April 18, 2010.

degree of global cooperation on such critical issues may shape defense planning. State support for terrorist groups is an issue addressed in legislation as well as in Executive Branch policy, and the effects on DOD planning of state support for terrorism may be an issue that the Defense Department should be tasked to address in future QDRs.

- **Transfers of arms and military-related technologies:** The United States has addressed the global arms trade in a gingerly fashion, but arms transfers may have a profound effect on the threats to U.S. security that the Defense Department must plan for. The 2010 QDR argues for reforms in export controls to promote cooperation with allies while safeguarding critical technologies. A more far-reaching set of concerns has to do with potential limits on transfers of military technology that might threaten regional or global stability. Future QDRs might be tasked to identify military transfers that pose particular problems for U.S. security interests, including sales of advanced air defense systems, anti-ship cruise missiles, and intelligence and reconnaissance systems. One potentially important way to bolster collective global security may be to open discussions on new measures to regulate the trade in potentially destabilizing military technologies. The Defense Department may be tasked to articulate its view on the measures to strengthen and expand current regimes to control the spread of nuclear, chemical, and missile technologies.
- **Cooperative measures to secure access to the global commons:** The 2010 QDR emphasizes challenges to U.S. access to space and cyberspace as areas of the global commons on a par with access to the air and the sea. It does not, however, address the potential of measures to identify threats to open access in these regions and to establish rules that might limit future threats. Future QDRs might address the extent to which collective security mechanisms could bolster cooperative efforts to limit future dangers.

## **The Integration of Defense and Non-Defense Responsibilities in National Security Policy**

The 2010 QDR emphasizes, more than any earlier strategy report, the importance of a whole-of-government approach to security. It also identifies trends that are reshaping the global security environment, most of which are matters that are not within the immediate purview of the Defense Department. One potential task for future QDRs may be to develop more fully, in close consultation with other agencies, where primary responsibility for defining policy on key matters lies, and what the Defense Department's role is in providing either leadership or support. A precedent is the manner in which the Defense Department has addressed homeland security, emphasizing that the DOD role is mainly in support of policies established by the Department of Homeland Security, but also identifying critical responsibilities for DOD.

A potential starting point might be in intelligence community assessments of global trends.<sup>95</sup> An integrated assessment of security policy could identify how trends may affect the international security environment; discuss very generally overall U.S. objectives, policies and new initiatives

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<sup>95</sup> For example, National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World*, Washington, D.C., November 2008, [http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF\\_2025/2025\\_Global\\_Trends\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf).

in addressing global issues; and then discuss in more detail how defense policy can support overall policies. The goal would be to prepare an analysis that more directly addresses the integration of defense policies with overall security objectives of the nation.

## Concluding Observations

The Quadrennial Defense Review has become an important supplement to the Defense Department's long-established Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System (PPBES), that prepares five- to six-year program and budget plans and that develops annual budget requests to Congress. While the QDR draws on many of the same resources used in the PPBES process, it also engages different and broader parts of the DOD organization in thinking about and debating defense priorities in, at least to some degree, a longer-term context. QDRs have also become a focus of extensive discussion and debate about defense policy in the broader community of national security commentators, analysts, and advocates. Although successive QDRs have been the subject of some criticism, they have also become models of long-term planning that Congress has recently applied to the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security.

The value of QDRs, nonetheless, remains a matter of some debate and QDR legislation has regularly been amended. Congress has revised the QDR's statutory mandate by adding topics to address, by requiring an independent review, by broadening the scope of the independent review, and by requiring the QDR to address resource issues differently. Additional changes may be expected. Congress may also want to consider whether the current requirement for an annual National Security Strategy statement should be replaced by a mandate for a more comprehensive, and less frequent, national security strategy review. The 1995 Roles and Missions Commission recommended this approach, as did the Center for Strategic and International Studies "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols" project. Some of the matters that might be addressed were identified in the report of the Project on National Security Reform, that proposed measures to improve interagency coordination of national security policy-making and implementation.<sup>96</sup>

The 2010 QDR suggests, perhaps above all else, a need for continuing efforts to consider and periodically reconsider the implications of the apparently accelerating pace of change in the global security environment for U.S. national security organizational structures, plans, and processes. Secretary of Defense Gates has argued more forcefully than any other senior official in recent memory that the institutional mechanisms the United States government relies on to sustain security have become, not merely too slow and unresponsive, but, in some cases, barriers to the adaptive flexibility that global developments require. To the extent this view is widely shared, the key issue may be how to enhance processes like the QDR to enable policymakers to better grasp the critical dynamics of the evolving global order and to adjust both the purposes and the processes of national security planning to address the challenges and opportunities ahead.

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<sup>96</sup> James R. Locher III, Executive Director et al., *Forging a New Shield*, Project on National Security Reform, Washington, DC, November 2008, [http://pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr\\_forging\\_a\\_new\\_shield\\_report.pdf](http://pnsr.org/data/files/pnsr_forging_a_new_shield_report.pdf).

## Appendix A. Current QDR Legislation as Amended Through the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act

This appendix includes

- The full, current text of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 118, as amended to date, which is the permanent statute, originally enacted in the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 106-65, October 5, 1999, that requires a Quadrennial Defense Review every four years, and
- The full text of provisions of the FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 111-84, October 28, 2009, that establish additional requirements for the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, including provisions regarding an independent panel to assess the 2010 QDR.

Together, these statutes constitute the legislative requirements for the 2010 QDR. Other statutes, not cited here, require a White House National Security Strategy statement, reports on U.S. nuclear, space, and ballistic missile defense policy, and quadrennial reports by the Department of Defense on the roles and missions of the military services.

### Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 118

#### § 118. Quadrennial defense review

(a) **Review Required.**—The Secretary of Defense shall every four years, during a year following a year evenly divisible by four, conduct a comprehensive examination (to be known as a “quadrennial defense review”) of the national defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program and policies of the United States with a view toward determining and expressing the defense strategy of the United States and establishing a defense program for the next 20 years. Each such quadrennial defense review shall be conducted in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(b) **Conduct of Review.**—Each quadrennial defense review shall be conducted so as—

(1) to delineate a national defense strategy consistent with the most recent National Security Strategy prescribed by the President pursuant to section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 404a);

(2) to define sufficient force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program of the United States associated with that national defense strategy that would be required to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy;

(3) to identify



(A) the budget plan that would be required to provide sufficient resources to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk, and

(B) any additional resources (beyond those programmed in the current future-years defense program) required to achieve such a level of risk; and

(4) to make recommendations that are not constrained to comply with the budget submitted to Congress by the President pursuant to section 1105 of title 31.

(c) **Assessment of Risk.**—The assessment of risk for the purposes of subsection (b) shall be undertaken by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That assessment shall define the nature and magnitude of the political, strategic, and military risks associated with executing the missions called for under the national defense strategy.

(d) **Submission of QDR to Congressional Committees.**—The Secretary shall submit a report on each quadrennial defense review to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The report shall be submitted in the year following the year in which the review is conducted, but not later than the date on which the President submits the budget for the next fiscal year to Congress under section 1105 (a) of title 31. The report shall include the following:

(1) The results of the review, including a comprehensive discussion of the national defense strategy of the United States, the strategic planning guidance, and the force structure best suited to implement that strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk.

(2) The assumed or defined national security interests of the United States that inform the national defense strategy defined in the review.

(3) The threats to the assumed or defined national security interests of the United States that were examined for the purposes of the review and the scenarios developed in the examination of those threats.

(4) The assumptions used in the review, including assumptions relating to—

(A) the status of readiness of United States forces;

(B) the cooperation of allies, mission-sharing and additional benefits to and burdens on United States forces resulting from coalition operations;

(C) warning times;

(D) levels of engagement in operations other than war and smaller-scale contingencies and withdrawal from such operations and contingencies; and

(E) the intensity, duration, and military and political end-states of conflicts and smaller-scale contingencies.

(5) The effect on the force structure and on readiness for high-intensity combat of preparations for and participation in operations other than war and smaller-scale contingencies.

(6) The manpower and sustainment policies required under the national defense strategy to support engagement in conflicts lasting longer than 120 days.

- (7) The anticipated roles and missions of the reserve components in the national defense strategy and the strength, capabilities, and equipment necessary to assure that the reserve components can capably discharge those roles and missions.
  - (8) The appropriate ratio of combat forces to support forces (commonly referred to as the “tooth-to-tail” ratio) under the national defense strategy, including, in particular, the appropriate number and size of headquarters units and Defense Agencies for that purpose.
  - (9) The specific capabilities, including the general number and type of specific military platforms, needed to achieve the strategic and warfighting objectives identified in the review.
  - (10) The strategic and tactical air-lift, sea-lift, and ground transportation capabilities required to support the national defense strategy.
  - (11) The forward presence, pre-positioning, and other anticipatory deployments necessary under the national defense strategy for conflict deterrence and adequate military response to anticipated conflicts.
  - (12) The extent to which resources must be shifted among two or more theaters under the national defense strategy in the event of conflict in such theaters.
  - (13) The advisability of revisions to the Unified Command Plan as a result of the national defense strategy.
  - (14) The effect on force structure of the use by the armed forces of technologies anticipated to be available for the ensuing 20 years.
  - (15) The national defense mission of the Coast Guard.
  - (16) The homeland defense and support to civil authority missions of the active and reserve components, including the organization and capabilities required for the active and reserve components to discharge each such mission.
  - (17) Any other matter the Secretary considers appropriate.
- (e) **CJCS Review.**—
- (1) Upon the completion of each review under subsection (a), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall prepare and submit to the Secretary of Defense the Chairman’s assessment of the review, including the Chairman’s assessment of risk and a description of the capabilities needed to address such risk.
  - (2) The Chairman’s assessment shall be submitted to the Secretary in time for the inclusion of the assessment in the report. The Secretary shall include the Chairman’s assessment, together with the Secretary’s comments, in the report in its entirety.
- (f) **Independent Panel Assessment.**—
- (1) Not later than six months before the date on which the report on a Quadrennial Defense Review is to be submitted under subsection (d), the Secretary of Defense shall establish a panel to conduct an assessment of the quadrennial defense review.
  - (2) Not later than three months after the date on which the report on a quadrennial defense review is submitted under subsection (d) to the congressional committees named in that subsection, the

panel appointed under paragraph (1) shall submit to those committees an assessment of the review, including the recommendations of the review, the stated and implied assumptions incorporated in the review, and the vulnerabilities of the strategy and force structure underlying the review. The assessment of the panel shall include analyses of the trends, asymmetries, and concepts of operations that characterize the military balance with potential adversaries, focusing on the strategic approaches of possible opposing forces.

**(g) Consideration of Effect of Climate Change on Department Facilities, Capabilities, and Missions.—**

(1) The first national security strategy and national defense strategy prepared after January 28, 2008 shall include guidance for military planners—

(A) to assess the risks of projected climate change to current and future missions of the armed forces;

(B) to update defense plans based on these assessments, including working with allies and partners to incorporate climate mitigation strategies, capacity building, and relevant research and development; and

(C) to develop the capabilities needed to reduce future impacts.

(2) The first quadrennial defense review prepared after the date of the enactment of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 shall also examine the capabilities of the armed forces to respond to the consequences of climate change, in particular, preparedness for natural disasters from extreme weather events and other missions the armed forces may be asked to support inside the United States and overseas.

(3) For planning purposes to comply with the requirements of this subsection, the Secretary of Defense shall use—

(A) the mid-range projections of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;

(B) subsequent mid-range consensus climate projections if more recent information is available when the next national security strategy, national defense strategy, or quadrennial defense review, as the case may be, is conducted; and

(C) findings of appropriate and available estimations or studies of the anticipated strategic, social, political, and economic effects of global climate change and the implications of such effects on the national security of the United States.

(4) In this subsection, the term “national security strategy” means the annual national security strategy report of the President under section 108 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 404a).

**(h) Relationship to Budget-** Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect section 1105(a) of title 31.

**(i) Interagency Overseas Basing Report-**

(1) Not later than 90 days after submitting a report on a quadrennial defense review under subsection (d), the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report detailing how the results of the assessment conducted as part of such review will impact—

(A) the status of overseas base closure and realignment actions undertaken as part of a global defense posture realignment strategy; and

(B) the status of development and execution of comprehensive master plans for overseas military main operating bases, forward operating sites, and cooperative security locations of the global defense posture of the United States.

(2) A report under paragraph (1) shall include any recommendations for additional closures or realignments of military installations outside of the United States and any comments resulting from an interagency review of these plans that includes the Department of State and other relevant Federal departments and agencies.

## **FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act, Provisions Regarding the 2009-2010 Quadrennial Defense Review**

### **SEC. 1051. REPORT ON STATUTORY COMPLIANCE OF THE REPORT ON THE 2009 QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW.**

**(a) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.**—Not later than 90 days after the Secretary of Defense releases the report on the 2009 quadrennial defense review, the Comptroller General shall submit to the congressional defense committees and to the Secretary of Defense a report on the degree to which the report on the 2009 quadrennial defense review addresses each of the items required by subsection (d) of section 118 of title 10, United States Code.

**(b) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE REPORT.**—If the Comptroller General determines that the report on the 2009 quadrennial defense review fails to directly address items required by subsection (d) of section 118 of such title, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report directly addressing those items not later than 30 days after the submission of the report by the Comptroller General required by paragraph (1).

### **SEC. 1052. REPORT ON THE FORCE STRUCTURE FINDINGS OF THE 2009 QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW.**

**(a) REPORT REQUIREMENT.**—Concurrent with the delivery of the report on the 2009 quadrennial defense review required by section 118 of title 10, United States Code, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report with a classified annex containing—

(1) the analyses used to determine and support the findings on force structure required by such section; and

(2) a description of any changes from the previous quadrennial defense review to the minimum military requirements for major military capabilities.

**(b) MAJOR MILITARY CAPABILITIES DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “major military capabilities” includes any capability the Secretary determines to be a major military capability, any

capability discussed in the report of the 2006 quadrennial defense review, and any capability described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 118(d) of title 10, United States Code.

[.....]

**SEC. 1061. ADDITIONAL MEMBERS AND DUTIES FOR THE INDEPENDENT PANEL TO ASSESS THE QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW.**

**(a) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—**

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—For purposes of conducting the assessment of the 2009 quadrennial defense review under section 118 of title 10, United States Code (in this section referred to as the “2009 QDR”), the independent panel established under subsection (f) of such section (in this section referred to as the “Panel”) shall include eight additional members as follows:

(A) Two appointed by the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(B) Two appointed by the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

(C) Two appointed by the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(D) Two appointed by the ranking member of the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate.

(2) **PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.**—Members of the Panel appointed under paragraph (1) shall be appointed for the life of the Panel. Any vacancy in an appointment to the Panel under paragraph (1) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

**(b) ADDITIONAL DUTIES.**—In addition to the duties of the Panel under section 118(f) of title 10, United States Code, the Panel shall, with respect to the 2009 QDR—

(1) review the Secretary of Defense’s terms of reference, and any other materials providing the basis for, or substantial inputs to, the work of the Department of Defense on the 2009 QDR;

(2) conduct an assessment of the assumptions, strategy, findings, and risks in the report of the Secretary of Defense on the 2009 QDR, with particular attention paid to the risks described in that report;

(3) conduct an independent assessment of a variety of possible force structures for the Armed Forces, including the force structure identified in the report of the Secretary of Defense on the 2009 QDR; and

(4) review the resource requirements identified in the 2009 QDR pursuant to section 118(b)(3) of title 10, United States Code, and, to the extent practicable, make a general comparison of such resource requirements with the resource requirements to support the forces contemplated under the force structures assessed under paragraph (3).

**(c) REPORTS.—**

(1) **INITIAL REPORT OF PANEL.**—The report on the 2009 QDR that is submitted to Congress pursuant to section 118(f)(2) of title 10, United States Code, shall include, in addition to any other matters required by such section, the interim findings of the Panel with respect to the matters specified in subsection (b).

(2) **FINAL REPORT OF PANEL.**—Not later than July 15, 2010, the Panel shall submit to the Secretary of Defense, and to the congressional defense committees, the final report of the Panel on the matters specified in subsection (b). The report shall include such recommendations on such matters as the Panel considers appropriate.

(3) **REPORT OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.**—Not later than August 15, 2010, the Secretary of Defense shall, after consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, submit to the congressional defense committees a report setting forth the Secretary's response to the final report of the Panel under paragraph (2).

**(d) TERMINATION OF PANEL.**—The Panel shall terminate 45 days after the date on which the Panel submits its final report under subsection (c)(2).

## **Appendix B. Bibliography of Official Strategy Reports**

### **Quadrennial Defense Review, Prior, and Related Reports**

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U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, March 2005, online at <http://www.defense.gov/news/mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>.

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### **Recent National Security Strategy Reports**

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### **Current Nuclear Posture and Ballistic Missile Defense Reports**

Department of Defense, *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*, February 2010, online at [http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630\\_for%20web.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf).

Department of Defense, *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, April 6, 2010; online at <http://www.defense.gov/npr/docs/2010%20Nuclear%20Posture%20Review%20Report.pdf>.



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