



## Anticipating the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review: Issues and Opportunities

Through the Armed Forces Force Structure Act of 1996, Congress mandated the first comprehensive, regular review of the armed services to provoke a reassessment of defense strategy and force structure. At the time, congressional mistrust of the Pentagon was such that a concurrent panel, the National Defense Panel, was convened to critique the Pentagon's findings. One of the bill's sponsors, Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT)—the other was Senator Dan Coats (R-IN)—explained the vision associated with this new review: "Our intent in sponsoring this legislation was to drive the defense debate to a strategy-based assessment of our future military requirements and capabilities, not to a budget-driven incremental massage of the status quo."<sup>1</sup>

This first attempt at a comprehensive review was ultimately seen as a budget-driven justification for the status quo instead of a forward-looking, strategy-driven document. Four years later, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65) established the legislative requirement for the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which formalized the review process started in 1996.<sup>2</sup>

Each branch of the armed services has a QDR office and each office conducts relevant portions of the review in consultation with the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Final findings are presented to Congress and the President. The QDR, a thorough review of national defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plans and other elements of the U.S. defense program and policies, with a view toward determining and expressing the defense strategy of the United States and establishing a defense program for the next 20 years, is conducted every four years in the year following an election year.

In 2001, the first QDR under the current Secretary of Defense, the review focused on transforming the armed forces and setting a new national defense strategy, with an emphasis on embracing uncertainty preparing for surprise. More attention was paid to balancing risk in current versus future investments. However, the 2001 review contained little on the changed threat environment characterized by the post-11 September 2001 world, since its publishing date was 1 October 2001. Today, the armed

<sup>1</sup> "The Quadrennial Defense Review" (Senate—19 May 1997: S4673), *Congressional Record*, available online at <http://frwebgate3.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi?WAISdocID=22361011413+0+0+0&WAISaction=retrieve>.

<sup>2</sup> "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." National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, Public Law 106-65, Section IX, Subtitle A, Sec. 901.



forces are dealing with numerous challenges—including a very high operational tempo and rising (and at times unexpected) costs—while transforming the forces and making other investments for the future. QDR 2005 must strike a balance between near-term pressures and long-term goals.

## Looking to 2005

The 2005 QDR will best benefit the armed forces if the review is driven by wanted military capabilities rather than by budgetary priorities. One can expect to see emphasis on strengthened intelligence, protecting critical operating bases, operating from the “commons”—space, international airspace and waters, networks—and working with partners to increase their capabilities so they reduce some of the burden currently carried by the U.S. military.

The QDR is also expected to stress unconventional threats rather than the two-major-theater-war strategy. The current Strategic Planning Guidance names three types of unconventional threats that are expected to figure prominently: irregular, catastrophic and disruptive, with irregular being the most likely/least devastating and disruptive being the least likely but the most damaging. Irregular threats include terrorism, insurgency, civil war and flouting international law. Catastrophic threats are nuclear, chemical, biological, radiological or electromagnetic attacks on the scale of the 11 September 2001 attacks or worse. Disruptive threats use breakthrough technologies to disrupt the American way of life. The framers of the QDR will probably choose not to emphasize any one type of threat, however.

## What Should Be in the 2005 QDR: Servicewide Concerns

The years since the 11 September 2001 attacks have given the military and the Department of Defense the chance to consolidate the many changes that have taken

place across the services since then and to plot new directions based on lessons learned. A few issues will affect each service in its own way:

**Stability and support operations:** Some believe that the insurgency in Iraq and continuing resistance from Taliban fighters in Afghanistan have shown that post-conflict operations must be given more emphasis in military planning.<sup>3</sup> Connected with this issue is that of security assistance: how much can we expect from our allies and vice versa?

**Strategic Forces:** As Army Chief of Staff General Peter J. Schoomaker mentioned before the Senate Armed Services Committee on 17 November 2004, strategic forces could get a thorough reevaluation: “What are the strategic forces of the future? Are they the same ones [from the past] or are they different? I don’t have the answer for that, but I think it’s a question we need to answer.”<sup>4</sup> Forces meant for deterrence or other strategic aims may not resemble those retained in a pre-11 September 2001 world.

**Homeland Defense (defense of the United States territory from threats originating outside its borders) and Homeland Security (defense of the United States from threats originating inside its borders):** Both missions could be in danger of “mission creep”—because they can be defined so broadly, the missions could grow to be so large that they lose focus. The QDR will be important in correctly defining the two missions and educating the public about why they are two different and important endeavors.

**DoD management and business processes:** The review may emphasize the importance of management modernization and acquisition reform to ensure that the military gets the equipment it needs when it needs it. It has been proposed that a Chief Management Officer position be created within the Defense Department to ensure the most efficient business systems are being employed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For examples, see Greg Jaffe and David S. Cloud, “Pentagon’s New War Planning to Stress Postconflict Stability,” *Wall Street Journal*, 25 October 2004, page A2; and “Post Conflict Operations from Europe to Iraq” by James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., Heritage Foundation Lecture, Washington D.C., 13 July 2004, available online at [www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl844.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl844.cfm).

<sup>4</sup> GEN Peter J. Schoomaker, testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, 17 November 2004, available online at [http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/security/has322000.000/has322000\\_0.htm](http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/security/has322000.000/has322000_0.htm).

<sup>5</sup> Dov Zakheim, “The Quadrennial Defense Review: Some Guiding Principles,” Heritage Foundation Conference on the War on Terrorism and Beyond: Principles and Issues for the Quadrennial Defense Review, Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., 3 December 2004, available online at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/NationalSecurity/hl864.cfm>.

## What Can the Services Expect?

**Army.** The QDR could put a stamp of approval on the changes the Chief of Staff is making to the force as it moves forward in transformation: modularizing, stabilizing the force, rebalancing the active and reserve components, overhauling the logistics system and making the move toward network-centric formations. For example, the Army could use the QDR as an opportunity to formalize the rebalancing of the reserve component to bring more military police and civil affairs Soldiers to the active component. The QDR could also have much to say about force posture. While going to a brigade-centered structure, converting positions held by military personnel to civilian positions, and troop rebasing may mitigate the need for some additional troops, endstrength is an issue that will continue to be important given the current operational tempo.

Special operations forces (SOF) have figured prominently in Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF). The technology and techniques

used by SOF today offer a glimpse of what the Future Force will look like, and these forces need continued support from Congress and the Pentagon.

**Other services.** The Air Force will have to make a strong case for keeping programs such as the Joint Strike Fighter and the F/A-22 if it expects to hold onto these platforms in their current numbers and configurations. The Navy and the Air Force are cutting their endstrength—at latest count, the Air Force wants to reduce its number of airmen by approximately 24,000 by the end of Fiscal Year 2005.<sup>6</sup> The Navy is also shrinking the size of its fleet and moving toward sea basing, enabling Navy/Marine Corps assets to get to mission areas much more quickly. The Navy, as part of its reevaluation of the size of the fleet and reduction in personnel, should achieve a cost savings. The services have traditionally been able to keep funds that they save. But with the Army stretched as it is, could the Navy's cost savings help to finance the Army's initiatives? While feasible, such a transfer of funds would surely create a heated debate among the services, the Department of Defense and Congress.

### Key Points

- The 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review needs to be forward-looking and capabilities-based—not budget- or program-driven.
- Attributes important to the Future Force, such as network connectivity, intelligence capabilities and dealing with unconventional threats, will figure prominently in the 2005 QDR.
- The 2005 QDR provides an important opportunity for the Army to formalize many of the positive changes it is making to the force for current operations and the Future Force.

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<sup>6</sup> Rod Hafemeister, "Bright Forecast; 2005 Selection Rates for Officers and Enlisted Promotions Expected to be Close to 2004 Rates," *Air Force Times*, 31 January 2005, p. 14.