



DIRECTOR OF STUDIES STRATEGY REPORT

Center for Strategic and International Studies ■ Washington, D.C.

Vol. 2 ■ 28 February 2006 ■ No. 4

Service Perspectives on the Quadrennial Defense Review

The March 2005 National Defense Strategy (NDS) set the stage for the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the release of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report. The NDS depicted the changing security environment as a “quad chart” of traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive challenges, and pointed out that continued transformation would require that the Department of Defense would “need to divest in some areas [presumably in traditional areas where it had excess capability] and invest in other [presumably non-traditional],” areas.

Following the precedent set by the 2001 QDR, the 2005 effort applied a “capabilities-based” approach to determine the next steps of transformation required to adapt to the changing security environment. However, the 1-2-4-1 force plus smaller-scale contingencies (SSCs) sizing construct for homeland defense, forward deterrence, swift defeats, and decisive wins outlined in the 2001 QDR were replaced with three “stacked ovals” representing homeland defense and civil support, the war on terrorism and irregular warfare, and conventional campaigns.

The recent QDR process underwent a midway “course correction” following a change in leadership. Months after Gordon England replaced Paul Wolfowitz as the then-acting deputy secretary, he realized that the original six Integrated Planning Teams (IPTs) (which had spawned an immoderate number of working groups and subworking groups) had bogged down the process, and he started using the “Group of 12” as his primary decisionmaking body. Instead of focusing on four core problems—defeating global insurgency fuelled by Islamic extremists, defending the U.S. homeland in depth, shaping the choices of countries that are at a “strategic crossroads,” and preventing the acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorists and rogue states—the Group of 12, which is co-chaired by the deputy secretary and the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, turned to a list of 12 new “focus areas,” with principal emphasis on joint ground, air, maritime, and special operations capabilities.

The 2005 NDS also previewed an era of flattening Defense budgets and of the future transformation of U.S. defense forces, which would require cuts in the “takes” (i.e., legacy programs) to offset the “puts” (i.e., new programs) required for transformation. The final QDR report defined a vision for joint service capabilities and marked a departure from past practice, recommending a significant increase in Special Operations Forces (SOF), an expansion of Psychological Operation (PSYOP) and Civil Affairs units, advancing strike capabilities for long-range targets and diverse environments, and the development of a broad spectrum of medical countermeasures.

The QDR is not perfect, inadequately addressing issues of homeland security and civil support as well as defense acquisition reform, and not specifying enough reductions in major weapons systems. Clark Murdock ended his briefing by commenting that “on the whole, the 2006 QDR Report has charted with considerable specificity DOD’s course forward and, unlike its predecessors, is likely to have a significant impact on how DOD copes with future challenges.”



Throughout 2005, the Department of Defense undertook its third congressionally mandated Quadrennial Defense Review. This resulted in the publication of the second Quadrennial Defense Review Report on February 6, 2006. The CSIS Office of the Director of Studies convened a Strategy Hour to discuss the report, its recommendations, and the perspectives of the services. The session was led by Clark Murdock, senior adviser in the International Security Program. Additional comments were provided by the CSIS military fellows and the Defense Industrial Initiatives Group. This Strategy Report provides an overview of the event and includes commentary from the perspective of the U.S. Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, Army, and Army Reserve.

■ *commentary from the CSIS Military Fellows on page 2*

Lt. Col. George Farfour, U.S. Air Force

Many in the Air Force were initially concerned that the QDR would focus too heavily on the nontechnological advantages of the U.S. military at the expense of advanced systems. Terms such as “overmatched” were taken to imply that advanced technological capabilities (e.g., F-22A) were on the chopping block. This led to the concern that the QDR might “mortgage the future for the present.” The Group of 12 arrangement helped to clarify and raise arguments above such fears. Despite criticism to the contrary, a QDR is always, in a sense, a budget drill. However this QDR is the first to have budgetary decisions that truly back up the vision with resources.

The QDR calls for the Air Force to do the following: develop a new, long-range bomber in the next 12 years (greatly accelerating Air Force plans); significantly increase the fleet of unmanned aerial vehicles; increase its special operations forces; field more battlefield airmen to support our sister services on the ground; train more airmen to fight with emerging technologies, such as protecting the nation through cyberspace; and decrease intercontinental ballistic missiles from 500 to 450.

Air Force capabilities provide the president with sovereign options across the spectrum of conflicts the United States faces now and may face in the future. The QDR addresses those goals and seeks to shape the force to do those things better.

The Air Force will also further decrease its manpower by 40,000 airmen—88 percent of which will come out of the active duty force. These changes will enable the Air Force to continue its traditional focus on technology and increase the airmen’s ability to be effective on the battlefield and dominate the battlespace, whether directly or by enabling the joint fight.

Col. Michael Melillo, U.S. Marine Corps

The 2005 QDR provides a refined construct of wartime force planning. The Marine Corps is well-suited for the goals outlined in the QDR: defending the homeland, prevailing in the war on terror, conducting irregular warfare, and managing and winning conventional campaigns. While each of these objectives requires a unique approach to achieve mission success, the QDR underscores the need for adaptive forces with the agility to switch from or simultaneously conduct high-end combat operations, stability and support operations, and humanitarian assistance interventions. Former commandant of the Marine Corps, General Charles Krulak, called this the “three-block war,” an approach the Marine Corps has embraced.

The recognition that irregular warfare is a required core competency of the U.S. military is probably the most significant change in DOD’s approach to the future. For example, the report calls for increases in Special Operations Forces (SOF), including adding 2,600 marines to Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and adding more civil affairs and PSYOP units. Possibly more significant is the recognition that, in this “Long War,” conventional forces will have to assume a greater role in what were typically special operations missions.

The Marine Corps is already adapting to the requirements for the post-9/11 world. Measures to increase the capacity of the Marine Corps include the establishment of a Marine Corps component headquarters at United States SOCOM and a Foreign Military Training Unit to assist our partners in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other states in developing security forces of their own. Furthermore, the Marine Corps has incorporated irregular warfare as well as culture and language training throughout its professional military education system. It has also established large-scale training centers for urban warfare and formalized stability and security operations training for all deploying units.

In this “Long War,” the one certainty our nation has is that nothing is certain. While we continue to adjust our capacity, the enemy continues to evolve. For that reason, we can be grateful we have marines who are adaptive, flexible, versatile, and ready for whatever our nation asks.

Capt. Mark Redden, U.S. Navy

From the maritime perspective, the 2006 QDR Report further codified efforts underway within the Navy to adapt to the dynamic security challenges the country currently confronts, as well as to those with the potential to dominate in the not too distant future. In prosecuting the “Long War,” the Navy will continue to play an active role, in conjunction with the other services.

Key to the Navy’s efforts will be a multitude of either new or significantly enhanced capabilities. The most noteworthy include an increase in SEAL team manning in support of SOF missions, acquisition of the Littoral Combat Ship, greatly enhancing the Navy’s ability to operate in “brown and green water” environments, and development of a riverine capability for river patrol, interdiction, and tactical troop movement. Additionally, the Navy will strive to enhance its already robust strike warfare capabilities by converting a number of nuclear armed, submarine-launched ballistic missiles to a conventionally armed version for global, quick-strike missions and by continuing to pursue the incorporation of unmanned aircraft into the inventories for both strike and surveillance missions.

■ *continued on page 3*

■ *continued from page 2*

Upcoming Strategy Hour

President Bush's Travels to South Asia

2 March 2006
4CR – 9:00am

Featured speakers:

Pramit Mitra, research associate,
South Asia Program

Mary Beth Nikitin, fellow,
International Security Program

Rebecca Linder, research
associate, Europe Program

To hedge against the possibility that a major or emerging power could choose a hostile path in the future, the Navy will continue to maintain a robust set of capabilities designed to assist DOD in its efforts to shape the choices of countries at strategic crossroads. There will be continued reliance on what are considered traditional naval forces and capabilities, combined with development of new avenues. The Navy's focus in this realm will remain centered around its carrier strike groups, with the QDR mandating the maintenance of 11 such groups. Complementing this will be efforts to maintain an unmatched attack submarine force, enhance sea basing capabilities, provide support for ballistic missile defenses, and improve competency in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and net-centric abilities.

Lt. Col. Ray Bingham, U.S. Army

The 2006 QDR Report reflects a continuum of transformation within the U.S. Army and, by extension, DOD. The QDR emphasizes ongoing changes in terms of the “adjustments required” to the organizational structures, processes, and procedures of our armed forces. A major challenge for the Army is the actual execution of said “adjustments.” Since 9/11, U.S. Army Active and Reserve components have experienced a high tempo of operational deployments to the Middle East in support of the Global War on Terror. The impending “adjustments” highlighted in the QDR and the ongoing rebalancing of force-structure within

the Active and Reserve components share a common thread. These changes have and will continue to take place while our army/nation is at war.

The QDR did highlight the Army's change in center of gravity from a Cold War construct—shifting away from a garrisoned military focused on size, predictability, and mass. It also outlined a strategic direction that includes accelerated transformation, defeating terror networks, defending the homeland in depth, and increased emphasis on irregular warfare.

The QDR did not, however, provide a clear roadmap as to how we will build a more capable and relevant Army for the twenty-first century while we continue to transform, combat terror, and gain the generational commitment and public support necessary to sustain our armed forces.

Lt. Col. Matthew Artero, Army National Guard

It is unclear why there is such emphasis in the comment and analysis on the QDR not being a programmatic document. The fact that the Department of the Army runs its QDR out of its G8 Office (which is its program office) at a minimum implies that the Army leadership understands that, at some point, anything that comes out of QDR must eventually end up in program and budget channels.

The Army wasn't too worried about cuts this time. Conventional wisdom and whispers from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) said the Army was safe since it lost Comanche and Paladin in the last QDR. In addition, since we are at war and the bulk of the workload is falling on the land component, it would not only be strategically and operationally wrong-headed to cut the land force, it would also be political suicide.

However, the debate has now become centered around the question of how much combat structure can be converted into units more able to take on tasks in irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive arenas. The China argument is the basis for not cutting too much conventional structure. The compromise so far is to broaden the conventional forces capabilities while restructuring what is considered excess combat capability (after all, we basically won the war in Iraq with two divisions). This can be seen in the expansion of SOF numbers (but not too much) while at the same time expanding conventional force mission task lists to expand into what would be traditionally special operations missions.

Homeland defense is still fuzzy. As Clark Murdock pointed out, the QDR does not refer to homeland security. It ambiguously states that DOD's mission is to support civil authorities or engage in consequence management (as well as fighting the “away” game). It is understood that DOD is not the lead in supporting civil authorities, so it is someone else's responsibility to do all the grunt work. However, OSD acknowledges the lead of the Army National Guard in consequence management situations, but based on what happened in Katrina, there is still work to be done to clarify this issue.

Director of Studies Strategy Report is published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a private, tax-exempt institution focusing on international public policy issues. Its research is nonpartisan and nonproprietary. CSIS does not take specific public policy positions; accordingly, all views, opinions, and conclusions expressed in this publication should be understood to be solely those of the author(s). © 2006 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.