History of the Quadrennial Defense Review

The fall of Communism in the former Eastern Bloc changed the geopolitical stage, which necessitated a fresh look at our defense environment. In response to this need, the defense review process was born. The first of such reviews, called the *Base Force*, was completed in 1991. Following this, the *Bottom-Up Review* was published in 1994. While these reviews were helpful in assessing military strength, formulating force structures, and identifying current threats, the reports lacked a focus for the future.

Therefore, in 1997, a new defense review process called the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was born. The new QDR boasted a vast improvement in understanding the post-Cold War environment. The strategy presented in the first QDR was to address a full spectrum of contingencies. The intent of the QDR was to drive the debate to a strategy-based assessment of military requirements and capabilities. Unfortunately, most saw the 1997 QDR as a budget-driven exercise that failed to define a new strategy or force structure.

In 1999, the 106th Congress created a permanent requirement for the QDR by inserting Section 118 into Chapter 2 of title 10, United States Code. This legislation states that every four years the Department of Defense (DoD) will conduct a comprehensive, in-depth review of the nation's defense posture, strategy, force structure, modernization, capabilities, and budgets for the next 20 years. A minimum of thirteen specific areas of study are required to be addressed in detail. Led by the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff, the QDR is to involve each service and the Combatant Commands.

The 2001 QDR took on a different approach than the 1997 QDR. The DoD released the QDR shortly after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and the authors immediately began reviewing the document to ensure it addressed the new security environment that emerged as a result of the attacks. These shocking events led senior defense officials to emphasize that the future military must have the power to change a regime in one Major Theater War, while stopping an enemy advance in another. Homeland security would be the top priority, and a new capabilities-based strategy would allow for persistent watch over any given area.

The 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review

The events of 9/11 have magnified the need for the Quadrennial Defense Review. The comprehensive review process is critical to our nation's security. The organizational structure of the 2005 QDR is centered around the Senior Leader Review Group (SLRG) and the Integrated Product Teams (IPTs). The senior DoD officials will assess the capability mix needed to address four core problems: Building Partnerships to Defeat Terrorist Extremist Networks; Defending the Homeland In-Depth; Shaping Choices of Countries at Strategic Crossroads; and Preventing the Acquisition or Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction by Hostile State or Non-State Actors. In addressing these four problems, the Air Force maintains a critical role in fighting wars of today, and preparing to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

During the 2005 QDR, six IPTs, each headed by a senior uniformed official and a senior Pentagon civilian, will determine the proper capability mix required to meet our national security objectives. The six teams are: Capability Mix; Joint Capability Enablers; Roles, Missions & Organizations; Manning and Balancing the Force; Business Practices/Processes; and DoD Authorities. Although the QDR is set for publication in February of 2006, the Secretary of Defense intends for this to be a "rolling QDR". As such, decisions will be implemented as they are made. And unlike the "bottom-up" approach used in the past, the 2005 QDR contains "top-down" decision guidance on strategy, forces, and risks derived from extensive deliberations and consultation.

The 2005 QDR will stress the importance of being prepared to handle four persistent and emerging challenges identified by the Office of the Secretary of Defense: Traditional, Irregular, Catastrophic, and Disruptive. The Air Force currently provides and seeks to maintain three strategic capabilities in mitigating these challenges: Persistent C4ISR, Global Mobility, and Rapid Strike. Recognizing that the nation's joint air dominance cannot be assumed, the Air Force is heavily engaged in addressing these challenges in the QDR.

While the Air Force possesses weapons systems able to meet today's challenges, it is investing in cutting edge technology and highly capable, highly trained personnel. The Air Force must make transformational changes to maximize the capability given by these advances. One way to do this is through the Future Total Force (FTF). The Air Force is placing increased emphasis on the integration of the active, guard, and reserve units, increasing combat effectiveness, peacetime efficiency, and recapitalization and modernization efforts. To minimize the national security risk, the nation must recognize air dominance as a demanding mission. The Air Force's role in Joint Air Dominance is critical to achieving strategic, operational, and tactical effects. The Air Force not only makes the whole team better – it makes it DOMINANT.

Persistent C4ISR • Global Mobility • Rapid Strike

We Make the Whole Team Better