



QDR "Roadmap"...

... Exercise in Futility
or
Avenue to Transformation?

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**QDR “ROADMAP”... EXERCISE IN FUTILITY OR AVENUE TO
TRANSFORMATION**

**AN ANALYTICAL LOOK AT QDR 2001 AND IT IMPACTS
ON FUTURE MILITARY DIRECTION**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES**

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ABSTRACT (MAXIMUM 200 WORDS) QDR 2001 ATTEMPTED TO EXAMINE EVERY FACET OF OUR NATION'S DEFENSE FROM DOCTRINE TO DOLLARS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE ELECTORAL DELAYS, WHICH POSTPONED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW BUSH ADMINISTRATION, DRASTICALLY COMPRESSED THE TIMEFRAME AVAILABLE (UNDER THE LAW) FOR CONDUCT OF THE REVIEW. THIS LED THE QDR MACHINERY TO BY-PASS SCRUTINY OF SEVERAL ELEMENTS OF OUR DEFENSE WHILE FOCUSING INTENTLY ON OTHERS, SKEWING THE "RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT." THIS FLAWED DATA BY NO MEANS MITIGATES THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESULTS. IF ANYTHING, IT UNDERSCORES THE NECESSITY OF THE SERVICES TO BE PREPARED WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE ACTUAL QDR, ANTICIPATING THE POSSIBLE QUESTIONS, AND BEING CAPABLE OF ARTICULATING THEIR RESPECTIVE SERVICE PLATFORMS, ROLES, AND MISSIONS IN DEFENDING THE NATION'S INTERESTS WITH "OFF THE SHELF" PRODUCTS REQUIRING LITTLE OR NO MODIFICATION. THIS PAPER WAS WRITTEN IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE AS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS QDR CELL, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF THE MARINE CELL IN FUTURE SUCH REVIEWS.					
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Preface

This research project – based in large part on my experience as a member of the United States Marine Corps 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Cell – is an attempt to chronicle the evolution of recently concluded QDR, and make some recommendations as to how future Marine QDR Cells should be organized and how they should conduct the business of winning the “Battle of the Beltway.” It is my hope that the product herein proves useful to both the Marine Corps executive leadership and, more importantly, their Action Officers assigned to the next QDR.

I would like to thank both Dr. Grey and Colonel Reist for their mentorship in the development of this work. Their insights and suggestions were crucial to the coherence of the final product and, hopefully, to its relevance for those tasked with manning the front lines during the next “battle.” I would also like to thank the numerous officers, contractors, and Department of Defense staffers who took the time to share their thoughts and ideas with me. I would especially like to thank Colonel (USMC Retired) Chandler C. Crangle, Executive Assistant to XXXXX, and Mr. Steve Klein of the Center for Naval Analysis, for their unique perspective in regards to these, and the previous, QDR deliberations.

SECTION I:

Introduction.

On Saturday, 20 January 2001, George Walker Bush was inaugurated as the 43rd President of the United States. With a new administration comes a flurry of activity, and ultimately a new Secretary of Defense as well. In this case however, this Secretary of Defense has the unique distinction of having held the position previously. The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld has already shouldered the substantial burden as Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) under President Ford a quarter of a century ago. In spite of the prior experience, Mr. Rumsfeld has acknowledged that things have changed around the “Beltway” and on the world stage since his last appointment. However, one aspect that has not changed is the desire on the part of our civilian leadership to examine the military establishment it controls to determine whether or not the current force is capable of meeting both current and future threats.

During the Presidential campaign, in a speech at the Citadel, then candidate Bush promised a “Top Down” review of the military.¹ Topics such as Homeland Defense/Homeland Security (HD/HS), National Missile Defense (NMD), force structure and size, roles and missions, readiness, modernization and *Transformation* were and are of great concern to both the Administration and the Service Chiefs. While several commissions and committees (billed as “educational” for the “new” SECDEF) were sanctioned by the Bush Administration to aid in prioritizing and resolving these concerns,

the Congressionally mandated Quadrennial Defense Review 2001 was the cornerstone of debate and (at least theoretically) decision making aimed at guiding the military into the 21st century.

This paper will examine the recent Quadrennial Defense Review (outcomes and potential impacts), attempt to gauge the importance of future such reviews, and provide recommendations for Marine Corps participation (organization and platform) in those reviews.

Background – The Burgeoning Role of the U.S. Military in Foreign Policy.

Since the earliest stages of our nation’s development, the role the United States military has played has been significant. From the American Revolution to the Reagan years, from the Banana Wars to Bush II, from Tarawa to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), our military has been integral to our success as a nation both militarily and politically, as an instrument “of force to compel our enemy to do our will.”²

While still a “youthful nation” (only a little over two centuries old) relative to our counterparts on the world stage, the United States has gradually and undeniably emerged as a world leader and is currently the last of the cold war super powers. This burgeoning responsibility and influence has resulted in no small part from the capability and might of our military establishment, and this fact, coupled with our economic pre-eminence, has

¹ George W. Bush, Candidate for the Presidency, “A Period of Consequences,” as delivered to the student body of the Citadel, 23 September 2001, 4.

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, eds./trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 81.

shaped our relationships with friend and foe alike, particularly in the wake of the Cold

War's end:

Beginning with the first Bush administration and continuing through the Clinton years, United States military strategy has prescribed a bigger role for America's armed forces in its foreign policy. Both the scope and goals of our military activity have increased with the aim of "filling security vacuums" and enlarging the friendly, stable space in the world.³

Today, U.S. military engagement far surpasses that of any other nation.

Typically, the United States maintains:

- More than **200,000 troops on foreign soil** and more than **50,000 personnel afloat** in foreign waters; in recent years an average of **35,000** of these personnel have been **involved in contingency operations**, mostly around Iraq and in the Balkans.
- More than **800 foreign military installations**, including **60 major ones**.
- **Military presence in 140 countries** including significant deployments (i.e., multiple hundreds or thousands of troops) in 25 countries.
- Strong commitments to help defend or substantially **support the defense efforts of 31 nations**, and significant defense cooperation with another 29 nations.
- The United States also conducts more than **170 overseas JCS exercises annually**, although some are quite small; about 40 percent of these have a multinational component; and conducts other exercise programs as well, such as the Joint Combined Exercise Training program involving special operations forces in 200 exercises annually.⁴

Some would argue that these numbers are misleading, since our deployed personnel

average during the Cold-War peak of the 1980s was approximately 520,000⁵, however:

The sites of engagement, numbers of exercises, numbers of contingency operations have increased. U.S. personnel are deployed in seven more countries today than in the 1980s, the number of Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) exercises has doubled, and the **average number of personnel deployed in contingencies has tripled to about 35,000**.⁶

³ Carl Conetta and Charles Knight, *A New US Military Strategy? Issues and Options* (Project on Defense Alternatives Briefing Memo #20, 21 May 01), 3.

⁴ Conetta and Knight, 4.

⁵ Conetta and Knight, 5.

⁶ Conetta and Knight, 5.

In the 1990s, America's Naval Forces alone responded to 144 contingencies – including 11 Combat Operations, 19 Evacuation Operations, 32 Humanitarian Operations, four Maritime Interdiction Operations, and 20 Shows of Force.⁷ In an article published in October of 2000, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James L. Jones, stated:

During the last decade, **U.S. military power has increasingly been used to mitigate chaos and restore stability in a world beset both by natural disasters and man-made crises.** Indeed, as the Cold War's monolithic threat recedes, consensus in the U.S. national security community has formed that less-predictable dangers to American interests lurk all around the world. The forms of disorder are many: frequent and urgent requirements to ameliorate human suffering; challenges to our allies; and threats to regional stability, to name a few.⁸

In the Terms of Reference published by the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Rumsfeld for the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review in June of 2001, today's U.S. military is portrayed as, "...the foundation of a peaceful world (in combination with other instruments of national power)." The Secretary contends that peace and prosperity "rests on the ability of the U.S. Armed Forces to maintain a substantial margin of national military advantage relative to others."⁹ No matter how you slice it, the United States military continues to contribute significantly to the policies and initiatives dictated by our civilian leadership – in contrast, on 3 December 2001, the Swiss (whose strategic circumstance is obviously different from ours) voted as to whether they should disband their military. Considering the inextricable role our military forces play in "assuring, dissuading, deterring, and defeating"¹⁰, it is unlikely that such a vote will take place in America in the foreseeable future.

⁷ *21st Century Navy*, CD ROM (United States Navy at the Pentagon, Washington, DC, 2001), accessed 27 November 2001.

⁸ General James L. Jones, "What's In a Word?," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 2000, 60.

⁹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Guidance and Terms of Reference for the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington, DC: OSD 22 June 2001), 1.

¹⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington, DC: OSD 30 September 2001), 11.

An American Republic – Civilian Control of the Military Establishment.

Like any civilian-controlled aspect of our republic, the military has evolved to meet the changing threats and the new roles imposed by our governmental leadership:

The framers of the U.S. Constitution worked to ensure that the military would be under civilian control. They did not want to emulate the European experience. The colonies had just fought a war of freedom from Britain. The king controlled the British military, and the framers had no interest in duplicating that system. **When they wrote the Constitution they separated the responsibilities for the military, placing the responsibilities firmly in civilian hands.**¹¹

As a result, our military establishment has been scrutinized, altered, and oftentimes essentially dismantled in the aftermath of every great conflict, as America has recoiled from the horrors of “the last great war” or merely sought the return to peacetime normality. In the past decade alone, there have been three comprehensive reviews of the U.S. military: (1) the Base Force Review – 1991, (2) the Bottom-Up Review (BUR) – 1993, and (3) the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (CORM) – 1995.¹² These reviews were resoundingly criticized as being “shortsighted, lacking vision, unlikely and (their recommendations) unaffordable.” Unsatisfied with these reviews, the Legislature formulated Public Law 104-201, which President Clinton signed in September of 1996. Public Law 104-201, better known as the FY 1997 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA-97), required the Secretary of Defense to “conduct a comprehensive examination of defense strategy, force modernization, plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense programs and policies.”¹³

¹¹ Jim Garamone, “Why Civilian Control of the Military?”, Armed Forces Information Service, 2 May 2001, 1 URL www.defenselink.mil/news/May_2001, accessed 27 November 2001.

¹² Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, (Washington, DC: OSD May 1997), 1.

¹³ *National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1997*, Public Law 104-201, Code 3230, § 923 (1996).

The Legislature followed this up four years later with the introduction of Public Law 106-65, also known as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (NDAA-00), mandating:

The Secretary of Defense shall every four years, during a year evenly divisible by four, conduct a comprehensive examination (to be known as the ‘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 (QDR) shall be conducted in consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.¹⁴

This legislation laid out the now infamous “fourteen points” (not to be confused with Wilsonian doctrine) that would guide the Secretary’s review:

1. The results of the review, including a comprehensive discussion of the defense strategy of the United States and the force structure best suited to implement that strategy.
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 related to –
 - a. the status of the readiness of the United States Forces;
 - b. the cooperation of allies, mission-sharing and additional benefits to the 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
 - e. the intensity, duration, and military and political end-states of conflicts and smaller-scale contingencies.

¹⁴ *National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000*, Public Law 106-65, Code 3230, § 118 (2000).

5. The effect on the force structure and on readiness for high-intensity combat or preparations for and participation in operations other than war and smaller-scale contingencies.
6. The manpower and sustainment policies required under the defense strategy to support engagement in conflicts lasting more than 120 days.
7. The anticipated roles and missions of the reserve components in the 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 defense strategy, including, in particular, the appropriate number and size of headquarters units and Defense Agencies for that purpose.
9. The strategic and tactical air-lift, sea-lift, and ground transportation capabilities required to support the defense strategy.
10. The forward presence, pre-positioning, and other anticipatory deployments necessary under the defense strategy for conflict deterrence and adequate military response to anticipated conflicts.
11. The extent to which resources must be shifted among two or more theaters under the defense strategy in the event of conflict in such theaters.
12. The advisability of revisions to the Unified Command Plan as a result of the defense strategy.
13. The effect on the force structure of the use by the armed forces of technologies anticipated to be available for the ensuing 20 years.
14. Any other matter the Secretary considers appropriate.¹⁵

The Quadrennial Defense Review has become more than just a footnote in the Clinton era, or simply another review aimed at appeasing the inquiries of the Legislature as to “the state of our military”, but part of our lexicon. More importantly, the QDR has evolved into the basis for the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS)

¹⁵ *National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000*, § 118.

governing the program development, force structure, and application of the United States military.

QDR 2001 – Not Just Another Review.

Regardless of the mandatory nature or rigid schedule imposed by NDAA-2000 concerning the Quadrennial Defense Review, the public scrutiny, media coverage, and disclosure issues inherent to the process ordains its primacy among reviews. It has developed into the **one comprehensive** “look” taken by a new or incumbent administration into the “affairs and business practices” of the nation’s military as it begins the current term. Spawning great debate, heightened anxiety (particularly on the part of the executive leadership of the military establishment), and mountains of paperwork the QDR promulgates a multitude of follow-on studies and reviews that propose to “delve deeper into the weeds” – weeds most General Officers (and their Executive Assistants and Action Officers as well) would prefer be left undisturbed. This preference is far less resultant from fear of exposure than it is an expression of frustration that “buzz-words” like *Transformation* will rule the day rather than common sense and the real defense needs of the nation and our allies. As one recent Command and Staff guest alluded, the bureaucratic layers inherent to the Department of Defense (DoD) decision making process require a “blessing” to do what “so many of us intuitively know” is the right thing. DoD documents like the QDR Report and Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) propose to “chart the course” of our nations military for years to come, rendering the deliberations and decisions formulated during the QDR to be of utmost importance to

our nation's defense and our military's future direction. This importance has been magnified by the events of September 11th and the resultant Global War on Terrorism.

A National Security Strategy? Putting the Cart Before the Horse.

In a perfect world, the National Security Strategy document would precede the QDR deliberations (from which the QDR Report would be derived), and in turn the QDR Report would precede the National Military Strategy. In the preface to the 1997 National Military Strategy, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M.

Shalikashvili, wrote:

This document (the National Military Strategy) conveys my advice and that of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the strategic direction of the Armed Forces in implementing the guidance of the President's *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* and the (Defense) Secretary's *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*.

Our best judgment is that this strategy, *Shape, Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era*, and the forces which it calls for, will protect the Nation and its interests, and promote a peace that benefits America and all like-minded nations.¹⁶

Appendix A of the QDR 2001 Report states:

This QDR Report serves as the overall strategic planning document of the Department (of Defense), as required by Public Law 103-62. § III, "Defense Strategy," gives the Department's comprehensive mission statement. General goals are covered in § II, under "U.S. Interests and Objectives." The Department's general policy objectives are to (1) **assure** allies and friends; (2) **dissuade** future military competition; (3) **deter** threats and coercion against U.S. interests, and (4) if deterrence fails, decisively **defeat** any adversary.¹⁷

To date, there has been no new National Security Strategy published (although it was supposed to be published in June of 2001), and in the months since the QDR 2001 Report

¹⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, September 1997, preface.

¹⁷ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 71.

was made public, there has been no new National Military Strategy published (although it was supposed to be published by 30 September 2001). In essence, due to the Administration's late start and theretofore unforeseen events, the QDR Report is *attempting* to fill the role of three crucial planning documents concurrently; 1) stating the tenets of the National Security Strategy, 2) outlining the direction of the Department of Defense, and 3) prioritizing the goals of our Military Strategy. While this circumstance may prove an anomaly in the future, it confirms the gravity of the QDR process – a reality that cannot be ignored. Even if the 2001 QDR Report was a stand-alone document, repeated reference to it both by the media and the Department of Defense as a basis for planning and follow-on activity, places it in the capstone category of defense documents – hand in hand with the classified Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) – as a driving force in the procurement and force structure process.

The Clinton “Legacy” – “Neglect and Decline”.

Throughout the Clinton tenure, accusations of neglect, misunderstanding and misuse of our nation's military abounded. Indicative of the criticism leveled against the Clinton Administration is this excerpt from Representative Floyd D. Spence's Congressional paper titled, “The Clinton-Gore Defense Record: a legacy of neglect and decline”:

After digging a deep hole in the defense budget, the Clinton-Gore Administration is now claiming credit for starting to fill the very ditch they created. Further, the cumulative impact of the Clinton-Gore defense spending record is one that will take years from which to recover. **Mere budget figures cannot begin to quantify the cost of the endemic effects on U.S. military capability resulting from deferred equipment modernization, the loss of skilled personnel, and**

the deteriorated readiness that has become the norm under the Clinton-Gore Administration.¹⁸

Anonymous American military personnel expressed both a sense of relief when President Bush was elected and a disdain for the previous Commander in Chief and his staff. It seemed the average military member (and for that matter the highest ranking service representatives) felt himself or herself free of controversy in the wake of the Bush election. President Bush's post-inauguration whirlwind base tour propagated comments like: "I was so sick and tired of the way Clinton treated the military, and am so damn happy about the way Bush is treating us, and I know I speak for a lot of others when I say, 'It's about time.'"¹⁹ Whether partisan wrangling or valid observations, it is certain that during the Clinton era, application of military power – at least in response to "international crises" – increased while budgetary outlays decreased overall. During the first six years of the Clinton Presidency, defense spending declined by an average of \$3.8 billion per year (or from 4.8 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product to 3.1 percent of the GDP).²⁰ Even as President Clinton raised the actual dollar amount of the defense budget during his final two years in office, these modest increases represented even less of the GDP, bottoming out at 2.9 percent²¹ (in contrast, 30 percent of U.S. GDP is directly related to global trade).²² At the height of the Reagan Presidency, defense

¹⁸ Representative Floyd D. Spence, (R- South Carolina, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee), "The Clinton-Gore Defense Record: a legacy of neglect and decline," Spence Congressional Papers, 3 (7 September 2000).

¹⁹ Joseph Curl, "Military Finds Refreshing Change With Commander in Chief," *Washington Times* (United States), 15 February 2001, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2001/e20010215finds.htm>, accessed 15 Feb 2001.

²⁰ Office of Management and Budget, *Fiscal Year 2002 Historical Tables*, October 2001, 50.

²¹ *Fiscal Year 2002 Historical Tables*, 51.

²² General James L. Jones, posture statement before House Armed Services Committee, 13 February 2002, 3.

outlay was 6.2 percent of the GDP.²³ While it can be argued that at least a portion of that Cold War outlay was “misspent”, it cannot be denied that the military budget of the last several years has been insufficient to maintain legacy systems let alone new programs, particularly in light of the number of deployments in response to world crises that have been undertaken in the last eight years. Will the Bush Administration be the cure, a panacea or something in between for the U.S. military?

A New Administration: “Help is on the Way!”

From the very beginning of his campaign for the Presidency, Mr. Bush and his team made it clear that if elected he intended to depart from Clintonian military strategy and that he was determined to overhaul what he described as an “over-extended” military establishment, returning it to its former strength and “renewing the bond of trust between the American President and the American military.”²⁴ In a speech at the Citadel, Mr.

Bush stated:

As President, I will begin an immediate comprehensive review of our military – the structure of its forces, the state of its strategy, the priorities of its procurement – conducted by a leadership team under the Secretary of Defense. I will give the Secretary a broad mandate – to challenge the status quo and envision a new architecture of American defense for decades to come. We will modernize some existing weapons and equipment, necessary for current tasks. But **our relative peace allows us to do this selectively** (this mantra would be repeated throughout the QDR). The real goal is to move beyond marginal improvements – to replace existing programs with new technologies and strategies. To **use this window of opportunity to skip a generation of technology**. This will require spending more – and spending more wisely. We know that power, in the future, will be projected in different ways.²⁵

²³ *Fiscal Year 2002 Historical Tables*, 49.

²⁴ George W. Bush, Candidate for the Presidency, “A Period of Consequences,” 23 September 2001, 2.

²⁵ George W. Bush, Candidate for the Presidency, “A Period of Consequences,” 23 September 2001, 4.

Mr. Bush's running mate – Richard B. Cheney – was even more pointed in a speech given at the Republican Convention in Philadelphia:

For eight years, Clinton and Gore have extended our military commitments while depleting our military power. Rarely has so much been demanded of our armed forces, and so little given to them in return. George W. Bush and I are going to change that, too. I have seen our military at its finest, with the best equipment, the best training, and the best leadership. I'm proud of them. I have had responsibility for their well-being (as Secretary of Defense for Bush the elder). **And I can promise them now, help is on the way! Soon, our men and women in uniform will once again have a commander in chief they can respect, one who understands their mission and restores their morale.**²⁶

While these statements made during a highly contested political race may have signaled a coming “bumper crop” of funding and a “blank check” policy for the Pentagon under a Bush-led defense team, one only needs to take a closer look at these speeches to see the storm clouds brewing. Near the end of his Citadel speech, Mr. Bush stated:

When our comprehensive review is complete, **I will expect the military's budget priorities to match our strategic vision – not the particular visions of the services**, but a joint vision for change. I will earmark at least 20 percent of the procurement budget for acquisition programs that propel America generations ahead (of our enemies) in military technology. **And I will direct the Secretary of Defense to allocate these funds to the services that prove most effective in developing new programs to do so. I intend to force new thinking and hard choices.**

To the military I say: **We intend to change your structure**, but we will respect your culture.

To the Congress I say: Join me in creating a new strategic vision for our military – a set of goals that will take precedence over the narrow interests of states and regions. I will reach out to reform-minded members of Congress, particularly to overturn laws and regulations that discourage outsourcing and undermine efficiency. **Our military must embrace the productivity revolution that has transformed American business.** **And once a new strategy is clear, I will confront the Congress when it uses the defense budget as a source of pork or patronage.** Moments of national opportunity are either seized or lost, and the

²⁶ Richard B. Cheney, Candidate for Vice-President, “Help is on the Way,” as delivered to the Republican Convention, 2 August 2000, 3.

consequences reach across decades. **Our opportunity is here – to show that a new generation can renew America’s purpose.**²⁷

The military leadership cautiously observed the Bush team as the Presidential campaign culminated, and few statements were made embracing or denouncing the Bush agenda once it was finally clear he was the new President. Mr. Bush had thrown down the gauntlet, and the military “massed its forces” for the battle ahead – QDR 2001. Would this “revolutionary” and *transformational* bent be the right fit for our nation’s defense, and would this be the right time to *transform*?

Transformation

A common theme of the Bush rhetoric before and after the election was one of military *Transformation*. The Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language (Unabridged) definition of “*transformation*” is: **‘to change completely or essentially in composition or structure.’**²⁸ The Secretary of Defense official definition of *Transformation* as published in June 2001 is: **‘the evolution and deployment of combat capabilities that provide revolutionary or asymmetric advantages to our forces.’**²⁹ Echoing the President’s claim that “we are experiencing a period of relative peace”, the SECDEF made the following statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee:

Thankfully, Americans no longer wake up each morning and fret about the possibility of a thermonuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. **They look at the world, and see peace, prosperity and opportunity ahead of them.**

²⁷ George W. Bush, Candidate for the Presidency, “A Period of Consequences,” 23 September 2001, 5.

²⁸ *The Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 3d ed., unabridged, under the word “transformation.”

²⁹ Definition approved by the SECDEF during a meeting of the Senior Leadership Review Group (SLRG) on 25 June 2001.

Today America is strong; **we face no immediate threat to our existence as a nation or our way of life**; we live in an increasingly democratic world, where our military power – working in concert with friends and allies – helps contribute to peace, stability, and growing prosperity. Indeed, it is the underpinning of world economic prosperity.³⁰

These tenets of *transformation* and “relative peace”, coupled with the President’s like views, formed the cornerstone of the “leap-ahead” strategy developed by Mr. Rumsfeld and his advisors – a strategy that read to the military establishment as a divestiture of legacy systems, a draw down in force structure, and a move towards technology instead of mass. These fears were not unfounded. During the campaign, Mr. Bush stated:

Power is increasingly defined not by mass or size, but by mobility and swiftness. Influence is measured in information, safety is gained in stealth, and **force is projected on the long arc of precision-guided weapons.** This revolution perfectly matches the strengths of our country – the skill of our people and the superiority of our technology. The best way to keep the peace is to redefine war on our terms.

Our forces of the next century must be agile, lethal, readily deployable, and require a minimum of logistical support. We must be able to project our power over long distances, in days or weeks rather than months.

On land, our heavy forces must be lighter. Our light forces must be more lethal. All must be easier to deploy. **And these forces must be organized in smaller, more agile formations, rather than cumbersome divisions.**³¹

It does not take a rocket scientist to glean the meaning of these statements, and when you consider the work done by Andrew Marshall’s group directly preceding the QDR, it was fairly clear that the military of the United States was going to become “leaner.” The QDR road ahead would be a rocky one, with each service attempting to paint themselves in the best possible light, hoping that it would not be their “cumbersome divisions” that were the target of DoD “trimming shears.”

³⁰ Donald H. Rumsfeld, prepared testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee, 21 June 2001, 13.

³¹ George W. Bush, Candidate for the Presidency, “A Period of Consequences,” 23 September 2001, 4.

SECTION II:

“Battle of the Beltway” – Conduct of QDR 2001.

In past reviews, the “us” (military) versus “them” (OSD reviewers) mentality was readily apparent, and perhaps even necessary considering what was at stake. Quadrennial Defense Review 2001 was no exception, and the universal animosity was evident from the start. The conduct of QDR 2001 was exacerbated by the delayed electoral results and the infusion of political appointees and Service Secretaries thrown into the mix just in time to “stir the pot” and make demands on both the military establishment and the career-level bureaucrats employed by OSD. These late entries (e.g., the Secretary of the Navy was not confirmed until May 2001, and as late as 21 June, the SECDEF testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that, “...the few senior civilian officials in the Department who **have** been confirmed, held a series of meetings to discuss the U.S. defense strategy.”)³² served to “fan the flames” of disharmony already inherent in a process aimed at “exposing inefficiencies” and “examining the business practices” of a military establishment already gun-shy after eight years of the Clinton Administration. It was readily apparent early on that the Secretary of Defense was not inclined to enlist the opinion of the military executive leadership during this review, and in this author’s opinion, it was only due to press outcry and complaint that Mr. Rumsfeld conceded the Flag Officers a seat at “the table.”

The resultant effect was a QDR “Bermuda Triangle” where each leg (political appointees, the military, and career OSD employees) was pitted against the other. Perhaps the most

crucial – and oft neglected – leg of the triangle in regards to progress or regression was that of the career-level bureaucrats employed by OSD. This group encompassed the “bean counters”, analysts, and duty experts who were tasked with running the Integrated

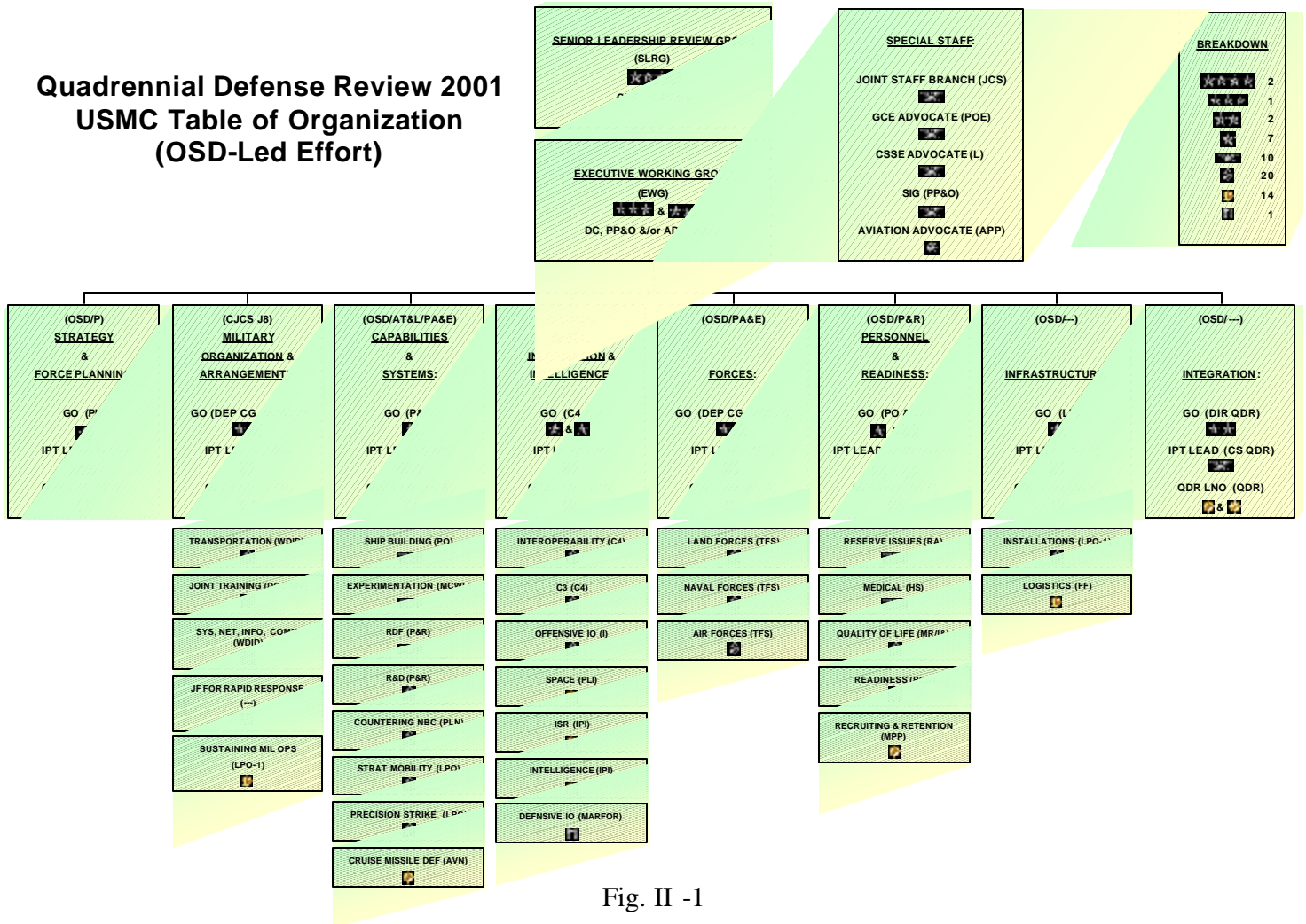


Fig. II -1

Process Teams (IPTs – there were eight; see figure II-1), collating the military inputs based on criteria established by the political appointees, analyzing it, and attempting to “sanity check” the results. While many things went into the aforementioned QDR Bermuda triangle, few things came out, and those that did had little resemblance to the

³² Rumsfeld SASC testimony, 1.

work the IPTs had (grudgingly) done. In describing the Russians during World War II, Winston Churchill likened them to, “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”³³ He could just as easily have been talking about the QDR – particularly the Senior Leadership Review Group (SLRG) chaired by the SECDEF, and attended by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Service Chiefs, and the various Assistant and Under Secretaries of Defense.

After a summer of long hours, countless briefings and constant demands, the QDR machinery began the painstaking process of trying to produce a viable, relevant report of the QDR findings and recommendations. Beginning in early August, numerous drafts of the QDR Report were penned, routed, chopped to pieces, and re-drafted. The version submitted for “chop” on 9 September 2001 was expected to be the final product. Mr. Steven Cambone’s (Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy) office had made it quite clear that this was the last round of negotiations as to the content of the “Secretary’s Report.”

³³ Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, speech presented in radio broadcast, 1 October 1939, Churchill Papers (CHAR 9/138/46).

SECTION III:

The QDR Report Review – Oh, What a Difference a Day Makes.

In a speech at the Norfolk Naval Station in February 2001, President Bush stated that the Secretary of Defense would have a “broad mandate to challenge the status quo as we (the Administration) design a new architecture for the defense of America and our allies.”³⁴

This mandate was a powerful tool brandished by Mr. Rumsfeld throughout the review process, culminating with his final report card. The *Report of QDR 2001* was published (officially) on 30 September 2001 by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, nineteen days after the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Was the document that was distributed for public release the same document that existed prior to “9-11?” More to the point, was the content of the QDR Report consistent with the deliberations that took place and the outcomes of those deliberations? The answer is “no”, but perhaps more important, did the QDR Report pose more questions than it answered? The following several paragraphs are a review of the QDR 2001 Report, its messages, and its implications for our military.

Foreword.

While this section makes great show of discussing homeland security/homeland defense, in reality little was said about HS/HD during the actual QDR deliberations. What discussion did take place resulted in placing HS/HD in the “too hard” category

³⁴ Frank Wolfe, “Stevens Favors Examination of Reasons Behind Defense Cost Rise,” *Defense Daily* (United States), 14 February 2001, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2001/e20010214stevens.htm>, accessed 14 Feb 2001.

considering the compressed time line imposed by the QDR process. This section does admit that the events of “9-11” were unanticipated (at least on the scale undertaken – “...a war that many feared but whose sheer horror took us by surprise.”³⁵) and that these acts have changed the way we as a Nation think about defense. However, it lacks the depth and detail necessary to substantiate such a change in thinking – particularly because the unique methods by which these attacks were executed were not predicted nor were they examined during the QDR “analysis” (there was very little analysis done during the QDR due to a lack of time exacerbated by the magnitude of the task at hand – *transform* the military). Also, the proclamation that “a central objective of the review was to shift the basis of defense planning from a ‘threat-based’ model that has dominated thinking in the past to a ‘capabilities-based’ model for the future” is misleading.³⁶ The crux of the work done to ascertain the proper force structure and capabilities required to effectively support our national defense was based on examination of various existing warplans “executed” against selected enemies, coupled with “other” coincidental events requiring military intervention. These deliberations initially produced a notional force structure far greater than currently existed, and the Bush appointees – ever mindful of the Administration’s intent to “trim the fat”, sent the Forces IPT back to the drawing board – again and again. Further complicating the process, was the seemingly random set of criteria that were imposed by the SECDEF and his deputies (and varied constantly) to govern the analysis, exacerbated by ambiguous application of war termination objectives. Perhaps the greatest area of divergence is demonstrated by the following excerpt: “To support the *transformation* of the U.S. Armed Forces and to better manage the full range

³⁵ *Report of the QDR 2001*, iii.

³⁶ *Report of the QDR 2001*, iv.

of activities of the Defense Department, the Quadrennial Defense Review identified a new approach to assessing and measuring risk.”³⁷ The “new approach” was to ignore it (risk) or at the very least mitigate it to the point of acceptability regardless of the evidence to the contrary.

I. America’s Security in the 21st Century.

Diminishing Protection Afforded by Geographic Distance.

In the discussion of current security trends, the QDR Report observes: “As the September 2001 events have horrifically demonstrated, the geographic position of the United States no longer guarantees immunity from direct attack on its population, territory, and infrastructure.”³⁸ While this statement is true, the assessed vulnerability of our soil and its citizens was never based on terrorist activity, but on missile-borne Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). DoD fully expected that beyond those missile threats, HD/HS would be an “away game” played with our forward deployed forces. As MajGen Whitlow said during a recent CSC visit, “very few people, military or civilian, comprehended that ‘9-11’ was a likelihood.” Further, the concern expressed was minimal and the likelihood that our soil or sovereignty would be compromised was dismissed.

State of the U.S. Military.

“The quality of life in the military is critical to retaining a Service member and his or her family.”³⁹ Throughout the QDR deliberations, the discussion of Quality of Life (QOL) initiatives and their proposed application was hotly debated. The President himself made

³⁷ *Report of the QDR 2001*, v.

³⁸ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 3.

the observation, “There’s an old military saying: Soldiers enlist, but families re-enlist. We need to treat families well and encourage military careers.”⁴⁰ Unfortunately, such platitudes and the QDR discussions they spawned ignored one very important and obvious fact – you cannot institute new QOL programs without fixing those that currently exist and are marginally effective at best. For example, the family medical care program (TRICARE) has been shown time and again to be ineffective and inefficient, yet steps to rectify these shortcomings were ignored. Though compensatory increases (read: pay raises and allowance increases) are welcomed by the Service member, the infrastructure and programs that support the health and well being of his or her family are equally as important and must be paid more than just lip service.

II. Defense Strategy.

Defense Policy Goals.

Assure, Dissuade, Deter and (if Deterrence fails) **Decisively Defeat.**⁴¹ While these policy goals appear marginally different from those of the previous administration, in reality they are strikingly similar. Further, they are vague enough to render scrutiny difficult if not impossible. Though each goal is defined in more “detail” in the ensuing paragraphs, what is NOT said is more important than what is said. The fatal flaw behind these goals is that they are not mutually exclusive, and failure in one goal spells shortcomings in all. For instance, if in an effort to limit deployment or operational tempo, we (as a Department of Defense) decide to engage an enemy threatening the

³⁹ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 9.

⁴⁰ Natalfi Bendavid, “Bush Launches Effort to Soothe Military Leaders,” *Chicago Tribune* (United States), 11 February 2001, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2001/s20010212launches.htm>, accessed 12 Feb 2001.

⁴¹ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 11.

sovereignty of an ally only with the force sufficient to restore the border, what have we accomplished? Does this assure our allies and friends that we will “honor all treaty and agreement obligations”? Does it dissuade future military competition with that enemy since we have allowed his escape? Does it deter threat and coercion against U.S. interests if we have shown a propensity to “disengage” once initial objectives are met? Did we decisively defeat the aggressor? While each crisis response scenario is obviously different, requiring varying levels of commitment and duration, the common thread of all QDR deliberations regarding force structure pointed towards reductions in end strength. Therefore, it stands to reason that we would be forced to limit our involvement in burgeoning conflicts. These limitations could very well render the policy goals impotent and devoid of any substance beyond words on a page.

Defending the United States and Projecting U.S. Military Power.

“Defending the Nation from attack is the foundation of strategy. As the tragic September terror attacks demonstrate, potential adversaries will seek to threaten the centers of gravity of the United States, its allies, and its friends. As the U.S. military increased its ability to project power at long-range, adversaries have noted the relative vulnerability of the U.S. homeland.”⁴² Unfortunately, we as a Nation (and particularly as a Defense Establishment) did not recognize the dangers, nor were these vulnerabilities the subject of great discussion during the QDR. The administration’s focus of effort with regards to technology and force structure centered upon long-range strike with a de-emphasis on ground forces, particularly those forces forward deployed. While surely an impact on the Marine Corps, this trend could do far more damage to our Nation’s collective military

⁴² *Report of the QDR 2001*, 14.

power base if carried too far. One must only heed the words of T. R. Fehrenbach to imagine the folly in becoming too reliant on technology to fight our battles:

You may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life, but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman legions did, by putting young men in the mud.⁴³

Innovation and *transformation* can be constructive, but if you expect to win the wars of the future solely through air power, stand off weaponry, and space based systems, you have ignored the lessons of history. Subtly worded, the Commandant of the Marine Corps' recent posture statement spells it out: "The Marine Corps' role as the Nation's medium-weight expeditionary force, (bridges) the gap between America's Special Operations Forces and the Army's critical land war-winning capability."⁴⁴ In other words, if we scale down the Army structure and "lighten" its force too drastically (reducing it to a handful of "mini-Marine Corps"), we will lose the ability to wage and win war on a grand scale. The latest War Room Report is even more pointed:

The Marine Corps must remain engaged as the Army develops the Objective Force (OF) in order to ensure that the nation makes a conscious and informed decision regarding future expeditionary seaborne forces. The Army has not been effective in projecting the true costs of achieving OF goals. Much of the technology to attain requisite OF capabilities does not yet exist, and thus it would be nearly impossible to predict true costs with accuracy. Reasonable estimates of the investment required in additional equipment, lift, training, and C2 infrastructure show a price tag considerably higher than the Army is currently proposing. **The Army's development of a Maneuver Warfare philosophy is encouraging, but it should be developed within the Army's established core competencies, while retaining the war winning punch and remaining interoperable with and complementary to its sister Services in the process.**⁴⁵

⁴³ U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College (CSC), Pamphlet: *Proud Legions; This Kind of War- A Study in Unpreparedness*, (MCB Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps TECOM, July 1990), iv.

⁴⁴ General Jones, Posture Statement, February 2002, 3.

⁴⁵ War Room Report 7-02, 15 February 2002, 3.

While our economic power is formidable, it cannot stand-alone. If our Nation’s military element of strategic power is diminished, the U.S. will be increasingly vulnerable – a position we cannot afford to assume in this new age of conventional **and** asymmetric threats and non-state “bad actors.”

III. Paradigm Shift in Force Planning.

“Unlike previous force-sizing constructs, the new (capabilities-based) construct 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.”⁴⁶ The preceding statements appear to validate the move from a “threat-based” military to one of a “capabilities-based” construct. However, the QDR deliberations, particularly those relating to Force Structure, were decidedly threat-based. As stated earlier, the foundation of the work done to ascertain the proper force structure and capabilities required to effectively support our national defense was based on threat calculation and desired level of response. Further complicating the process was the criteria that were used (and varied constantly) to govern the analysis, exacerbated by often-undecipherable war termination objectives.

Defend the United States.

“Those who respond first to an incident will likely be the closest to the event – local law enforcement and emergency response personnel. DoD must institutionalize definitions of

homeland security, homeland defense, and civil support and address command relationships and responsibilities within the Defense Department. This will allow the Defense Department to identify and assign homeland security roles and missions as well as examine resources implications.”⁴⁷ The very language of these statements alludes to the lack of discussion regarding such matters that took place prior to the September attacks. Phrases like, “will likely”, “must institutionalize”, and “will allow” clearly illustrate the unfinished nature of our efforts to thwart similar attacks in the future, primarily because before “9-11”, such attacks were considered highly unlikely and were not examined by the QDR panels.

Major Combat Operations.

“For planning purposes, U.S. forces will remain capable of swiftly defeating attacks against U.S. allies and friends in any two theaters of operation in overlapping timeframes.”⁴⁸ While it’s uncertain what “for planning purposes” means (does it mean “on paper only”?), the rest of this phrase sounds suspiciously like the “two Major Theater War (MTW)” paradigm supposedly disposed of at the outset of the QDR deliberations. If the Forces deliberations were any indication, the two MTW paradigm is alive and well.

Current Forces.

On page 22 of the QDR report, a chart outlines the current force structure of the U.S. military, Service by Service. The paragraph preceding the chart labels it as “the baseline from which the Department will develop a transformed force for the future.”⁴⁹ This statement is basically political double-speak for “we were on the verge of making an

⁴⁶ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 18.

⁴⁷ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 19.

⁴⁸ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 21.

⁴⁹ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 22.

unpopular decision (at least with the military executive leadership) by reducing the size of the U.S. military, when the events of “9-11” rendered such actions politically dangerous. By portraying our intent with vague reference to the future, we avoid having to make any decision at all.”

IV. Reorienting the U.S. Military Global Posture.

The premise of this particular section of the QDR report is admirable – “reorient the global posture to render forward forces capable of swiftly defeating an adversary’s military and political objectives with only modest reinforcement.”⁵⁰ Unfortunately, it ignores the regrettable reality that our access to other nations, particularly in those geographic areas of emerging importance (like the Pacific region), is shrinking rather than expanding. This trend towards limited access and dwindling forward basing will make it extremely difficult to meet the reorientation goals laid out on pages 26 and 27 of this document. Projecting power in an anti-access environment will be among the most demanding challenges for the U.S. military in the 21st century, and it is still uncertain as to how that challenge will be met if we decrease both the number of personnel forward deployed and the number of ships in the U.S. Navy’s inventory.

V. Creating the Military of the 21st Century.

This section is – or at least should have been – the most substantive portion of the QDR Report. However, it is in actuality a rehash of the *transformation* agenda touted by the Bush Administration throughout the Presidential campaign and subsequent to the election. In contrast, consider the Commandant of the Marine Corps’ recent testimony

before the House Armed Services Committee where he likened this call for *transformation* to the cries after the energy shortage of the 1970s. In this testimony, the Commandant cautioned against confusing “modernization” with “*transformation*” – did we as a nation really transform our energy policies in the wake of the energy crisis, or did we simply modernize with an eye towards *transformation*? The same could be said of our current military and our legacy systems – should we modernize with an eye towards *transformation*, or should we make the ultimate gamble and place all our chips on the future at the expense of the present. If we over-invest in “leap-ahead” technologies and cordon off a small portion of our force for *transformation*, we will starve the current force and drive our legacy systems to the danger point. As former Marine General Anthony Zinni noted:

Some proposals have been made to cut force structure drastically, remove forward-based and deployed forces from overseas, and stop modernization to afford transformation. Advocates of a strategic pause who think we can withdraw from the world or opt out of interventions that threaten our interests are not facing the reality of the current world situation. **We cannot gamble on a self-ordering world, since the risk to us could be great if we are not militarily capable of dealing with an unforeseen threat that emerges from this disordered global environment.**⁵¹

Transformation will take a very long time to complete, and as a defense establishment we should not artificially accelerate the process for political reasons.

VI. Revitalizing the DOD Establishment.

This section espouses many important and valid concerns regarding recapitalization, personnel adjustments, infrastructure, etc. However, OSD should take great caution in

⁵⁰ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 25.

⁵¹ Anthony C. Zinni, “A Military for the 21st Century: Lessons from the Recent Past,” *Strategic Forum*, No. 181, July 2001, 3.

placing too much emphasis on efficiency and “sound business practices” at the expense of effectiveness. It is difficult to imagine a championship athletic team with no depth beyond the starters; while having a paucity of stock on the shelves may be desirable in business, in combat it is paramount that contingencies are planned for and that reserves be programmed into the battle plan. If you strip your resources too thin in the name of efficiency, you are likely to pay the price when eventualities you have not considered – such as the September attacks – materialize. War is not a business, and if you go too far in your attempts to turn it into one, the resultant cost paid in blood on the field of battle will be steep.

VII. Managing Risks.

Strategic planning without risk assessment is planning conducted in a vacuum. “No plan survives first action/contact”, and that axiom itself confirms the necessity to conduct detailed risk assessment prior to executing any plan. If you have not examined as many eventualities as possible prior to implementation, in an effort to minimize the “holes” in your plan, you expose yourself to unnecessary risk and limit your chances for success. During the QDR deliberations, risk assessment was essentially dismissed in the name of expediency. That is why this section on Managing Risk is so disturbing – how can you manage risk without first assessing it? “The tendency to reduce spending in periods with no clear or well-defined threat has the potential effect of creating risks by avoiding or delaying investment in the force.”⁵² Insufficient or ill-advised increases in defense spending that mortgage our legacy systems, coupled with potential reductions in force

⁵² *Report of the QDR 2001*, 57.

structure in light of uncertain threats, gapping technology, and assuming you are enjoying a “period of relative peace” also have the potential to create risks.

A New Risk Framework.

The “New Risk Framework” posed by this document introduces a “four-dimensional” approach to Risk Management: (1) Force Management, (2) Operational Management, (3) Future Challenges, and (4) Institutional (Management). The four interrelated dimensions are intended to “assess the Defense establishment in these four areas, directly addressing the issues associated with developing and assessing operational force, key enabling capabilities, and its supporting deployment and industrial infrastructure.”⁵³

Unfortunately, the nuts and bolts of these dimensions are “still under development” or “yet to be undertaken”. Additionally, a major tenant of this new risk management formula, is a departure from “the past, (where) major elements of the forces were designed and evaluated against a narrow set of military missions and associated tasks” in favor of “a wider set of missions and tasks... and those that they (the military) are currently assigned to conduct.”⁵⁴ These statements would suggest that the new Risk Management model was used during the QDR deliberations, and that simply was not the case. If anything, the criteria utilized during the QDR process to assess force structure were narrower than in the past, due to the existing time constraints.

Mitigating Risks Across the Spectrum.

“Maintaining a strategy-driven balance among the four dimensions of risk is essential, and that balance must be sustained and, where necessary, adapted over time.”⁵⁵ This statement will only be true if you have a strategy. At this point, evidence has not been

⁵³ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 58.

⁵⁴ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 60.

presented that proves we have a coherent strategy coupled with a true capabilities-based system of force structure and program development – the QDR certainly does not provide this evidence.

VIII. Statement of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“In my view, the defense strategy and program recommendations contained in the QDR report are a major step toward accomplishing these two tasks, while balancing the associated near-, mid-, and long-term risks.”⁵⁶ At first glance, this statement appears to be an attempt on the part of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General Henry H. Shelton) to bow out gracefully without “making waves”. However, further study of the Chairman’s statement reveals an unease regarding the QDR results (“I believe that sustaining an end strength and force structure capable of executing the new defense strategy at moderate risk will be a significant challenge”⁵⁷), and his assessment is a subtle warning that there is far more work to be done before the task is complete. In voicing his thoughts on Risk Assessment, the Chairman states:

Over time the full implications of the QDR will emerge. **The ability of the force to field transformed capabilities, while continuing to protect and advance U.S. world-wide interests in the near- and mid-term, will be more accurately assessed as the Joint and Service transformation roadmaps are developed.** Finally, force structure, budget, and infrastructure impacts will become clearer as the Services complete their FY03 budgets and Program Objective Memoranda.⁵⁸

In other words, the QDR deliberations and alleged decisions made here are insufficient to fully overcome the myriad of challenges facing a “transforming” Defense establishment, and a great deal of effort and analysis lies ahead.

⁵⁵ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 64.

⁵⁶ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 67.

⁵⁷ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 68.

Conclusion

The statement “we must provide them with the resources and support they need to safeguard peace and security not only for our generation but for generations to come” sounds very much like a recipe for end strength increases and enhanced program development, while all the indicators prior to “9-11” pointed towards a draw down and the culling out of “redundant technologies”. Throughout the QDR process, the theme “we are enjoying a period of relative peace, and we should take advantage of it while we can” was preeminent. This document does not correspond to that belief. As a whole, this document says little and validates less. In short, this QDR Report would have been better served as a two-page acknowledgement that the events of “9-11” rendered the majority of the work done in the QDR obsolete, and that “we” (the Defense Department) need to re-evaluate our priorities for defense prior to publishing a definitive plan for the future – something this document most decidedly is not. As lacking in substantive language as this report may seem however, the impact of the numerous studies and budget considerations mandated by the QDR promises to be great, and it could be as long as two years until that impact is measurable.

⁵⁸ *Report of the QDR 2001*, 70.

SECTION IV:

QDR '01 from USMC Perspective.

In the late spring of 2000, MajGen Robert Magnus (then Assistant Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations and currently the Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources) was assigned as the General Officer/Advocate for the Marine Corps QDR effort. Colonel John Priddy was named as his Executive Assistant. While both officers were exceedingly capable, and in MajGen Magnus' case in particular, familiar with the "Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures" (TTPs) inherent to the Pentagon and Washington, they were placed in the unenviable position of assembling their team and laying out a "game plan" after the game had already begun. Not only did their assignments coincide with a period traditionally associated with officer rotation (spring and early summer) – limiting the corporate knowledge and continuity in each functional area they would be able to draw upon – but they had to lobby strenuously for the support they would receive in terms of permanent personnel (the seven "iron majors" they requested from MCCDC and TECOM) as well. These "iron majors" – the Strategic Studies Group – were not actually assigned until 4 January 2001, a mere 16 days before the inauguration. While they were preceded by a group of like officers from the Command and Staff College, those officers were not intended to "prepare the battlefield" for the QDR – at least not directly – but to support Dynamic Commitment, a wargame sponsored by the Joint Staff. As Colonel (Ret) Chandler C. Crangle (Special Assistant to MajGen Magnus for the QDR effort) stated in his assessment of the QDR:

QDR planning must be better (earlier) integrated into HQMC/MCCDC planning. QDR is no longer an unanticipated unpleasantry – it is a recurring

Title 10 requirement. Early identification of QDR leadership and assignment to Washington (is required). Need them in place NLT January 2004. Early development/decision on Marine Corps objectives and themes (is a necessity). (The Marine Corps needs to) dedicate an EOS/GOS to QDR themes and objectives – 18 to 12 months prior to the '04 elections to allow full development (OLA and PA campaigns, GO speakers) and deployment (influence the “defense intelligentsia” on both sides, Congress, Administration and “think-tanks”).⁵⁹

This late start was only magnified by the delayed election results and apparent desire of the new Secretary of Defense to conduct his own in-house review prior to the actual QDR. Additionally, as the smallest of the four Services, the Marine Corps was at a distinct disadvantage in providing dedicated subject matter experts (SMEs) to the various IPTs conducting the QDR “analyses.” Aside from the “iron majors” and a handful of the Marine Corps panel leads, the preponderance of the officers dedicated to the Marine QDR effort were part-time players, with other duties as their primary assignment – several were stationed in Quantico, dividing their time between the Pentagon and home-station.

When the Going Gets Tough.

Despite the disadvantages faced by the Marine Corps QDR cell, once the proceedings began, the team worked quite well together and persevered throughout the summer to provide the best possible products with the limited resources (both monetary and manpower related) at hand. It was also fortuitous that MajGen Magnus was frocked to the rank of LtGen in June of 2001 in the midst of the QDR deliberations. While the timing may have seemed innocuous to some, the difference between being a two-star general and a three-star general is not lost on the powers that be in the Pentagon. From

⁵⁹ Chandler C. Crangle, Memorandum for the Record, QDR After Action Report, 11 February 2002, 6-7.

that point forward, whenever LtGen Magnus entered a meeting or debate, he was likely to be the ranking military officer in the group, lending even more weight and credence to his opinions and positions on the various issues. This helped greatly to “level the playing field” between the Marine Corps and the other Services competing for funding and program priorities. Suffice it to say that that competition was keen, and had it not been for the events of “9-11”, the outcomes of the QDR – and the “winners” and “losers” – might have been substantially different. While it might make for exciting reading, a discussion of the various stances made by the other Services and their attempts to undermine the efforts of the Marine Corps (and each other) has little value here. The real takeaway for the Marine Corps is to be prepared early and with a common set of themes and objectives to avoid the pitfalls of “wrestling with pigs.” As the old saying goes, “never wrestle with a pig; you’ll get dirty and the pig likes it.” Further, a permanent organization and timetable must be developed in support of the QDR, which is now a recurring and crucial part of our national defense.

The Future.

If the trappings of the recent Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process have taught us anything, it is that the QDR prelude, deliberations, decisions and their aftermath are potentially very important to the Marine Corps. Fiscal programs, systems, force structure and end strength, roles and missions – all of these areas and more were scrutinized, dissected and commented upon by the QDR process and ultimately the report that was produced. To what end is yet to be determined, but by all accounts the influence will be far reaching. That being said, it would be imprudent to “dissolve” the Marine Corps

QDR team as has been suggested, leaving it dormant until 2004. It is difficult to imagine a championship athletic team that puts the trophy in the trophy case and disbands the organization until next opening day. The behind the scenes activities inherent to preparation for the next “campaign” start while the champagne is still flowing. The “housekeeping” chores alone are staggering. Marine Corps efforts should be no different (See Annex A and B). Although there are a number of ways to “skin this cat”, one proposal is as follows: maintain a permanent QDR Cell with a civilian employee as the deputy (and the continuity element) replacing a “gang of” CSC students on an annual basis. This cell would be subordinate to the Strategic Initiatives Group (SIG) in the Interim QDR years, and would become “OPCON” to the General Officer/Advocate and his Executive Assistant assigned the mission during the actual QDR execution year.

Contractor Support – Sort Of

By assigning a civilian employee of the Marine Corps (vice a contractor) with the requisite experience to act as the continuity from year to year, while maintaining Marine Corps control of the cell through the Strategic Initiatives Group (SIG) and ultimately the “QDR General”, we capitalize on the best of both worlds. The Marine Corps need not concern itself with cyclically replacing the deputy (as it would with a serving officer or a contractor whose employment terms are subject to periodic review), yet the reporting senior/reviewing officer role and ultimate authority behind the cell’s actions would remain in the hands of a Marine officer – the SIG Director and finally the QDR General/Advocate and his Executive Assistant. The civilian GS (starting at GS-14 with potential for promotion) assigned as the deputy would act as the functionary overseeing

the day-to-day operations of the QDR cell, and in the long run providing advice and guidance to the designated QDR General/Advocate during the QDR execution phase. His accumulated depth of knowledge (over each four year cycle) and stable of contacts would serve to streamline the efforts of the QDR cell, and minimize the “breaking in” period that would be undertaken each year. Additionally, he would act as the custodian of all classified and unclassified material that is pertinent to the QDR effort, and would be responsible for the administrative functions (office space, C4, supply, parking, etc. – see Annex A and B) of the QDR cell. Those functions – such as establishing a Plain Language Address (PLAD) – for the QDR cell that require Marine initiative may be assumed by the SIG Director.

The “Iron Majors” – The Gang of ?.

While there are many arguments against taking a number of officers out of a PME school for a year, and throwing them into the “beltway fray”, none of them are more compelling than the argument for doing just that – they are readily available, and can be replaced on an annual basis with little cost to the Marine Corps while in turn reaping substantial benefits. If their function was to do nothing more than provide a place holder and perpetuate contact with the agencies involved in the QDR, it would be worth it, but they could provide so much more if given the proper tools and guidance. Each year in the cycle – the interim years and the actual execution year – could be painstakingly broken down with a detailed Plan of Action and Milestones outlining their tasking and responsibilities. Additionally, a QDR order should be published outlining the mission, billet descriptions, etc., that are inherent to any military organization to include the QDR

Cell. The billet description and responsibilities of the “gang” would remain fairly constant over each four-year cycle, with clearly defined “lanes” developed for each officer. As we have seen during the last two QDR cycles, the issues and basic panel areas of concern are common and have remained relatively predictable. With that in mind, each officer in the “gang” could be assigned an “area of responsibility” (lane) parallel with the panel his successor will ultimately participate in during the QDR execution phase. For instance, during the 2001 QDR cycle, the panels were (1) Strategy & Force Planning, (2) Military Organization & Arrangements, (3) Capabilities and Systems, (4) Space, Information & Intelligence, (5) Forces, (6) Personnel & Readiness, (7) Infrastructure, (8) Integration. While the issues discussed by these panels overlapped somewhat, the focus of each panel was fairly specific yet broad enough to apply again in 2005 and well into the future. If each officer assigned to the cell was given responsibility for the focus area of a panel, they could essentially build a “playbook” that can be continuously updated, revised, and used as a pass-down from year to year. These responsibilities would include attending any workshops, wargames, presentations, etc. given that impact the panel focus area assigned. Additionally, each officer could be assigned a secondary responsibility for assessing the political environment (platform of current administration and their potential opponents); defense initiatives, priorities and service positions; the economic environment; the international scene; current military actions; etc. as well as analyses of the previous QDR process, the published QDR report, and the subsequent Chairman’s assessment.

Guidance.

Ultimately, the responsibility for providing clear guidance – a “party platform” if you will – that can be fleshed out by the QDR Cell and articulated by the Advocates who will participate at the highest levels of the QDR hierarchy lies with the Commandant of the Marine Corps. This platform should be developed and announced to the Marine Corps General Officers as soon as possible upon assumption of the duties of CMC. This could be accomplished relatively easily at the first GOS or EOS of the Commandant’s tenure (as Colonel (Ret) Crangle also suggested). During this forum, the Commandant could lay out his ideas regarding force structure and end strength, program priorities, conceptual developments, vision for the future, etc. with the caveat that each advocate respond within 30 days with a critique of the platform and suggestions for improvement. Once this platform has been solidified and agreed upon, it would become the stepping off point for interaction and negotiation with the Joint Staff and OSD during the QDR process. Once announced, the QDR Cell would be tasked with providing or seeking out the information (point papers, briefings, etc.) that would buttress the platform and provide positional validation during the inevitable arguments that will ensue. This platform takes the guesswork out of the process, and allows the Advocates the opportunity to clearly articulate Marine Corps positions with sufficient information to back up their claims.

A perfect example of this type of “platform” is General Jones’ recent posture statement before the House Armed Services Committee. A seminal document, the Commandant’s statement covers everything from *transformation* to revitalization of our bases and stations. It clearly defines the Marine Corps’ role in today’s evolving strategic

environment and hints strongly at the methods and thought processes that will be necessary to maintain our position in the global community while maintaining the stability so desirable to our culture (and most others as well). In his statement, the Commandant also proclaims the supremacy of *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare (EMW)* among Marine Corps doctrine. EMW provides not only this Commandant but his successor as well, with the means to verbalize the Marine Corps' message. Used as intended – as a “capstone document” – EMW provides the Commandant with a “living, breathing” advertisement for Marine Corps programs and initiatives. By regularly updating and “filling in the blanks”, EMW can act as a conduit between the Marine Corps and those in our government who “hold the purse strings” – our legislators. For years the Marine Corps has used the line, **“for six percent of the Department of Defense budget, the Marine Corps provides 20 percent of our nation’s ground combat maneuver battalions, tactical fixed-wing aircraft squadrons, and attack helicopter squadrons, as well as one-third of its active duty combat service support.”**⁶⁰ While some would dispute these figures, they have been repeated so many times that they are now part of our mantra, and are accepted by the Legislature. As General John Jumper (the USAF Air Combat Command leader) said, “the formula for success in the next QDR, is early preparation and good communication. We’ve learned from previous reviews that we have to be prepared. We have to be ready to explain what the Air Force needs to be for the people of the United States, and explain what the value of our Air Force is to this country.”⁶¹ If the Marine Corps follows suit, and ensures EMW is not only understood

⁶⁰General James L. Jones, posture statement before House Armed Services Committee, 13 February 2002, 7.

⁶¹General John Jumper, “Command Prepares for Next QDR,” Air Combat Command News Service, 22 August 2000, 1.

by our legislators, but that they believe it, the Corps can avoid being labeled “obsolete.” Additionally, however, we must not rely on the old adage “the reason the Marine Corps still exists is because America (read: our Representatives) loves the Marine Corps.” As the number of legislators with military experience decreases (as it has done steadily over the past several terms), and the trend towards “sexy, stealthy, stand-off, space-based” defense grows, the Marine Corps will have to very clearly and repeatedly define its place in our nation’s defense portfolio to avoid the aforementioned label as “obsolete.”

SECTION V:

Conclusion

Regardless of the level of military input during, or “pushback” in the aftermath of the QDR or, for that matter, the ultimate direction the Bush Administration takes, strategy development and implementation will certainly be within yet to be defined budgetary constraints. During the elder Bush’s tenure as Commander in Chief, the military establishment had 2.1 million people on active duty, 1.11 million reservists, and a \$401 billion budget in today’s dollars. The current Bush Administration inherited an active-duty military of 1.38 million and 846,000 reservists with a \$296 billion budget.⁶² The Bush Administration has requested an increase to \$379 billion with \$14 billion earmarked for rising health care costs and \$6.7 billion set aside for increases in military pay, benefits and improved housing.⁶³ As the President stated in his speech before a joint session of Congress on 27 February 2001, “Our men and women in uniform give America their best and we owe them our support.”

Unfortunately, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs – USAF General Richard B. Myers - recently concluded that even a \$379 billion budget is far too small to support the current National Military Strategy, and although the Bush Administration would like to divorce itself from this strategy (breaking the two MTW paradigm and shifting towards a

⁶² Chris Vaughn, “Bush Faces Challenges in Upgrading Military,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (United States), 27 January 2001, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Jan2001/e20010129bush.htm>, accessed 29 Jan 2001.

capabilities-based military), recent events have made that impractical. General Myers contends:

The armed services need to spend **\$100 to \$110 billion a year for several years** (just) to replace fighter jets, ships, and other weapons that should be retired. **We cannot continue to defer procurement as we did over the last decade. We must accelerate the replacement of aging systems if we are to sustain our capability to meet near-term challenges and all of our 21st-century commitments.**⁶⁴

But already some politicians, military experts and Pentagon watchdog groups disagree.

They argue that the real problem is that the Administration and DoD have not cut or killed older weapons programs or reined in “out of control” program budgets to help pay for new ones.⁶⁵ This difference of opinion will be played out during the budget battle on Capitol Hill, much the way it was fought during the QDR. All existing or proposed programs – to include force structure – were scrutinized during QDR 2001, and their collective fate has yet to be fully realized. Programs crucial to the *transformation* of the Marine Corps such as the V-22 and JSF will continue to be observed and reevaluated. Said one former Bush staffer, “It’s (the V-22 Osprey) still not ready for production after 10 years of development.” As for the JSF, he added that the Joint Strike Fighter program will also be on notice to meet “very tough program cost targets, deadlines and production unit costs.” Under the Nunn-McCurdy Act, the Pentagon must notify Congress of any program whose unit cost increases by 15 percent.⁶⁶ If a program’s unit cost increases by

⁶³ James Dao and Thom Shanker, “Rise in Budget is Not Enough, General Plans to Testify,” *New York Times* (United States), 5 February 2002, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2002/e20020205rise.htm>, accessed 5 Feb 2002.

⁶⁴ James Dao and Thom Shanker, “Rise in Budget is Not Enough, General Plans to Testify,” 5 February 2002.

⁶⁵ James Dao and Thom Shanker, “Rise in Budget is Not Enough, General Plans to Testify,” 5 February 2002.

⁶⁶ Unknown Author, “Programs Must Use Realistic Cost Estimates, DoD Comptroller Says,” *Aerospace Daily*, (United States), 5 February 2002, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Feb2002/e20020205programs.htm>, accessed 5 February 2002.

more than 25 percent, the Pentagon must certify it is vital to national security and can be restructured to maintain costs.⁶⁷ For the first time since its passage in the 1980s, the Nunn-McCurdy act has been invoked, leading the Pentagon to curtail the Navy's Space Based Infrared Radar Low (SBIRS Low) program, cut back the LPD-17 purchase from two ships to one, and cancel the Fire Scout Vertical Takeoff and Landing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (VTUAV).⁶⁸ "The Administration is proposing the largest increase in military spending in two decades," Senator Carl Levin (D-Michigan, Senate Armed Forces Committee Chairman) said 5 February 2002.⁶⁹ "This proposed increase comes without a comprehensive strategy or a detailed plan to guide that spending", Levin added.⁷⁰ The Secretary of Defense himself admitted to the "legacy of mistrust" regarding the defense budget that has developed, citing the 2,022 changes Congress made to last year's defense budget proposal.⁷¹ Even as the military stands to see the greatest increase in funding since the Reagan years, QDR-like scrutiny, "numbers crunching", and reference to the QDR and the studies it spawned will continue.

As for the evolving direction of our military, Mr. Rumsfeld noted, "It seems to me that the state of change we see in our world may be the new status quo. We may not be in the process of transition to something that will follow the Cold War. Rather, we may be in a period of continuing change, and if so, the sooner we wrap our heads around that fact, the sooner we can get about the business of making this nation and its citizens safe and

⁶⁷ Unknown Author, "Programs Must Use Realistic Cost Estimates, DoD Comptroller Says," 5 February 2002.

⁶⁸ Unknown Author, "Programs Must Use Realistic Cost Estimates, DoD Comptroller Says," 5 February 2002.

⁶⁹ Vince Crawley, "Defense Budget: More of the Same?," *Marine Corps Times*, 25 February 2002, 10.

⁷⁰ Vince Crawley, "Defense Budget: More of the Same?," 10.

⁷¹ Vince Crawley, "Defense Budget: More of the Same?," 10.

secure as they must be in our new national security environment.”⁷² This evolving strategic environment has been outlined in several studies commissioned by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, suggesting a move towards technology and a drawdown in personnel and infrastructure. It has been noted by officials in the Bush Administration that the Pentagon budget is burdened by a 23 percent excess in base capacity that costs millions of dollars to maintain.⁷³ While the events of “9-11” and the subsequent prosecution of the Global War on Terrorism may have postponed those “*transformational*” aspects that would cut force structure, future program development and maintenance of legacy systems, a lagging economy, Congressional pressure and the escalating costs of prosecuting the GWOT will likely bring them to bear in the next three to five years (through the current and into the next budget cycle). In a time of questionable resources and ever increasing military commitments, competition for necessary monetary support will be intense. EMW provides an answer as to the relevance of the Marine Corps in the 21st Century:

Our Nation must be prepared to fight – worldwide – against adversaries who will seek to engage us with asymmetric capabilities rooted deep in the human dimension of conflict. **The Marine Corps, with our philosophy of maneuver warfare and heritage of expeditionary operations, is ideally suited to succeed in this challenging landscape.**⁷⁴

The next QDR may be the most crucial battle (the “Battle of the Beltway”) the Marine Corps will fight in the foreseeable future. If our efforts to articulate our equities (programs, resources, and force structure relative to Title 10 and Marine Corps roles and

⁷² Rowan Scarborough, “Rumsfeld Mulls Options for Defense Systems,” *Washington Times* (United States), 27 January 2001, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/Jan2001/e20010129rumsfled.htm>, accessed 29 Jan 2001.

⁷³ Ed Offley, “Military base Closures on Horizon as Bush Prepares Defense Review,” *Stars and Stripes* (United States), 1 February 2001, URL: <dtic://ebird.dtic.mil/feb2001/e20010202closure.htm>, accessed 2 February 2001.

missions) and relevance (as the Commandant has done with his posture statement and EMW) are stagnant or insufficient, the very survival of the Marine Corps could be at issue.

⁷⁴ *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare, Marine Corps Capstone Concept*, Office of the Commandant, 10 November 2001, 3.

Annex A
QDR “Ramp-Up” Checklist

1. “Ramp-Up” Process:

- a. Continuity from year to year leading up to QDR:
 - i. Who will provide it? Contractor? Military Office? Other?
 - ii. Archival responsibilities:
 - Classified documents.
 - Unclassified documents.
 - QDR Report.
 - Chairman’s assessment.
 - Passdown materials.
 - Reports subsequent but relevant to QDR process and products.
 - Record of and data from studies and exercises relevant to the QDR that are conducted during the interim years.
 - iii. “Housekeeping”:
 - Required Office Space.
 - Furniture.
 - Computers.
 - Phones.
 - Fax Machines.
 - Copiers.
 - Office Supplies.
 - Parking Passes.
 - Access Badges (NCR preferred).
 - Establish Plain Language Address (PLAD).
 - Orders.
 - Fitness Reports.
 - Establish “filing system” (particularly for electronic files).
 - Establish common brief template.
 - Establish templates for Information Papers, Memorandums for the Record, After Actions, Passdown Materials.
 - iv. Briefing schedule to prepare QDR participants.
 - v. Introductions to JS and OSD counterparts.
 - vi. Analysis of the incoming/current administration:
 - Political positions (campaign “promises” or ongoing policies).
 - Defense initiatives & priorities.

- Personalities (both on front lines – appointees – and behind the scenes – “advisors”).
 - Economic environment.
 - International scene.
 - Current military actions.
 - Service positions.
- 3. Interaction with Joint Staff (JS) and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD):
 - b. “Permanent” panel leads:
 - i. Will the JS panels (which may be operational from one QDR to the next) “translate” to the OSD panels developed for the QDR? (Basics – TFS, Programs, Logistics, etc.)
 - ii. Are tasks and studies sanctioned and conducted by JS & OSD complementary or redundant?
 - iii. Should JS & OSD develop a Plan of Action and Milestones outlining a “Plan of Work” from the time of publication of the current QDR Report and Chairman’s Assessment to the inauguration of a new administration or the re-election of the current one?
 - c. Are JS and OSD panel leads co-chairs or separate entities conducting separate processes?
 - d. Is the effort collaborative or exclusionary?
 - e. How are the products (QDR Report & Chairman’s Assessment) developed – with or without Service input and to what degree

(Checklist developed in cooperation with Mr. Steven Klein of the Center for Naval Analysis)

Annex B
QDR Aftermath Checklist

1. QDR Aftermath.
 - a. Assessment at “QDR end-date.”
 - i. What was determined?
 - ii. Were policies instituted?
 - iii. Expected affects on Marine Corps?
 - iv. Unintended consequences?
 - b. End-date (ED) + 30.
 - c. ED + 60.
 - d. ED + 90.
 - e. ED + 180.
 - f. ED + 365.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Title: *QDR “Roadmap” ... Exercise in Futility or Avenue to Transformation (An Analytical Look at QDR 2001 and Its Impacts on Future Military Direction)*

Author: Lieutenant Colonel Anthony J. Greco, Jr.

Thesis: This paper examines the recent Quadrennial Defense Review (outcomes and potential impacts), gauges the importance of future such reviews, and provides recommendations for Marine Corps participation (organization and platform) in those reviews.

Discussion: The Quadrennial Defense Review – or QDR – is a legislatively mandated “comprehensive examination of the national defense strategy, force structure, 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 review – to be conducted “every four years, during a year divisible by four” – may appear to the casual observer as a simple exercise where each service lines up its troops and “toys” to be inspected by the Secretary of Defense. Nothing could be further from the truth.

QDR 2001 attempted to examine every facet of our nation’s defense from doctrine to dollars. Unfortunately, the electoral delays, which postponed the establishment of the new Bush administration, drastically compressed the timeframe available (under the law) for conduct of the review. This led the QDR machinery to by-pass scrutiny of several elements of our defense while focusing intently on others, skewing the “results of the experiment.” This flawed data by no means mitigates the importance of the results. If anything, it underscores the necessity of the services to be prepared well in advance of the actual QDR, anticipating the possible questions, and being capable of articulating their respective service platforms, roles, and missions in defending the nation’s interests with “off the shelf” products requiring little or no modification. This paper was written in the aftermath of the author’s experience as a member of the United States Marine Corps QDR Cell, with recommendations for organization and function of the Marine Cell in future such reviews.

Conclusion. The next QDR may be the most crucial battle (the “Battle of the Beltway”) the Marine Corps will fight in the foreseeable future. If our efforts to articulate our equities (programs, resources, and force structure relative to Title 10 and Marine Corps roles and missions) and relevance (as the Commandant has done with his posture statement and EMW) are stagnant or insufficient, the very survival of the Marine Corps could be at issue.

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