

## **A General Understanding of QDR 2005**

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), instituted in 1997, is viewed as a necessary top-down review of the Defense and Military-Industrial establishments serving the United States. The 2005 QDR will determine the security and defense needs of the American people for the next four years taking into account the world threat environment, current forces, R&D, procurement, national capacity, and resources. The QDR will examine the full spectrum of defense needs to preserve the welfare and economic well being of the nation and it will also address the roles and requirements of the defense industrial base necessary to survive and thrive in all varieties of threat scenarios. Within the boundaries of these tasks resides an enormous effort, presently underway, in transforming the services and command structure into a joint-thinking, lean, mean, objective-based, and cost-managed coordinated organizational structure.

The starting point of the QDR will be an assessment of the world wide threat environment and the defense initiatives necessary to meet those challenges. Yet at the same time, the QDR must ensure that it incorporates into its goals the economic and cultural growth of our nation honoring its democratic heritage in the process implementers.

This Quadrennial cycle comes in the midst of two enormous undertakings; the War on Terror and a global transformation of force structure, equipment, and doctrine. In simple terms, the defense establishment has pushed its personnel, organizations, and equipment to the limit, well beyond expectations. A new type of “fog of war” has been realized, one that occurs when a well constructed evolutionary process gets terribly interrupted by the dynamics of revolutionary change requiring quick adaptations; not only in actions and equipment, but in the very philosophy and professional conduct that defines the military services.

The nature of war, as the United States has known it, has changed dramatically. The present conflict has seen an unprecedented amount of sudden change experienced and required in the economic, social, political, and technology sectors. The suddenness, the pace, breadth and extent of change has reached such a dynamic proportion that it has been considered “revolutionary”, not “evolutionary.” In short, the War on Terror in the post 9-11 era has produced a revolution in the nature of conflict. Clausewitz reminds us that such radical events actual build and take place over an extended period of time and they only make sense through time. The fact that 9-11 has made a permanent “line in the sand” in American defense thinking does not mean that the conditions that led up to the terrible event just happened; they were formed over a long period of time.

We are also driven to think of these events as “threats” or “military events”, but in fact the principal drivers come from economic, social, or political situations rather than military-technical issues or competitions. The QDR 2005 in both process and substance must direct itself to these realities.