



## HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DUNCAN HUNTER – CHAIRMAN

### ***PRESS RELEASE***

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## **CHAIRMAN HUNTER OPENING STATEMENT**

### ***Full Committee Hearing on the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Defense Review***

**Washington, D.C.** – Congress created the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) after the Berlin Wall fell to connect threats, strategy, force structure and budgets. Over the years, it has helped us do so to one degree or another. While we have not always been satisfied with the product, the effort forces the Department of Defense and Congress to pause and ask fundamental questions, which is valuable in and of itself.

In fact, we believe the process is so important that the committee decided to conduct its own review this year. Many members have contributed to Committee Defense Review over the last six months and we are closing in on completing the project. Throughout that process, the Department was very helpful and I want to thank our witnesses for the cooperation we received across the board. It has been remarkable.

That, of course, leads me to some aspects of the Quadrennial Defense Review with which I have a few concerns. First, the QDR is “resource-constrained.” In other words, the final product has assumed that a certain amount of funding will be available to meet our defense needs. For some time, Members of the committee have been concerned that the “resource-constrained” model affects how QDR planners review threats and the capabilities required to meet them. A resource-constrained approach can lead planners to consider only those threats and capabilities for which they have adequate resources. Defense planning should be undertaken the other way around. We need to first identify what we need, and then decide how—and whether—we can afford it. At least that way, we can be clear about the risks of not adequately funding our defense.

Second, the QDR reaches some contradictory conclusions about force structure. It calls for making our armed forces more expeditionary than they are now. Yet, it concludes generally that we possess enough strategic lift today to achieve the mission, even though our current lift assets were not designed for an expeditionary Army. It proposes handing some special operations missions to regular Army units, increasing the demands on the force, at the same time that it shrinks the number of brigade combat teams. In other words, the QDR promises to do more with less. The armed forces have been doing a lot more, with a lot less, for a decade. It is fair to question the wisdom of a strategy that proposes to accelerate that trend.

Third, the QDR makes some programmatic decisions that seem to contradict its strategic findings. For example, it stresses the value of, and increased demands on, deep strike platforms at the same time it recommends cutting the operational bomber force and making up the difference with aircraft that do not yet exist, and certainly will not exist for another decade.

I'm not making these points just to be critical, but I think they highlight a larger point. The QDR is very optimistic that new technologies and operational concepts will address these problems. Yet, it is vague on those technologies and concepts. Meanwhile, we continue to increase the demands on our current force structure, which the QDR will reduce in order to free up resources for modernization. Ultimately, those two trends conflict with one another—a point the QDR does not seem to acknowledge. In suggesting that we can move forward without confronting that fundamental contradiction, the QDR may lead us to miss the forest for the trees. So, I think we need to view the QDR, and the committee's defense review, as inputs into the process of building our nation's defenses—not as the last word.

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