



PRESS RELEASE

House National Security Committee

Floyd D. Spence, Chairman

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STATEMENT OF HONORABLE FLOYD D. SPENCE

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING WITH NATIONAL DEFENSE PANEL MEMBERS

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Today the committee takes up an issue that is likely to occupy us all for the rest of the year: the Quadrennial Defense Review. Second to the annual defense authorization process, the committee's examination of the QDR will be perhaps our most important task in the months ahead.

For the past several years there has been a strong, bipartisan consensus that the Bottom-Up Review was flawed in at least two major ways. First, it failed to provide adequate forces and resources to execute the two-regional war scenario at the heart of U.S. national military strategy.

Second, while I believe that the Bottom-Up Review was right to recognize the regional threats to our interests in the Persian Gulf and in Korea and to establish the need to size our military forces to be capable of conducting two wars rapidly and decisively, the last four years showed us that the Bottom-Up Review's focus was too narrow. The administration failed to anticipate the rate at which it would deploy U.S. troops on manpower and resource intensive peacekeeping and humanitarian operations – what the QDR is apparently calling “smaller-scale contingencies.”

If the administration wishes to avoid repeating these mistakes, the QDR must first determine a sound national strategy and then identify the forces and resources necessary to execute the strategy. Based upon what I have heard to date, I am deeply concerned that the administration is once again putting the cart before the horse by allowing budget considerations to drive decision-making on strategy.

When Secretary Cohen states, “I am operating, and the entire building is operating, on the assumption that...the defense budget is likely to be no more than...\$250 billion in real terms for the foreseeable future,” it is impossible not to view the QDR as another a budget-first, strategy-second Bottom-Up Review.

Make no mistake – the current mismatches between strategy, forces and resources have had real consequences: last week I reported on the readiness problems our forces are confronting as a result of the “doing more with less” approach of the Bottom-Up Review. If the QDR once again compels a smaller, under-resourced force to execute an expanding strategy, then the readiness, quality of life and modernization problems we see today will quickly worsen.

More fundamentally, what I fear will emerge from the QDR will be long on commitments and short on resources. The emerging QDR is likely to call for a continuation of the current two-contingency strategy. And all the other lesser operations. And without revisiting diplomatic and military commitments throughout the world. And doing all this while reducing forces and resources to meet a predetermined budget number. . . . and promising to dramatically increase modernization spending while protecting readiness. Call me a skeptic, but I do not believe that you can get there from here.

That said, if something positive does come out of the QDR, I hope it will be a much-needed public debate about the risks associated with an under-resourced national military strategy. If conventional wisdom is true and the defense budget top-line does not increase above the President’s outyear numbers, then the American public needs to understand the very real risks. Weighing the risks of war, of casualties, of defeat, and the implications of retreat after this century’s great victories over fascism and communism must play a central role in any honest evaluation of the QDR’s recommendations. Only then can the American people understand whether the QDR will turn out to be a sound national security blueprint for the future, or simply another exercise in deceptive advertising.

To help us understand some of these complex issues, today we are pleased to have with us three members of the National Defense Panel. Created by Congress last year, the panel’s job is to provide an independent assessment of the QDR strategy and its force structure recommendations. We have with us:

- Philip Odeen, the NDP’s chairman, who also serves as president of the BDM Corporation;
- Admiral David Jeremiah, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and
- Andrew Krepinevich, Director of the Center for Budgetary and Strategic Assessments.

Gentlemen, I look forward to your testimony. Before proceeding, I would like to yield to the committee’s Ranking Democrat, Mr. Dellums, for any remarks he may have.